



Mag Ruffman's Anything I Can Do

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Tray Pride Day

Anything I Can Do DVD Volume 3 – *Mixed Media*

A generously sized tray for luxurious breakfasts in bed.

This tray is totally fun to make. It takes a while but it's worth it. If you want to do lots of pressed flowers fast, order a [microwave flower press](#) from Lee Valley Tools.

Materials:

- Sheet of 3/8" (or thicker) Baltic birch plywood
- 11' of 1/4" decorative moulding
- Carpenter's glue
- Fish glue
- Window glass (regular or non-glare)
- Spackling compound
- Latex paint
- Artist's acrylic medium
- Water-based urethane
- Pressed flowers

Tools

- Circular Saw
- Jigsaw with a scrolling blade
- Drill
- French drawing curves
- Eye, ear and hand protection
- Straight-edge at least 4' long
- Paper and pencil
- Glass cutter (optional)
- Putty knife
- Orbital sander or palm sander (optional)
- Flower press

Cut List:

- 20" x 30" bottom
- Two 3" x 20-3/4" pieces for the sides
- Two 6" x 20" pieces for the ends
- 20"x30" piece of window glass
- Moulding to fit

Steps:



Tea tray with pressed flowers under glass



First, cut out the endpieces



Set the depth of the blade



Make the cut using a straight edge

Cut It Out

Start by cutting the plywood up.

If you're using a circular saw, set the blade depth to 1/2" inch so it will cut through the plywood but no deeper. Clamp a straight-edge (i.e. a 4' level or a straight piece of lumber) on top of the plywood to guide your saw's base plate. This will ensure a very straight cut. Measure and mark your first cut line, remembering to allow for the distance from the base plate (which rides along the straight-edge) to the blade of the circular saw. It'll make sense when you're doing it, but it's darn dull to read about.

Cut out the all the pieces for the bottom, ends and sides.



Make a paper template for handles



Use a French curve to help get a flowing line

For the curvy handles in the 6" x 20" end pieces it's best to use a template to achieve symmetry. Draw a curvy line on a 10"-wide piece of paper or cardboard. Cut the design out and trace it onto one half of the 20" wide board. Then flip the cardboard over and trace the design onto the other half of the board. Cut the curves using a jigsaw.





Use a compass to help with the handle



To cut out the handle, first drill a hole for the saw blade



Go slowly on the tight corners

Next, draw the 4" x 1" handle opening on both end pieces and cut them out. (Use a compass to make two 1" diameter circle and join them with straight lines.) Drill a hole large enough for the jigsaw blade to pass through and proceed to cut out the handle. Patch any rough spots with spackling compound. Sand the surfaces smooth and round over the sharp corners.



Fill any tear-outs or voids



Sand the surface and the edges

Patch any rough spots with spackling compound. Sand the surfaces smooth and round over the sharp corners.



Dry fit the pieces and check for a tight fit



The bottom piece may not sit flat



Weight it down if necessary



Apply glue to the edges



Clamp it together to dry



Add decorative nails if desired

Together at Last

Now get your clamps out. It's hell to have the glue drying while you look for the right size clamps. A [ratcheting strap clamp](#) works well. Apply glue, clamp everything and after 20 minutes clamping time, install optional decorative nails along the joints.





Apply the undercoat of paint first



Apply a coat of fish glue and let it dry 'til tacky



Apply the top coat

Cracklin' Rosie

This is a great finish if you're not a good painter. Sloppiness still looks good. Three easy steps:

1. Paint the surface with a coat of latex paint.
2. When the paint is dry, apply a coat of [fish glue](#)
3. When the glue is almost dry but still tacky, apply a contrasting colour of paint quickly with long single strokes (so as not to disturb the glue).



Use a hair dryer to speed up the crackle effect

Tip: A blow dryer speeds up the crackle reaction.



Ceramic flower press (available from Lee Valley Tools)



Apply acrylic medium to the back first



Apply 3 or 4 coats to the top

Apply pressed flowers to the bottom of the tray with white glue or artist's acrylic matte medium. A microwave flower press dries roses to perfection in under two minutes.

Coat the entire tray with a layer of water-based urethane.





Install some clear silicone dots to help support the glass along the edge



Install the glass

Glass Ho!

Measure the inside of the tray and ask a picture framer to cut a piece of glass to fit. The glass should be about 1/8" shorter than a tightly measured dimension in each direction.

The flowers in the middle of the tray will hold the glass up but the edges need to be supported too so the glass doesn't break under the weight of your breakfast. Apply dots of clear silicone an inch apart along the edges of the tray. The silicone blobs should be about the height of the flowers in the centre. Clean the glass, and drop it into place on top of the flowers.



Cut and glue the trim in place



Finished tray

Cut and mitre the moulding to fit along the edges and glue the pieces in place with carpenter's glue.

Let everything dry (AGAIN). Now loudly encourage your family to salute your efforts by bringing you breakfast in bed.

