



# Botanical Clay Mobiles

Take & Make Kit #14

June 2021

## Included in Kit

Air dry clay  
Acrylic Paint (2 colors)  
Jute twine  
Straw (1)

## Additional Supplies Needed

scissors  
Rolling pin or cardboard tube  
knife  
a stick and several small leaves  
a paintbrush\*\*  
a rag or paper towels

For help in completing the project, follow the photo tutorial and instructions for this craft at <https://berlinpeck.org/take-make/> (see back for written instructions only)

We love to see your creations! Share photos of your Take and Make crafts on our Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram pages or email us at [library@berlinpeck.org](mailto:library@berlinpeck.org).

Questions? Call us at 860-828-7126 or email Anne Henriques at [ahenriques@berlinpeck.org](mailto:ahenriques@berlinpeck.org).

\*\*Please contact us if you need to borrow a paintbrush to complete the craft.

See our website (address on front) for pictures of each step.

**Step 1: Collect your botanical items.**

Find a stick or a piece of driftwood that's approximately 12-14 inches long. Collect 10-14 small leaves, ends of branches, etc. This is a great opportunity to see nature up close and in a different way! Look for items that are relatively small – the final size should be no more than 2 inches, but you can start with something larger and trim or pull off extra leaves or needles. Our sample uses a variety of leaves, pine needles, wild rose buds, and arborvitae.

**Step 2: Roll out clay.**

Using a rolling pin or cardboard tube, roll out your clay to approximately ¼" thickness. The thickness doesn't need to be exact, but you'll need enough depth to press your botanical items into the clay.

**Step 3: Place leaves on clay and press.**

Place the leaves onto your clay, making sure to leave room for a hole at the top of each piece and enough room to cut around each item with a small border. Once items are placed, press each item gently into the clay using your fingers. After items are positioned as desired, roll over the entire surface with the rolling pin to make sure that each is firmly indented in the clay. Don't press too hard - you don't want to thin out your clay or push any deeper items all the way through!

**Step 4: Cut out individual shapes.**

Using a butter knife, cut around each leaf, leaving room at the top for a hole and a small border. Use your fingers to smooth out any rough edges. Repeat with all remaining shapes. If you have clay left over, repeat steps 2-4 until you run out of clay.

**Step 5: Remove botanical items.**

Gently remove all leaves and other items from the clay pieces you've cut out. If it looks like any item hasn't left an imprint, roll out the clay and try again. Keep in mind that even a delicate imprint can show up nicely once the paint is added.

**Step 6: Make a hole for hanging.**

Press the end of the straw into the top of each clay piece to create a hole for hanging.

**Step 7: Dry clay pieces.**

Set all pieces aside to allow the clay to dry thoroughly. The clay will turn whiter as it dries, so make sure you check that it is completely dry before proceeding with Step 8. Depending on the thickness of your pieces, this will take approximately 20-24 hours.

**Step 8: Paint and wipe.**

Dampen a rag or several paper towels. Working one item at a time, use a paintbrush to paint the top surface of each clay item, making sure that paint gets in all indented areas. Immediately use the damp rag to wipe off excess paint. The goal is to remove paint from the borders and raised areas while leaving it in the indented areas. After you've removed most of the excess paint, you can follow up with a dry cloth or paper towel to remove more paint if desired. You can also paint the edges of each piece if desired. Set aside to dry and repeat with all other items. *OPTIONAL: After paint has dried, seal each piece with ModPodge or similar clear sealer to make pieces waterproof.*

**Step 9: Prepare stick for hanging.**

Using a length of jute twine (our sample used approximately 18 inches), tie the ends of the twine near the ends of the stick and knot on the back side of the stick. Trim any excess twine. *OPTIONAL: Use a bit of hot glue to secure the twine on the back.*

**Step 10: Plan placement of pieces.**

Spread out your stick and clay pieces on a table and decide where you would like each piece to hang. Varying the height and color of pieces will create the nicest final piece.

**Step 11: Cut twine and tie pieces to stick**

Cut appropriately sized lengths of twine to hang each clay piece from the stick, leaving enough extra to tie a knot at each end. Tie once at each end and adjust height and placement. Knot each piece of twine at both ends and trim excess twine. *OPTIONAL: Use a bit of hot glue to secure each twine piece and any ends to the back of the stick.*

Note: If you don't seal your clay pieces, make sure to hang your piece somewhere it will remain dry.