

Building trees (II)

Every construction that includes vegetation must count on good trees that emphasise the set

Text & images Legotron



Trees' green tones add a high visual value to constructions and diorama. So, the bigger and leafy the tree, the bigger the visual impact it will rise as you watch it.

This time we'll focus on building a bigger tree than the one seen on the first article. We're looking to mimic a straight trunk tree with branched foliage in the top half; for example: pine trees. These trees are 10 to 30 meters high (30 to 90 feet), and they feature a leafless lower trunk part. At minifig scale, it means a height around 20 to 60 bricks. For our needs, we'll follow the lowest height, for using the least number of pieces. These kind of trees require a big quantity of branching, so it is advisable to have a large pool of pieces that could be used as foliage. We are going to build a tree as a single element, on a small plate, but integrating it in a diorama or any other construction will follow the same procedure, just putting the trunk's tree on the desired place instead of the mentioned plate.

Needed material.

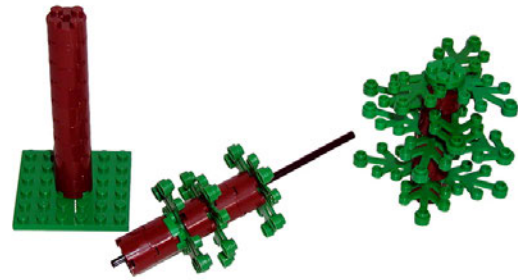
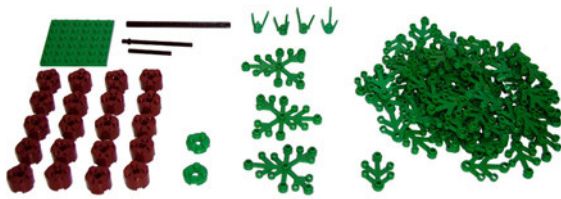
This is the part list that we are going to use for building the pine tree, referenced as it will be found at Bricklink web portal.

For the base:

- A 6x6 plate, green
- Three to four green plant flower stem for decorating the base

For the trunk, given a 20 bricks tree height:

- 20 brick round 2x2 brick, brown
- 2 plate round 2x2, green, for branch snapping
- A technic axe 8L, any color, for securing the trunk's lower half
- A bar 4L lightsaber blade, any color, for strengthening the trunk
- A bar 6.6L with Stop Ring, any color, for strengthening the trunk



Building

We'll begin with the base. We'll put the round 2x2 bricks at the plate 6x6 center, inserting the technic axle through them. This first trunk section's length, with no foliage, could vary as for the technic axle length, but it's better that it nears half tree's height, so it would be more visually appealing. So, the taller the tree, the more number of leaves we'll need to give a healthy look. Also, it should be stated that tree's base should be proportional to its height and foliage, to provide stability. The top round 2x2 brick must be connected in a way that only part of the technic axle stands inside the brick, so there's enough space to connect the next element. For the next trunk section, we'll join two round 2x2 bricks with the 4L lightsaber blade bar, then we'll insert a round 2x2 plate, three round 2x2 bricks, and two plant leaves 5x6, alternating them any way we prefer, but leaving a round brick as the last element, as we can see in picture #2. Next, we'll fit the 6.6L with Stop Ring bar, supporting the cap with the last round brick of the trunk, and we'll add another plant leaves 5x6, hiding the cap. We'll connect this trunk section with the other one, so we'll obtain the lower part of the trunk. On the protruding 6.6L bar we'll alternate round 2x2 bricks or groups of 3 or 4 plant leaves 4x3 connected with the round bricks' studs, to the desired height. It could be added more 4L bars if needed. To close trunk's building, we'll put a round 2x2 plate with a couple plant leaves 4x3 in its center. We'll connect this last part in its place, and we'll have a finished trunk.

This next phase will define the tree's look, and it consists in adding plant leaves 4x3 to all branch endings. Varied tree foliage can be done; denser in the upper part, or in the lower part, or even. We'll build an uniform foliage. Setting the leaves is a delicate task, and it's better to accomplish it methodically, so as we'll be arranging the foliage it will become harder to reach the hooking points of the

new leaves without unattaching the attached ones. For this example, we have chosen to add two or three plant leaves 4x3 to each hooking point, looking for a very dense tree crown but not so broad. It's better not to chain more than 4 or 5 plant leaves, because these pieces fold under the weight and eventually loosen. It would be better to use technic plates 2x4 for the trunk, and to attach on them 1x8 plates, or bigger, for the branching.

Finally, we'll add some plant flower stem on the base, or any number of parts that could simulate plants, flowers or even stones, and we'll obtain a totally custom tree.

References:

[1] Unofficial LEGO® parts sale portal:
<http://www.bricklink.com> ■