

BYMR - Zine

WELCOME to the first issue of **BYMR-Zine**, a newsletter devoted to providing new and old tips to model railroaders of all ages and scales in a quick easy-to-read format that you can print, save and refer to frequently in your train room. Here we go...

Icicles – Use clear bristles from a toothbrush cut to different lengths and dip them in gloss medium using tweezers. While the gloss medium is still wet, place them on the bottom of eaves and overhangs. After they dry, add more gloss medium to make larger icicles and to try to achieve a tapering effect. Ref

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<http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/winter-scene.html>

Jerky trains? - Clean your tracks with "GooGone". Also use a thin layer of Wahl clipper oil or transmission fluid on all your tracks except maybe on the steepest grades. This will give you slow starts and smooth running due to better electrical pickup. If traction becomes an issue, get some "Bullfrog Snot" to make thin traction tires for your locos, being careful not to interfere with electrical pickup.

Tired of waiting for your soldering iron to heat up? - Try a butane soldering iron. I've used them all. This is the best. Heats up fast. The degree of heat is adjustable. No wires to interfere with your surrounding scenery. Turns off easily. No need to

work near an outlet or find an extension cord. Very small point for detailed work. I got mine at Radio Shack.

Ref - <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/soldering-tips.html>

Tree Roots - After you plant your tree on the layout, put some Walthers Goo around the base of the tree where it meets the ground and use a toothpick to shape the Goo so that it looks like roots at the base of the tree. When it dries, paint the trunk and the roots grey or grey-brown. For more dramatic roots like on a rocky hillside, cut off metal branches from a Woodland Scenics tree kit, bend and shape them appropriately, test fit, and then glue them to the base of your planted tree. Paint the trunk and roots grey and/or brown.

Ref - <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/model-trees.html>

Billboards and Signs – Go to a garage sale and pick up a few old magazines, find some old ads and cut them out or scan them into your computer and resize them using your photo software. Then paste them wherever you need a sign on a building or on a billboard. If you're putting the sign on a brick building, use a pencil erasure on the back of the picture to thin the paper, then used thinned white glue or decal glue to paste the picture to the building so that the picture goes into the mortar lines of the bricks.

Ref - <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/model-railroad-scenery.html>

Structure Interiors – Similarly, in an old magazine, find a picture of an interior of the type of building you are modeling. Scan it into your computer and size it so that the width is a little larger than the width or length of the room or building. Print it and cut it out, then place it inside your building with the concave side of the picture facing forward. Then put a small light in the building or room high above the picture in the ceiling or roof so you can't see the light source. (Make sure the inside of the building is painted opaque black so the light won't show through the plastic.) When the lighted building is on your layout, the interior will look very realistic. You may even want to put a figure or two inside to make it look more 3D.

Ref - <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/model-railroad-buildings.html>

Suitcase Connectors – Use these little gems to attach feeder wires to a bus wire. They will make the wiring of your track all around the layout go much quicker and easier.

Ref -

<http://www.micromark.com/SearchResult.aspx?deptIdFilter=0&searchPhrase=suitcase+connectors>

- <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/model-railroad-wiring-2.html>

Rock Formations – Lots of ways to do this. One easy and inexpensive way is to use pine nuggets that you can buy in garden centers. They are usually used to mulch flowerbeds, but they also make great rock formations or rock walls for your layout. Use white glue to attach the flatter nuggets in layers, one on top of the other, staggering them irregularly. You could

use Sculptamold mixed with dark brown paint as your “glue” and to help fill in crevices. You can leave the nuggets the same natural color or you can enhance them or paint them using the spot technique described on the website. Fill in some of the crevices with plants. Another type of rock wall is to use broken ceiling tile or cork tile layered on top of each other. Use Sculptamold to fill in the cracks and paint as mentioned above.

Ref - <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/painting-rocks.html>

Backdrops – Use masonite hard board or even extruded foam sheets to round the corners and provide the surface of the backdrop against the walls or even down the middle of your layout if you wish to divide one side from the other. Then paint the backdrop sky blue starting at the top. Begin mixing the blue with small streaks of white paint as you get closer to the bottom to show vague wisps of clouds closer to the horizon. You can leave it as is, or you can then add thin fluffs of polyester fiber (from craft stores) stretched horizontally and irregularly to look like clouds. Before you stretch and pull the clouds you may want to spray a thin mist of dark gray to the bottom of the polyester fiber, so that when they are stretched out and thinned and glued onto your backdrop with white glue, they will look more three dimensional.

Ref - <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/backdrop.html>

Photographing your layout – NEVER use flash for close up scenes. Use a single light source for your scene in back of the camera and to the side to imitate the sun so there won't be more than one shadow. ALWAYS use a tripod. The best

pictures are taken at eye level so that it appears as if you are actually standing on the ground in the scene. Use a small aperture (higher f stop) for better depth of field and allow your camera to adjust the shutter speed automatically (aperture-priority mode on automatic cameras). Use a remote switch to trip the shutter if possible to avoid inadvertently shaking the camera. Use filters for special effects (fog, polarizers, or star filters, e.g.).

Ref - <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/model-railroad-photos.html>

Open paint or glue bottles – Murphy’s Law says if you have unprotected open paint bottles on your workbench, one of them will spill over sooner or later. Drill a hole the size of your bottle bottom in a block of wood or in a block of extruded foam and place your open bottle in the hole till the cap is on and you are done with it.

Fence – Use EZ Line from Berkshire Junction and get some twigs from your backyard to make a wire fence to line your tracks in a country scene or around pastures. Just glue the twigs – all about the same length and diameter into holes in the layout surface. After the glue dries, wrap the EZ Line once around the lower third of the first twig, then stretch the line to the second twig and so on. Do the same for the top third of each twig, so that you now have a 2-line wire fence to keep your cattle from wandering off.

Ref - <http://www.berkshirejunction.com/>

That's it for now. Hope you enjoyed this format. Print out this section and keep it in your layout room for quick reference. Feel free to pass it on to your friends, family and other model railroaders. If you have a great tip that you would like to publish here, please let me know - the more, the better. Also, any comments or suggestions are always welcome.

Ref - <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/model-railroading-tips.html> or contact me directly at gregwarth@building-your-model-railroad.com

Thank you for your support and for subscribing to the free BYMR-zine.

And, as always, thank you for visiting the **BYMR website** at <http://www.building-your-model-railroad.com/index.html> .

-Greg Warth