**Spring Delivery** by Debby Forshey-Choma

Pussy Willows (Salix discolor) another plant that is rarely thought of as a wildflower is the attractive member of the willow family. In many areas they signal the arrival of Spring by producing furry catkins even before it produces leaves. Pussy Willow shoots are picked just as the buds expand in the Spring and can last indefinitely once dried. Pussy Willows range widely through Canada, the northeast, and in the Midwest, growing along streams in swampy areas. The flower symbolism associated with Pussy Willows is motherhood.

Every time I look at Pussy Willows, awesome and fond memories of my Gramps comes to mind! He too, would be the first thing you would see outside in his gardens, just like Pussy Willows popping up for the First Sign of Spring.

*Adding different techniques, however simple or detailed to backgrounds or on top of a finished design, adds interest to the design. The background is a supporting part of the design, but keep it in the background; don’t overdo.*

**Surface Source**

2 – Postage Stamp Ornaments (5” x 4” vertical) #SKU: 207-1005 available through [www.vikingwoodcrafts.com](http://www.vikingwoodcrafts.com)

**DecoArt Americana Acrylics** available through [www.DecoArt.com](http://www.DecoArt.com)

Celery Green 208 Light Cinnamon 114 Sand Grey 361

Graphite 161 Neutral Grey 095 Snow White 01

Hauser Medium Green 132 Payne’s Grey 167 Soft Black 155

Light Buttermilk 164

**DecoArt Sealers/Finishes**

Acrylic Sealer / Finisher Spray – Matte DAS13 Multi-Purpose Sealer DS17

DuraClear Matte Varnish DS60 Weathered Wood DAS8

**Royal Brushes** available through [www.RoyalBrush.com](http://www.RoyalBrush.com)

#1360 – sm, med Debby Forshey’s Texture brush #4170 – 4 Majestic filbert

#1114 – lge Royal stencil brush #4585 – 10/0, 5/0 Majestic liners

#3080 – 1 Oval Wash Combo #4700 – ¾ Majestic glaze wash

#4150 – 0, 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 Majestic shader #M770M – ¾ Moderna oval mop

#4160 – 5/8 Majestic angle

**Misc Supplies**

Baby Wipes Drill; 1/8 drill bit

Blue Shop Towels Frog Tape

Brayer or Cosmetic Wedges Natural Jute Twine – 10 diameter – 24”

C-Thru Graph Ruler Spattering Tool

Stampendous Butterfly Two Stamp Set and Vintage Note Stamp

M2 – 29 Postage Stamp Stencil

available through [www.sandymctierdesigns.com](http://www.sandymctierdesigns.com)

-or stamps and stencil of choice

**\*Suggestion - always try a new technique on a piece of poster board; which has been basecoated with a coat of acrylics.**

**Prep**

1. One postage stamp ornament is vertical and the other horizontal. To make the one horizontal, drill a hole in

 the top corner and fill the extra hole with wood filler.

 Apply a coat of Multi-Purpose Sealer over the entire stamp ornaments; using the glaze wash brush.

 Lightly sand, wipe off with a dampened blue shop towel.

**Basecoat Surfaces**

2. Basecoat the entire stamp ornaments with a Payne’s Grey mixture (Payne’s Grey + a shot of Snow White);

 using the glaze wash brush, achieve an opaque coverage.

**Crackle Effect**

3. Weathered Wood will be applied to the surface of each stamp ornament. When applying Weathered Wood,

 remember the thinner the coat the finer the cracks, the thicker the coats the wider the cracks. Applying the

 medium in one direction, the medium will crack the same direction. Apply the medium vertically and

 horizontally, the medium will crack the same directions.

 Allow medium to dry until tacky to the touch, do not dry too long and definitely not overnight, it will not crack.

 Apply a Light Payne’s Grey mixture (Payne’s Grey + Snow White 1/1) over the Weathered Wood.

 Stroke in one direction and do not press down hard over the medium, the crackling will not work well. It is

 also best not to overstroke. Let completely air dry.

 Repeat crackling steps on the backsides of each stamp ornament.

*Refer to Image – Crackle Effect*

**Background Stamping**

4. The background is randomly stamped with Graphite; using the Vintage Note Stamp or stamp of choice.

 When using paint on stamps it is important that you do not overload the image. Pounce the wedge sponge

 into Graphite and then dance off on a clean area on your palette. When you look at the bottom of the

 sponge it should be covered in paint, but you should still be able to see the texture of the sponge.

 Now quickly pounce the loaded sponge over parts of the Vintage Note stamp image and randomly stamp it

 on the surfaces; refer to photo for placement.

 You can also use a brayer to apply paint to the stamp image. To load the brayer, roll the brayer through the

 paint on your palette, continue rolling on your palette to work the color across the roller, then roll across the

 stamp image.

 Repeat steps and continue randomly stamping over the surfaces, but leave a few open spaces for the other

 stamp design.

 When stamping is completed, clean the stamps with baby wipes.

*Refer to Image – Background Stamping*

**Butterfly Stamping**

5. Following the steps in #4, and using the Butterfly Stamp with Payne’s Grey, stamp a butterfly on each of the

 surfaces; refer to photo for placement.

*Refer to Image – Butterfly Stamping*

**Background Spattering**

6. With thinned Hauser Medium Green and the Spattering Tool, lightly spatter over the background where the

 pussy willows will be painted; refer to photo for placement.

*Refer to Image – Background Spattering*

**Background Stenciling**

7. With the Postage Stamp Stencil or stencil of choice, Worn Penny and lge stencil brush, stencil on the

 surface.

 Position the stencil on the surface; refer to photo for placement.

 Secure with the Frog Tape or hold with your fingers.

 Load the lge stencil brush with a bit of Worn Penny, swirl the brush on a blue shop towel to remove excess.

 Apply color in a circular motion one direction and then in a circular motion in the other direction (changing

 directions frequently) over the stencil.

 Fill in some of the design fully and leave other areas incomplete.

 When completed, this application should have a slight distressed appearance.

 Carefully remove stencil by holding one end with your fingers and lifting the opposite end.

 Clean stencil and brush immediately; using a baby wipe.

*Refer to Image –Background Stenciling*

 When dry, lightly mist with the matte spray.

 *TIP: Lightly misting with matte spray will allow for easier clean-up.*

 *You can lock down acrylic paint with matte acrylic spray at any time during the painting process to preserve*

 *previous work. This allows for fearless painting of the next steps, as any unwanted results may be wiped off*

 *without harming the underlying work.*

**Transfer Design**

8. Transfer the design to the surfaces; refer to photo for placement.

 Use the graph ruler to aid in the transfer of any straight lines, by dragging the stylus along the ruler’s edge.

**Pussy Willows**

9. Double load the 5/0 liner with Soft Black + Light Cinnamon, pull the branches through the pussy willows.

 Basecoat the pods with Light Cinnamon; using the 4 filbert.

 Fully load the brush with Light Cinnamon, slightly press down on the surface to allow the bristles to spread.

 Gradually release pressure and slightly turn the brush to the right as you pull the stroke towards the pod

 tips. Slow down to allow the bristles to return to the chisel edge.

 Think: press...pull...turn...lift...

 Corner load the angle with Soft Black, float a shade across the bottom of each pod.

 With the sm Texture brush and the Eggshell mixture (Celery Green + Sand Grey ½), dance one coat on

 each catkin (fluffy part).

 Lightly dance to create irregular outside edges and a texture effect.

 Repeat the step, to achieve a proper coverage over the background color, but still maintain a fluffy look.

 *For the proper use of the Texture brush, use the following method.*

 *Dampen the bristles with water to start the separation of bristles. Tap bristles into the paint on your palette,*

 *hold it perpendicular to your palette, pounce it up and down to get some of the paint off – keeping the paint*

 *sparse on the brush. Note – this brush can be used on the whole foot or just the toe.*

 *Tap lightly on the surface, dance with the brush up and down, rolling the brush in different directions in*

 *between your fingers when it is up in the air (like dancing the twist, light on your feet). Allow some drying*

 *time in between dances so the paint sets up and you don’t end up with a globby or muddy look.*

 Corner load the angle with Light Cinnamon, float in a choppy, hit and miss shade at the base of each catkin.

 Repeat the same step with Neutral Grey.

 With the sm Texture brush, dance a highlight of Light Buttermilk at the top third of each catkin; refer to

 photo for placement.

*Refer to Image – Step-by-Step Pussy Willows*

*Refer to Image – Pussy Willows Close Up*

**Finishing**

10. To protect your painted piece, varnish the entire panel with the DuraClear Matte Varnish; using the Oval

 Wash Combo.

 This brush doesn't leave any visible brushstroke marks after the varnish has dried.

**Finishing Touches**

11. Cut the jute into 2 – 12” pieces. Pull each end of the jute through the top holes of the stamp ornaments

 from the backside through to the front, tie a knot, cut off excess jute.

For questions concerning this design, you can contact Debby at debbyforshey@gmail.com or visit her website [www.DebbysTouch.com](http://www.DebbysTouch.com), on Facebook or Instagram.

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