

Crate of Grapes

Text and Photography
by Holly Burke

This is a popular gift shop item at Midwest Miniatures Museum, Hickory Corners, Michigan. We are sharing the instructions so you can try it, too, just in time for Michigan's late fall grape harvest. This is a 1-inch scale project.



What You'll Need:

Basswood (You may substitute other scrap wood or Popsicle sticks; crates aren't perfect):

2 ends $1/8'' \times 1/2'' \times 1 3/8''$ long

2 sides $1/16'' \times 3/8'' \times 1 1/2''$ long

2 bottoms $1/16'' \times 1/2'' \times 1 3/4''$ long

Miter box and saw, The Chopper tool, craft knife or scissors

Wood glue

Clamp or rubber bands

Stain

Mustard seeds

Grape-color acrylic paint

Foam plate

Elmer's Glue-All

Maple leaf punch

Green paper, or paper you have painted

32-gauge green floral wire

Straight pin

1. Cut wood to measurements given. Glue sides between ends, using wood glue, and clamp. Glue bottom pieces on last, leaving gaps at center and sides.

2. Glue on label. The label provided is an antique label reduced at a copy center. Crate labels are often available from miniatures stores, magazines or from on-line "printies" sites.

3. Dunk the finished crate in stain to age it. Allow to dry.

4. Roll mustard seeds around in acrylic paint to form bunches of grapes. Work on a foam plate, pushing clumps off to the side to dry.

5. When dry, glue grapes into the crate using Elmer's Glue-All.

6. Using maple leaf punch, punch several leaves from green paper. Remove stems. Add veins with a pencil or scratch them in with a pin, if you wish. Crumple the leaves and tuck them among the grapes, wherever there's a space to fill. Glue in place using the Elmer's Glue.

7. Add some grapevine tendrils. Make them by wrapping 32-gauge green floral wire around a pin, making a corkscrew with

about $1/4$ inch straight wire attached. Glue these into crate with Elmer's Glue. ■

If you prefer to order kits or finished crates, please send a check made out to: Midwest Miniatures Museum, 6855 W. Hickory Rd., Hickory Corners, MI 49060. Kits are \$3 (you supply paint, stain and glue); finished crates are \$6. (Michigan residents, please add 6% sales tax.) Include Shipping and Handling costs: \$2.50 (1-3 pieces), \$4.50 (4-6 pieces).

Holly Burke is a miniaturist who serves on the board of the Midwest Miniatures Museum in Hickory Corners. She lives in Kalamazoo, Michigan.



Holly purchased the full-size label at an antique show, then reduced it to miniature size. You may cut these for your crate, or copy them.