

Topiary Cake

By Carolina Lara

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A Tutorial by Carolina Lara

Tools & Equipment Needed:

- Cornstarch bag
- Rolling pin
- Cutting mat
- Fondant mat
- Small microwave container (to melt DECOgel™)
- Egg carton foam (flower former)
- Tiny leaf cutters with various sizes (or flower cutter in the shape of a leaf)
- Dots Button Mold, Marvelous Molds® (button mold)
- Classic Pearl Border Mold, Marvelous Molds® (pearl border size 4 or 6)
- Feather Crest Mold
- Other assorted molds of choice
- Royal Icing
- Piping Bag
- Tip #1.5 or #2
- Saran Wrap or (3-4) Ziplock bags quart
- Gum glue and applicator
- Tweezers
- Tailor's Pin
- Palette knife
- Wet kitchen towel or paper towel (to cover piping tip)
- Lemon extract or Everclear
- Small painting palette or mini containers (to mix colors)
- Nice round big brush (Luster Dust)
- Assorted round & flat paintbrushes for dusting
- Round 4" Styrofoam Ball
- 2 wooden bamboo skewers
- Gum Paste (white)
- Fondant 6 oz. for Styrofoam ball
- DECOgel™ Clear (or color of choice)
- White round sprinkles
- 1- 6" covered cake
- 1- 8" covered cake
- 1-10" covered cake board
- 1 foam cake to place the Styrofoam ball on while you work

Assorted Powder Colors:

- Dark green
- Light green
- Light Pink
- Medium Purple
- Yellow
- Orange
- Silver Highlighter
- White Pearl Dust



Preparation:

1. Cover your Styrofoam ball with fondant. It does not have to be perfect since the surface will later be covered with decorative buttons and leaves.
2. Insert the bamboo skewer thru the middle of the Styrofoam ball ensuring you leave approximately the same height of your cake at one end and 3 to 4 inches on the other end of the Styrofoam ball. This will allow you to manipulate the Styrofoam ball later in the decorating process.
3. Insert the Styrofoam ball on the cake dummy and set aside.

Molds:

Using gum paste, do the following:

4. Feathers (approximately 32 pieces)
5. Dots (2 sets of 7)
6. Thin out gum paste to desired thickness and cut leaves (approximately 80 pieces in various sizes)
7. Place these once molded/cut in a baggie to prevent them from drying too quickly. You want these to be somewhat flexible when placing them on the Styrofoam ball.



8. Use DECOgel with the "Dots" mold. Follow the directions on the package for proper use of this product. Every microwave is different, so start with a small piece until you reach the desired melting point. Each Dot mold uses approximately 3/4 of an ounce of DECOgel per set. Once cooled, unmold, set aside and repeat 7 times. You will pick and choose the ones you want to use later. The unused portion can be re-stored and reused at a later time. (photo 1075)

*Tip: Customize this Button Ball Topiary by using a button or brooch that is a family heirloom.
Use Silicone Plastique™ from Marvelous Molds and make your own mold to compliment your sugar piece.*

Color:

Take your time in this next step while you dust all your pieces. I used Everclear to apply the light colors on the white leaves, feathers and gum paste dots (buttons). Then dusted with darker colors the areas I wanted to highlight to create some drama! This was my color guide.

Leaves: Light green, accent dark green

Feathers: Light Pink, accent medium purple.

Dots (Buttons): Yellow, Orange, Silver Highlighter, White Pearl Dust



Now you have a nice collection ready to be applied on the Styrofoam ball.

9. Prepare a piping bag with using a small tip #1.5 or #2.

Topiary:

10. Apply gum glue on the ball. Do not place too much gum glue - just enough to have the pieces adhere to the fondant. If too much glue is used, the pieces will slide off. Try to use flat pieces or small pieces in this area.

11. Now get creative and start applying your pieces on the topiary. Work your way half way down the ball. Using your gum paste pieces and DECOgel Dots (buttons). Use the tailor's pins, if necessary, to help support your pieces until they dry.



12. Using your piping bag (filled with royal icing), carefully pipe in areas between the feathers, leaves and Dots (buttons) that did not get decorated with your sugar pieces. Use your tweezers to apply the white sprinkles. These will look like tiny pearls.





13. Now very carefully remove the topiary (Styrofoam Ball) from the cake dummy and flip it over. You should now have the already worked area on the bottom and the top part of your topiary bare.

14. Repeat steps 1 thru 3 until ball is fully covered.

15. Have your cakes stacked. Insert a skewer down the middle of the top tier. This will allow the topiary to enter the cake easily, preventing possible sugar breakage due to applied pressure.

Now your topiary is complete and all you have to do are the little details that will complete this cake.



16. I used the Classic Pearl Swag mold for the center of the top tier cake. Notice that I altered the mold in order to make it work for my design. I also used the Classic Pearl Border for the bottom cake. Silver highlighter was applied to all these pieces. *Make sure you only use the highlighter on pieces that can easily be removed and will not be served.*



Take a good look at your molds and you will realize you can use them in more than one way. Get creative and most of all have fun!



Carolina Lara is a former Fashion Designer and owner of Dulce Bella who traded in her fabrics and threads for fondant and sugar. She has appeared in a Live Challenge for WeTV network, "Wedding Cake Wars," participated in TV segments for "Telemundo," a Spanish TV network, and was the winner of the First "Domino Sugar Fashion Show." She is also a member of the winning team at the ICES Live Cake Challenge in 2014 and has had a few cakes featured in Philadelphia Brides

Magazine. Currently, she is a member of The Sugar Mob with Chef Vanessa Greeley and Silvina Barboza specializing in teaching and educating the art of sugar.