Beads DIRECT

Tree of Life Pendant

Materials and Tools

25cm Coloured copper wire - silver – 0.9mm
120cm Coloured copper wire - silver – 0.315mm
23 Pearls – 6mm
Round nose pliers
Chain or flat nose pliers (nylon tips recommended)
Soft wire cutters
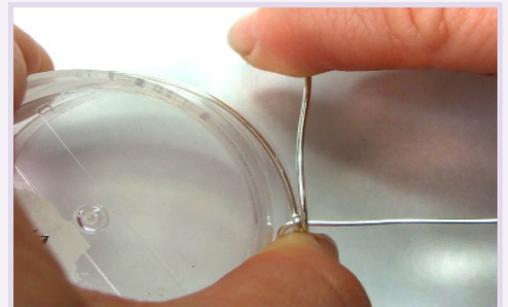Round cylinder (approx 5cm diameter)
Beading mat
Ruler or tape measure

Before you begin…

A round storage tube 5cm across has been used to form the base ring in this project. You can use any size tube you wish, even a mug and increase the thickness of the wires for different looks. To give your tree a lifelike appearance don't try to make everything really neat. If you find you're wire work is becoming too regimented gently untwist the wires and try again. You'll find that kinks that formed in the wire will help give a softer and looser look.

Step 1 – framework

Cut a piece of 0.9mm wire that will go one around your chosen tube plus an extra 10cm on either side. In this instance a 25cm piece of wire is used. Position the wire immediately below your cylinder and wrap firmly around so that you have an equal amount of wire on either side. Bend one of the wires at right angles to the tube then tightly wrap the other one neatly around it twice and keeping it parallel to the cylinder – don't trim either wire yet. Carefully remove the frame from the cylinder.

Step 2 - hanging loop

With round nose pliers grip the wire that is sticking straight up just above the wrap. Bend it away from you to a slight angle. The part of the wire you're gripping will become the stem that you'll wrap around to secure the loop. The photograph shows the kind of angle you'll need. You can form a hanging loop that is in line with the frame or at right angle to it. In this example the hanging loop will be in line with the frame.

Step 3

Change your grip on the wire so that you holding it immediately after the angled bend. The size of loop you create will depend on how far along the pliers you hold the wire. With the fingers of the other hand pull the wire over the pliers towards you as shown. Continue moulding the wire around the pliers until you have a complete circle. By keeping your pliers steady and moving the wire with your finger you'll reduce the chance of damaging the wire.

Step 4

Twist the wire around the stem half a turn. Swap to your nylon tipped pliers and grip across the loop. Wind the wire around the stem and down to the frame. Use your round nose pliers to pull the end of the wire around if you need to. Trim the excess wires as near to the work as you can then use your nylon tipped pliers to flatten the cut ends down against the stem.

Step 5 – Tree Roots

Cut a piece of thin wire that is four times the diameter of your frame. In this instance the diameter of the frame is 5cm so a 20cm piece of wire is being used. Position the wire under the frame immediately opposite the hanging loop and so that you have an equal amount on either side. Wrap the wire around the frame 5 times. Twist the two wires loosely together once, just above the frame.

Step 6

Cut a further 4 pieces of wire and repeat, placing 2 wires either side of the central root with a slight gap between each.

Step 7

Bring all the wires together and twist to form a trunk. The top of the trunk should finish at the centre of the frame.

Step 8

Separate the wires into pairs and splay them out to form the beginnings of the branches. You can splay them out evenly around the top half of the frame or stagger them as shown.

Step 9

Using our design as guidance, twist pairs of wires together to form the left and right-hand branches. Then twist each individual pair. Keep the twists fairly loose.

Step 10

Separate the wires of the first pair and add some beads. Secured the beads by wrapping the wire around the frame 3 or 4 times.

Step 11

Trim the excess wire at the back of the pendant with soft wire cutters. Get as close as you can to the work, but take care not to cut the wire that the beads are on. Press the cut side down flat to the frame with nylon tipped pliers.

Step 12

Repeat the process of adding beads in any way you please. Once you're done go around the ring again checking all the cut ends are flattened.

Step 13

Any bead that won't sit where you want it to can be held in place by forming a slight twist in the wire just below it. This method of twisting can also be used to shorten wires that are too long or if you just want to change the shape slightly.

Step 14

Finally check the appearance of tree and shuffle any groups of wires around to improve the design. To wear, either thread a cord, ribbon or chain through the loop.