

Calico Christmas Trees



Don't you love setting out all your holiday decorations? As you unwrap each item, memories seem to come flooding back, making the holiday season even more special. Somehow, it's very exciting to rediscover each treasure. However, it just seems like plain old work, when it's time to put everything away. Wouldn't it be nice if some decorations could be left out throughout the entire winter? Well, with these country pine tree holiday decorations, you can do just that.

Country pine trees are quite versatile. If you choose, you can make them in the traditional red and green color scheme and use them only at the holidays. Since I wanted to extend the longevity of the trees, I made them all in a pleasing green. Since the trees are meant to be whimsical rather than realistic, almost any color combination will work.

There are several nice things about these simple trees. They can work in almost any room in your home, from a trio of small country pines that add a bit of color and texture to a simple buffet to a large country pine in the corner of your kitchen. A smaller cone can be used for a tiny tree on a bathroom counter. Since the trees are made of fabric attached to Styrofoam, moisture won't be a problem.

These trees are also a great addition to a family room; they are very kid-friendly. Even if the tree were to fall on your child, he wouldn't get hurt since the finished project weighs only a few ounces. To make your own country pine trees you'll need the following materials;

Materials List:

Styrofoam cones in an assortment of sizes
100% cotton fabrics in homespun plaids and calico prints
Straight pins
Scissors



Instructions:



1 To begin this project, you need strips of fabric that measure 2 ½ inches wide. Fold the fabric over several times and cut the strips quickly and as closely to 2 ½” without a lot of measuring or worrying about it. A 12” cone tree requires about 5 strips of fabric.

2 Country pine trees made out of fabric require frayed edges to give them a lot of texture which creates the pine boughs of the trees. To get the frayed edges, cut into the long edge of the strip about 1 ½ - 2 inches. Repeat this every ½ inch.



3 Once all strips have been clipped, run them under hot water and wring them out. Throw them into the dryer for about fifteen minutes. When they come out of the dryer, expect a twisted, tangle of strips. The good news is that it will take you longer to untangle the strips than it will to complete the rest of the project.

4 Beginning at the lower edge of a Styrofoam cone, use a straight pin to hold your strip in place and start to wrap the strip around the cone, pinning every few inches or so and overlapping as necessary to cover the cone.



When you reach the end of a strip, use a straight pin to secure both that strip and the new strip, and continue wrapping.



Continue wrapping until you have extended just beyond the top of the cone. Over lap the fabric and pin in place to cover the top.



Then, cut off any excess from the strip and you've finished your first tree!

You may decide to stop right there and go with a single tree in just the right spot. You may decide to make a couple more and group them in threes at the end of a dresser or on a shelf.

However, for a more impressive grouping of trees, you might consider grabbing a few more materials from the craft store and creating something quite nice. An oblong metal container, some floral foam, a dowel and Christmas snow can combine with your trees to make a tiny winter wonderland!



First cut the foam to fit tightly in the container. Just push it into the base of the container, unless it's loose, and then add a little hot glue to hold it in place.



Score the dowel stick with a utility knife and then simply break the dowel at the scored line. I needed 8" pieces of dowel to insert into the foam in the container and into the base of the Styrofoam trees.



Insert the dowel into the center of the base of the Styrofoam trees.



Fill the container up with artificial snow or Spanish moss and then insert the largest tree into the center of the container pushing the dowel into the container's foam. Repeat with the rest of the trees.

This is a great look for the winter months as the turned up fabrics show off their back sides that almost look like snow dusted branches.



However, for the holiday season you can dress these miniature pines to look like Christmas trees with the addition of simple felt stars at the top.



Once the felt star is blanket stitched together and gently stuffed with bits of leftover felt, insert a pin through the back of the star and allow most of it to extend passed the base of the star.



Insert the pin into the top of the tree and let the holidays begin!

Country pine trees are a great accessory to add to your holiday décor. And this is one Christmas decoration you might not put away until it's time to get out the Easter baskets!

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