

# The WAYBIGGER Flockin' Tree Machine

by Jack Heier, Craig Linn & Bob Sobol

Do you want to quickly make foreground trees like these, evenly flocked and free of opaque clumps in the canopy? If so, you need to build a Tres Amigos Waybigger Flockin' Machine!

Jack Heier received his original inspiration from the \$118 Turbo Tree, sold over the web at AtlanticScaleModelers.com. But being Jack, he *immediately* saw ways to improve the design and build his own *waybigger* model and at far less cost than the Turbo Tree!

## MAKING A TREE

For these examples Jack selected sage that he harvested near Chama, NM. Jack recommends harvesting in winter, as ticks commonly inhabit live



summer bushes. Good material also grows in and south of Vedauwoo, WY. Gluing several sage stems together forms a fuller tree and minimizes waste. Potentilla, a common landscape plant, and candy tuft (not painted purple) also work well.

Drill a small hole in the base and insert a sturdy pin; this makes planting the tree easier. If desired, form a root ball with brown paintable caulk.

Get green Woodland Scenics Polyfiber and pull petite pieces from the package. Tease them into very open shapes. Attach to branches with diluted white glue.



Jack prefers Noch leaf flake flock, which he ordered from Scenery (a/k/a Scenic) Express. Mixing a little bit of a lighter green into a darker green gives the impression of leaves blowing in a gentle breeze.

A sharp slap knocks off loose Noch leaf flake flock (try saying that fast 3 times!) Spray again with hair spray to fix the leaf particles in place. The tree is now ready to plant.

Spray the tree with “We’re not in Kansas anymore” strength hair spray, then immediately clip the tree’s pin in the alligator clip on the machine’s lid. Plug in power and watch leaves grow on the tree.

To watch a short video of the machine in action:

<http://bobsobol.smugmug.com/Trains/Model/Waybigger-Tree-Flockin-Machine>

or: <http://tinyurl.com/y75hvju>





## Make Your Own Machine

Building a flocking machine is an easy afternoon project. Here is what you will need to gather. Note that most modelers already have many of these items on hand in the junk drawer.



### BILL OF MATERIALS

Jar, waybigger, cheese balls from Sam's, or	\$6.00
Jar, standard, log pretzels from K-Mart	\$5.00
12 volt computer fan, F5 tornado model free-	\$12.00
12 volt wall wart (get adjustable voltage free-	\$20.00
model if purchasing it new)	
Power jack Radio Shack 274-1582	\$3.29
Styrene sheet for diverter vanes, scrap box	\$0.00
Alligator clip Radio Shack 270-346	\$2.99
8-32 screws and nuts, Ace	\$1.00
Feet or chair glides, Ace	\$2.50
Silicone caulk, scrap box	\$0.00
Styrene tubing for spacers, scrap box	\$0.00

If you need to purchase all new parts, the machine will cost about half as much as the Turbo Tree. A 100% markup is very common in retail sales, so the price of the commercial model is really not out of line. You will save the most if you already have an old computer fan and a spare wall wart transformer. Choose a noisy, F5 tornado strength fan if you can.

### Construction

Locate and mark the fan mounting holes. These marks can assist in locating the air diverter vanes. Punch and drill them to receive the 8-32 screws.

Cut a hole in the side, near the bottom, to receive the power jack. If the side of the jar seems too flimsy, reinforce the mounting area with styrene plates.



Solder the jack (not Jack) to the fan. Connect the fan's positive or red wire to the center tip of the jack. Mount the jack to the side of the jar.

Cut small styrene spacer tubes and mount the fan. The rotating hub of the fan faces up. This helps keep flock from falling down into the fan, between the hub and blade.

Trim the spacers to such a length that the center of the fan almost touches the bottom of the jar, but perhaps 1/8 to 1/4 inch clearance remains around the edge of the fan. Don't be afraid to try different heights.

Plug it in to give the fan a quick test. The fan should blow down against the bottom of the jar.

One of Jack's important improvements is the addition of styrene air flow diverter vanes. These break-up the tornado-like laminar air flow found in the original product and convert it to a turbulent flow. Turbulent air more evenly distributes the flock. It also permits the tree to hang from an alligator clip in the center of the lid instead of near the edge. Glue the diverter vanes in place with silicone caulk. At this point it might be a good idea to set the jar aside for the caulk to set up.

There needs to be a way to hang the tree in the container. Punch a hole in the center of the lid and bolt the alligator clip so that it hangs down. A couple of washers may be helpful for strain relief.

That's it! The Tres Amigos Waybigger Tree Flockin' Machine is complete.

Total parts cost: \$15-\$50. A fun afternoon hanging out with good modeler friends: priceless.

If you choose to build the Waybigger model, please **do not eat the cheese balls!** They are hazardous to your health! **I**