

6-14-2014

Making Rock Molds

By Marvin Selzer

Selecting a Master: Rocks or Coal can make good Masters. Broken concrete may work. Tree bark is a possibility, but would require sealing. When you find masters you like hang on to them or make master molds of them.

Masters should be dry and relatively clean. Food for thought, glue fine dirt to a plain master.

Mold release is required. Mold release is available from Micro-mart, Smooth-on, and others. A thin coat of Vaseline also works well. Use a stiff (acid) brush to work the Vaseline in. Let it dry.

Latex Rubber is available from Woodland Scenics, Mold Builder and others. Stipple light first and second coats with a stiff acid brush. Always let the rubber "cure" between coats. The color will change from white to a yellowish beige. Heat will speed curing.

The third and fourth coats can be applied a little heavier. If you prefer, the cheap foam brushes can be used. Either way you will end up throwing them away. Cleaning after each use with soap and water only delays the end.

Sharp outside corners need reinforcement. Use plastic netting available at most fabric stores. Use the "dark" colors, red, green, and black. "Light" colors like white and yellow are hard to see in the rubber. The plastic netting does not 'wick' water into the mold the way cloth can. Apply the netting to one face of the master at a time with rubber; let the rubber on the first face at least partly cure before folding the netting around the corner. Secure with more rubber.

Apply 3 or 4 more coats.

Let cure for 2 or 3 days.

Remove carefully from the master starting at the edges.

There was a very good article on making rock molds in the February issue of Railroad Model Craftsman by Gregor Moe.