

Character Dolls

Button Willow & His Woodland Friends

DOLL BY DARLENE LANE
COSTUME BY PAT ALLEN

North of Los Angeles on Interstate 5, an exit sign proclaims, "Button Willow Next Exit." Every time I traveled this route to visit my mother, I would think, "Someday I'm going to sculpt a doll with pointed ears and call it Button Willow." I finally did!

Afterwards, I carted the little head everywhere, trying to find a free moment to make a wig. Then Pat and Laura Allen happened to see it laying in a box, still with no wig. They were so taken with the sweet little face that I finished the doll, and gave it to them undressed. The transformation of the completed, costumed doll is inspiring and a joy to behold.

There are two versions to the doll's face. One has a closed mouth, the other has a slightly open mouth and freckles across the nose, here called *China Berry*, looks more like a boy.

As you will see, there are endless ways to costume this 16" doll. Please let your imagination fly; I guarantee each one will put a smile on your face.

Step 1 – Casting options: Mix 4 parts Ivory Flesh and 1 part Misty Cream and apply a wash. Or, use

Color Guide

Color Wash . . . New Jumeau Brow
Mouth Color . . . Dusty Rose Pink
Lip Detailing
. French Blush/Pink Cheeks
Cheeks French Blush
Eye Shadow . . . New Jumeau Brow
Nose Dots Dusty Rose Pink
Eye Dots Dusty Rose Pink
Eyelashes Black/Brown
Eyebrows New Jumeau Brow
Painted Eyes

Materials Needed

- ✦ Button Willow Mold Set
- ✦ Body Pattern
- ✦ Porcelain Slips: Ivory Flesh, Misty Cream
- ✦ China Paints: New Jumeau Brow, Finishing Brown, Dusty Rose Pink, Black, Rosy Pink Cheeks, French Blush, Baby Blonde Hair (Optional)
- ✦ Flux
- ✦ Suitable Medium
- ✦ 14mm Glass Eyes
- ✦ 16"-18" x 1/4" Armature
- ✦ Cotton Swabs
- ✦ False Top Eyelashes
- ✦ Size 7-8 Mohair Or Skin Baby Wig



Tender Beige porcelain slip and no wash.

Once cast, cut and bevel the eye openings to accommodate 14mm eyes (large eyes are more appealing than small ones in a doll). Use your usual methods to complete the cleaning process.

Fire to cone 6.

Step 2 – Prepare the bisque for accepting china paints.

Painting Instructions

Step 1 – Wash: Mix 4 parts New Jumeau Brow with 1 part Flux. Apply lightly and remove color from the lips with a dry cotton swab. Prepare the limbs, hands and feet as desired.

Fire to cone 017.

Step 2 – Lashes: Mix equal parts Black and Finishing Brown. Paint fine, delicate top and bottom lashes that slant toward the ears.

Brows: Select a wig, so you have an idea of the doll's coloring. Choose one of the several different brow styles on *Button Willow* or make up your own. To add depth to the eyebrows, never apply entirely at one time. Instead, stroke in additional hairs at each firing.

Use New Jumeau Brow for a good basic color. For blondes, add Baby Blonde Hair. For redheads, add a tad of Rosy Pink Cheeks.

Freckles (optional): It is important that freckles vary in color and size. Apply the brow color with a toothpick and immediately blend with your finger to spread and soften the dots.

Lips: A doll's identity is found in the lip shape, therefore it's the most important paint application. Mix 4 parts Dusty Rose Pink and 1 part Flux. Apply very lightly to the lips.

Face contouring: Use the lip color to shade around the nose flares. Do not carry this too high on the nose. Also shade the indented line between nose and upper lip (philtrum), ear tips and creases, and the crease between bottom lip and chin.

Fire to cone 018.

Shade the lip color over and above the upper eyelids, fading away before reaching the brows. Shadow the lower eyelids over the lashes.



A flexible glue and posable body will make a totally flexible and "play-friendly" doll.

Button Willow is decidedly feminine in a costume of silk leaves.



Meadow Lark has red hair and wears a suit of feathers.

A blonde *China Berry* has freckles and a slightly open mouth.

Brows: Add brow hairs.

Mouth: Mix 2 parts French Blush and 1 part Rosy Pink Cheeks. Apply at lip center, and tap rather than stroke to blend darkest at mouth center and to pull color to the corners.

Tear ducts and nose dots: Use the French Blush-Rosy Pink Cheeks mixture for eye and nose dots and reinforce coloring on the ear tips.

Cheeks: Blush with French Blush, darker at cheek centers, fading away at edges.

Fire to cone 018.

Step 4 – Eye Shadow: Apply New Jumeau Brow on upper eyelids only, blend. After blending the shadow, add a line of this color to each eye crease. Apply the French Blush-Rosy Pink Cheeks mixture to the lower lash root areas. Use the Black-Finishing Brown mixture to line the upper and lower eye openings.

Brows: Add hairs as needed.

Mouth: Darken the center with the shading mixture from Step 3. Lip accents and crease lines are optional.

Cheeks: Lightly blush cheek centers.

Limbs: Finish off the arms, legs, hands and feet as desired.

Fire to cone 019 (temperature reduction prevents color burn off).

Step 5 – Assemble the cloth body with an armature for posing. Follow the instructions on the body pattern to attach porcelain body parts to the cloth body. Then use Pat Allen's description on costuming or follow your own plan.

Costuming Button Willow, China Berry and Meadow Lark

When I first saw *Button Willow*, I thought that if Helen of Troy had the face that could launch a thousand ships, this little doll could launch a

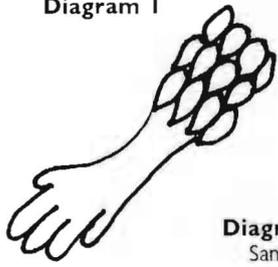
thousand costumes!

From start to finish, these costumes have been pure fun to make. Because they are “no sew—glue as you go,” they can be a memorable joint venture for adult and child. The method allows each elf to remain totally flexible, posable, and “play friendly.” In addition, a little glue will repair or replace any part of the costume.

Think elfin, and you will see suitable “clothes” everywhere. Accessories and display pieces abound in malls, craft stores and yards. Laura found the small suede bag that hangs from *Meadow Lark's* waist in the souvenir shop at the Grand Canyon. The bag, a replica Native American medicine bag, contains charms representing spirit and life forces that are believed to bring good luck.

With the following basic instruction, gather your supplies and create

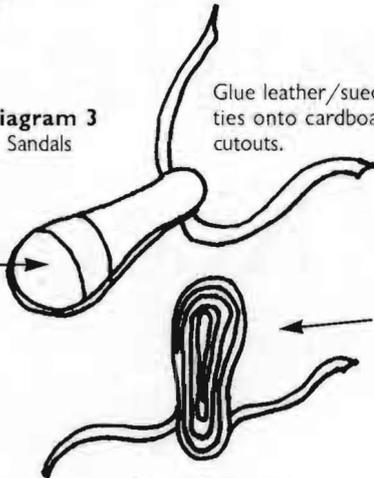
Diagram 1



Apply leaves and feathers in "bricklaying" fashion, from bottom up.

Diagram 3
Sandals

Cover tops of cardboard cutouts with leaves or leather.



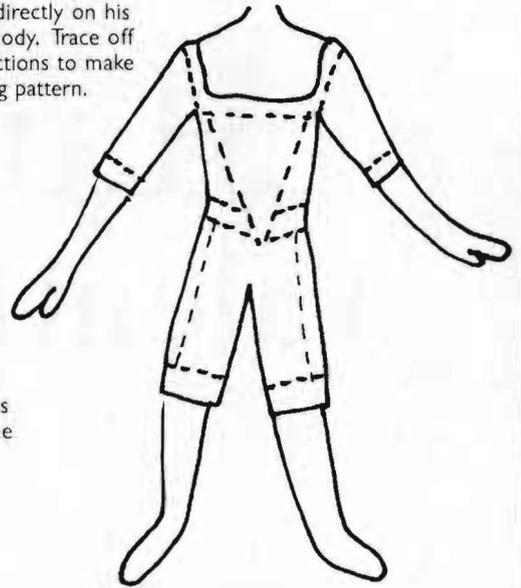
Bottom of sandal

Glue leather/suede ties onto cardboard cutouts.

Apply glue to cardboard soles and spiral twine into glue.

Diagram 2

Sketch China Berry's outfit directly on his cloth body. Trace off the sections to make clothing pattern.



unique and delightful versions of this charming little doll.

Button Willow's theme is leaves, *China Berry's* is fur, and *Meadow Lark's* dressed in feathers. All the elements are glued directly to the doll's cloth body with GemTac, a craft glue that dries clear and flexible. Other than that product, the supply list is simply what you have, what's available and what you like.

Step 1 — General: Start gluing the leaves and feathers at the bottom of the arm or leg and work upwards, "bricklaying fashion" as illustrated in Diagram 1. Cut fur pieces separately and glue on.

To make trousers for *Meadow Lark* and *China Berry*, cut rectangles of leather or velvet and glue around each leg. Glue small scraps patchwork style to cover any exposed cloth on the seat areas. Decorate to cover the "seams."

Button Willow

His green leaf costume was created using leftover leaves from craft store silk flowers—any size will do.

Step 1 — Coat the back of each leaf with GemTac and lay directly on the body. Hint: On green cotton bodies, spaces are barely visible.

When the body is entirely covered, glue on smaller leaves of vari-

ous shapes and shades to form "cuffs and collar," and the center front panel design. Glue on small critters, such as lady bugs, butterflies and frogs, and bows (a.k.a., dragonflies). *NOTE: Critters can be purchased or made from craft clay.*

Meadow Lark

Purchase small bags of inexpensive feathers and confiscate the molting feathers from a friendly parakeet or canary. Apply feathers with the same procedure as leaves.

Step 1 — Position and glue the feathers to show off the most colorful sections; fluffy ones on the arms, small patterned quail feathers as "cuffs" on the arms and legs.

China Berry

His fur outfit was sketched on the cloth body—cuffs, square collar, V-shaped panel (Diagram 2)—to create a pattern. I used several different kinds of fur from old collars and coats found in thrift stores. Fake fur also works well.

Step 1 — Darken the pencil lines with a marking pen and make a pattern for each section. Lay wax paper over each section and trace the lines with a sharp pin. Cut out the wax paper pattern.

Step 2 — Lay the pattern pieces on the back (leather) side of a piece of fur. Trace around the pattern pieces with a pen.

Step 3 — Use a very sharp blade in your utility knife to cut through the leather only. Do not cut the fur. Glue to the body as desired.

Sandals

For more detailed instructions, refer to "Leather Slip-On Shoes" by Catherine Cannivet, November 1998.

Step 1 — Trace each foot onto cardboard, mark to keep bottoms and tops identified. Glue leather/suede strips for ties over the insteps. Glue leaves or leather pieces to the tops (over the ankle ties) and spiraled string to the bottoms. Glue a small strip of leather over the instep and decorate as desired.

When dry, wind the leather strips around the legs and tie (Diagram 3).

Sources: Molds, body pattern, porcelain slip and china paints by Bell Ceramics. Other than found objects, all costuming supplies are readily available at fabric and craft stores. Darlene Lane, 3112 Tomahawk Trail, Tucson, AZ 85749. Pat Allen, 3916 Grand Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85019. 602-839-1048.

Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for replies to correspondence. □