

Evergreen Tree

Becky Barnes - 2021

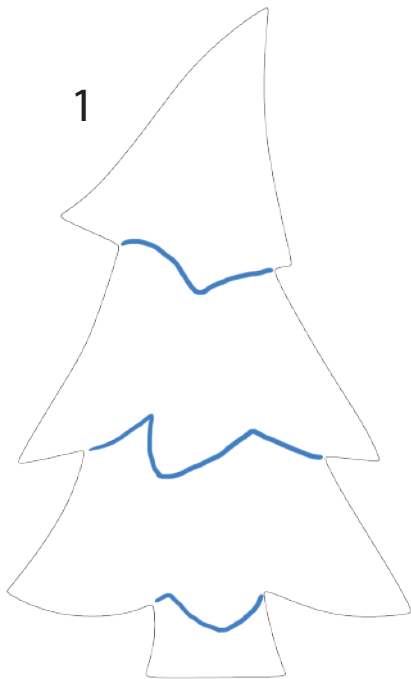


This simple tree will be great for practicing some of your basic cuts. You can do this with only a knife, or only a gouge, but a combination of knife-and-gouge will be easiest!

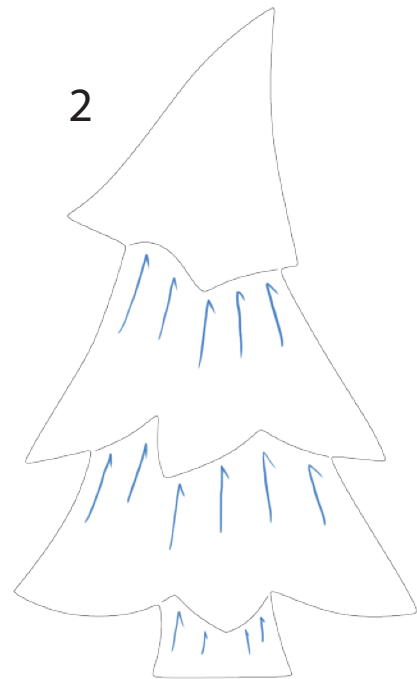
The blank at left was cut out using a 3/4" basswood board. You can use a more thin, or more thick board as well. The end result was attached to a "cookie" base for stability. The tree has two main faces - front and back. You can make it more dimensional for a challenge if cut it out of thicker stock.

You can see the pencil lines of where I want my branches to end (each layer of the tree). There are also vertical squiggles, which remind me where I want to remove more material, to make my branches seem more dimensional.

Pay attention to your grain direction. This piece is pretty easy with the grain running from the trunk, to the point. It would be much more difficult if the grain was running crosswise.



Here I have thickened up the blue lines - these will be your initial Stop Cuts. Push directly into the wood with knife or gouge, to break the grain running through your tree. These will help give your tree that nice layered zigzag appearance, with the ends of each branch sticking out the farthest, and looking like they tuck up under the branches above.



Next, start from the middle of your branches, and Sweep Cut or Push Cut towards where your Stop Cuts are. Do this all around your tree, for each level of your branches, as well as the trunk. If the branches don't tuck in enough, go over your Stop Cuts again, and repeat the process to make them deeper yet.

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The next steps can be done in any order. Continue using shallow Push Cuts over the surface of your tree, to give it texture. Remember to leave the lower edges of your branches thick!

Shave your tree top to a point, using those Push / Sweep or Pull cuts.

The sections of the tree at left with the narrow hashing marks should be deeper than the areas next to them. This will give each of your branches a wave-like or undulating surface, with more high spots and low spots. Simply go over those areas a few more times with your cuts, to push them deeper.

Lastly, round out your form! Turn your tree around, and trim down those right-angles of the blank, so each branch curves from the front of your tree, to the back. A nice, continuous shape. Don't forget to do the same to your trunk!



At left I've cut a segment of branch into what's called a "cookie" - a nice, flat base. I drilled a hole through it to run a screw from the base, into the trunk, for stability.



Finally - add some color! Pick your favorite paints, or even markers. At right, I actually used a variety of alcohol-based markers to give me a wide range of colors.