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# BLUE BIRD

by Deborah Prokop

I have always been inspired by the natural world. Mother Nature has it down when it comes to colors, patterns, and textures. Broccoli looks like little green trees and cauliflower is the albino cousin. It's the special and unique way they grow that gets my creative juices flowing. The way droplets of water sit on top of the skin of a dark red tomato, that image, or parts of that image, can be captured and applied to whatever you want. I look for images that are high definition micro or macro photos, something with a lot of detail. They could be the swirl of a flower or a rust-covered piece of metal, but you'll be looking at it on a very small scale. If I'm working with metal washers, I take my circle template and move it around the picture to see what part of it I want to cut out and apply to a washer.

This necklace, "Blue Bird," was designed around the pairing of the peacock plumage pattern on the large washer and the just-washed blueberries on the four smaller washers. I love the difference between the roundness of the blueberries and the straight edges of the feathers, but their colors are true to each other. The eight smaller washers are covered in the colors and swirls of light on a forest stream. Each one has their own unique quality and color, holding their own among the rest; a moment of color and patterns captured and gracefully displayed around your neck.

## TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Buffer wheel
- Circle template
- Clasp/lobster claw
- Craft knife
- Drill press
- Enamel
- Jump rings
- Decoupage medium: Mod Podge
- Necklace chain
- Paintbrush
- Paper clips (for hanging dry)
- Paper towel
- Pencil
- Printed photos
- Scissors
- Washers: 1½" fender; 1¼" fender (8); ¼" (8)

## TECHNIQUE

Mark on the washers where you want your holes to be and drill them using a drill press. Make sure you don't have any burrs on the backside of your washer; if so, buff them off. Use a slightly

larger size circle than the washer you want to cover. Take your circle template and use a pencil to mark the part of the picture you want to cut out. Paint your washer with Mod Podge and apply the circle, being careful to keep it centered. Trim any excess from around the washer with scissors as close as you can. You can cover both sides; just make sure you're working on a slick surface like wax paper, or the smooth side of freezer paper so your piece doesn't stick. Apply another coat of the Mod Podge as a top coat; this keeps the ink from running when you dip the washer in enamel, which you will do after that top coat dries. Carefully cut out the center hole using the craft knife.

Dip each washer in enamel, using a paper towel to catch any drips. Hang the washers and keep them from touching each other or anything else until they are dry. Repeat the dipping process at least three times to make sure your washer is completely coated. Between enamel treatments, when pieces are dry enough to carefully touch, take a pin and poke out the holes you drilled in each piece. This process takes some patience, and can take up to a week to completely finish; leaving the piece dry enough to work, without damaging the glossy finish. Assemble the large washer and four smaller ones with jump rings. Join the small washers that make up the necklace with a necklace chain and small jump rings. \*

## TIPS

- Always work in a well-ventilated area when working with enamel.
- Wear protective eyewear when using a drill press or buffer.
- You'll need to get creative in finding a way to hang the washers to dry. I used a 15" x 10" piece of wood about 2 inches thick that I drilled holes along the top edge of the short sides. I bent the ends of a wire hanger and inserted each end into the holes. Make the bend in the wire at least 6 inches up from each end so your washer can hang without touching the base. You can use a straightened paper clip or wire to make hooks to hang the washers. It's important that they do not touch each other when drying.

Deborah Prokop is self-taught in almost everything from her jewelry to taking care of the family of geese she keeps on her small acreage. She lives in Washington State with her husband, three dogs, two cats, and the geese. Her jewelry pieces are unique and one of a kind. You can find her jewelry and new 2014 collection at [hardwareartwear.com](http://hardwareartwear.com). She welcomes email at [hardwareartwear@hotmail.com](mailto:hardwareartwear@hotmail.com).