

How To Make PVC Pipe Look Like A Branch

PVC pipe can be shaped into a fake branch or staff useful in Halloween decorations. It has a few advantages over real branches. They can be constructed to the precise dimensions need for a prop. As they are hollow, they can carry hidden wires for power or animation of attached props. They can be constructed with multiple sections for easy dismantling and storage.



To imitate the tapering of a branch, graduated pipe sizes are used. Pipes that do not fit inside the next larger pipe are filed or ground down. The tips of larger pipes are filed or ground down to taper into the smaller sizes.

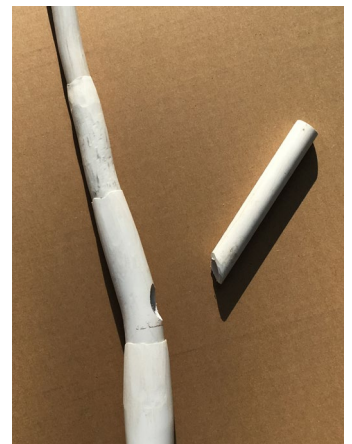
You can warm the PVC with a heat gun to bend the pipe if it is not too large. If you bend too much the pipe will kink. To bend large PVC pipe, tape one end and pour in sand that has been heated to 500 degrees F. Then use a heat gun to warm the outside of the pipe.

When the pipe softens, bend to desired shape. Pour out sand and hold the pipe in position as it cools. CAUTION: wear protective gloves and work in a well ventilated area. Heated PVC can produce dangerous fumes.

The PVC pipes are joined together with hot glue.



Side branches can be joined to the main branch through a hole drilled into the larger PVC pipe. The side branch is held in place with Hot Glue. All bending of the pipe should be done before joining them with hot glue.



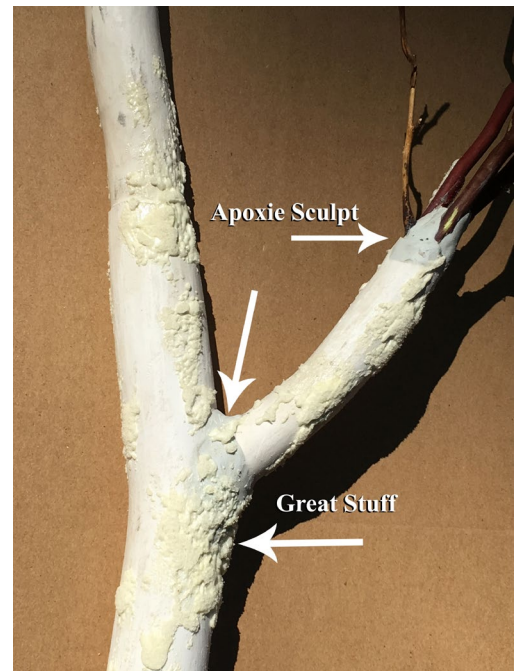
Small real branches or twigs are added to the smallest pipe. The photo here shows the tips of the real branch trimmed. That was only because this branch was going to be transported for a demonstration. Normally you would not trim the tips.



Apoxie Sculpt is then used to create a natural looking junction.

Fresh branches have bark on them. As they deteriorate they lose their bark. A wooden staff would usually have no bark at all.

Bark can be simulated with Great Stuff. Only a thin layer is needed. Many times adding a small amount of Great Stuff to a portion of the real branch helps with the blending. After it cures, the Great Stuff is sanded down to an appropriate thickness.



One of the most important steps is the painting of the fake branch. It should be done in several layers of varying colors. The last layers should be put on with dry brushing to accentuate the textures. It is recommended that the paint be outdoor paint. You may attempt to make the colors of the real branch. But even so it is usually a good idea to paint the branch as well as the PVC.

