

Paper Purses



Materials Needed:

- 1 sheet Tamarind Leaves White/Plum 80 g/m², cut to 12" x 18"
- 1 sheet Rough Mulberry 100 g/m², cut to 12" x 18"
- 2 sheets of white cover stock, cut to 12" x 18"
- Spray Adhesive
- PVA Glue
- Craft Knife
- Cork-backed Metal ruler
- Bone Folder
- Plastic squeegee, roller, or credit card
- Pencil

Transfer our pattern onto one of the sheets of cover stock, and then carefully cut out using the ruler and craft knife, and marking the fold lines on the cutout with dotted lines. (For the pattern, we actually used a sheet of 2 ply Bristol board with a grid for precision. If you decide you want to enlarge or design your own pattern, the grid makes measuring a snap.)

Much as we dislike using spray glue as a rule, it works perfectly for this project. Just take it and the sheet of cover stock and Tamarind outside and put some newspapers down. Because it dries rapidly, work quickly. Spray glue the cover stock, then attach the Tamarind starting at the top and smoothing your way down with your hand to minimize bubbles. Use the squeegee or roller to get a good bond when the papers are in place. When dry, spray glue the reverse side of the cover stock, attach the Rough Mulberry and squeegee again.

My sister-in-law wanted to give packs of handmade note cards and envelopes as gifts. The question was how to package a group of cards and envelopes to make it look special. Paper "purses" turned out to be the ideal solution, plus it turned into a really fun project.

The pattern was designed to fit 4 1/2" x 5 3/4" envelopes, with a 1" gusset that will accommodate 10 cards and envelopes. The decorative papers suggested in the "Materials Needed" section below are only for example. In the experimental phase, we used a decorative paper mounted to a cover stock. The resulting purses were too weak, especially the handles. Mounting the extra sheet of decorative paper made all the difference in the world, plus it looks like a lining.

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Lightly trace around the cutout pattern on the Tamarind side, or whichever side you want to become the inside of the purse. (Keep in mind that these papers are hard to erase.) Cut out the purse using the metal ruler and the craft knife, being careful not to make over-cuts, which will weaken the handles. You should end up with two handles and one top flap. The top flap will be folded over and secured. Use the bone folder and ruler to score the fold lines. Fold to make a box with the small flaps on the bottom 1" gusset folded to the inside. These can be secured with glue, if desired, to the inside of one of the side flaps. The top flap fits through the handles and will fold down the side. Make sure the all of the folds are crisp, and then glue into place with the PVA glue. It might be necessary to hold the box sides together temporarily with clamps, paper clips, or clothespins.

Securing the top flap to the side of the purse presents the opportunity for extreme creativity. You can of course use tiny pieces of Velcro and let it go at that. But you can also make places to tuck the flap by cutting out shapes or strips from the leftover scrap. Glue these into place and slip the flap under it. Embellishing the purse can become a fun thing, especially with cut shapes, beads and pieces of costume jewelry. Let your creativity soar.

Once you've made the first purse, you can change the shapes and lengths of the straps, or change the top flap by adjusting the pattern. Instead of handles with squared off edges, round off the edges with scissors. Instead of 3" handles, make 2" handles. Or you might even want to do away with the paper straps and attach cords. Similarly, you can change the shape and length of the top flap, or do away with a flap altogether.

Using different combinations of papers is particularly fun. (We also used Floating Hearts Red/Red Cover/Florentine Roman, Floating Hearts Pink/ Pink Cover /Florentine Venetian, 5-Petal Daisies Aqua/Aqua Cover/Iridescent Purple Haze, Crocodile Black/ Black Cover/Unryu Red, Amala Leaves/Yellow Cover/Unryu Golden Green, and many, many more combinations.) But, some patterns on the papers necessitate making adjustments beforehand. For instance, papers like Walking Elephants or Floating Hearts have patterns that go in one direction. When you make your folds, you'll end up with an upside down pattern on one side of the purse and a top flap that goes the wrong direction. The easiest solution is to cut the top half of the purse to include a bottom. Turn the decorative paper and cut the other half with a bottom. This will give you two separate sides. Score the papers. Trim the small flaps off one of the bottoms, glue the bottoms together, and finish. To get the top closing flap to go the right way, you'll need to cut the flaps completely out. Adjust the fold lines to allow for an additional 1/2" fold on the wide part of the flap. Measure and score the other folds and glue into place on the back.

We would love to see your creations and/or get your feedback.

This is an 11 x 17 inch layout.
You must print this pattern
to a tabloid, 11 x 17 inch
piece of paper to be
able to trace this
to actual size.

