

13 Halloween Crafts



from

M. Ryan Taylor &

ThirteenForHalloween.com

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1. Crystal Ball



Almost too easy! This is great as a centerpiece or as a prop for fortunetelling games which were once very popular at old-fashioned Halloween parties.

Directions:

Wrap a set of mini, battery-powered Christmas lights in clear, rainbow-colored holographic tissue (as is used for gift bags) and place inside a clear or bubble-glass globe (available from the lighting section of your hardware store). Heap fun fabric around the globe. Voila! You now have an impressive-looking crystal ball.



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2. Scrap-Wood Sign



This is a great way to use up old, weathered lumber, and is about as simple as woodworking projects get. This lumber came from a garden planter I replaced with stone. The older and more weathered the lumber the better.

Directions:

Cut lumber into the desired shape for your sign and screw onto a post made from the same material (make sure you've cut a point on it for the base). Paint your Halloween message with acrylic paints, using two colors for contrast. After the paint is dry, pound your new sign into the ground with a wooden mallet.



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3. Shrunken Apple Heads

Easy fun for old and young. Plan ahead: this project must be done at least 15-20 days in advance of when you want to display your work.

Directions:

- Peel an apple that has a firmly attached stem.
- Carve a face into your apple.
- Tie a string to the apple stem and hang the apple for 15-20 days (or more).
- To hasten the drying process you can tie the apple onto a grate positioned on the top rack of your oven and put the oven on very low heat, keeping the oven door slightly open. Dry for 6-8 hours (this should give your apple a good head start on drying).

Your shrunken head should last you for many years. The apple pictured here is between 3-4 years old. Though I've not done it myself (as of October 2007), I've often fantasized about using the apple as the basis of a witch doll.

Suggestions:

- Play fun Halloween music while you carve your heads. Visit ThirteenForHalloween.com to purchase "Thirteen for Halloween" CDs or downloads. "Thirteen for Halloween" is M. Ryan Taylor's family-friendly Halloween album.



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4. Halloween Print Placemats



Yes, your placemats match every other day of the year, but on Halloween? Never! Colorful placemats on a dark tablecloth really add a bit of dazzle to the holiday food spread (Halloween food is all about presentation), and these placemats are about as simple to make as a sewing project can get.

For each placemat you will need:

- 1/2 yard cotton Halloween print
- 1/4 yard medium weight interfacing
- black thread

Directions

1. Fold fabric in half with interfacing between the layers and cut your placemat in the size and shape you desire (by no means are the rectangles I chose the only possibility; try ovals, irregular shapes, pumpkin shapes, ghosts, etc.).
2. Place fabric with right sides (printed sides) together and place interfacing on top of this.
3. Sew around the edges, leaving a 1-2" hole.
4. Turn the project inside out and iron flat, making sure the fabric at the hole is folded inside.
5. Topstitch around all the edges with a zig-zag stitch.

That's it! Make a bunch of different placemats, no two the same.



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5. Found Object Characters

Any fun or unusual object can take on a new personality with a coat of paint (be careful not to paint a valuable antique!). This giant camp mug made me think of the Frankenstein monster and this old-fashioned sugar container with its button lid made me think of a jack-o-lantern. While most of the work in this photo is done with brushes, Frankenstein's eyes were made with thumbprints!

Directions:

Find some fun objects and use your imagination to decide what they will become. Spray paint each object with a base coat of acrylic paint. After the base coat is dry, go to work with additional acrylic craft paints. Experiment!



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6. Trick-or-Treat Bag

This project is not much more difficult than the placemat on page #4. Be sure to consult with your child about what character they'd like their bag to take on.*

Directions:

1. Follow the steps #1-4 for a basic placemat on page #4 and repeat to make the two side pieces of your bag. Make sure your 2-inch holes are where you want to insert the bag's handle.
2. Using the same process, craft a handle for the bag. Insert each end in the holes on the side pieces and sew over them 4 times, locking the handles in.
3. If desired, craft and add an appliqué to one or both side pieces.
4. Sew side pieces together, leaving an opening by the handle for the candy.
5. Zig-zag stitch around the edge again to make sure the seam is secure.

* That's what my mother did and when she asked my brothers and I what we wanted for our Halloween bags, the results were a ghost, a pumpkin and my black cat pictured here. Frankly, I think this bag is pretty near a masterpiece of Halloween folk art and is one of my treasured holiday possessions. Years of use, storage and display wore the appliqué of the black cat threadbare. Last year I carefully removed all the black material in the body of the cat and slowly brushed in the area (guided by the original appliqué stitch) with black acrylic paint. It worked wonderfully. It takes a close look to tell that the fabric has been replaced with paint.



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7. Skeleton Lovers

Make a portrait of you and your love eternal, personalized with your own thumbprints.

Directions:

1. Paint two wooden skeleton figures (available at craft stores) completely with white acrylic paint and let dry.
2. Dip your thumbs or index fingers (depending on the size of the skeletons) in black acrylic paint and blot once or twice on a newspaper before pressing firmly down where the skeleton eye sockets should be.
3. Using a brush, outline the fingerprints with black paint.
4. Brush on nose, mouth and other accents.
5. Use grey acrylic paint and the dry-brush technique to add contours and shadows to the skeleton's figures.
6. Using white embroidery floss or string, tie your skeletons together in a friendly pose.
7. Hang from a hook using the floss or some twine.
8. If desired, paint a small sign for your skeletons to hold and glue to the skeletons, placing the hands as if holding the sign. "Love is forever."



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8. Pumpkin & Bat Garland

Garlands really add spice to party decorations. This is a very simple idea that is inexpensive and easily executed.

Directions

1. Remove plastic handles from 12 or more jack-o-lantern treat cups.
2. String jack-o-lanterns along a length of twine appropriate for the room you wish to decorate and secure in place with knots.
3. Tie loops at the end of the twine and hang on hooks or pushpins.
4. Hang store-bought or home-made bats between the jack-o-lanterns.



Note: Instructions for making these simple, furry bats can be found by going to FamilyFun.com/Halloween and typing in the search term: "Boa Bats"



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9. Imps

The design for “What’s Brewing Cauldrons” (in *Halloween Food Fun and Crafts : Best Recipes*) left me with a large handful of unused red polymer clay when I was done. What do you do with leftover, red polymer clay? Make imps of course!

Directions:

1. Create skeletons for your imps by bending pieces of 18-gauge uncoated floral wire into the desired shapes.
2. Form the red polymer clay over the skeletons, pinching together, adding features, expressions and smoothing as you go.
3. Carefully balance your creation if you wish it to stand.
4. Bake according to package directions, or pre-heat to 275° and bake 2 hrs.



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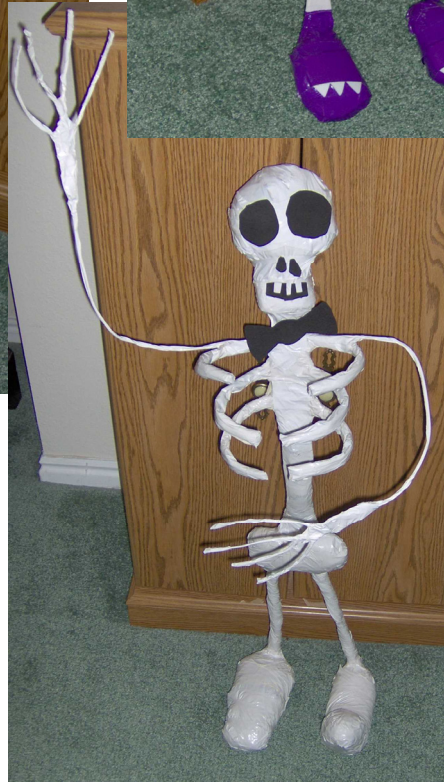
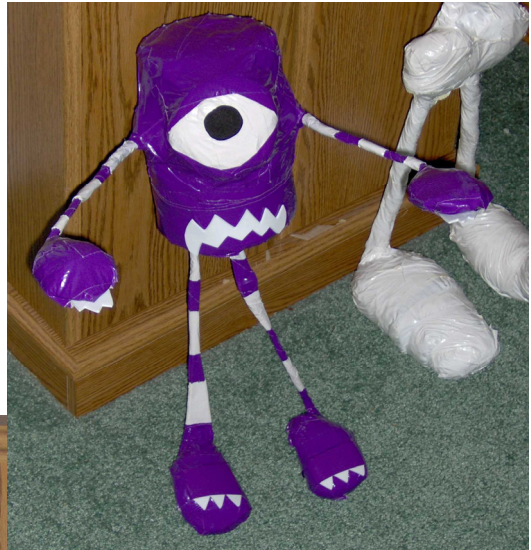
10. Duct Tape Monsters

I first saw a duct tape monster at a craft store a couple of years ago and saw the idea revisited in a recent Halloween magazine. The great thing about this project is the amount of creativity it affords you to create a monster of your own imagining.

Whether you're into cyclops & skeletons (me) or disco-dancing martians (my wife), duct tape is almost a blank slate and comes in a lot of colors these days.

Directions:

1. Build a form for your monster using boxes, plastic bottles, newspaper, wire hangers and other discarded materials.
2. Make sure you use something heavy (like rocks or bags filled with beans) for the feet.
3. Cover your form with appropriately colored duct tape.
4. Create mouths, teeth, pupils and other features with craft foam.
5. Attach foam pieces with glue dots.

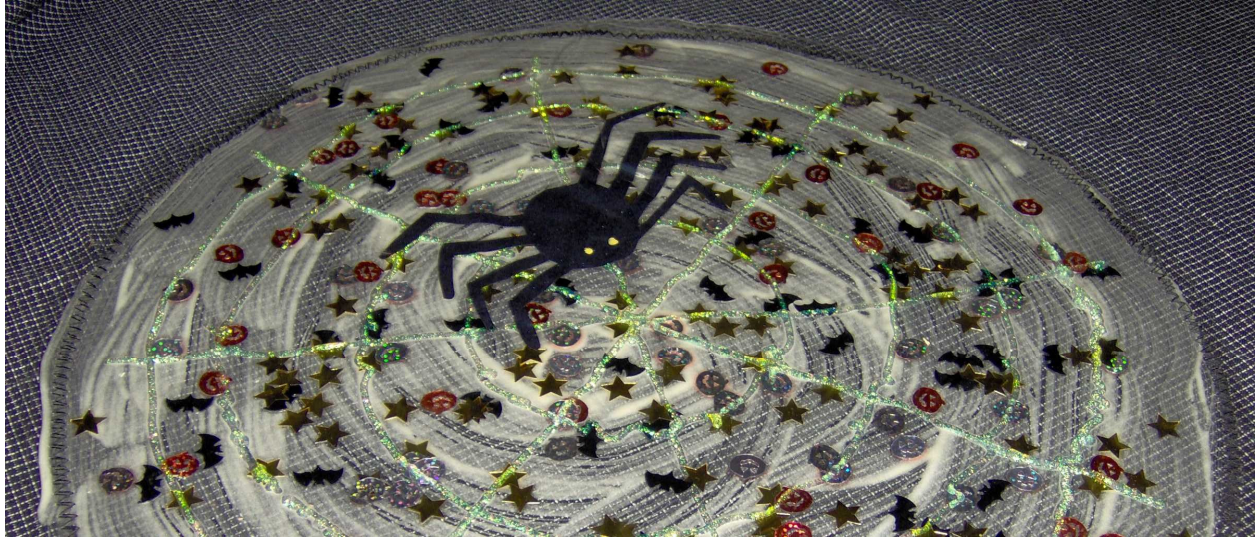


Note: Be sure to pay attention to balancing your monster if you wish it to stand on its own.



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11. Glowing Spider's Web Placemat



Simple, fun, spill-proof!

Directions:

1. Cut two 16-inch circles from a piece of medium weight decorator plastic (usually found at fabric stores for use as a table covering).
2. Using a large brush, smear glow-in-the-dark fabric paint in a swirling pattern on one of the plastic circles.
3. Now draw a spider web design on this circle with glitter fabric paint.
4. Sprinkle holographic or other Halloween confetti over the paint.
5. Cut a spider shape out of a piece of dark cardstock and place on the web.
6. Paint two eyes on the spider with yellow acrylic paint (or glitter fabric paint).
7. Let project dry overnight (or longer if still wet).
8. Place second plastic circle over the first and sew together using a zig-zag stitch. Go around the placemat twice.

Play fun Halloween music while you spin your web. Visit ThirteenForHalloween.com to purchase "Thirteen for Halloween" CDs or downloads. "Thirteen for Halloween" is M. Ryan Taylor's family-friendly Halloween album.



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12. Dead, White Halloween Tree



A dead, white Halloween tree can be just as spooky as a black one. So hang your weary bones on this tree, that is, once you've made them.



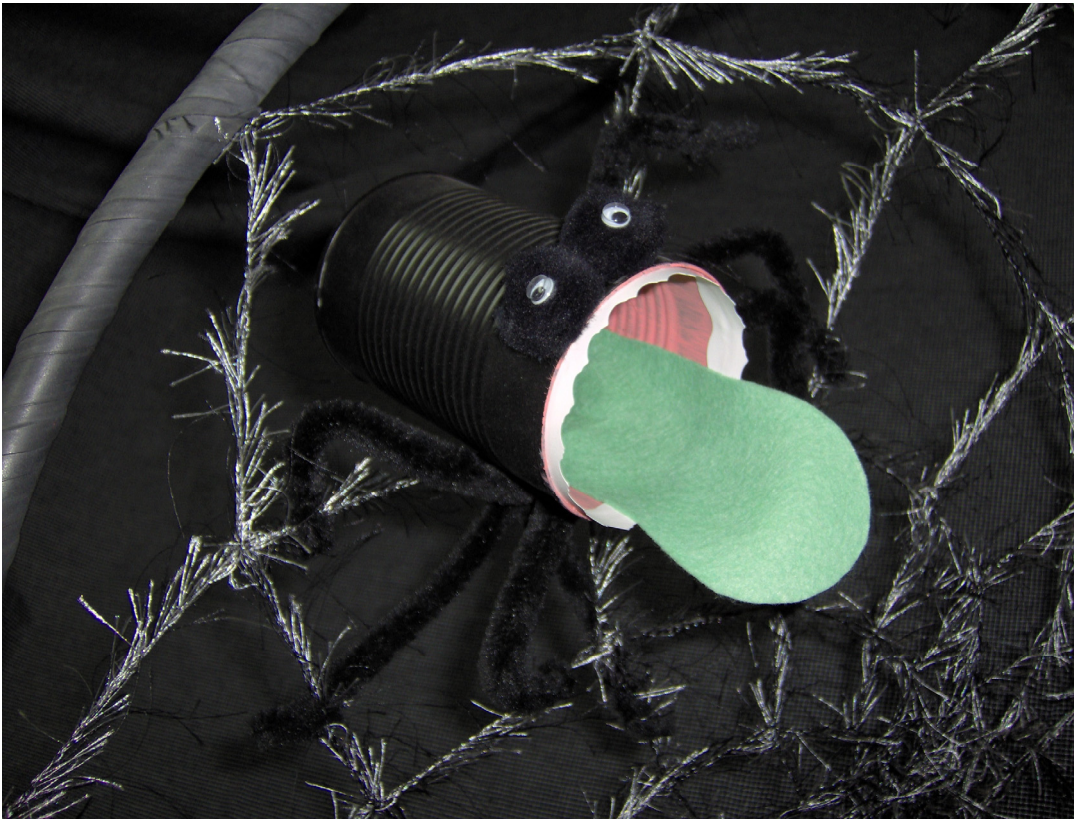
Directions:

1. Twist two packages of 26-gauge white fabric-coated floral armature together about 2/3 down the length of the wire.
2. Separate the bottom 1/3 of the wire into three sections to become the roots. Continue to twist and separate until happy with the look of the roots.
3. Follow the same process with the trunk and branches.
4. With a black permanent marker draw spider web and skeleton designs on white shrink film.
5. Use a fine-tip marker for details like the fly wings pictured above.
6. Using a hole-puncher, punch a hole in each ornament.
7. Bake according to packaged instructions.
8. String ornaments using light weight fishing line.
9. Arrange ornaments on the dead, white tree.

*from M. Ryan Taylor &
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Play fun Halloween music while you rattle the bones. Visit ThirteenForHalloween.com to purchase "Thirteen for Halloween" CDs or downloads. "Thirteen for Halloween" is M. Ryan Taylor's family-friendly Halloween album.

13. Canned Spider



Directions:

1. Remove paper from a tin can and wash thoroughly.
2. Drill two rows of 1/8-inch holes (8 total) in the side of the can for the legs.
3. Paint the outside of the can with black acrylic spray paint. Let dry.
4. Paint the inside of the can with salmon craft acrylic paint. Let dry.
5. Using tooth-shaped craft scissors, cut a strip of white cardstock and glue it around the inner lip of the can.
6. Push four long chenille pipe-cleaners through the holes to form legs.
7. Cut a tongue shape out of green felt, long enough to reach the back of the can and come out of the front of the can about 3 inches.
8. Thoroughly glue the tongue over the pipe cleaners inside the can.
9. Glue two google eyes on two black pompoms and then glue to top of can.
10. Position the spider on a store-bought or home-made web.



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