
Pom Pom Garlands with Hello!Lucky

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Overview

- We're gonna show you how to take simple coffee filters, dye them various colors, and then string them onto kitchen string to make high-impact garlands. The project is from our book, *Handmade Weddings*. - These are great. They're super easy to make. You can make them with friends. They're really inexpensive, and the impact is really fabulous. They're perfect for weddings, showers, photo backdrops.

Chapter 2 - Materials

Materials

- To make your garlands you'll need coffee filters, first and foremost. The ones that we used are industrial coffee filters. They have a flat bottom, and you can buy them in bulk. They typically come in boxes of 1,000. You likely won't need that many. You'll need about 150 per 20 foot strand, so it kind of depends on how big of a room you need to fill. But typically you'll just use a box of them, and they're really inexpensive. The second thing that you'll need is kitchen string. One ball should do, but it does depend on how big of a room you're looking to fill. You'll also need a yarn needle. The yarn needle needs to have a bit of a point at the end, because you'll be using it to strand and poke through the coffee filters. You'll need a pair of regular scissors. Then finally you'll need a hot glue gun and some extra glue sticks for actually attaching the filters to your string. - You'll also need some laundry line, and you want rope that's thick enough that you can put a straight pin through it. A box of straight pins, you'll need lots of those, so make sure you have a big box of them. We're using Procion dye. It's a fabric dye, but you can use any kind of powdered fabric dye. Kitchen gloves to make sure you don't dye your hands bright pink. And two bowls: one filled with water and one empty.

Chapter 3 - Dying the filters

Mix the dye

- So first we need to mix the dye. I've started by protecting the work surface. I often at home do this kind of thing on my oven because it's an enameled surface and I don't need to bother with such things, but if you have a nice table, I would definitely put something down to protect it. I've got a bowl of water here. Temperature does not matter. Cold, hot, it's all fine. We're gonna use a Procion MX dye. It's a powdered fabric dye. It's pretty powerful stuff. We're doing a variety of shades of color. So we're gonna start with just a tiny bit to get light pink and then as we dye the coffee filters, we'll add more and more pigment to get a richer and richer color. So here we go. Phew, I think that's enough. And then just gonna mix it up with a spoon. This looks really bright, but it actually won't dye that dark. And now we're ready to dye.

Dye half of the coffee filters

- Before I start dyeing, I like to fan my coffee filters. It makes it a lot easier to pull them apart when they're wet, and it makes things go much, much faster. One good tip with this is to wear surgical gloves, that gives you a really nice grip and then you can do it really quickly. You don't need to pull them apart all the way, you just need enough so that you can tell where the edges are when they're

wet. Now I have a whole bunch that are fanned and I'm gonna start to dye them. Once you get into the rhythm, this starts to go pretty quickly. So, here you are with your coffee filters, and you just completely submerge them. And then you pull them out, and you very carefully, so they don't squirt all over you, squeeze out all the excess liquid. Once you've squeezed out all the extra dye, put it in your empty bowl. And then we're going to keep fanning. I'm gonna just try this with my rubber gloves on. It helps a lot to do with the rubber gloves on, but it really is great when you have surgical gloves. Now I've got another batch fanned, so I'm gonna dye these guys, and squeeze out all the dye again. And put it in the drying bowl. Now you've got quite a few lighter colored filters, so I think we're gonna add a little bit more dye. I'm pretty fast and loose about these kinds of things, so if you want a strand that's pretty light, then you do a lot of light colored filters and a few dark colored filters. I'm just gonna add a little bit more here. But if you want something very dark or very bright, then you do a lot more of the dark and fewer of the light. So, there's no real formula. The other thing to remember is that these all will dry a little bit lighter, so don't be afraid to do some really bright, heavily dyed ones. So you're just gonna do this again and again for a little while, until you have enough for your strand, about 200 per strand.

Hang and dry

- Once I've dyed all my filters, I'm going to hang them to dry. Now you can do this with your gloves on, or preferably with surgical gloves on. I personally just do them in bare hands, 'cause it's a lot easier to manipulate the coffee filters. But I'm okay with hot pink fingers, so sort of depends on what you're okay with. So I'm gonna grab a big clump of coffee filters and I'm gonna start separating them out. And I'm gonna pull one off of them. Here's a nice one. We're gonna pinch it in the middle, so you have like a dainty handkerchief happening and we're gonna pin it right through the top here and attach it to the clothesline to dry. The clothesline can be anywhere in your house, it doesn't drip so it's pretty safe. I, last time, I think tied it to a window sill in my kitchen and the other end to the handle of my refrigerator, Little bit in the way, not too bad. And then we're gonna go ahead and make the pom-poms once they dry. It takes about, I'd say a day, a good day for them to dry.

Chapter 4 - Prep and assembly

Once dry, prepare the coffee filters

- Okay, so now, I've gathered all of my dyed filters. I'm gonna leave them kind of folded like this for right now, and I'm also now going to prep my plain filters because what we're gonna do is mix the plain filters in with the dyed ones. What I'm doing is just taking my filters and separating them and flattening them out so they kind of lose that coffee filter shape. So ultimately, I'm gonna want to have about an equal number of plain filters as dyed filters because we're gonna intersperse them as we make our pom-poms, but it's kind of up to you. If you want your pom-poms to be more colorful, you could also do more dyed than undyed filters. This is also a great thing you could be doing while your dyed filters are drying. You could be prepping all of your undyed ones, as well. Okay, now that I have a good number of my unfinished or undyed filters, I'm now gonna take my dyed filters and prepare them so that I can start putting together my pom-poms. What I'm going to need in order to do that is a combination of filters that are sort of flattened out and then some that are folded more or less in quarters. Now, with the ones that you've just finished dying, they're already kind of folded 'cause they've been pinched in the center, so you don't really need to fold them much more. You just need to take some of the ones that you've dyed and just kind of lay them out flat so you have a

mixture of folded and flat ones to work with. And then, likewise, with the white ones that we've just prepared, we're gonna take some of them and fold them into quarters. And you really don't need to be precise about it. The whole folding is just to kind of give it a little bit more texture, as you can also pinch them from the center and just kind of grab them and fluff them like that, but we basically want to create a little bit of a kind of ruffly feeling with some of the pom-poms so that our overall ball has some dimension. And this is a great thing to just do with friends in front of television. You can just have masses of filters and pom-poms gather around you 'cause it's a very simple, repetitive task that anyone with any sort of crafting skill at all could really help with. Continue with your preparation until you have a mixture of flat and folded filters that are both dyed and undyed.

Threading your line

- Now that I have all of my filters prepared I'm going to take my string and start threading them. So I have some kitchen string here in a ball and I've already threaded it onto my yarn needle. And you'll notice that my yarn needle has a pointed or somewhat sharp tip so that I can pierce through the coffee filters. It also has an eye that's wide enough to string my thick kitchen yarn or wire. In order to make one garland, you're gonna need about 20 feet of kitchen string. So the first thing I'm gonna do is measure out my kitchen string. And this can be just a rough measurement, it's always good to have more length than less because you can always trim down. That said, if you make a garland or your string is too short you can always tie two together. Especially if you tie it close to the pompom, no one will ever notice it. So I'm just going to pull out a bunch of thread here to loosen it and then I'll roughly kind of measure. You can use a ruler if you wanna be precise or you can just kind of eyeball it. So I'm gonna estimate that's probably about good. The length of your string is also gonna really depend on where you're planning to hang your garlands. So, if it's a large room obviously you might need more string and a larger length. That said, it becomes much harder to work with your garland the longer your string is because you have to string everything kind of sequentially from one end to the next. So, even if you have to cover a large space you might wanna do a few short garlands and then tie them together. I'm just going to set it off to the side and start stringing my garland. I like to start each pompom with about three or four of these folded filters. I'm just going to take my needle here and pierce it through near the center of one of my folded filters and thread it through. And here, we can do a mix of white and dyed filters if you like. Okay, those are gonna some depth and sort of ruffle at the end of my pompom. Next thing, I'll intersperse some flat filters. You can, again, do a mixture of white and dyed. You can also take note of the variations of color that you may have in your dye batch and kind of mix some darker ones with some lighter ones again to give some more depth. After you've put on a couple of flat ones you can switch back to putting folded filters on your pompom. Again, a mix of white and dyed. It really doesn't matter if they're kind of crumpled because the crumpling will just create volume. I'm gonna put a total of about 16 to 20 filters on each pompom, but really it's up to you. It's kind of up to how full you want them to be and how the pompom's looking as you're going along. Again, every couple of flat ones you can intersperse with some folded. Once you've put a critical mass of filters on your string you can kind of take a step back and see how it's coming along. Here I've got a pretty nice, full pompom developing. I might add one more layer and then I'll probably move on to the next one. And I'm gonna end my pompom with a couple more of the folded filters. Okay, so now that I have a pretty full pompom there I'm going to push it all the way down my string and then dab some hot glue on it to secure it before I move on to the next one. I'm just going to slide it down onto my string. And on this end I'm going to leave probably a good maybe three or four feet or more, more is usually

better, that I can use for hanging. So I'm gonna end it about there. And I'm now gonna take my hot glue and dab a little bead of hot glue at the base of the pompom on the string. This is where it's important to have a fairly thick string because this going to really secure your pompom in place. And the string gives the glue some surface area to grab onto. I'm gonna let that dry a little bit. Hot glue usually only takes maybe a minute to dry. Once that's dry, you can take some hot glue and dab it on the other side as well. Okay. The last step is, and you can also save this to the very end when you have a bunch of garlands ready, is just sort of fluff your pompom out and give it a nice round shape. This is where those folded ones can really come in handy, just kind of fluff them out a little bit. Create a nice, full pompom. Once you've finished your pompom you can just keep on doing the same thing. So, skip about 10 to 12 inches and just start on the next pompom. Oops. Occasionally you'll tear a filter (laughs). That's okay, just rip it off and move on to another one. And as you're stringing, if you wanna get creative and kind of give your overall garland an ombre look. Maybe you're going from a dark color to a light color. Or maybe you've dyed a couple different colors of garland, you wanna alternate colors, you can also do that. Once you have another full pompom, you're just gonna slide it down your string to where it's about 10 to 12 inches from the one you previously did. And again, you can kind of scale it based on the size of the garland and the amount of space you need to fill. And also how much time you have. You could space them out a little bit more if you don't have time to make that many pompoms. And so I'm just going to push mine down about like that. And then again, we're gonna anchor each end of the pompom with a dab of hot glue. Once the glue's dry, you can fluff your pompom out or you can just wait and fluff everything at the end once you finish your garland and or just before you're about to hang your garlands 'cause you'll likely need to do that anyway to make sure that all the pompoms are looking really fluffy and at their best. Continue making your pompoms until you've completed the length of your string.

Finishing up and variations

- We want to show you how these look once they're completed. We have the darker pink one that we were just working on, a lighter pink garland, we have some blues here and then we just have a natural white coffee filter, which if you don't have a lot of time for dyeing, you can just use plain white and that can also look really beautiful, especially when they're all strung up. This is also using a smaller coffee filter, just a traditional typical one that you could find in your grocery store if you don't have the means or the time to find a restaurant supply store where you can get the commercial larger ones. Just make sure you get the coffee filters that are not cone-shaped, but that are flat at the bottom and these just come out, you know, look like a beautiful white and can look really gorgeous once they're all strung up. - And, as for stringing up, you can string them up all kinds of different ways. You can do them horizontally across the back or you can hang them vertically. You could do two or three on a strand and hang them from the ceiling at different lengths. There's a lot of possibilities and they're fantastic because they store totally flat. You don't have to be careful with them at all. You can literally just smash them (paper crinkling) and then just fluff 'em right back up again. So, they're really great because you can throw them into a garbage bag, you can pack 'em flat in a box and ship them. They're super light, so they're easily transportable, which took me a minute to learn I actually rented an entire U-Haul truck in order to transfer all my pom-poms (co-instructor laughing) when I did this for my wedding because I was so concerned about the fluffiness of them and later on found out I could have just thrown them in my trunk, so (laughs). - Yeah, and they actually get better, the more you crinkle them and crush them. They get more textured and have more volume, so they just last a really long time. You can reuse

them for all different types of events.