

Nesting A Home

By Norman R. Davis & Zane Beg

edibleartists
NETWORK MAGAZINE

Nesting A Home

A Tutorial by Chef Norman R. Davis and
Chef Zane Beg of Norm & Zane The Sweet Life LLC

Tool and Supplies

- White and off-white fondant
- Dresden tool
- Soft, fluffy brush
- Fan brush
- Stiff paintbrush
- Edible dust colors: black, white, light green, dark green, golden brown, dark brown
- Brown gel paste color
- Lemon extract
- Thick consistency royal icing
- Rolling pin
- Cake drum
- Ribbon
- Noodles
- Small bowl
- Rose cutters
- Ball tool
- Star tool
- Gum paste
- Holly leaf cutter and veiner
- Flower former
- Bead mold
- 28 gauge wire
- Confectioner's glaze
- Floral tape
- Rice Krispie treats (homemade to form raccoon)
- Flexique
- Wafer paper
- Cornstarch
- Silicone mat
- Small scissors





Step 1:

Take white and off-white fondant and prepare it to be marbled. The way that we marbleize fondant is to twist the white and off-white together. I'll do this process twice (I'm just looking for subtle shades of colors).

Step 2:

Once you have the fondant rolled out, use a Dresden tool and mark the fondant. (You want to do this on your work surface so the birch knots will be nice and deep. (If you did this process on the cake you might tear the rolled fondant and cause damage to your cake).

Step 3:

Wrap all the cakes with the rolled fondant. When wrapping, make sure you have some gentle folds/movement and a few air pockets. Make sure some of the rolled fondant goes over the top edge of the cake. At the top of the fondant, give some tears; this will give a realistic look for a birch tree. (Remember when stacking the cakes, make sure your seams are staggered. At this point, it is okay to see the seams).



Step 4:

Now it is time to bring the birch tree to life with colors.

Step 5:

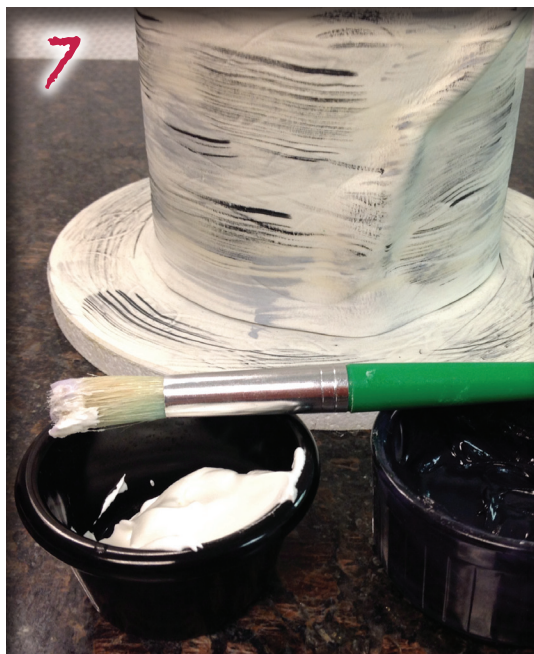
With a very soft, fluffy brush, lightly color some sections on the fondant covered cake with a shade of gray. This painting will be dry coloring.



Step 6:

Now it is time to build up good shading of colors. We made liquid from dusts colors. To make the liquid, we mixed pure lemon extract with the same colors that we have been using (you may use any clear spirits of your choice to mix the liquid colors). This time we painted with a fan brush. Again make a liquid from the Elite dusts color. Once again use a fan brush (the reason for using a fan brush is that you will get many nice lines on the fondant covered cake).





Step 7:

Make up a small amount of royal icing (this should be thick). Make a small container of white and black, then load up a stiff paint brush with white royal icing.

Step 8:

Spackle some white royal icing in sections and, before it has a chance to dry, spackle some black royal icing on top of the white, blending some of the white and black together.

Step 9:

Roll out another section of fondant. This needs to be paper thin (you might want to use a pasta machine to get this fondant paper thin). Do the same process of coloring as you did on the main part of the cake. This time, you will do both sides of the fondant.



Step 10:

Before applying this paper thin fondant to the main cakes, tear it, rip it, bend and shape it into medium and small pieces. Apply the pieces to the main cakes, starting at the seam areas. Once all the staggered seams are covered, apply to other sections of the cake. What you are doing at this point is making this paper thin fondant look like part of the birch tree - the part of the tree that is peeling off.



Step 11:

With a very soft fluffy brush, you will now lightly color some sections on the cake. I used Fern, Caramel, and Golden Leaf. This part of the painting is once again done with dry colors.

Step 12:

Again, make a liquid from dusts color. With the fan brush, we splattered the cake with the color. This technique gives nice splatter dots. Part of the painting is once again done with dry colors.



Step 13:

Shape the mushrooms into a half cup shape. Make them thin at the top and a little thicker toward the bottom. With a mini spatula, place lines on the bottom of each of the mushrooms. With a very soft, fluffy brush, lightly color the bottom of the mushrooms with a shade of gray. We used Turkish Black mixed with White. This painting was done with dry coloring. The top of the mushrooms was dry painted with Caramel.



Step 14:

Again make a liquid from dust color. The choice of color was is Turkish Deep Brown. With the fan brush, splatter the top of the mushrooms with the liquid color.

Step 15:

Using royal icing as glue, attach the mushrooms to the cake. Arrange the mushrooms in groups climbing over the cake.



Step 16:

Off-setting a cake will give you great space for fun items at the base of the cake. We hot glued my cake onto a cake drum. We used ½" thickness.



Step 17:

When you bake and you get those darn cake domes what are they good for? I'll give you three good uses: One, you get to eat cake all the time; two, they make great cake balls; and three, they also make great looking dirt. To make the dirt, I chopped the cake into small chunks, placed it into a baking pan and baked the cake chunks until they dried out. Once dried, we put the dried cake chunks into a food processor and chopped them into smaller pieces.

Place some icing onto the cake drum and then spread the cake dirt onto the cake drum. We also placed a ribbon around my cake drum to give it a polished look.

Step 18:

For the bird nest, I used noodles; any brand will work, just follow the instructions. Add some brown gel paste color into the warm water.





Then add some noodles to the warm brown water. Let them soak in the water until the noodles are soft.



Step 19:

Drain the noodles and place them onto a paper towel. We wanted the noodles to be a few colors, so I sprayed them. Then place some of the soft noodles into a bowl. It will take two to three days to dry. Once the noodles are firm enough to hold the shape of the bowl. Dump them out to finish drying.



Step 20:

Place the dry noodle nest on top of the cake.



Step 21:

To make pinecones, we used FMM five rose cutters. Make a cone shape so you have something to attach the pine cone petals to. Cut out a few molding chocolate flower shapes (about the thickness of a quarter). Cut each petal away from the center, then with a ball tool cup, up the petal.

Step 22:

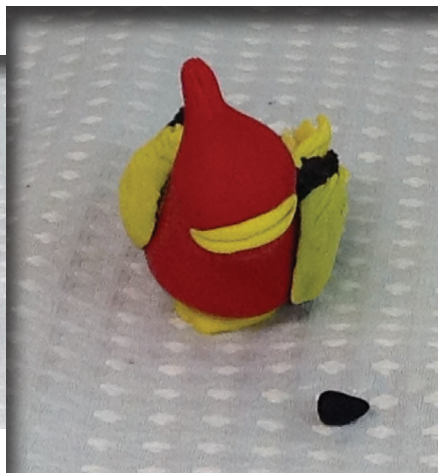
Stagger the petals onto the cone shape: larger petals at the bottom, smaller petals as you go up the cone. To attach each petal, we use nothing - with this being molding chocolate, we just placed each petal onto the cone with some pressure and it stayed.

Step 23:

The gum paste birds: Just give this a basic shape. To form the wings and tail feathers, we marked small lines into the gum paste.

Step 24:

Make the mouth and beak. With a small ball tool, make an indentation for the eyes to go into.





Step 25:

Holly leaves: With dark green gum paste, cut out the leaves, vein them and place them into a former to dry. Some of the holly leaves were wired using the Soft Method.

Step 26:

The holly berries: We placed red gum paste into a bead mold (the reason for using the bead mold is that each berry will be the same size). Unmold the beads, cut them and make them round. Each berry will need to be wired and the gauge of wire is #28. Each of the wires should have a small hook on one of the ends. Place the end of the wire hook over the flame of the candle to heat it. Before it has a chance to cool, place the hot end into the berry (the reason for this is that the heat will melt the sugar and, once cooled, it will make for a great bond). Make an indentation on the top using the star tool.



Step 27:

Use confectioner's glaze to give great shine to the leaves and berries. Once the glaze is dried, tape the leaves together and then some berries on top of the leaves. The same process was used for the orange berries.





Step 28:

Bob the raccoon: We use rice treats to shape the body. Molding chocolate was then used to give better shape to the raccoon.

Step 29:

Flexique: Mix the product according to the directions. Color it, then brush it onto the wafer paper on one side, flipping it over onto a silicone mat and then brushing the other side. When slightly tacky, dust cornstarch on it.

Step 30:

In this photo, you can see we used a few colors of Flexique on the wafer paper. With a small pair of scissors, cut small strips and start to adhere it to the raccoon.



Norm is an award-winning Chocolatier and Pastry Chef and a Certified Master Sugar Artist. He is known for his White Chocolate Curl Cake and his three-dimensional chocolate figurines.

Zane is a shining star in cake decorating with no formal training, but with an unlimited creative sense. He loves to create cakes that have great movement and flow to them. He specializes in detailed, hand-painted cakes and molded chocolate.

For more information about Norm & Zane visit www.thesweetlife.com

