

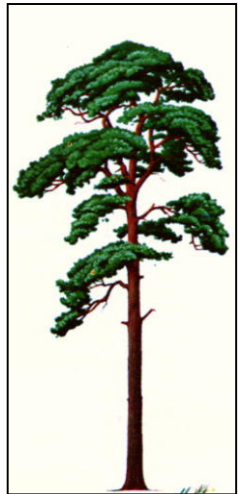
Making trees

There are many ways to make trees so here are a few ideas.

First a useful reference book is the “Observers book of Trees”. A small hardback book (only costing a few pounds) giving plenty of diagrams of the trees and close-up shots of the bark texture. If you want a particular shape tree this is invaluable.

Consider how high your trees should be. I see so many layouts with stunted trees that are hardly more than bushes. It’s not unusual to see 100mm trees on a 4mm layout. Trees are big! To get an idea stand a coach on end and then consider that a tree could easily tower over it! The table below shows how big trees can get in the UK:

Broad leaved and common lime	40m	130ft
Small leaved lime	30m	100ft
Holly	21m	70ft
Sycamore	35m	115ft
Field maple	27m	88ft
Wild cherry	33m	108ft
Ash	45m	148ft
Common elm	40m	130ft
Wych elm	44m	144ft
Birch	31m	102ft
Alder	21m	70ft
Sessile oak	41m	135ft
Sweet chestnut	35m	114ft
Beech	43m	142ft
Scots pine (right)	37m	120ft



Trees of 30m are not unusual and specimens up to 40 or even 45m have been known. So how big should our model trees be?

	2mm	4mm	7mm
100ft	200	400	700
75ft	150	300	450
50ft	100	200	350

So you can now choose a tree and make a model of it. This is how we started with the trees for Chiltern Parkway but soon found that we could make a tree shape and then decide what it was. The wire could be bent and cut to form the

required shape to match a real tree.

A tree is basically a supporting network of branches covered in green stuff. The trunks and branches can be formed of many materials:

Plastic, needs bending (or twisting) to shape, heating in hot water helps prevent breakages.

Whitemetal, easily shaped.

Etched brass, good at a distance but looks flat close-up although you can add a line of solder to get a rounder shape.

Wire (e.g. welding cable) copper wire is best as it is soft but you can also use iron wire or even steel if you have thick gloves and pliers.

Natural materials (e.g. forest in a box, or material from the garden)

Bark can be added if it is a tree in a prominent position from a flexible filler. I have used a ready mixed filler from a tube mixed with some paint and recently found someone using brown acrylic sealant. This can be mixed with water based paints for application and painted afterwards if required. You could also use polyfiller and wood glue. All of these materials will give a slightly flexible bark less prone to damage than a hard filler.

Foliage can be obtained from Woodland Scenics, Heki or similar. I find the Heki materials a little finer in texture but they are harder to find in the shops and more expensive. Use materials from a number of manufacturers to increase the colour and texture ranges.

After adding the foliage and the glue has thoroughly dried the tree can be shaped. The foliage net can be stretched out for a more open effect or pushed together for a denser effect. Trimming branches and excess foliage is also required to produce the shape you require.



Finished trees can also be spray painted to provide more subtle colour variations or to tone down the over bright colours of some foliage packs. The Woodland Scenics autumn colours are very bright but a light

spray with light green produces a more realistic and gradual variation in colour.

Finally, plant the tree in your layout either singly or in groups or even a complete Woodland if you have plenty of time and space.

Now if you still want more detail and a challenge add birds and animals;-)

Point to remember: Scenery is **BIG!**

