HAUNTED OLD TREE

Project design by Jeanne Abel
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Fitch House Miniature Club, CT
Region M2

This whimsical tree was conceived by Jeanne for a fun and easy one-day project at our monthly meeting.

Supplies

Twist Paper (online or craft stores) – Black or other color. OR you can also use a lightweight paper bag (lunch bag) cut open and twisted into tight ropes. For these instructions, we used the latter.
Thick cloth covered floral wires, 16-18 gauge, about 60" needed in total.
Newspaper
Heavy cardboard (like backing on paper pads)
Paints: Black, Brown, Charcoal/Dark gray, Light Gray, Green
Paint brush, ½" or so
Wire cutter
Ice pick/awl
Needle nose Pliers
1 long flat-head screw (like drywall screw)
Xacto knife
Ruler
Masking tape
Elmer's glue and stiff brush to apply

1. Cut cardboard into a kidney shape, about 4" x 3".
2. Roll newspaper into a tight tube, about 7" high x 1¼" wide. Secure with tape.
3. Cut wire into 5 pieces, 6" long. The remaining wire will be for branches. Gently curve one end of the wires for the roots, about 1½" from the ends. Tape the long parts of the wires along the tube with the roots flaring outward from the bottom.
4. Tear newspaper into strips and glue around the tree trunk to secure the wires. Tear small strips of newspaper and glue around each wire root.
5. Use Xacto knife to cut a triangular "rot" hole at the base of the tree, between two roots. Use Xacto (and pliers, or ice pick) to tear up the newspaper inside the hole to make "rot" inside. Do the same for the top of the tree, making a hollow rotten top.
6. Put a fair amount of glue on bottom of tree and roots. Glue to kidney shape base with the indent in front of the rot hole. Put screw up through bottom of base into bottom of tree (toward the back to avoid the rot hole) to stabilize it. Let the roots over hang the base or trim back. Varying the lengths looks best.
7. Uncoil twisted paper.
8. Make two branches (for arms) by cutting two wires, each about 4" long, and taping 3 or 4 smaller branches along the sides. Use pliers to bend branches as desired. Tear small strips of twisted paper, apply glue to one side, and glue around and along the lengths of each wire branch. Let dry. Poke holes on each side of the tree where you want the arms to go. Put glue on branch end and push into tree, angling it upward a bit.
9. Tear strips of twisted paper (creases running parallel to tear) and, one at a time, glue strips up the tree trunk, overlapping a bit, and over the roots. Let the twist paper drape down to the base, flaring out, covering the space between the tree and the base. Squeeze and shape the paper over the roots. (This is somewhat like doing papier mache, with the glue softening the twisted paper, becoming hard when dry. A bit messy!) Build up the branches a bit where they meet the trunk. Fold paper over the edges of the "rot" holes at the bottom and top. If there are spots where the paper did not stick, put glue on top and press down. Let dry.
10. Paint base brown. Paint the inner rot areas black. Paint entire tree charcoal gray (if you used black twist paper you can leave it black). Gently dry brush the gray trunk and branches with some black.Then dry brush some light gray all over to bring out ridges. Dry brush some green for mossy parts.

Face: Take tiny bits of newspaper, wet them, shape them, and glue to front of tree, making eyebrows, lips and a beard. Poke holes with ice pick/awl to make eyes. Paint eyeholes black inside, edges rims with a bit of light gray. When face parts are dry you can dab on some gray paint.

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Decorate your tree with bats, ghosts, hanging moss, etc., and put some pumpkins at the base for a fun Halloween scene. Make multiple trees of different widths and heights with scary faces for a haunted forest!