

Basic information's

how to make nice paper leaves



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Information's, inspirations and tips for making beautiful and natural paper leaves

These paper leaves you can use for several home decorations and also for your quilling flower decorations or other creations. You can also make very beautiful autumn leaves and can keep them for several autumn seasons. In the following sections (1-9), I would like to give you a few information's, inspirations and tips how to make beautiful and natural paper leaves.

1. Paper, wire and glue
2. Leaf cutting techniques
3. Embossing and sanding techniques
4. Colouring the leaves
5. Sealing the leaves
6. Shaping the leaves
7. Leaf templates and PDF file with original leaf templates
8. Some pictures for inspiration
9. Video tutorial links

1. Paper, wire and glue

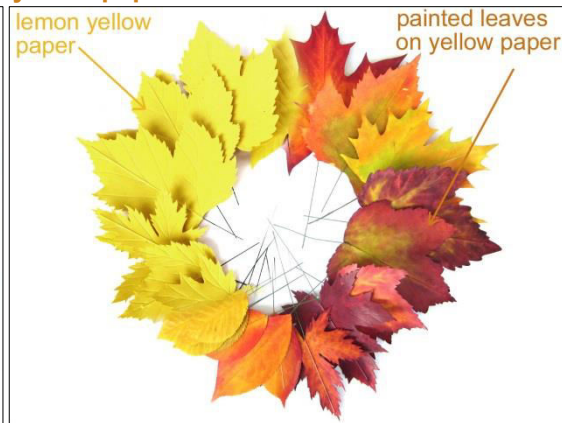
Paper for your leaves

Best is to use construction paper 120/130 gms. This paper is resistant, slightly absorbent and can be processed very good to create paper leaves. For green leaves I use green paper. If I paint the leaf I use light green paper and if I bleach the paper I use dark green paper. For autumn leaves I use yellow paper, if you make orange or red leaves you can also use these colors.

green paper



yellow paper



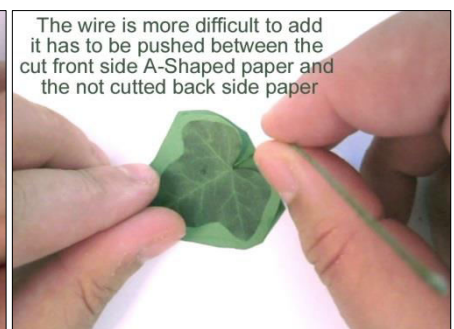
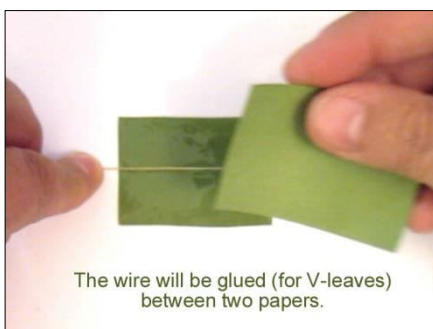
Wire

The wire is very important and will be glued between two papers. You can create nice branches and also give the leaf a very lovely shape. Important is that the wire is straighten and before gluing it mark first the correct position to fix it. After gluing, mark again the leaf tip so that the wire is well centred when you cut the leaf.

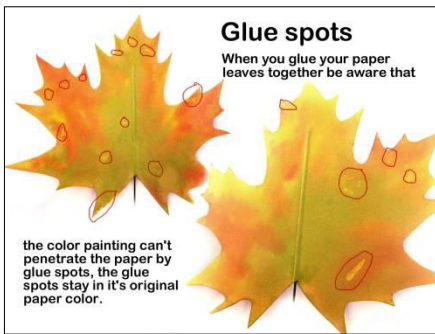
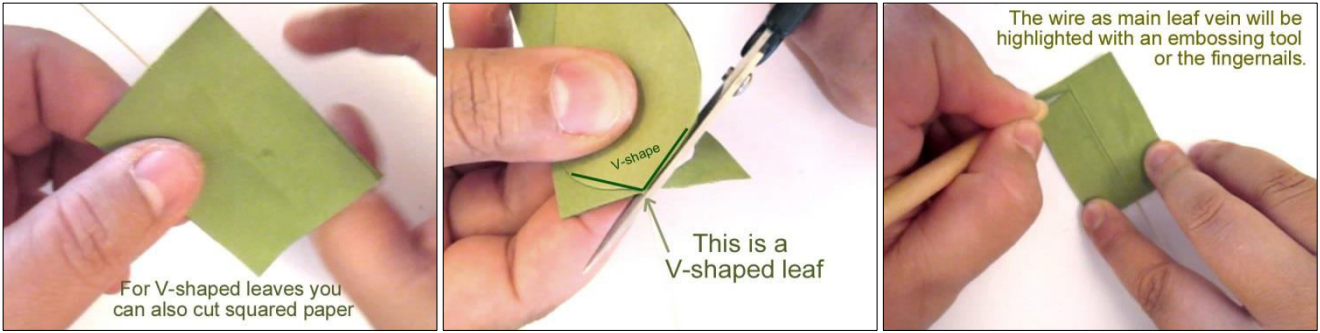
It depends how the leaf veins are, you can use for very thin leaf veins, wires between 0.25mm and 0.35mm and for medium leaf veins, between 0.35 and 0.65mm and for big leaf veins also thicker wires or wrap them with floral tape.

Some leaves are A-shaped and others V-shaped. By the **A-shaped** leaves like Ivy or Norway maple) you have to cut first the A-shape from the leaf before you can fix the wire. In my video Ivy leaves

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-EcdlhXuo8> you can see this by 3:00 minutes well explained.



By the **V-shaped** leaves (like oak, hornbeam, birch, lilac and some others leaves the wire is easy to fix, so that you can fix the wire also on a squared paper and cut the leaves in its shape.



Glue

To glue the paper together it's important to use the right glue. Best is to use a transparent glue which is not too liquid and makes the paper wavy, it should also harden the paper after drying so that you can shape the leaf very good. The glue should also stick well when the paper gets very wet by painting it, with colors where you need much water. Best experiences I made with "UHU twist and glue" or with transparent Cementit. Important is also to glue the wire, so that it stays between the papers.

IMPORTANT: Be very careful that you do not leave any glue spots on the paper, because you can't paint this glue-spots and they will remain in the original paper colour.

2. Leaf cutting techniques

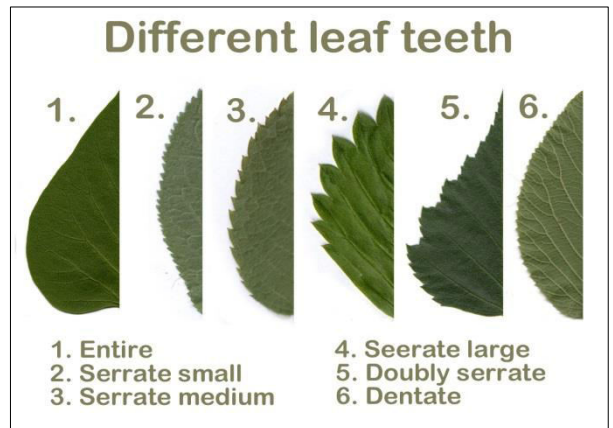
Leaves without leaf teeth

Leaves without teeth (entire), are more simply to cut and does not need much time or practice to make them. This leaves you can cut directly from the template see my video (part 1) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ryETZ78O_4M by 9:20 - 10:18 minutes.



Leaves with big leaf teeth

Leaves with big leaf teeth or curves, I would advise you first to draw the outline from the leaf template with an embossing tool, please see my video ([part 1](#)) by 9:21 until 11:14.



To cut it directly from the template will be very difficult with so many curves. Do this just after gluing the papers together so you can see the embossing lines very good, because the lines are seen better when the paper is wet and soft from the glue. It's also better to cut the leaf soon after gluing the papers together, while the scissor cut will also welding the edges.

Leaves with small leaf teeth

It will be difficult to cut these teeth by your leaf templates. Best is to cut the leaves according your leaf templates by the outline of the smaller leaf teeth tips. Later when the glue is dry and the paper of your leaves is harder you can cut the smaller leaf teeth. In my video ([part 1](#)) by 11:25 until 14:38 I show you the following different leaf teeth cuts.



3. Embossing and sanding techniques

Embossing techniques

To emboss leaves, makes them look more realistic. By some leaves like the hornbeam leaf you can reach a very natural look by embossing it right. To emboss leaves you need embossing tools in different head sizes from very small to large. With the small heads you do more the drawing of the leaf veins and with the bigger heads you highlight the curves and shape the leaves. If you emboss on a hard underground with less pressure, you can work on the leaf veins without that you see them on the back side of the leaf. If you use a soft underlay or a felt mat and you put more pressure by embossing, you can see it also on the back side.

Embossing on fresh glued paper	
<p><u>Advantage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You do not need much pressure by embossing You can use hard undergrounds and see the veins also on the back side After the glue is dry and the paper harder it keeps the embossing better 	<p><u>Disadvantage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper tears faster if you use a soft underlay Embossing mistakes are more visible It's difficult to work on details and the veins get more ticker
Embossing when the glue is dry and the paper harder	
<p><u>Advantage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The paper does not tear so quickly Mistakes are not visible so quickly and can be corrected You can work out more embossing details 	<p><u>Disadvantage</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You have to work with more pressure (your hands pain with the time)

Leaves like ([Oak leaves](#) or Norway maple leaves) which are smooth and you only see the leaf veins are simple to emboss. Leaves like [Ivy-](#), [birch-](#), [hornbeam-](#) or [whitebeam leaves](#) are more difficult and need more pressure to emboss all the details and highlights of the leaf. Best is to see all the video tutorials from the linked leaves, there I show all this leaves with its embossing details. After colouring your leaves with very wet paint you lose much of your embossing, so I advise that you emboss your leaves again when there are completely dry. After sealing your leaves I would not emboss them anymore, because you only would make bad scratches on them.



Oak leaves with simple leaf veins



Ivy leaves with characteristic leaf veins



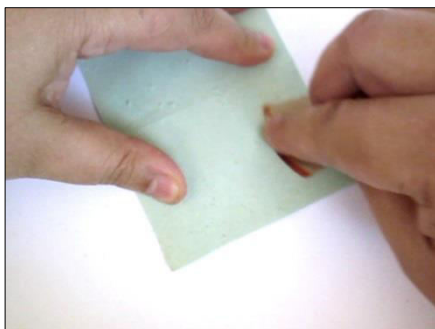
Birch leaves with rounded highlights



Hornbeam leaves with characteristic veins

Sanding techniques

Some leaves are hairy and nice to feel. For example the whitebeam leaf when it has young leaf shoots. If you decide to make hairy leaves you can't paint or seal your leaves, so you have to work with the bleaching technique. Best is if you can also dye the paper after bleaching it with fabric colours in some colour nuance darker, like this you will also highlight the leaf veins in the darker dyed colour. To imitate this hairy feeling you have to grind the paper before processing it further. For this you use sand paper or a grindstone and sand a little bit of the first paper layer carefully off. When the paper has a soft feeling you can work on the next steps, gluing the leaf together, cutting the leaf and embossing the leaf veins. When you finished these steps, you grind as last step the leaf again with sand paper or a grindstone. If you have a dremel, you can also use this to highlight more details on your leaf and give it a more hairy look and feeling. But be careful with the dremel, too much of it can spoil your whole work.



Here I sand the paper before processing it further I am using normal sand paper



with a dremel you can highlight more details. This leaf I did not dye so the veins are in the same colour like the leaf and not visible



Here you can see the leaf veins in the darker dyed colour. By sanding the leaf again you can work out the different colors and highlight like this the veins.

4. Colouring the leaves



Colors

To colour your leaves you can use lots of possibilities. Like for example colored pencils, felt pens, water colors, water soluble wax crayons, fabric (textile) colors, or print them with your printer. In my 7 part video tutorials I will show you the colouring with:

1. fabric (textile) colors

Video "[Oak leaves](#)" (part 2)
Video "[Birch leaves](#)" (part 4)
Video "[Autumn leaves](#)" (part 7)

2. water soluble wax crayons in wet painting

Video "[Hornbeam leaves](#)" (part 3)

3. water soluble wax crayons in dry and wet technique

Video "[Ivy leaves](#)" (part 6)

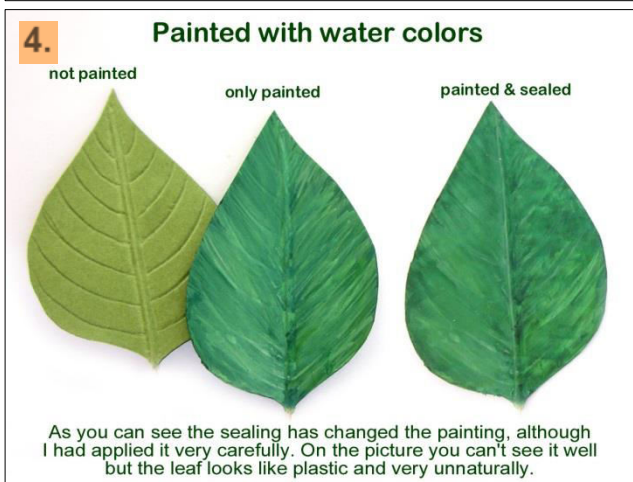
4. print it with your printer

Video "[Ivy leaves](#)" (part 6)

The other colour possibilities except water colors, I didn't try yet and have no experiences with them. In all the video tutorials I show some special tips and tricks. So just have a look at them.

I like best to work with fabric colors and water soluble wax crayons in wet technique. This both variations are great. If you like to work more details into the leaf you can also use water colors and water soluble wax crayons in wet painting. By the water colors it's more difficult to seal the leaves later, because the sealing works also on the water colors and can change the painting of your leaves. This also can happen if you colour your leaves with water soluble wax crayons in "dry technique". So you have to be aware of this. I have painted my autumn leaves with fabric colours, but I think also with water soluble wax crayons in wet painting they would turn out very lovely, because you can also work better on some details. So you just have to try and see what works out the best for yourself. All colors you can wash very well from your hands only fabric colors get into the skin, but if you soak your hands in diluted bleach-water for 1-2 minutes you can remove the colors very good or you use gloves to protect your hands.

For this following leaves I used different painting possibilities, the last leaf of this four pictures are sealed with the same alcohol-glue-mixture.



5. Sealing the leaves

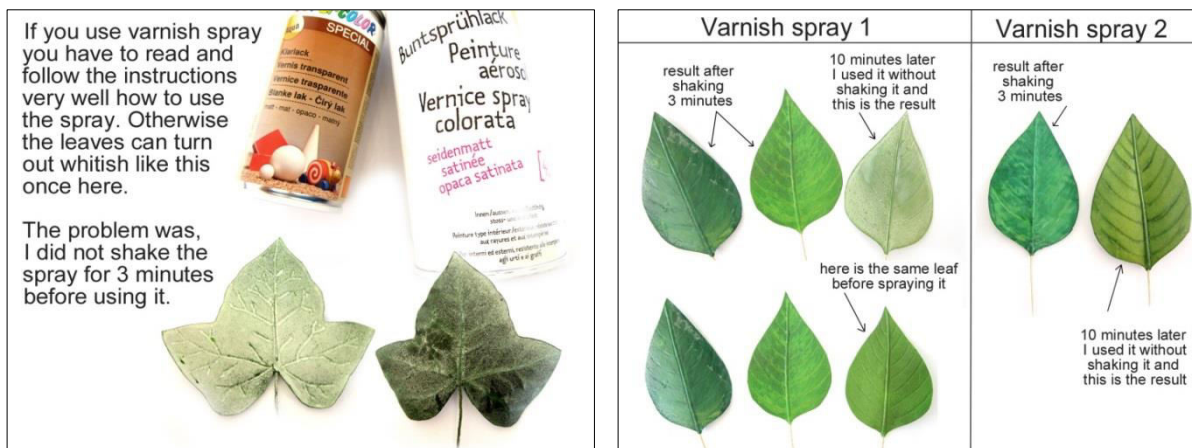
Different sealing possibilities

I advise you to seal your leaves after finishing the whole leaf processing and when they are completely dry, the colors are much more intense and beautiful. By some colors (water colors, crayons, fabric colours etc.) you also have to protect your leaves, because if they get wet you will have paint changes or spots on your leaves (see the pictures before on page 4 right down). You can seal them more shining or matte and you can seal them waterproof or just give it a protection that the colors stay steady. Leaves which you processed hairy by sanding them, I would leave naturally and not seal them. By sealing the leaves, a little bit of the embossing will go lost, so please do not emboss your leaves after sealing them, you only would make bad scratches on them. Emboss your leaves always before or after painting them and seal strong embossed leaves very matte with less sealing, then it will not lose much of its embossing. If you leave your leaves dry completely for 24 hours and let it get hard you can shape them very nicely.

Waterproof sealing

You can use varnish lacquer or nail polish to seal your leaves waterproof, but they will be very shiny and will lose their natural look. But if you like to make little leaves as jewelry this is a good alternative to seal your leaves.

You can also use a good lacquer spray; maybe you will have to try first if it functions well on a painted paper. Important is to read and follow the instructions how to use the spray correctly. I have tried this option too but I did it wrong. I should have shaken the spray for minimum 3 minutes, what I didn't do. So the leaves I sprayed were very whitish. It is also important that they dry vertically before you can spray the other side. After about 10 minutes the next leaves which I have sprayed turned out again whitish, maybe I should keep shaking the spray. I used two different sprays and have seen different results. The leaves are soon clear, but very sticky and need to dry. About after 8 hours they are dry and not sticky anymore. So however for me this is not a good or simple option and I only can advise you first to try it, maybe you develop a certain knowhow how to use it best or you find a better spray.



Sealing as painting protection

If you only want to protect the painting of your leaves you can seal your leaves with normal **white glue**, **UHU twist and glue**, **water diluted white glue** or with the **alcohol-glue-mixture**. If you like your leaves more shiny you dilute your white glue with less water and if you like them more matte you dilute it with more water and spread only very little of the diluted white glue on your leaves. I have tried out all this variations, but from all possibilities I like best, sealing my leaves with the **alcohol-glue-mixture**, they just turn out wonderful and it is very easy to handle and it dries very fast. If you like it shiny, you apply more of the **alcohol-glue-mixture** on your leaf and if you like it more matte you apply very little of this mixture and your leaf will have a beautiful natural look. In my video ([part 1](#)) you can see by 18:01 until 20:04 minutes the sealing with the special glue-mixture on different painting variations.

How to mix the alcohol-glue-mixture:

½ part of Alcohol (Ethanol) minimum 70% Vol. or more (you can buy this by the pharmacy)
1 part of Water
2 parts of white glue

6. Shaping the leaves

Shaping the leaves makes them look more realistic. It is very important, that the leaf is glued with a wire in the middle of the leaf and the paper is double. You can shape them by hand or use tools. I like to use different sizes round wooden dowels to shape the leaves. They are easy to handle and do not damage the leaf. You can also create nice branches by wrapping the wires from the leaves together with floral tape and paint later the branch brownish. By bending the wires and leaves in the right position you can create realistic branches.

In my video ([part 1](#)) you can see by 20:25 until 22:27 minutes how to shape the leaves.

7. Leaf templates and PDF file with original leaf templates



The best inspiration, to make lovely and realistic paper leaves, is still garden nature. Enjoy a lovely nice walk in the nature and pick up some nice leaves in green or for autumn in lovely colors. Take different sizes of each leaf. Copy or scan your leaves and make some nice templates. Print it on ticker paper (120-160gms) and glue them double with an transparent glue which makes the paper harder when it's dry. Then cut the outline of the leaves to create nice templates. The once without leaf teeth you can cut according to the leaf outlines, the others with leaf teeth you only cut the teeth tip outlines for the template. You will see these thicker templates will be very easy to handle and best for using to make lovely leaves. I have tried to laminate the printouts and cut them to use for templates, but this did not work very well, so I came to this solution.

If you would like to share the leaf templates I have done, you find on my website all sorts of PDF-file downloads with original leaf templates. Please click on this link: <https://www.quilling.ch/home/my-quilling-projects/pdf-leave-templates/> and chose the download link you would like to share.

8. Some pictures for inspiration



At last you can see some pictures from my paper leaves I have done and I hope they will inspire you to make some own paper leaves to decorate your home or lovely creations you will do. I wish you much joy and success by doing.

If you have any questions just contact me on [FB page](#) by private message. If you view this PDF-file digital you can click on all the Links.

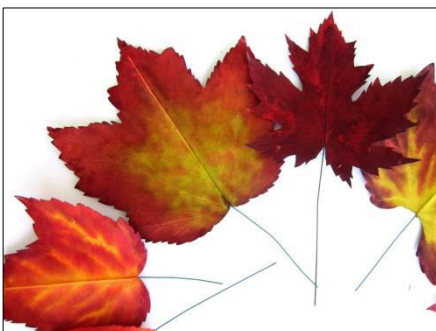
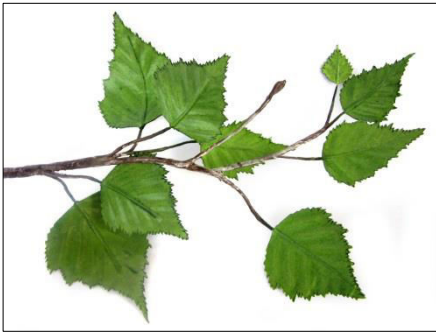
More works of me you can find on my:

YouTube: [Bridgit's Creativity](#)

Website: [Quilling 4 you](#)

Blog: [Bridgit's Creativity](#)

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9. Video tutorial links

Here you can see all my paper leaf video tutorials, if you are viewing this [PDF-file digital](#), you can [click on the pictures](#) to see the videos.



Bridgit's paper leaves

Video tutorial with **Basic Information's**

for making nice and natural looking paper leaves

with original leaves templates

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Bridgit's Oak paper leaves



Bridgit's Hornbeam paper leaves



Bridgit's Birch paper leaves



Bridgit's Whitebeam paper leaves



Bridgit's Ivy paper leaves



Bridgit's Autumn paper leaves



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