

Leafy-Puzzled Pumpkins

By Michael Harbridge



Materials List

Puzzler Molds: By ClayPuzzling.com
BP305 Pumpkin Puzzler Set 3 Molds

Clay: By Continental Clay Company
Low-Fire Moist Red

Leaf Forms: By ClayPuzzling.com
LA100 Small Forma Leaf Assortment

Tools: By Royal & Langnickel
RSET-POT1 Basic Pottery Tool Set
By ClayPuzzling.com
PPT1 Puzzling Press Tool

Brushes: by Royal & Langnickel
Assorted Drybrushes

Colors: By Mayco
Translucent Oil Based Stains
TL-6 Maple
Softie Acrylic Stains
SS-210 Orange
SS-111 Brightest Yellow
SS-7 Country Apple
SS-57 Accent Green
SS-48 Artichoke
AC-520 Solvent Cleaner
AC-516 Porcelain Mist Spray

By Royal & Langnickel
ECGG-116 Intense Lime Glitter Glue

Miscellaneous:

Paper Towel
Silicone Glue
Masking Tape

Kiln: by Manufacturer of Choice
Capable of firing to cone 04

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Step 1 Open Puzzler Pumpkin Molds and place each half on a flat work surface. Position the rubber leaf forms with the textured side facing up in each half in desired positions and combinations.



Step 2 Flatten pieces of moist clay with your hands and fingers to the thickness of about ¼ inch. The shapes and sizes of the piece are not important. With smaller sizes, you'll achieve more puzzled lines on the final shape.



Step 3 Press the pieces of clay into the mold, right over the leaves. Cover the entire interior of each mold half, right up to the top edge. The clay should not go over or above the edge of the mold. Each piece of clay should slightly overlap. Use a sponge or towel to press over the clay to compress all the parts, forcing them together. Pressing will also embed the leaves. It is not necessary to press clay up into the step area.



Step 4 Create a coil of clay about ½ inch thick that can wrap around one entire half mold. This coil of clay will be what's used to attach the two mold halves. The coil can be gently attached just below the edge of the mold.



Step 5 Place the two mold halves together. Wrap your fingers around the edges of the half you lift so as you turn it over, the clay does not fall out. Gently pull your fingers out once the top mold is in place. Attach the Velcro strap to secure tightly.

Step 6 Reach inside the mold with the press tool and press the coil of clay over the seam area, connecting the two halves.



Step 7 Place the mold on its side and remove the strap. Wiggle and lift one half of the mold. Feel the clay on the bottom and see if it is firm enough to stand on its own. If not, allow the shape to sit in the mold until strong enough to remove and stand.

Step 8 Flip the mold so the clay shape is on one hand and remove the other half of the mold. Stand the clay pumpkin and use a metal rib to remove any clay seam lines or fill in gaps.



Step 9 Use a needle tool to remove the rubber leaf forms.



Step 10 Create stems for the pumpkins by making a coil of clay about an inch thick and about two inches long. Press your thumbs into the bottom of one end to open up the clay and hollow out the bottom. This part will attach to the top of the extruded pumpkin. Use the wooden sculpting tool from the basic tool set to scratch lines in the stem. Gently twist the stem. Place it on top of the pumpkin but do not attach.

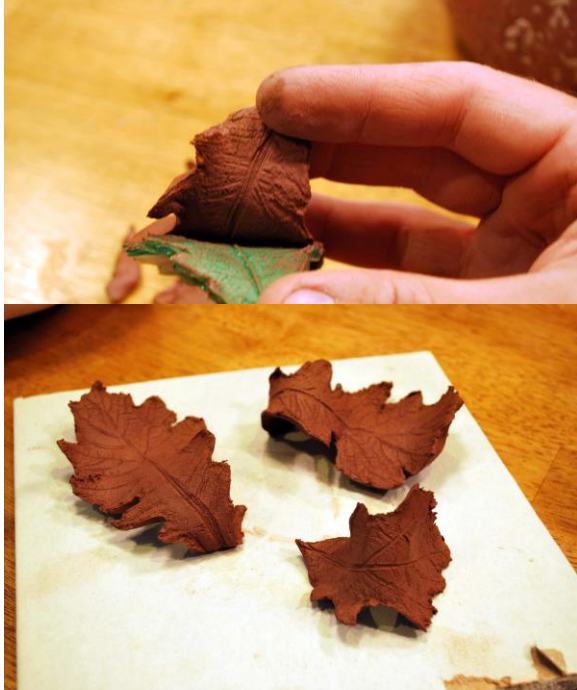


Step 11 Flatten pieces of clay to about 1/8 inch thickness between your fingers or with the use of a slab roller or rolling pin. Press the plastic leaf form into the clay and tear away excess clay around the edges. Turn the leaf (with clay still attached) so the clay leaf is facing up and the plastic leaf form is facing down. Bevel the edge of the leaf so it is thick in the middle and gets thin along the edges. (You do not want the leaf to have a square edge.)



Step 12 Starting at the stem of the leaf, bend the plastic leaf form back and gently pry the

clay leaf away from the form. Remove the leaf and place it on paper with the stem of the leaf bent back so it will appear to grow out from the top of the pumpkin when attached.



Step 13 Extrude or roll strands of clay for the vines and twist and curl. Hold the vines up to the side of each pumpkin to figure out shape. Place the vines on paper to dry.

Step 14 Allow all pieces to dry thoroughly before firing to the appropriate temperature for the clay selected. Our low-fire clay was fired to cone 04. Leave all parts separate. It is much easier to paint and glue together if all parts are separate.

Step 15 Antique (brush on and wipe back with paper towel) all parts with Maple and wipe back so the color stays only in the crevices. Use paper towel with Solvent Cleaner to wipe back more color or lighten dark areas.

Step 16 Drybrush the pumpkins with Orange and Brightest Yellow. Go right over the leaf impressions.

Step 17 Drybrush all leaves (impression leaves and loose) with Accent Green and Artichoke. Drybrush random areas on all leaves with Country Apple, Brightest Yellow and Orange if you want to create fall colors. Drybrush vines and stems with Accent Green and Artichoke.

Step 18 Spray all parts with two light coats of Porcelain Mist.

Step 19 Apply dabs of silicone glue on each of the leaves, stems and vines and attach. Hold in place with masking tape until dry. Remove tape.

Step 20 Apply a light coat of Intense Lime Glitter Glue with a brush to the impression leaves.