
TIPS

Don't Throw Anything Away!

Make Your Own Walls, Tunnel Portals, Etc.

Written By: Jim Schaefer

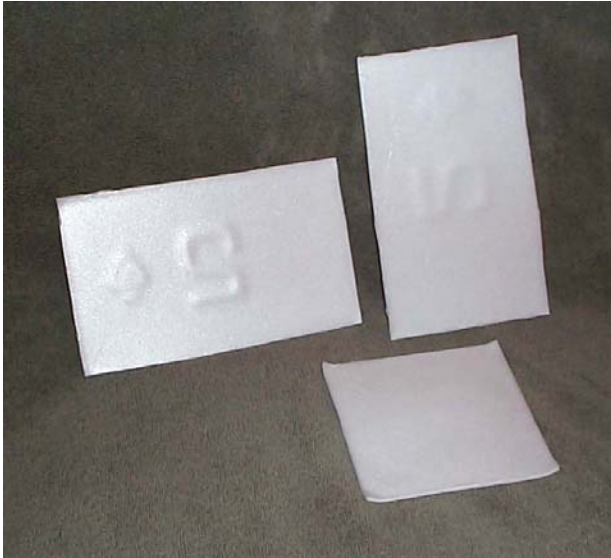
A Division 4 NMRA member gave a clinic years ago saying that you should tell your spouse not to throw away anything except for garbage. It has stuck with me and I used the information to save money, be creative, and have my own signature on my layout. Not to mention that the walls, tunnel portals, etc., will not have that “store bought” look and sheen.

One example is the use of thoroughly dried tea leaves as ground cover.

The best suggestion is to save all of the foam platters that are part of many meat purchases. Clean the platters thoroughly, trim off the edges so that you have flat sheets.



Use foam platters such as these that were saved from meat purchases.



Trim the beveled edges off and retain the flat bottom sheets.

Use a dull pencil, slightly sharpened Q-Tip, or a similar dull pointed object to outline what you would like to make. For a portal or wall built with field stone, draw horizontal lines free-hand. Don't scribe too deeply. As you scribe the lines, imagine what a field stone structure would look like.

For the vertical lines, scribe here and there between two horizontal lines. Vertical joints are staggered to enhance structural strength.

Making portals for tunnels, remember that it isn't necessary to have corner strips. Don't forget to scribe in the locking keystone or concrete to the top center unit.



Here is a partial scribed retaining wall. To finish it, it needs to be painted, trimmed, and installed on your layout.

Paint the various stone shapes with colors like gray, red, brown, green or other natural looking colors. Make them anything but glossy or bright.

For concrete block, use a ruler to help scribe straight horizontal lines and then alternating lines for the vertical joints.

If you're into building items from foam, there is no limit to what you can do.

Send in some of your results so that others can benefit, like I did!

