Building trees (VI)

In a forest, not everything you can see are trees. There are also bushes and thickets.

Text and images by Legotron

We seek to build new elements for our forest in order to complement the tree formations that we have been seeing and building in previous articles. One element we lack are the bushes and small shrubs that grow in the shade of trees or on the edges of roads. To make it easier to find the necessary parts, the design was made using the same parts that have been used in the construction of the trees. Moreover, given the simplicity of the elements, we will make two variations, one for bushes and another for thickets. The bushes, with a height lower than a minifig, are designed for use on roadsides and surrounding areas with trees. Bushes, with a height slightly larger than a minifig, are designed to be placed next to the trees, so as to make the forest more luxuriant.

Parts required.

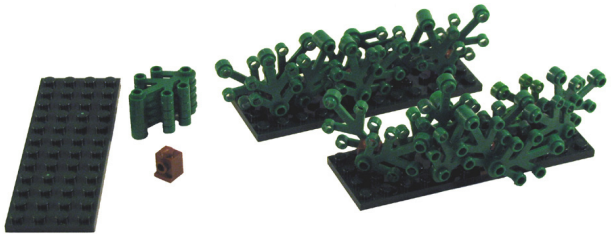
On this occasion, the list of parts required, named following the Bricklink [1], naming conventions, will be incredibly easy, and we will divide it for each of the two elements that we will build:

For the bush:

- 1 dark green plate 4 x 10.
- 1 brown brick arch 1x5x4.
- 15 green plant leaves 4x3.

For the thicket:

- 1 dark green plate 4x8.
- 3 brown bricks 1x 1 modified with headlight to hold the leaves.
- A dozen green plant green 4x3.



Construction.

Bush: As you can see we kept it really simple, with a plate, a brick arch 1x5x4 and leaves we have everything we need (figure 1). The construction process is also very simple. Place the brick arch 1x5x4 near one end of the plate, so that the tip points to the other side of the plate. Place leaves on all the available studs on the trunk, each one pointing in a different direction. Then, starting with lowest of the leaves, extend the leaves adding another 1 or 2 additional leaves, connecting them below the first one and placing them so that these extensions are made to turn around the trunk. On the next level repeat the process, but turning the extensions in the opposite direction, so that the trunk is well covered. Once you have finished this step, you can add a couple more leaves to customize the bush leaving it well covered on all sides. There are many ways to make more unique customizations such as a representation of a bush in a windy area, making every branch point in the direction of the end of the trunk. These bushes are very simple and easy to make, and placing a small number of them along with a couple of trees can get the feel of a fairly leafy forest.

Thicket: The other element is as simple as the previous. You only need a plate, several modified bricks 1x1 with headlight and a number of leaves (photo 2). The construction of the thicket is fun and gives you endless possibilities, despite the small number of pieces. The first most important step when deciding its application is to place the bricks modified 1x 1 with headlight on the plate. It is the way we place these bricks which will determine the shape, and therefore the use we can give to the bush:

- If you want to build a fence or a wall of demarcation just put all the bricks on the same line, and orienting the stud side toward the long edge of plate.

- If you want to build a bush on the boundary of a path, you can place the bricks on the same line, but randomly turning the bricks slightly.

- If you want to build a thicket for a wooded area you can put bricks in different rows each one with a different orientation, in a jumbled way.

In the first two cases with many more parts you will be able to build roads, with their bends, just placing the bricks into position beside the road and with right orientation. Once the bricks are placed you continue with the placement of the leaves. This process is what will give the desired finish to our thicket. For each of the cases mentioned above the process of placing the leaves process is different.

- A hedge needs a complicated process. Depending on the distance between the bricks, 3 or 4 studs is best, we will have the height for the entire hedge. First you place the rear side, with two leaves on each brick, the first slightly tilted to one side and pointing upwards and the other at its end, on the inside of the fence, pointing down and slightly tilted to the other side , down to the next brick. In this way you complete the entire length of the hedge. The next step is to place the leaves on the front of the front hedge, in the same way but inclined in the opposite direction. Placing the leaves is complicated as there is only an exact position in which all of them fit perfectly. Joining several sections, we have a perfect hedge to separate gardens.

- In the case of the thicket that borders a forest or a road, the process is different, because the leaves are placed randomly on the bricks, at different angles. Since the bricks are aligned but with different orientations, you get a well defined separation that has a wild look which is perfect for our purpose. Additionally, you can add some flowers and some cherries in order to make it look like a rose or mulberry bush.

- Finally we have the thickets in the forest, which should be built with the biggest possible disorder, trying to vary the tilt of the leaves to get different heights. These thickets can be made building separate groups or a single heterogeneous group, and can be used together with other trees to achieve lush forests which look impenetrable.

With these two elements we have a simple way to give a more appealing look to our forests, roads and gardens.

References:
[1] Online portal for Unofficial LEGO® parts sales: http://www.bricklink.com
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