

# Papier-mache

*Can you tell us how to make papier-mache?*

Actually there are several ways. I like to make papier-mache mash, which gives you sort of a dough-like substance. You first shred newspaper into bits of confetti. Put it into a bucket or other container and cover it with very hot water. Let this soak overnight.

The next day, fish out the pulp and put it in a strainer and mash out as much water as you can. At the same time you'll be mashing it into a pulp. For each cup of the pulp, you should add two tablespoons of paste. Wheat paste mixed according to directions, is often used. Diluted white glue, mixed half-and-half with water, also is used. I like to use both wheat paste and the white glue equally. Stir the glue and paste in to be sure it's all well-mixed and that it doesn't have any lumps.

You can also put the confetti and water over the fire and bring it to a boil for 30 minutes or so. This will make it turn into pulp much quicker. Many people also just use torn strips of newspaper which they soak for 15 minutes or so in white glue and water or in wheat paste. You can also fireproof the papier-mache by stirring in a teaspoon of sodium phosphate for each cup of mash.

The mash can be dried with a hand-held hair dryer, or you can just let it dry naturally, which usually takes overnight. It can be sanded and painted after it's formed. Most people use water-based poster paints. After the painting is done, a clear sealer is a good idea. You can use shellac, varnish or a spray-on plastic finish.

*Send questions or suggestions to Al Carrell, c/o Community Relations Dept., The Journal, Box 2421, Edmonton T5J 2S6.*