

## Realistic Paper Flowers



The idea of making Paper Flowers has always fascinated me. After giving it a try on my own, I had to admit I needed help, so off I went in search of a book—surely somebody had figured it all out!

Returning empty handed from trips to craft and book stores, I ended up at the public library where I found a copy of “Handmade Flowers From Paper and Fabric” by Steve and Megumi Biddle. If you are serious about learning to make realistic paper flowers, this is a great book to start you on your way. It is an excellent resource and is loaded with amazing tips and tricks in the General Techniques section.

### Materials Needed:

- Four sizes of paper-wrapped wire (If the exact gauges of wires recommended in the book are not available, come as close as possible. Also, wire that is painted green, as opposed to being paper-wrapped, is harder to work with.)
- A roll of floral tape
- Stamens (Stamens may not be readily available, but white ones can be found in bridal sections, and painted with yellow acrylic enamel.)
- Handmade and decorative papers
- PVA glue
- Tracing paper
- Needle-nose wire cutters
- Scissors
- Burnishing tool
- Markers

The textures of the handmade papers are ideal for flower making even when fabric is suggested. If the papers are not the exact color, they can be dyed, tinted, or painted. If the papers are not the exact weight, sheets can be glued together or stiffened with gel medium. The papers I used were what I had on hand. This is a fairly inexpensive hobby to get into, but it is time consuming, at least until you get the hang of it. However, creating that first flower makes you want to do more, and with each success comes tremendous satisfaction.

### The Papers I Used:

Tulips: Thai Reversible Unryu in Sienna/Cherry for petals, and Blue/Lime for leaves. The Reversible Unryus work well for the crinkle technique described and for the leaf embossing.

Bird of Paradise: Philippine Crinkle Yellow, Crinkle Orange, Crinkle Iris for petals and Crinkle Sea Green for leaves.

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**Iris:** Philippine Woven Fibers for the petals, and Unryu Forest Green for leaves. (Two sheets of the green Unryu were glued together with the wire between the layers using Gel Medium, which also added some body to the paper.) I sealed the Woven Fibers lightly with Gel Medium after construction to keep the fibers from fraying.

**Lily:** Philippine Salago Yellow for the petals and bud, and Lokta Sun-Washed Clover Green for the leaves. As with so many other projects, the Lokta papers are very nice to work with.

**Hydrangea:** Crested Crane Tairei for the petals, and Silky Lace Green for the leaves. The texture of the Silky Lace makes an interesting leaf, but the edges look shaggy if not sealed.

**Carnation:** Salmon Unryu for the petals and Philippine Reversible Green for the leaves. The Unryu did exceptionally well for this particular flower, but I will make another choice for the leaves when I make more—the Philippine Reversibles are a little too soft.

**Petunia:** White Soft Unryu for petals and Stardust for leaves. There isn't a better choice for a Petunia than the Soft Unryu. I used pastels to tint the edges. The Stardust is a little on the funky side for a leaf choice, but some times I just can't help myself.

**Eucalyptus:** Two-Layer Green Stripe for the leaves. (A better choice would have been Green Unryu glued together.) The Green Stripe looks great when first made, but does not hold up particularly well.

**Cherry Blossom:** Red Metallic Confetti for the petals and Green Silky Lace for the leaves. I also used Mango Blue for the petals of another flower. Both worked out well although the color choices were not traditional.

**Foxglove:** Pink Splatter for the flowers, and Momi Lokta Olive Green for the leaves. Because it is slightly lighter on the reverse side, the Splatter made an excellent Foxglove bloom.

**Canterbury Bell:** Momi Lokta Butterscotch for flower and Ogura Hemp Honeydew for leaves.

**Poppy:** Red Unryu for petals and Philippine Crinkled Green for the leaves.

**Clematis:** By far, the funkiest flower I made using Indian Metallic Stripes Teal/Purple for the petals and Gold Momi (painted green) for the leaves.

**Peony:** Mauve Unryu for the petals, and Mint Green Bachelor Buttons for the leaves. The Unryu was a little lightweight for the technique, so two sheets were glued together using Letratrac dry transfer adhesive.