

Leaf Castings

You can make a leaf that lasts a lifetime! Leaf casting enables you to preserve that favorite leaf for decoration in your garden or home, or can even be used outdoors as a birdfeeder or birdbath.

Supplies Needed:

- Fresh leaves (Hosta & Rhubarb work well. Any leaves with pronounced venation on the bottom-side of leaf and fairly smooth leaf margins work best)
- Portland Cement
- Play sand (fine)
- Board (for mold – see photo below)
- Water
- Sturdy spoon or trowel (for mixing cement)
- Bucket or pan (for mixing cement)
- Sturdy wire plant stake or 16-gauge wire (for hanging leaf)
- Rubber gloves
- Plastic wrap
- Paint (acrylic or exterior latex)
- Polyurethane
- Paint brushes and/or foam brushes



Directions:

1. Make a mound of moist sand, slightly larger than the leaf you are casting. You can do this either on the ground outside, or a sturdy board. This mound of sand will determine the final shape of your leaf. If you want the leaf to be more bowl-shaped, you will need to build the sand up in the center in a mound. *(See photo below).*
2. Create a rim on the outside edge of the sand mound, approximately ¼” to contain the cement mixture once it is applied to leaf.
3. Cover the sand with plastic wrap. The plastic wrap not only keeps the sand from getting into casting, but it also used to wrap the casting so that it will retain moisture and dry slowly.
4. In a bucket or pan, mix one part portland cement to 2½ parts sand. Add enough water to the mixture so it has the consistency of thick icing.
5. Spread the cement mixture over the leaf, using your fingers to push it to the edges. Continue adding cement until the cast leaf is ¼” thick at the edge and thicker in the middle. *Please note that rubber gloves should be worn when handling cement.*
6. If you plan to hang the leaf, embed a loop of 16-gauge wire into the cement.
7. If you intend to use the leaf as a platform for birdseed, embed the loped end of a wire plant stake in the center of the leaf.
8. Fold the plastic wrap over the cement.

9. Allow the mold to dry undisturbed for 48 hours.

10. Unwrap the plastic wrap and peel away the leaf.

11. Get creative! Paint your leaf in a realistic manner or be artistic. Finish with a sealant of polyurethane.



^^ You can make the sand mold on a sturdy board (This was an old cupboard door). It can even be a piece of Plywood; any hard surface will work.

This board is 11" x 20". Sand mold for leaf is approx. 7" x 12".