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Use pins, beads, and sequins
to glitz up your holiday table!

Glittering Fruit

Diane Fitzgerald



My love affair with beaded and sequined fruit that sparkles and glitters began with a tiny article in the *New York Times* several years ago. It mentioned that caterers were snatching up this 1970s craft item to make sensational centerpieces for gala banquets. I could imagine a huge bowl of this fruit catching the gleaming light of candles and creating a tabletop fantasy. Later, on an antiquing trip to Pennsylvania with my sisters about 1995, I began to notice bags of this fruit at fairly reasonable prices. When I could not find any other beads or beadwork to buy, I began to buy beaded fruit. Pretty soon I had a huge box of nearly 200 pieces of fruit to ship home.

Materials

Styrofoam base
Size 11° seed beads
8mm sequins
1½" long steel dressmaker pins
4–6mm faceted plastic beads
Plastic or silk leaves
String or thin wire

Notions

Serrated knife
Thimble
White tacky glue

Now . . . what to do with it? It was too pretty to stash in the closet. I recalled that before glass ornaments and electric lights were available, people decorated their Christmas trees with real fruit, candles, and strings of nuts and berries. So that's what I did. I purchased an artificial tree with widely spaced branches, and the beaded fruit—which has since grown to nearly 300

and, with a serrated knife, carve the piece to resemble a pear, lemon, apple, or other fruit. Carve a banana from a flat circular piece about 1½" thick. For grapes use 8 to 10 Styrofoam balls about 1½" in diameter. Now you're ready for the fun part. Better get out a thimble to protect your fingertip!

Step 2: Apply beads and sequins at the stem end by picking up a pin, stringing a seed bead, and then a sequin. Dip the tip of the pin in glue and push the pin straight into the fruit base. Overlap the sequins slightly as you add rows to cover the fruit. If you wish, insert a faceted plastic bead between the seed bead and the sequin, but the fruit is pretty either way. After the fruit is covered, add one or two leaves with the pin/glue combination and, if you wish to hang your fruit, a loop of string or wire.

Once you've mastered beaded fruit, you can go on to glittering up any Styrofoam shape you wish, adding ribbons, cord, and other beads. Two balls glued on top of each other make a cute snowman. Hmmm, I wonder if anyone will try a life-size, human form? Let me know if you do! ☺

Diane Fitzgerald lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she writes, beads, and enjoys life. A kit to make six pieces of beaded fruit—an apple, pear, orange, banana, plum, and pineapple—is available for \$27.50 including postage from Beautiful Beads, 115 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis, MN 55401. Checks only; sorry, no credit cards.

pieces—now graces my holiday tree. On the darkest, shortest day of the year, my tree glows with the light of hundreds of sequins and beads all reflecting merrily off each other. My strings of berries are plastic as well, and a beaded/sequined star sits atop the tree.

I'm a twenty-first century kinda gal.

Step 1: Most likely, Styrofoam bases that look exactly like fruit won't be available, but this is not a problem. Buy a Styrofoam ball larger than the fruit you want to make



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