

SLOW-MADE: PLANTABLE, RECYCLED PAPER

YOU'LL NEED:

recycled paper
scissors or shredder
tub or vat (like a dishwashing pan)
old kitchen blender
sponge
cloth/towels or other
absorbent material

(2) wooden picture frames
screening material or mesh
staple gun
hard surface or wooden board
OPTIONAL: seeds (organic
varieties of herbs or wildflowers
work well)

MAKING THE MOULD/DECKLE:

Remove the glass/insert from the picture frame(s). One will be your mould, the other will be your deckle. These are used to shape and form your individual sheets as you pull them from the paper pulp. Cut your screening to be just slightly larger than the picture frame(s). Hold it taut across the frame and place a staple in the center of each side. Then work your way outwards from each edge, making sure to keep pulling the screening tightly as you staple. Trim any excess edges around the mould, and you're ready to start prepping your paper!

STEP 1

PREPARING YOUR RECYCLED MATERIAL:

Cut or rip up recycled paper into 1" squares. Soak your paper for as long as you can (overnight is ideal!) Experiment with different papers and fibers - newsprint, old magazines, watercolor paper, old notebooks, etc will all result in different color, texture and durability. Have fun trying things out!

STEP 2

BLENDING AND PULPING:

Fill a kitchen blender 3/4 full with water. Throw in a large handful of the cut-up recycled paper. Blend to a pulp. Fill your tub with the pulp, about 1/3 to 1/2 way. Add more water to the vat. The higher the pulp-to-water ratio, the thicker your paper will be! Play around and find a pulp-to-water ratio that suits your needs.

STEP 3



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PULLING YOUR SHEETS:

Stir your tub of pulp so the fibers are evenly mixed throughout. Begin by holding the mould screen side up, and placing the deckle (if you have one) on top. While holding them together at an angle, dip them to the bottom of the vat and scoop upwards, holding the mould and deckle horizontally. As you lift out of the vat, gently shake the mould and deckle back and forth - this helps align the fibers and results in a more uniform sheet of paper. Let the water drain fully.

STEP 4

COUCHING AKA SHEET TRANSFERRAL:

Slightly dampen your towels and place on a flat board or other smooth surface. If adding seeds for plantable paper, scatter a *small* handful onto the wet sheet, being careful to distribute. Remove the deckle from the mould. Place the long edge of the mould on the towel and in one smooth motion, place the mold face down, press downwards and lift from that edge. Try do to this in one quick motion - it may take a few tries to get the hang of it!

STEP 5

PRESSING:

Place a second towel or other absorbent material on top of your freshly couched sheet. With a sponge, press down onto sheet firmly (as much pressure as possible.) If you have a rolling pin or old paint roller, use that to press sheet even more. Pressing is an important part of the process, as it helps bind the paper fibers together.

STEP 6

DRYING YOUR SHEETS:

Find a flat, non-porous surface (smooth wood boards, plexiglass, window, etc.) Take your wet sheet and gently press onto the flat surface. Make sure the edges are pressed down well. Let sheets dry, and peel off! Drying time will vary greatly, but between 8-24 hrs is a good gauge.

OR...

Place wet sheets on top of a towel or absorbent material and repeat to form a stack. Weigh it down with a flat board or book stack, until your handmade paper is dry and ready to go!

STEP 7