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INSPIRE**

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KIWI SPRINGS

by Deborah Prokop

Recycling isn't a new concept. Our family has been recycling for years, doing our part to keep that floating garbage island's acreage down. But upcycling is a newer concept, one that demands the attention of creative minds. Enter the disposable lighter. These little buggers float in the ocean, adding to that garbage island. Imagine how many lighters are used and thrown away every day in every place in the world! I took apart a disposable lighter and several components jumped out at me — literally. There are two tiny springs inside and a brass fitting as well as two small striker wheels that can be found in some lighters.

I've found ways to use all these components in my jewelry. Kiwi Springs is a tribute to these convenient but pesky lighters. The short springs used in this piece come from under the lighter's button. I slipped an eye pin inside and paired them with green dragon vein beads. The pendant is a large fender washer I cut in half, drilled holes into, and covered with the colorful print of a kiwi. The chain simulates the seeds, holding the two halves together. The finished piece is a fresh new look born from something used and thrown away. It doesn't look anything like what it was originally created for. That's upcycling! Now I just have to figure out what to do with all that colored plastic!

TOOLS & MATERIALS

- Band saw/metal blade
- Beads
- Circle template
- Decoupage medium: Mod Podge (Plaid)
- Disposable lighters (6)
- Drill press
- Enamel
- Eye pins
- Grinder/buffer wheel
- Jump rings
- Large washer
- Necklace chain
- Needle/pin
- Paintbrush
- Patterned paper
- Scissors

TECHNIQUE

Mark and cut the washer in half. Drill holes and buff edges. Using the circle template, trace on color-printed or patterned paper, and cut out. Paint the washer pieces with decoupage medium and apply the paper. Trim the edges with scissors. Use a pin to poke the holes in the paper. Paint the surfaces with decoupage medium and after they dry, dip the pieces in enamel and hang to dry. Make sure you are in a well-ventilated space when you are using enamel. Keep the pieces from touching when drying. Then keep dipping the pieces in enamel, drying for an hour between treatments; three coats should be enough. Retrieve the springs from six disposable lighters. Remove the long, skinny spring from under the flint. Attach springs to beads with eye pins, and attach to necklace chain. Attach full chain to the pendant with jump rings. *

TIPS

- Always enamel the metal washers after cutting or drilling to keep them from rusting. There is a zinc coating on them that is compromised after being cut or drilled. This can be done after placing the printed paper onto the washer.
- Always buff off any burrs left over from drilling or cutting. Do this before applying any embellishments.
- You can find any picture or pattern you want on the Internet; just print it out and use your circle template to find the right spot you want to cut out and apply.
- Unfold paper clips and use them to hang your washers. I took a thick piece of wood and drilled holes in it to use as a drying stand. I used a wire clothes hanger, bent it, and inserted it into the holes of the wooden stand. This allows me to have a drying line, kind of like an outdoor clothes line, only shorter and portable. You just need to keep the pieces hanging free and not touching.

Deborah Prokop is self-taught on almost everything from her jewelry to taking care of the family of geese she keeps on her small acreage. She lives in Washington with her husband, three dogs, two cats, and the geese. You can find her one-of-a-kind jewelry at hardwareartwear.com. She welcomes email at hardwareartwear@hotmail.com.