



Rice 'n Easy

An organic, free-form serenity lamp.

Materials:

- Flat piece of stone
- Branches of curly willow
- Rice paper or other fibrous paper
- White glue
- 5-minute epoxy

Tools

- Drill or Hammer-drill
- Glass-and-ceramic drill bits
- Blow dryer

Steps:



Glass-and-tile drill bits



The bit you use should drill easily into the stone



A drill with a 'hammer' setting makes cutting into rock easier

Rockin' Good Time

Choose a piece of stone for the base of your lantern. Sandstone is the easiest to drill into. With a spade shaped glass-and-ceramic bit, drill several holes about one half-inch deep. This will go a lot faster if you have a hammer-drill, which looks like an ordinary drill except that it has hammering setting that adds vibration to the rotary action of the drill. The vibration makes it possible to remove material faster.

Tip: Don't let the friction heat up the drill bit to the point where the metal changes colour from silver to dark grey. Overheating the bit will cause it to lose its 'temper' and then it becomes dull and useless. To keep the bit cool, dip it regularly in cold water.



Blow or vacuum out the holes before gluing



Curly willow makes a twisty interesting frame for the paper

With a sharp knife, carve the ends of the branches to fit the shape of the holes before gluing them in. Also, to ensure that the epoxy will make good contact with the inside surfaces of the hole, blow out or vacuum each of the holes to remove the stone dust.



Cement branches in place with epoxy



Mix the epoxy thoroughly



Hold the twigs steady with some craft wire while the epoxy sets up

Next, mix up the epoxy and glue a curly willow branch into each of the holes using epoxy. Also, wear latex gloves to keep the epoxy off your hands because the hardening compounds in it can be corrosive to skin. Use some fine wire to tie the branches together while the epoxy sets up; it'll keep them upright. Clean up any glue squeeze-out with acetone or nail polish remover. You can also spread some of the drilling dust on the tacky squeeze-out to disguise it.



Wet the paper



Tear it into strips



Glue the strips to the twigs

Wet your rice paper and tear off strips, paying attention to the direction of the grain in the paper. It'll want to rip easily in one direction, but not the other. Apply a bit of diluted white glue (about a 50/50 glue/water mix) to one end of a strip and wrap the paper around one of the vertical branches. Stretch it as far as it can go around the other sticks and glue it in place. Be sure to leave a space between the paper and the stone so that air can get to the candle, which will reside inside the paper enclosure.





Repair holes with small grafts



Rub the patches into place with a gluey finger

Continue working until the lantern has the shape and height you desire. If you find that you need to patch spots, just tear a small piece and glue it in place. If some of the horizontal seams open up, go back and tack them together along the edges of the strips using a finger laden with glue mixture. A blow dryer helps to speed drying. If the paper gets too dry and a patch won't stick, spray it with water.

The paper will tighten up as it dries and provide a drum-like tautness to the skin of the lamp shade.

Alternatives:

A chunk of wood can also be used as a base. The lantern can be wired for an electric lightbulb to provide more light.

Glue notes:

The white glue used in this episode worked well but in concentrated areas it left a stain almost like an oil spot. If you use white glue, dilute it well because it doesn't take much to hold the paper in place.





A votive candle added



Finished lantern

Attack of the Body Snatchers

My lamp turned out looking like an evil alien pod. The kind of rice paper I used didn't help. The myriad little dark red fibers look exactly like blood vessels when lit from within. Organic, yes, but it frightens children.



Free standing twig and paper lantern



Small twig and paper lantern on wooden base

