The Compleat Sculptor presents...

Making Miniature Tree Stumps
for Mounting Small Sculptures

This is a quick and easy way to make miniature tree stumps for mounting small sculptures using Styrofoam as an armature and AquaResin as a foam coat.

Materials Used in this Article:
- Tree Trunk = 4" round StyroFoam column – (or 6" if you want the tree trunk to be larger)
- Tree Roots = 2" Styrofoam rod
- Foam Coating = AquaResin Trial Kit (See AquaResin Tech Sheet for mixing instructions)
- Nitrile gloves (if you are using fiberglass)

Optional Materials:
- AquaGlass for reinforcement
- Mixol Pigments for pigmenting the AquaResin
- Any paint or other embellishments such as moss, mini flowers, or silk leaves.

Image #1
Styrofoam can be sculpted & shaped with knives, Hot Wire tools and rasps.

Step One: Make your armature. Cut the large Styrofoam rod at the height you would like your tree stump to be. *See Image #1* Save the remainder of the rod for more stumps or other projects.

Cut the small Styrofoam rod into sections about 1" shorter that the trunk section to make the roots coming out from the base of the tree trunk. *See Image #2*

Image #2
Always exercise caution when using sharp objects.

Cut the smaller Styrofoam sections diagonally then randomly place them around the trunk. Cut more if needed. These can be various heights, no need to be exact. *See Image #3*

At this point you can either attach the roots to the truck with hot glue or a small batch of thickly mixed (2S:1L) AquaResin.

Image #3
Further sculpting can be done once the roots have been attached.

Step Two: Coating the Styrofoam. Once the roots are attached and stable, brush on a coat of AquaResin over the whole root and trunk form.

AquaGlass(optional): See Image #4
Cut the thickest glass into 2" strips (or smaller if you prefer), dip the strips into the AquaResin. Run the AquaGlass though your fingers over the mixing bucket to remove any excess AquaResin then place the coated AquaGlass around the base of the trunk, working your way around and up to the top of the stump, coating all the Styrofoam using the AquaGlass in decreasing thicknesses (50 then 30 then 10.)

Image #4
Be sure to overlap the AquaGlass pieces slightly and use a finger or a brush to smooth the seams.

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Step Three: Making the Bark Texture. Mix another batch of AquaResin, a little thicker than the first batch and start to sculpt the bark. There are several techniques to achieve a bark like texture. *See Image #5*

At this point you can add Mixol pigments to your AquaResin mix to tint the AquaResin (or you can use acrylic paints to paint the tree after it is finished.) AquaResin is a light, pink-ish white color, therefore we recommend tinting the AquaResin brown even if you do wish to paint once it is done so that the bright AquaResin does not show through thin or missing spots of paint.

- Technique #1: Brush AquaResin all over the stump. Keep running the brush through the AquaResin as it starts to cure. As the AquaResin cures, it thickens and the brush will start to leave a lined texture.
- Technique #2: Brush on a coat of AquaResin then stipple the surface as the AquaResin cures to get a more pocked bark texture.
- Technique #3: Apply a thicker layer of AquaResin and stipple deeply all over. Then, very lightly, brush over the stippled texture.
- Technique #4: You can also press different textured items into the AquaResin as it cures to create texture.

For the top of the stump, draw a stiff bristle brush in a circular motion over the AquaResin as it cures leaving brush marks that look like the rings of a tree. *See Image #7*

Step Four: Finishing. While the AquaResin is curing you can rasp and sand any imperfections you'd like to remove. *See Image #8* After curing over night you can paint the tree stump with acrylic paints and hot glue moss, leaves or flowers to your tree stump. *See Image #9*

Tips:
- Mix small batches of AquaResin at a time to avoid waste.
- AquaResin can be added to itself so if you are not happy with the texture or a particular area, mix another small batch of AquaResin and continue to sculpt. Once you have achieved the texture you like, leave the AquaResin to cure.
- Keep in mind different trees have different surfaces and not two are identical. Try and work quickly making a semi-uniform surface over the whole tree stump. These quick textures tend to look more natural and less "planned" when finished giving the tree stump a natural look.
- When making bark texture as the AquaResin starts to cure it may clump – these clumps can enhance the look of the bark!
- Fresh AquaResin will be accelerated when it comes in contact with curing AquaResin. For example your second and third AquaResin layers may cure faster than your first AquaResin layer. Also using a mixing container or mixing stick that has curing AquaResin on it can accelerate new mixes.
- AquaGlass is optional in this project because of the projects size and weight load. This project is intended for a light sculpture to be placed on top of the tree stump. If you desire to mount a heavier sculpture on these tree stumps AquaGlass, as well as other reinforcement, may be needed.

More Advanced Techniques
- Adding XLR-8 to mixes AquaResin will make it set fast but will also decrease working time.
- Adding THX-6 to mixed AquaResin will physically thicken the AquaResin mixture to a frosting consistency. Adding too much THX-6 can thin AquaResin.

Image #5
AquaResin cures in stages. The frozen butter-like "beta" stage is the best stage for sculpting texture.

Image #6
Use tools like a spatula, stiff disposable brush or gloved hand to smooth the AquaResin onto the stump.

Image #7
Create rings on the tree stump with a stiff disposable brush in a circular motion.

Image #8
Clean up edges, smooth rough areas or create different textures with rasps and files.

Image #9

Other Examples