

Good Housekeeping

**INSIDE: Our Gift to You—
a Pullout Stencil**

PREMIER ISSUE

Do it Yourself

SUMMER 1997

Decorating Basics • Crafts • Home Improvements • Gardening

**25
EASY**

**DECORATING
PROJECTS**
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INSTRUCTIONS



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**TRANSFORM A TABLE
WITH PAINT, DECOUPAGE OR TILE
IN A WEEKEND**

DISPLAY UNTIL AUG. 4

Quick & Easy Makeover

Stencil a Table

To set a cottage mood in your kitchen, paint a piece of furniture with delicate designs in soft colors



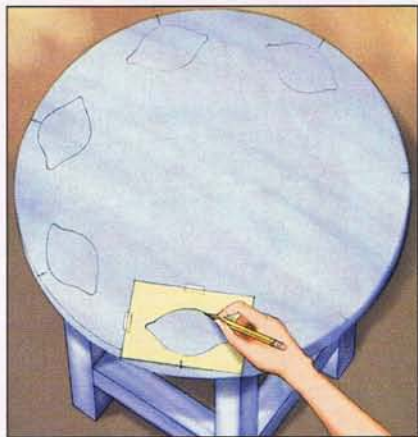
ADDING COUNTRY CHARM TO YOUR KITCHEN CAN BE AS SIMPLE AS PICKING A PRETTY stencil and using it to create a border on the walls, embellish a corner cupboard, or—as we've shown here—decorate a table. Stenciling lends itself well for use on imperfect surfaces, because the finished design acts as camouflage and distracts the eye from any dings or scratches. Dining tables are particularly attractive when stenciled, and the pattern eliminates the need for a tablecloth. What's more, stenciling is quick, easy, and affordable. Premade stencils are sold individually or in kits in a wide variety of styles at home-improvement centers and craft stores. Or, you can even create a customized stencil if you want to trace a motif from a favorite fabric or draw a design of your own.



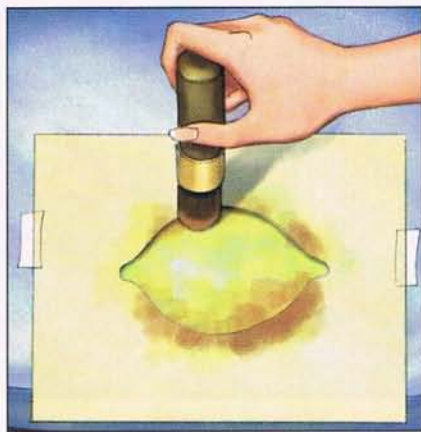
1 ▲ If the table is unfinished, sand and wipe off dust. With the 2" bristle brush, apply primer and let dry. Clean and dry brush. If the table is already sealed, wipe it with alcohol to remove any dirt or wax and allow to dry. Apply one coat of white latex paint and let dry thoroughly. Apply one coat of light blue latex diluted with one part water to achieve a thin coat of paint. Let the paint dry overnight.



2 ▲ Brush on another coat of white, this time with the addition of a little blue or blue and gray to blend with the undercoat. When dry, lightly sand the top layer of paint to smooth the finish and to make the table look "worn," by exposing a little of the blue underneath. The edges of the tabletop and the legs are appropriate spots on which to focus.



3 ▲ Position all the elements of one pattern repeat on the table. Measure the width of the repeat and divide it into the circumference of the table to get the number of complete patterns that can be placed around the table. Any remainder needs to be inserted between the patterns as extra spacing. Tape the stencil in place. Put a little yellow paint in paint tray, dab the brush into the paint, wipe off excess, and dab in the stencil opening.



4 ▲ Without removing the stencil, use a second brush to lightly dab yellow ochre around the edges of the opening for shading and to accentuate the shape. Allow to dry and move the stencil to the next spot. Position, mark, and paint the leaves and any other smaller decorations in a similar manner using the photo, opposite, as a guide for color. Stencil one element at a time.



5 ▲ Finally, lay the table on its side on a low work surface with the stenciled tabletop hanging over the edge. Place, mark, and paint the decoration on the legs. Also paint the crossbars, if desired. When the table is thoroughly dry, lightly sand the stenciled areas for a weathered look. Dust. Apply flat-finish polyurethane, allowing it to dry thoroughly between coats.

materials

- Wood table
 - Fine sandpaper
 - Clean cloths
 - 2" bristle brush
 - White satin-finish latex paint
 - Pale blue satin-finish latex paint
 - Precut stencils
 - Measuring tape
 - Pencil
 - Masking tape
 - Artist's acrylic paint in lemon yellow, yellow ochre, lime green, forest green, purple, and crimson
 - Paint trays
 - Stencil brushes
 - Flat-finish polyurethane
- OPTIONAL**
- Primer
 - Alcohol
 - Pale gray satin-finish latex paint

helpful hints

Although stenciling is an easy technique, it will take a certain amount of practice before you know just how much paint to put on the brush, how much to wipe off, and how much pressure to apply when dabbing, or "pouncing," on the paint. Using too much paint will cause it to seep under the cutout and blur the image. Applying too much pressure to the brush or dabbing it at an angle will produce the same effect. The best results come from holding the brush at a 90-degree angle to the surface, lightly applying thin layers of paint, and gradually building up the desired intensity of color. Choose brushes that match the size of the cutout and purchase at least two; then, one can be in use while the other is drying (a too-damp brush can cause the paint to run). Secure the stencil with painter's masking tape. If you are using more than one, it's a good idea to label each stencil for easy identification. If this is the first time you'll be stenciling, practice several times on a piece of paper.