

Little Bird SOS

Working with Clay :: Coil Pots

You will need to provide the following:

- Air drying clay. We think Scola, reinforced air drying clay, works the best
- Waterproof table covering or unwanted A4, or larger, laminated sheets
- Old bit of cotton cloth, cut to approx A4 size, to stop the clay sticking
- Something to hold water for dipping fingers or sponges. Jam jar lids work well
- Aprons - working with clay is messy
- Small sponge - an ordinary wash sponge cut into 4 works well
- A bucket of water or a trug for clearing away
- Patience!

Getting started:

Clay is a wonderfully tactile material to work with but it requires a bit of preparation before use. Clay has a tendency to dry out quickly if left uncovered so may require rehydrating before use. To do this, simply pick off a piece of easy to handle clay and start kneading as you would do with pastry dough. It might feel difficult to do at first but to make it easier, wet your hands to incorporate some moisture, but not too much at once as it might become too mushy. When the clay is easily mouldable, a bit like the consistency of blue tack, it is ready for use. Put any clay, you are not working with immediately, under a damp cloth to retain the moisture. If the clay you are working with starts to crack, this is a sign that it is drying out too quickly. Rectify this by rubbing a little water onto the cracks.

Instructions

1.



To make coil pots start by rolling a small piece of clay into a long sausage shape. Thin rolls will make more delicate pots think thicker rolls will make more robust pots

2.



Once you have an even sausage shape, start to make a coil as illustrated in the picture. If the clay starts to crack, this is a sign that it is drying too quickly.

3.



Continue to make more sausage shapes and build up until the coil is the desired size that you want the base of your pot to be

4.



Next build up the sides of the pot with more sausage shapes to the height you want your pot to be. When you are happy with the shape you can now start to smooth out your pot

5.



To smooth the pot, dip your fingers in a pot of water

6.



Very gently start to rub the coils so that they flatten. Ensure that you also rub about the inside of the pot

7.



Finally, to get a smooth finish, dip a sponge in water, ensure it is damp, rather than sopping wet, and rub gently around the inside and outside of the pot

8.



Once the pot is complete, leave to dry for approx 24 -48 hours

These pots will not be as robust as kiln fired pots but once they are dry, they can be painted with acrylic paints. It is recommended that a layer of varnish is added after the paint had dried as this will help prevent them crumbling.