

Paper Making Mould & Deckle

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Plain

These are instructions for building a Himalayan-style mold and deckle for 5 x 8" sheets of handmade paper. This is the simple version; see below under "Fancy" for more elaborate constructions.

Materials:

60" length of clear pine or fir 1 x 2" (3/4 x 1-1/2" actual dimension) Look for "craft" wood rather than dimensional lumber at Jerry's or Home Depot.

6" length of 1/4 x 3/4" trim, molding, or scrap wood

6 x 9" piece of 18 mesh brass screen. I use Paragona WireForm modeling mesh from Georgies Ceramic & Clay Company.

16 - 1-1/2" brad nails.

4 - 3/8" round head wood screws

Heavy duty staple gun with 1/4 or 3/8" staples.

Wood Glue

Procedure:

Cut the 1 x 2" into four 5" lengths and four 9-1/2" lengths. Drill two pilot holes 3/8" in from each end of all the long pieces.

Cut the trim or molding into four pieces. Drill a pilot hole into one end of each. These will be the tabs that hold the deckle in place onto the mold.

Glue and nail the mold and deckle frames. (If you have a power stapler or brad nailer, you can use instead of drilling pilot holes.) Glue and screw the tabs to all four sides of the mold.

Trim your brass screen to size with tin snips or heavy duty utility shears. Position the screen on top of the mold frame. Place one staple in the center of each side. Continue stapling towards corners, making sure screen stays flat.

Allow glue to dry, then fit deckle over mold (screen side up) and make paper!

Fancy

- After glue is dry, but before attaching screen, waterproof your frame with Varathane, marine varnish or oil finish.
- To help keep the screen edges from fraying: After stapling, lay a small bead of silicone tub caulk or sealer over the outer 1/8" of the screen, and spread out to cover cut edge with a putty knife. Don't get any into the working area of the screen, and make sure it's thoroughly set before you try to put the deckle on.
- If you have access to a good woodshop: Start with 66" of 1 x 2". Cut widths 5-3/4" instead of 5", and cut a 3/8" dado on each end of the side pieces. This is generally overkill on small molds, but is handy for strength on something bigger, like a 9 x 12".
- Also optional on larger screens: Cut a groove 1/8" wide by 1/16" deep all around the inside top edge of the mold. Lay in a piece of 1/4" hardware cloth (a galvanized steel mesh) trimmed to fit, then staple your screen over the top. Make sure some of the staples anchor the hardware cloth to the frame. This provides support against the screen stretching or sagging with use.

