



Terra Cotta Makeover



In this quick and easy SDP Learn to Paint project, a little paint and a lot of imagination transform a trio of terra cotta pots into eye-catching accent pieces.



PREPARATION

Because terra cotta is very porous, it tends to absorb the moisture from any paint applied to it, leaving the dried-out paint to flake off the sides. It is thus very important to seal the entire terra-cotta surface with an appropriate sealer before beginning. Follow the instructions provided with the sealer you choose, and be careful to coat the entire surface—even, in the case of a terra-cotta pot, the interior edge of the drainage hole in the base.

PAINTING TIPS

When painting, apply nice, even coats of color. Because the browns and greens used in this project are neutral colors, you may substitute a different color for the teal if you like; the new color isn't likely to clash. Feel free to pick something to match your décor, and remember that you'll be using both a medium and a light shade of this color.

LET'S PAINT BASECOAT

Once your pots and trays are sealed and dry, begin painting by applying a basecoat of *Off-White* to the entire surface of each piece, inside and out, top and bottom, using a 1-inch foam brush. The off-white won't cover the terra-cotta color completely at first, so once you've finished



Alternative Configuration



Painter's Checklist

SURFACE

Three 6" (15.25cm) terra cotta pots
 Three 6-1/2" (16.5cm) terra-cotta trays
 1-1/2" (approx. 4cm) wooden knob
 2" (5cm) wooden wheel

PALETTE

ACRYLIC PAINTS

Dark Brown
 Medium Teal
 Medium Yellow Green
 Off-White

Note: Use an off-white that's more of a tan, not yellow.

BRUSHES

No. 1 script liner
 No. 8 square shader
 1" foam brush

SUPPLIES

1/4" quilter's tape
 3 cosmetic wedge sponges
 Brush basin or water container
 Sealer for the terra-cotta surface
 Palette paper or paper plates
 Craft glue

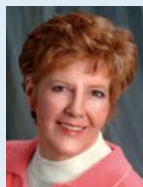
Pencil	Stylus
Ruler	Tracing paper
Scissors	Transfer paper

SOURCES

All supplies used in this project are commonly available at art supply stores.

ARTIST'S SKETCH

Having been raised in an artistic household, Chris Thornton-Deason loves all forms of crafts, and although her first love is



decorative painting, she is enthusiastic about beading, sewing, altered art, and gardening as well. A freelance designer and a painter since 1986, Chris has written more than forty books and innumerable magazine articles, and worked with such companies as DecoArt and Loew-Cornell.

Chris has been a member of SDP since 1997. You may write to her at P.O. Box 617, Douglass, KS 67039.

with all six pieces, go back and give each pot and tray a second and then a third coat. This should provide opaque coverage. Allow the basecoat to dry thoroughly before continuing with the next step.

STRIPES

Using a pencil and ruler, make two marks on the outside lip of a terra-cotta pot at a distance of two inches from one another. Draw a line straight down to the base from each of the marks; because of the curvature of the pot, the lines will only be about one and a quarter inches apart at the bottom. Tape these lines off with quilter's tape, pressing firmly along both edges to get a good bond. Measure three-eighths of an inch out from both strips of tape, and mark lines on both sides, taping these off, too. You'll now have a wide center stripe of exposed, off-white terra cotta with a thinner stripe on either side.

Tip: Fold a little tab at the top of the quilter's tape before you place it on the surface to make it easier to remove once your stripes are painted.

Next pick up a small amount of *Dark Brown* on a wedge sponge, and pat it on your palette paper or paper plate to remove excess paint. Using a straight up-and-down motion, pat this color evenly onto the wide center stripe. Be careful not to apply the paint too heavily; this may cause it to bleed under the quilter's tape. Instead, apply two or three thinner coats of color. Repeat this process immediately, using a new sponge and *Medium Teal*, on the two outside stripes, and remove the tape just as soon as you're finished. Allow this to dry completely.

Tip: Don't use water to wash paint from the sponges. Instead, set them aside with the paint still on them, and use scissors to cut away the used area once they're dry.

On the picture of the finished piece you'll see three stripes that are more diagonal, not straight up and down. Tape these stripes off next, placing them similarly to those in the photo and varying their width. Tape off a fourth line running vertically about a quarter of the way into the center brown stripe on the left. Now mix *Off-*

White+Medium Teal in equal parts on your palette paper, and pick up some of this mix in a new wedge sponge. Blot out the excess paint, and apply this lighter teal using the same technique as in the previous step.

TRANSFERRING THE DESIGN

Lay a sheet of tracing paper over the leaf design, and carefully trace all the lines with a pencil. Using the photo to determine placement, lay your tracing on the surface, and tape the paper down at the top and on one side. Keeping the dark side facing down, slide a sheet of graphite paper (transfer paper) between the tracing and the surface, and use a stylus to transfer the design. You may find that it's easier to tip the terra-cotta pot upside down when applying the design to the candleholder.

LEAVES AND STEMS

Create a mix of equal parts *Off-White+Medium Yellow Green*, and use this light green on the no. 8 shader to paint in the leaves. Use the no. 1 script liner to paint the stems.

Next use unmixed *Medium Yellow Green* on the no. 8 shader to lightly shade the divisions between the leaves and stems where they overlap. Use the same brush and color to float a shadow at the base of each leaf. Allow this to dry.

When painting the tray to be used as a lid for the cracker jar, trace a few leaves on the left side of the tray bottom (this will be the top of the lid), and paint them as you did the others.

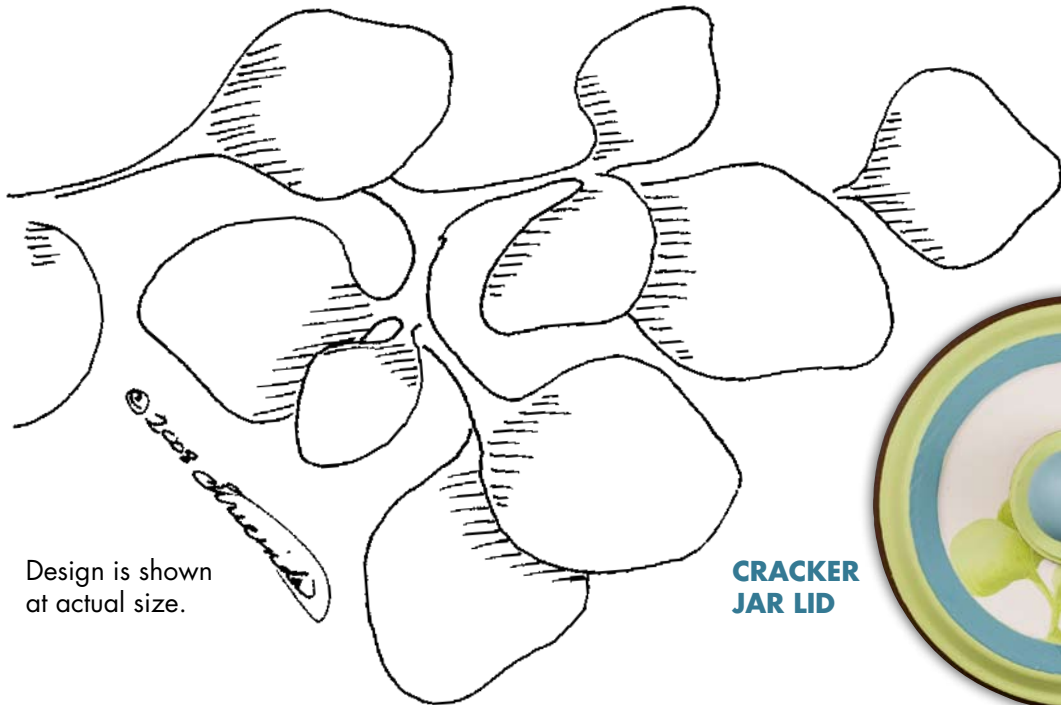
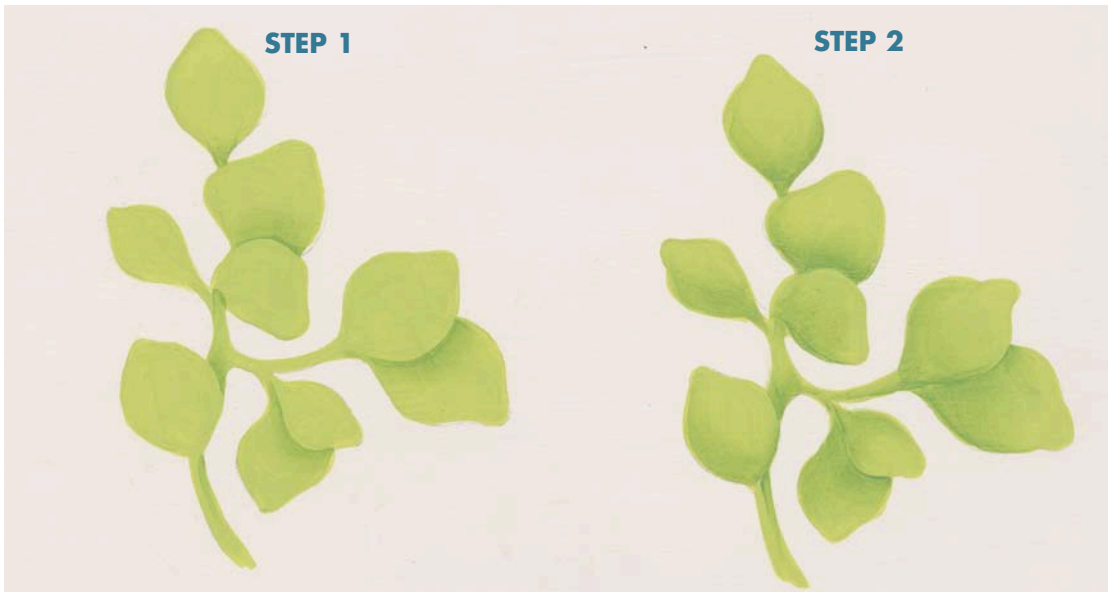
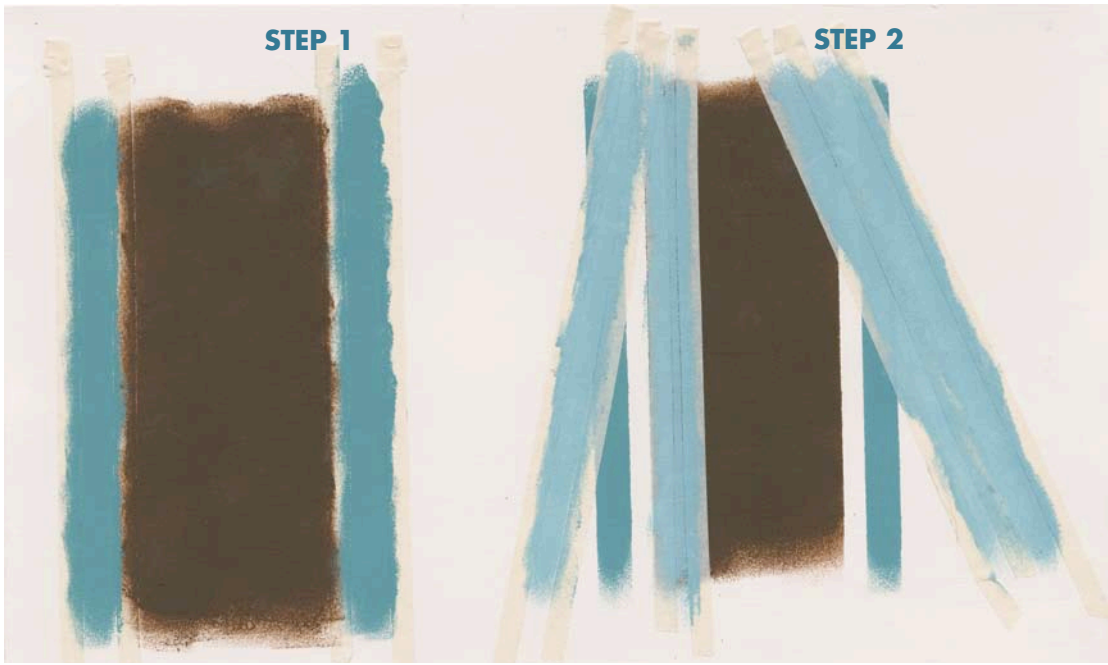
Finally, use the no. 8 shader, and, referring to the photo, paint the bands on the trays and the knob in the colors of your choice. Allow all paint to thoroughly dry.

FINISHING

Complete the lid to the cracker jar by using craft glue to adhere the knob and wheel to the tray bottom; this will serve as a handle.

Once the handle is well set and all the paint is dry, use the 1-inch foam brush to apply as many layers of a good varnish as you wish, following manufacturer's instructions.

STEP BY STEP



Design is shown at actual size.

CRACKER JAR LID





Society of Decorative Painters

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