



# Reuse Ideas for a Contemporary Tree

# The Story of the Contemporary Reuse Tree

The Reuse Xmas Tree that is on display in City Hall during December is a duplicate of the second tree entered in the Festival of Trees by Waste Services. It was also an award winner claiming the Decorator's Silver award for the Small Tree category.

The ornaments were crafted from materials gathered from the Reuse Fairs and followed a blue and silver theme. Materials for these ornaments are readily available for a minimal cost at the city's Reuse Centre at 104 Avenue and 100 Street.

The booklet can be found at [www.edmonton.ca/reuse](http://www.edmonton.ca/reuse) as well.

Questions? Call one of the Master Composter/Recycler team at 780-496-5051 or email: [mcrp@edmonton.ca](mailto:mcrp@edmonton.ca)



## Master Composter/ Recycler Volunteer Program

The Master Composter program trains community volunteers in all aspects of waste reduction so that they can share their knowledge in the community. So far 20 classes of volunteers have been recruited, and have undergone 35 - 40 hours of training over a three-week period. The course gives an overview of the waste management process in Edmonton, with specific emphasis on the areas of home composting and recycling, through lectures, videos, facility tours, demonstrations, and discussion groups. Graduates then go out into their own communities to help educate and inform the public about the 4 R's: reduce, reuse, recycle, and recover.

For more information about this program and an application form phone the Environmental Programs Coordinator at (780) 496-5991 or visit our web site at: [www.edmonton.ca/mcrp](http://www.edmonton.ca/mcrp)

Thanks to Laurie Bisset for creating this booklet.

# **“Oh Waste-Free Tree, Oh Reuse Tree”**

How to make Christmas decorations for your tree

This booklet was created to support and help you to create decorations at home with your family from reusable materials. All our decorations are easy to make, with no sewing or special skills needed. For the most part, these are general instructions only; we have not told you how much or how big or what colour. All patterns are included at the end of the instruction pages. We hope that our ideas will help to get you started to think creatively about reuse at Christmas and throughout the year!

## **Supplies needed:**

Almost everything we used on our tree is reused! The focus was to try and use common every day things we wouldn't think of as craft materials. By making Christmas decorations with these materials we hope that they will become treasured items not used once and then dumped. We bought some paint, glitter, ribbon and some pipe cleaners. Items came from the Reuse Centre, Reuse Fairs and as well as from the numerous volunteers that scrounged for the rest. Here is a list of the reused materials found on our tree:

aluminum plates & containers	Christmas cards	puzzle pieces
beads	felt scraps	ribbon
beaded necklaces	foil coffee bags	soap scoops
broken jewellery	greenery	soup cans
buttons	juice discs	tissue paper
bubble wrap	light bulbs	wire
cardboard tubes	pipe cleaners	fibre fill
	pop cans	

## Puzzle Ornaments

### Materials/ Tools

- |                 |                    |              |
|-----------------|--------------------|--------------|
| - glitter       | - books for weight | - white glue |
| - paint brushes | - puzzle pieces    |              |
| - paint         | - sand paper       |              |

Fit together pieces until the desired size is achieved. Carefully glue the edges with a small amount of glue. Place the weight on top until the glue has dried; this prevents it from curling.

When glue is dry, rough up the shiny surface of the ornament. This will allow the paint to stick.

Paint each piece a different colour or choose just one and carefully trace the seams in a contrasting colour to highlight the pattern. (This could be done with a felt pen.) Wait until it is completely dry and turn over to paint other side. When it's dry drill a hole in the top to add a string or you can use a hammer and nail to gently pound a hole being careful not to crack the paint.

**Variations:** Using a Christmas puzzle; don't sand the picture but flip over and paint the back or spread glue carefully on the back and sprinkle glitter on it. Pat down and then wait until it is dry to shake the excess glitter off. Gently mist with hairspray to help keep the glitter in place. Or paint one side and glitter the other. Or vary the shape making a teardrop shape, with very small puzzle pieces you could make a wreath shape, painting it green and adding a ribbon bow to the top.

## Aluminum Shadow Trees

### Materials / Tools

- |                          |              |                   |
|--------------------------|--------------|-------------------|
| - take out containers    | - craft glue | - scissors or box |
| - white or green glitter | - empty pen  | cutters           |

1. Trace out the pattern onto the aluminum.
2. Carefully cut out around the shape. Do not cut on dotted line.
3. Bend on the dotted lines, folding both sides up. Do not fold more than 90° as it might snap in two.
4. Put a generous amount of glue on the edges for snow and add glitter. Punch a small hole at the top to hang it from.

## **Paper Roll Candle**

### **Materials/ Tools**

- |                      |                   |                          |
|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| - toilet rolls       | - can lid         | - yellow and orange      |
| - scissors           | - paint brush     | tissue paper             |
| - red or green paint | - old greenery    | - white glue or glue gun |
| - box cutters        | - aluminum scraps |                          |

Carefully make a 1/2" slit on the side of the roll about 1/2" from the end of the roll. This will be for the handle. Add a drop of glue to the paint and mix well, this helps it stick and gives good coverage in one coat. Paint the paper roll making sure that you get about 1" down on the inside on the opposite end of the slit. When the paint is dry take a strip of aluminum slightly thinner than 1/2" and 6" long slide both ends into the slit bend the ends on the inside back so they won't slide out. Then spread glue onto the can lid and gently press the roll on the glue. While the glue is wet take small pieces of the greenery and add to the base of your candle pressing them firmly into the glue. Go around the base covering the can lid. Some of these branches can be bent up to rest against the side of your candle. Take a large pin and make a hole near the top of the candle directly in line with the handle and use thread to make a loop for hanging. Now take small squares of both yellow and orange tissue and place them in the top of the candle for the flame.

## **Coffee Bag Snowflake**

### **Materials/ Tools**

- |               |                  |             |
|---------------|------------------|-------------|
| - coffee bag  | - 15 beads       | - scissors  |
| - iron        | - foam place mat | - large pin |
| - floral wire | - felt           |             |
| - empty pen   | - box cutter     |             |

Make sure the coffee bag is clean and dry. Use a very thin cloth as a press cloth to iron the coffee bag, melting it together. Set the iron half way between wool and cotton. Iron the bag together checking often to make sure it's not wrinkling, or burning. You might want to practice on one before making your snowflake. Cut the place mat in half and cover the stacked pieces with the felt. This will be the surface you do your tracing on. To make several you need to make copies of the pattern. Carefully trace the pattern onto the bag pressing firmly with the empty pen (if you press too hard you will tear the pattern). After tracing it once remove the pattern and cut around the lines using a box cutter, carefully cut out the centers. Take the pin and poke holes where the dots are. Cut pieces of wire that are just a bit longer than the hole. Insert one end and bend it back. Thread the beads on until the hole is covered. Carefully insert the other end into the hole and bend it over.

## Coffee Bag Angel

### Materials/ Tools

- |               |                  |        |
|---------------|------------------|--------|
| - coffee bag  | - scissors       | - felt |
| - floral wire | - paint brush    | - rag  |
| - dangly bead | - iron           |        |
| - paint       | - empty pen      |        |
|               | - foam place mat |        |

Make sure the coffee bag is clean and dry. Use a very thin cloth as a press cloth to iron the coffee bag, melting it together. Set the iron half way between wool and cotton. Iron the bag together checking often to make sure it's not wrinkling or is burning. You might want to practice on one before making your angels. Cut the place mat in half and cover the stacked pieces with the felt. This will be the surface you do your tracing on. To make several you need to make copies of the pattern. Carefully trace the pattern onto the bag pressing firmly with the empty pen (if you press too hard you will tear the pattern). After tracing it once remove the pattern and continue to trace over the lines until the lines are prominent, try not to poke through the liner. Once this is done carefully cut around the outline on the outside catching the indented shape. Paint one side making sure you get the paint into the lines, wait a minute and using your rag rub off the paint making sure that you leave some in the lines showing the pattern. Once it's dry flip over and paint the raised side, when rubbing paint off this side focus on removing paint off of the raised lines. Take a pin and poke holes in the middle of both hands, thread beads onto the wire then wind it through the holes allowing the beads to dangle.

## Aluminum Bulbs

### Materials/ Tools

- |                               |                          |               |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| - aluminum take out container | - ribbon or wire         | - paint brush |
| - empty pen                   | - enamel paint           | - tape        |
| - place mat                   | - scissors or box cutter |               |

1. Cut place mat in half. This will be the surface that you use to trace on.
2. Using an unused can smooth out any wrinkles out of the aluminum.
3. Carefully trace the bulb pattern pressing firmly. You can use tape to hold the pattern in place.
4. Cut out around the bulb. Retrace the inside pattern. Flip the bulb over and gently trace around the edge of the ridge you have created.
5. Use the enamel paint to fill in the parts of the pattern you wish to emphasize. You should work in a well-ventilated area, as the fumes can be unpleasant.
6. Poke a hole in the top for either wire or ribbon to hang it with.

## **Aluminum Tree**

### **Materials / Tools**

- |                                  |                                   |                            |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| - aluminum takeout<br>containers | - floral wire<br>- 10 green beads | - scissors<br>- glue stick |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------|

Use the glue stick to rub out the pattern and scratches from the aluminum. Trace out 3 large stars and 3 small trees. Cut them out and poke a hole in the center of each one. Take a 12" piece of floral wire and bend in half. Thread a bead on and twirl once. Alternate until you run out of stars and then add the rest of the beads create loop and twist ends to close the loop.

## **Plastic Bag Bows**

### **Materials/ Tools**

- |               |            |                |
|---------------|------------|----------------|
| - floral wire | - scissors | - plastic bags |
|---------------|------------|----------------|

1. Collect and use bags that have the colours of your tree or ones you want.
2. Cut the bags up one side and across the bottom to create a big sheet of plastic.
3. Cut into strips. Take one and wind it around your hand creating loops about 5" long.
4. Take a piece of floral wire and twist it around the middle.
5. Take one loop and pull it towards the middle. Do this for each loop on both sides, fluff them up and pull the ends down to hang below the bow. Adjust and play with the loops until you are satisfied with the way they look.

There are several books available on making bows. Try different patterns using plastic bags as a substitute material. Use the bows on gifts as well. Strips could be used as ribbon to decorate gifts.

## **Laundry Scoop "Snow Shovel"**

### **Materials/Tools**

- |                 |                             |              |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| - laundry scoop | - white/ iridescent glitter | - box cutter |
| - ribbon        | - white glue                |              |
| - fibre fill    | - wire                      |              |

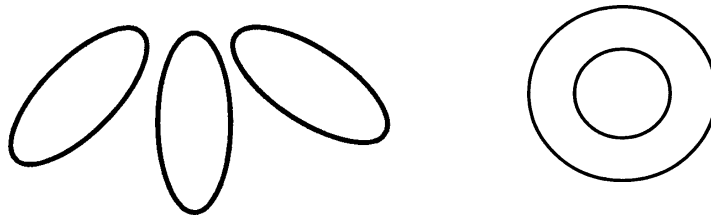
1. Using a clean laundry scoop trim the handle down. Use a nail to punch a hole into the end.
2. Smear a small amount of glue inside and fill with fibre fill allowing some to spill out over the edge.
3. Apply thin glue with a pinching motion spreading it on top of the fibre fill. Sprinkle with the glitter.
4. Make a bow and using the wire secure it to the scoop handle. Add a wire loop to hang it on the tree.

## Light Bulb Globes

### Materials/Tools

- |                      |                                |            |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| - light bulbs        | - T.S.P. (trisodium phosphate) | - glue gun |
| - Zinsser BIN primer | - glue sticks                  |            |
| - paint              |                                |            |

1. Carefully wash the light bulbs with the T.S.P. using the directions on the box. This is an important step to helping the paint adhere to the glass bulb.
2. Take your glue gun and place thick lines of hot glue on the bulb in the pattern you have chosen.
3. Once the glue has cooled and hardened give it a coat of primer. This is another step in ensuring the paint will adhere. When this is dry paint your bulb. You can paint the inside of the pattern a different colour than the rest. You can paint the ridges of pattern another colour. The easiest way to paint the ridges of glue is by using a dry brush technique. Here are some ideas to get you started.



## Bubble Wrap Tree Skirt

### Materials/ Tools

- |               |           |                              |
|---------------|-----------|------------------------------|
| - bubble wrap | - stapler | - spray paint white and blue |
| - spray glue  | - glitter |                              |

1. If using small scraps of wrap overlap and staple together
2. Find the centre and cut a seam to the middle adding a hole in the middle to accommodate the tree trunk.
3. On the bumpy side of the bubble wrap staple small folds randomly around the sheet of wrap.
4. Spray paint the stapled areas with blue spray paint. Spray the rest of it with the white varying the spray intensity to create different textures.
5. When paint is dry turn over and using spray glue add glitter to areas you want to highlight.
6. Wait until its dry to use on the tree.

Please note: Spray in a well ventilated area and this should be done by an adult.



## **Aluminum Icicles**

### **Materials/ Tools**

- scraps of aluminum
- clear beads
- floral wire
- scissors

1. Take a 10' piece of wire and bend in half thread a bead onto it. Give it a twist and continue adding beads until it is the length you want.
2. Add a slender strip of aluminum and gently bend it over so it hangs down beside the beads. Thread a final bead onto one strand of wire then twist the two pieces of wire together to secure. The remaining wire can be used to hang it on the tree. With your fingers curl the aluminum and beads around each other so they create a spiral.

## **Juice Can Angels**

### **Materials/Tools**

- juice can/ pop can
- craft glue
- floral wire
- primer
- felt scraps
- nail
- coffee bag liner
- broken jewellery
- craft paint
- iron

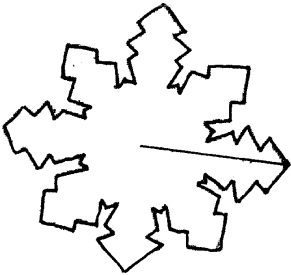
1. Make sure the coffee bag is clean and dry.
2. Use a very thin cloth as a press cloth to iron the coffee bag, melting it together. Set the iron half way between wool and cotton. Iron the bag together checking often to make sure it's not wrinkling or burning. You might want to practice on one before making your angels.
3. Trace out the pattern onto the coffee bag and cut the wings out. Trace the pattern for the harp and cut out as well. You could use sticker instead if you want.
4. Crush aluminum cans by holding your thumbs under the top of the can, with the opening facing you (the opening will become the mouth). Squeeze hard! Fold the top of the can down towards the middle; then poke the bottom of the can down towards the middle on the back of the angel.
5. Prime the angel. Doing this will help the paint adhere. When it's dry paint the inside of the mouth black. Paint the top of the can (the face) flesh tone. When dry, add painted eyes and hair (you could use felt markers for this as well). Paint the rest of the can one colour, it might take two coats.
6. Poke two holes in the back of the angel one-finger width from the top. Looking in the mouth from the front it should only be visible if you tilt it up and back. Position the wings and make small holes to line up with the ones in the angel.
7. Take a 8" piece of floral wire and working from the back feed it through one set of holes pull it almost all the way through and then feed it back through the other set of holes. Twist the ends tightly together and trim the excess wire off.
8. Add the harp to the front and cut the feet from the felt scraps. Glue them to the bottom inside rim on the back of the can. You can add a piece of chain for a halo or have him holding a wreath, a candle, a jewel.

## Friction Fit Snowflake

### Materials / Tools

- coffee bag liner
- plastic place mat
- empty pen or mechanical pencil
- box cutter

Make sure the coffee bag is clean and dry. Use a very thin cloth as a press cloth to iron the coffee bag, melting it together. Set the iron half way between wool and cotton. Iron the bag together checking often to make sure it's not wrinkling or is burning. You might want to practice on one before making your snowflake. Cut the place mat in half. This will be the surface you do your tracing on. To make several you need to make copies of the pattern. Carefully trace the pattern onto the bag pressing firmly with the empty pen if you press too hard you will tear the pattern. After tracing it cut it out and from one point make a cut towards the center.



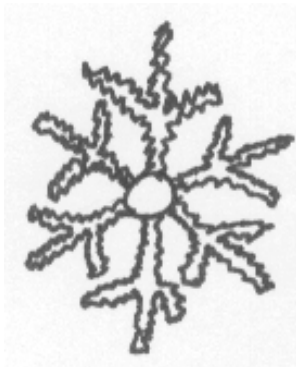
You will need to make two of these for each ornament.

Try fitting the two together by sliding the slit points over each other. You may need to lengthen the cuts you have made. Pierce one side of the slotted point and string with wire or string to hang it with.

## Pipe-cleaner Snowflake

### Materials / Tools

- white pipecleaners
- white felt
- wire cutter



Cut 3 white pipe cleaners in half. Bend each one in half, then bend each side so you have a Red Cross shape. Now bend the two "arms" upward into a cactus shape.

Cut two ½" (1 cm) circles from felt. One at a time, hot glue the cut ends of your 6 pieces onto one circle of felt. Hot glue the second piece of felt over top of the first piece to hide the ends.

Try brushing your snowflake with slightly thinned white glue and adding white glitter.

## Christmas Boxes

### Materials / Tools

- Christmas cards
- scissors
- ruler
- pencil
- glue

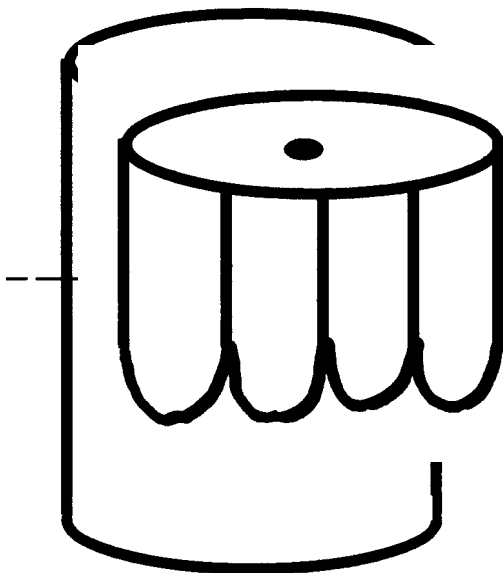
Trace pattern and make a template. Cut along heavy lines. Fold to the inside along light lines. Fold and glue the small flap last. Repeat the same method for the bottom of the box.

## Soup Can Cones

### Materials/ Tools

- |               |                |               |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| - 5 soup cans | - tin snips    | - nail        |
| - 3 buttons   | - wire cutters | - hammer      |
| - floral wire | - varnish      | - work gloves |

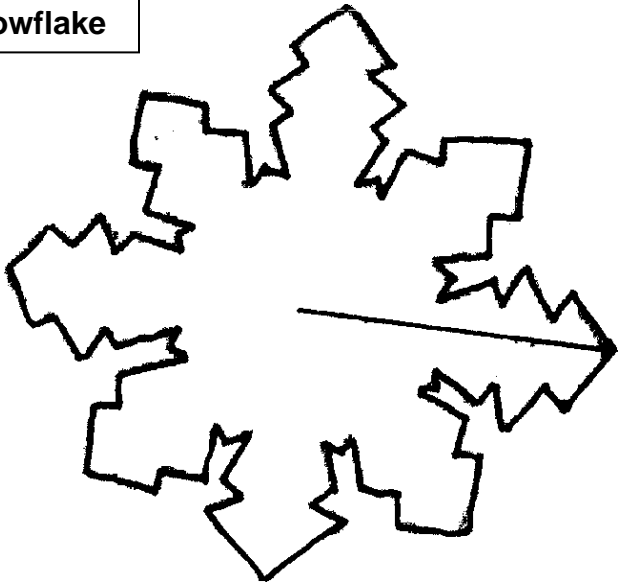
1. Take the nail and punch a hole in the center of the can's bottom.
2. Find the seam line on the side of the can. Use the wire cutters to cut through the rim if it is still on the can. ( Don't use the tin snips as this will ruin them). Cut down the side of the can right to the bottom.
3. Now cut around the can so it's about 5 cm tall.
4. Go around the can and cut it into 8 sections. Carefully round the ends of each section not taking too much off the top. Repeat this with all the cans.
5. Spray the cans with the varnish to blunt the sharp edges.
6. Take a fairly long piece of floral wire and thread a button on it. Then thread it through the hole in a can. Thread another button onto the wire and twist it off about 5 cm from the first can. Add another can and button; twist it off tightly. Now just add the remaining cans, finish off with the last button. It might be nice to have this button white, brown, silver or black so it doesn't show up too much.
7. Now wearing gloves bend the sections back opening the cone up and curling them in the middle lengthwise Then giving the end a sharper curl outwards. The inside can needs one section folded in to cover the hole and the other sections should bend inwards before having the ends curl out. Play around with them until you are happy with how they bloom.
8. Add a bow at the top to cover the can bottom and finish it off. After adding the bow create a loop for a hanger, snip off any excess wire.



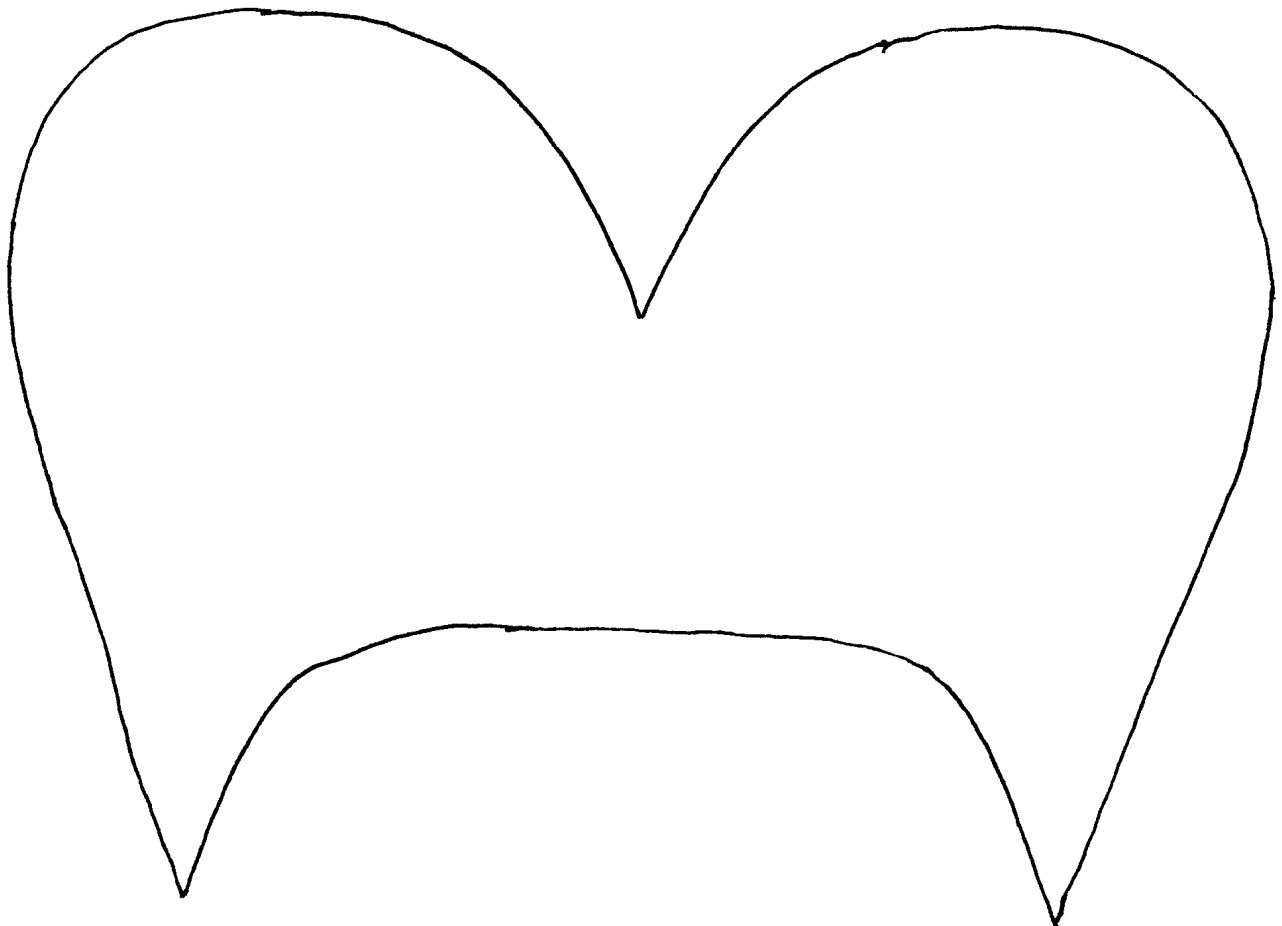
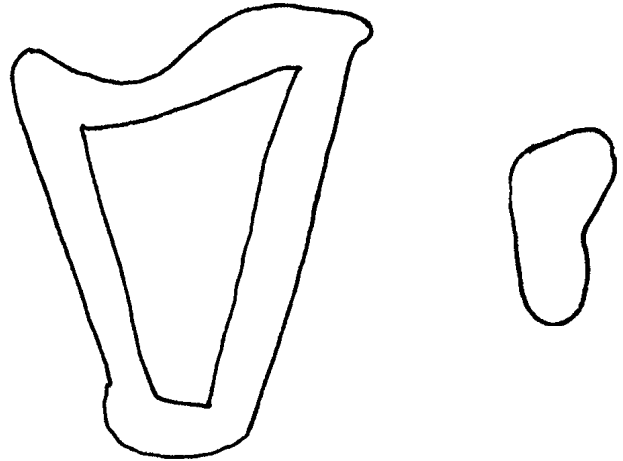
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## Patterns –

Friction Fit  
Snowflake

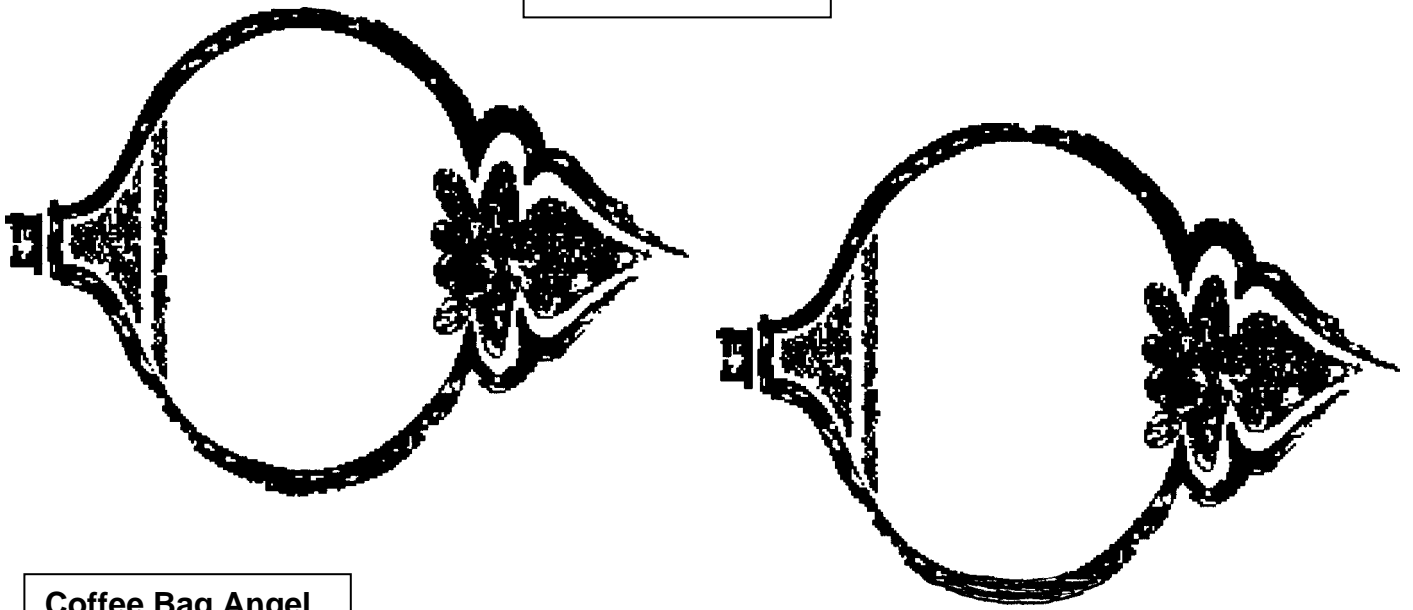


Juice Can Angel –  
Harp, Feet & Wings

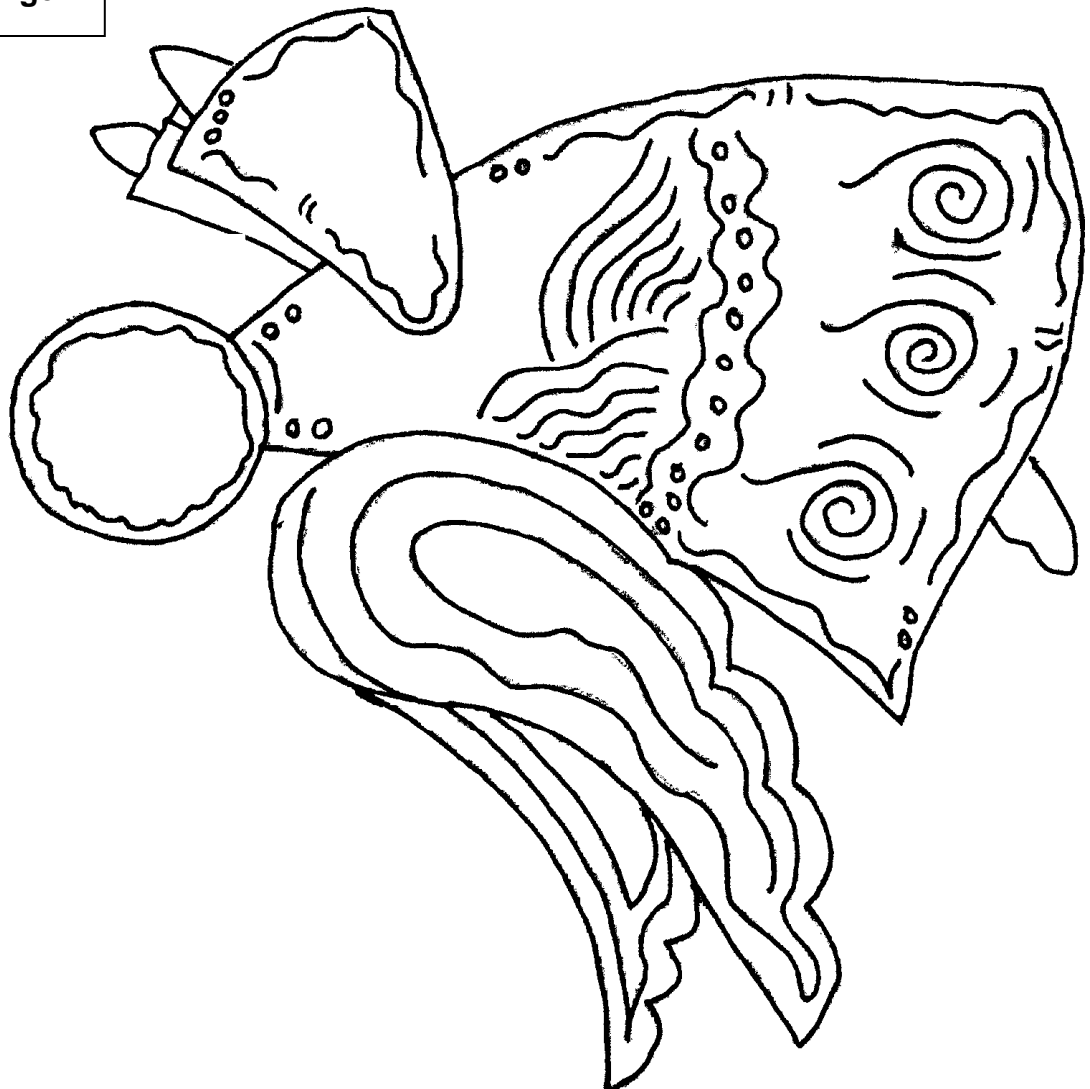


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Aluminum Bulbs



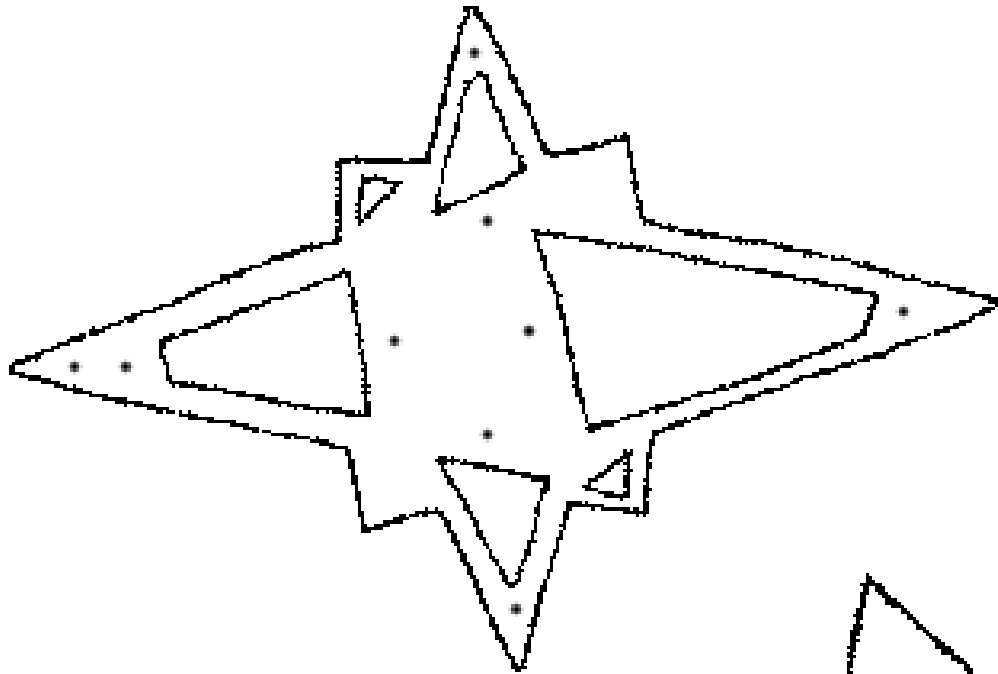
Coffee Bag Angel



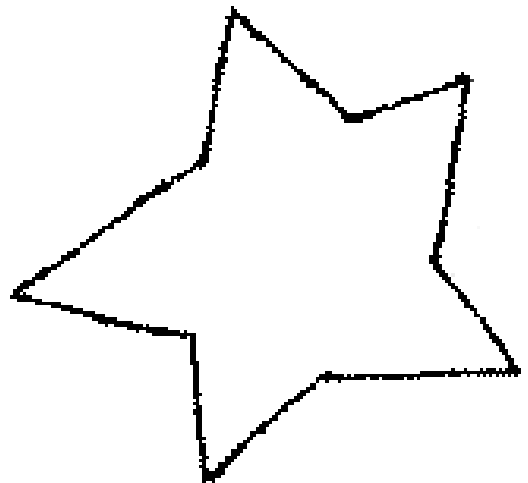
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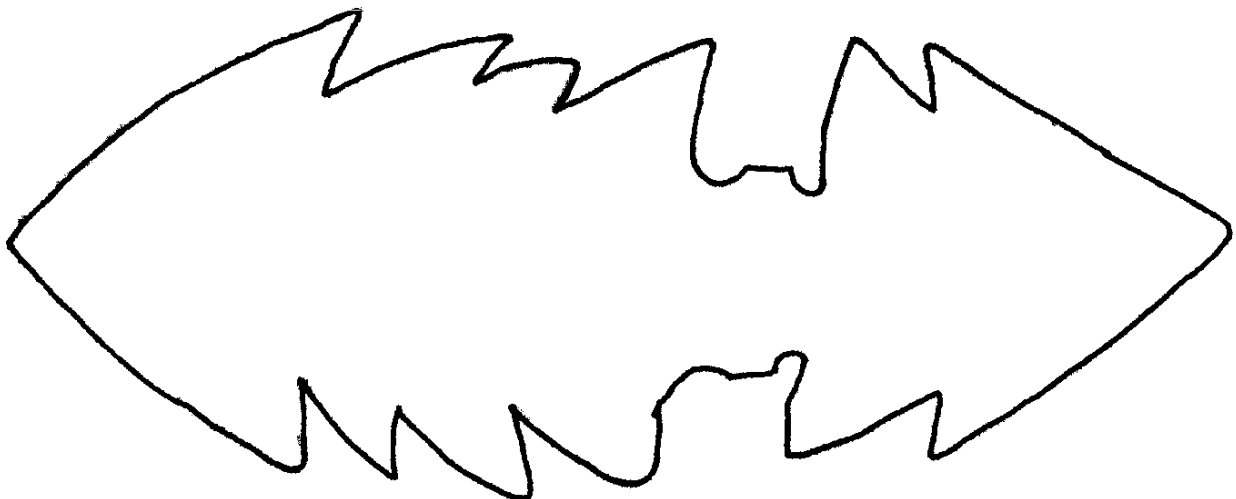
**Coffee Bag Snowflake**



**Aluminum Trees –  
Large & Small Star**



**Aluminum Shadow Tree**



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## Christmas Boxes

