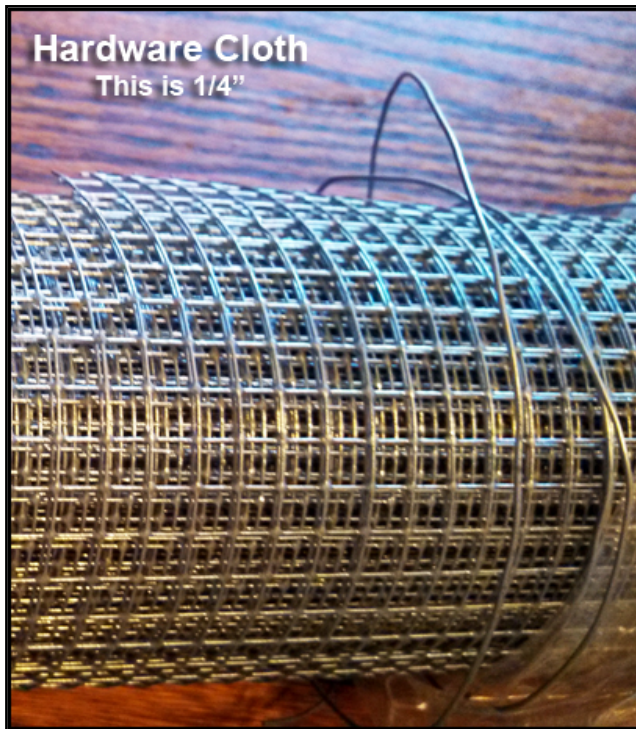


Hardware Cloth Wire Forming Tutorial

By Beverly Walker of www.WalkersWayWeeds.com

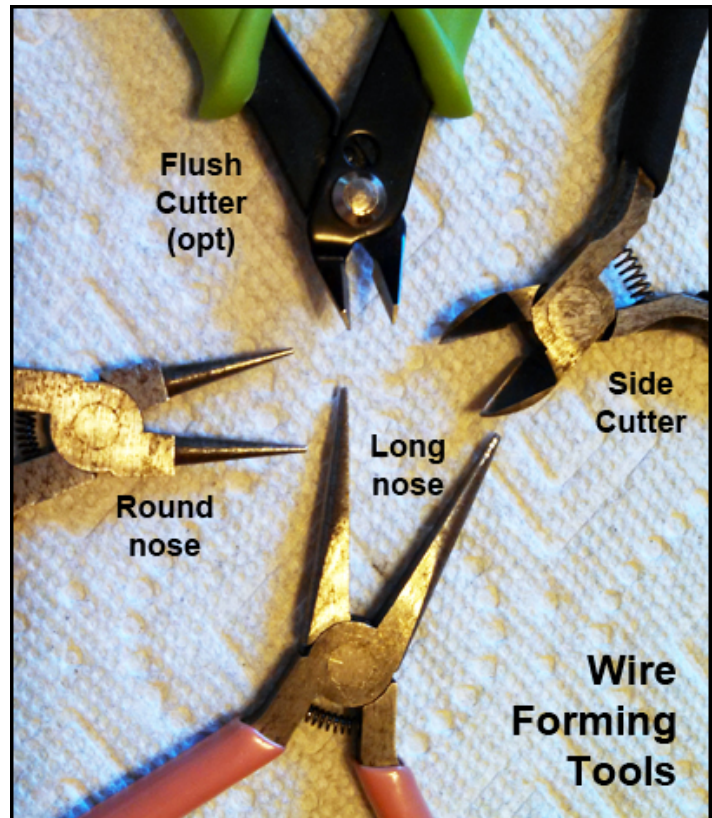


Hardware cloth is made of galvanized steel wires that are welded into a screen mesh. It can be purchased by the roll at hardware and home improvements stores in a variety of sizes: $\frac{1}{4}$ ", $\frac{1}{2}$ ", and 1" mesh (size of the square openings). It is not very expensive considering the vast number of miniature things that can be made from it, or uses around the house and yard.

I primarily use $\frac{1}{4}$ " and $\frac{1}{2}$ " mesh for armatures, and to create miniature garden accessories and embellishments for fairy houses. It's easy to work with and if I mess up, I have lost mostly my time and not much money (I reuse my scraps and mistakes).

TOOLS

- You will need a few wire forming and cutting pliers. I use jewelry making pliers with the $\frac{1}{4}$ " mesh, but regular sized pliers will work fine for the larger mesh sizes.
- Graph paper, pen, pencil and eraser are essential in creating a design before you ever cut the first wire.
- Emory board, needle files, or sandpaper are helpful with getting rid of the sharp points of wire.
- Paint, magic markers, paint pens, and clear sealer help to give the mini mesh creations a finished look.

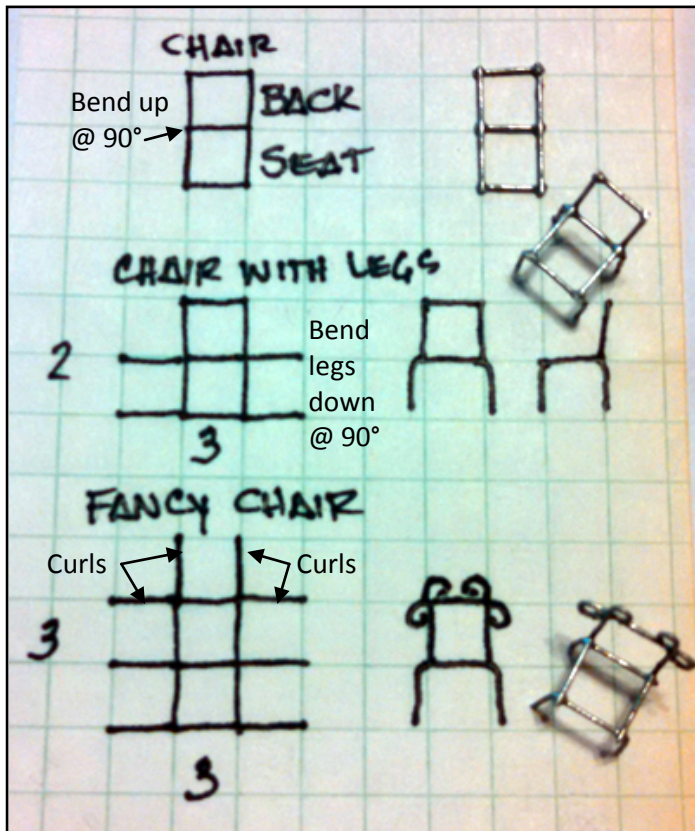


BASICS

It is difficult for some of us to conceive 3-dimensional items in a flattened form, or vice-versa. Experiment with a few simple structures until you get the hang of sketching their patterns, and used to the properties of the hardware cloth, to gain confidence with your own designs.

PATTERNS

Here are a couple patterns to get you started.



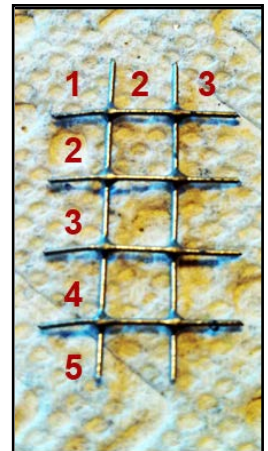
Chairs

These are patterns for a simple chair to a fancier one. The patterns (on $\frac{1}{4}$ " graph paper) are on the left, a sketch of the completed piece from the front (center), and the finished hardware cloth chairs on the right.

The numbers are the amount of squares, or rows and columns, needed to create the chairs.

The long, or needle, nose pliers are used to bend the wires in the direction needed.

The round nose pliers are used to form the curly-cues on the fancy chair.

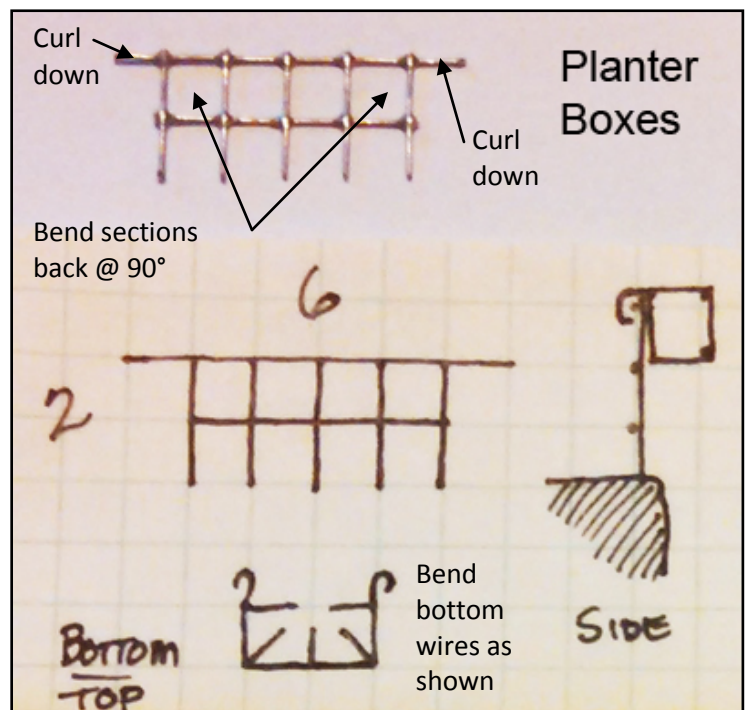


Planter Boxes

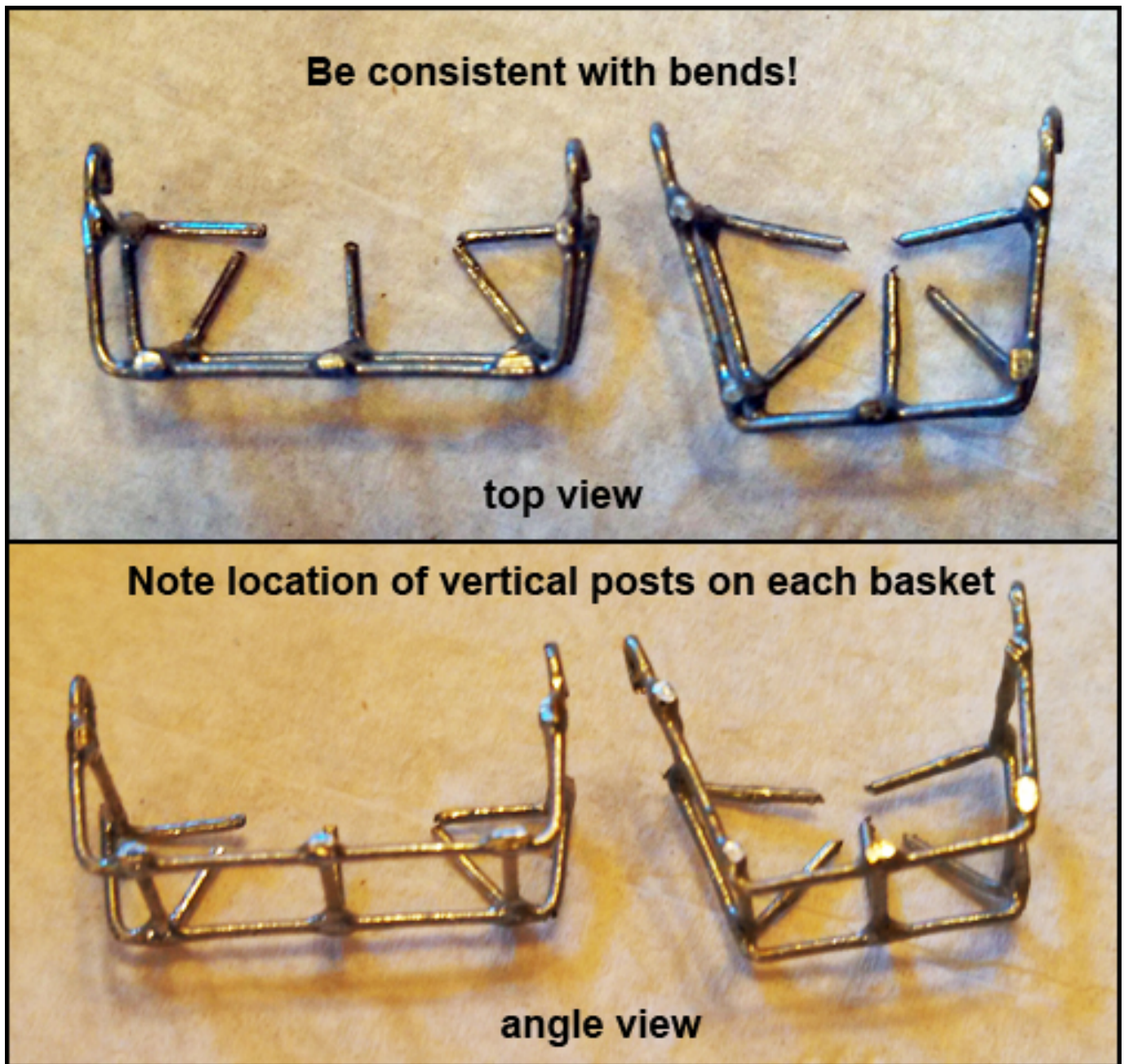
Here is the design for those interested in the planter boxes I made for the Fairy Castle Cottage.



Compare the "Side" in the sketch with the photo above. The "Bottom/Top" sketch shows the hooks out to the sides, but they actually go toward the back.



These larger photographs may help explain more than my descriptions about forming the planter boxes, along with a caution about bending the hardware cloth.

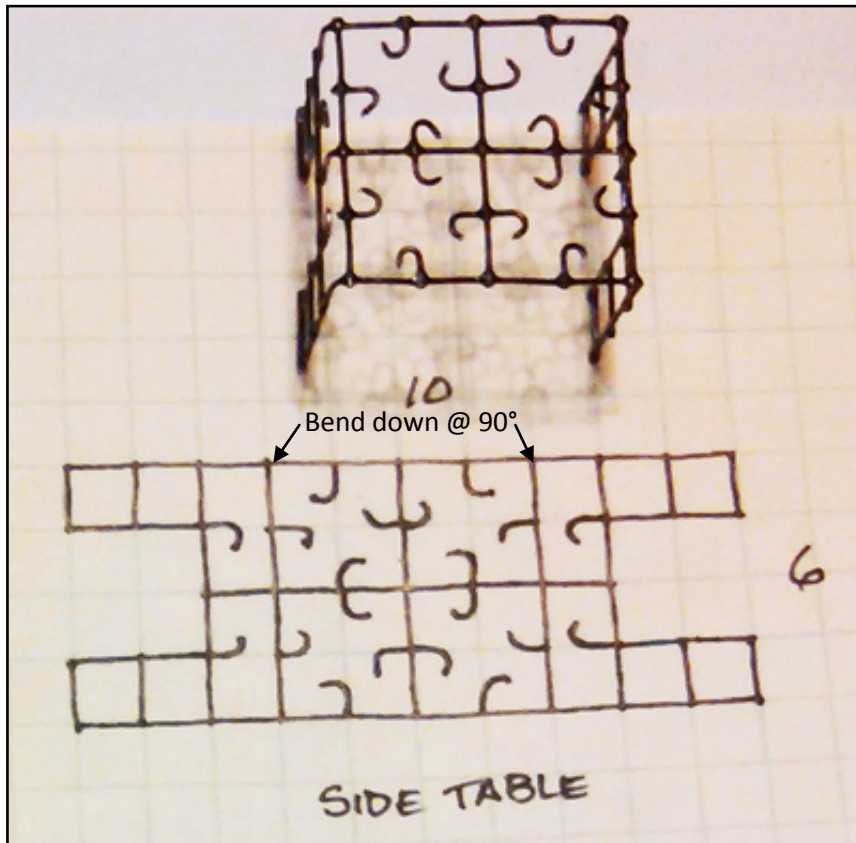


Neither of these planter boxes is wrong. They were just formed differently with the very same size piece of hardware cloth. When forming multiples of your own pieces, make sure your bends are in the same places for consistency.

Fancy Side Table

I started out making miniature patio furniture for my 1/4"-scale fairy houses. I used 1/4" polymer clay squares for the seat cushions and table tops. I have used clear plastic from store packaging, little mirrors, and bits of wood veneer for the table tops and seating.

Currently, I am experimenting with patterns within the hardware cloth and do not want to cover them up. Here is a simple one for you to try.



Seed beads can be strung onto the wires for more decoration or as feet for table and chair legs.

Smaller gauge wire can be wrapped for embellishment or to attach multiple components for complex designs.

TIPS

- Don't bend the hardware cloth too closely to a weld connection. The connection can sometimes break.
- Don't bend the wires back-n-forth too many times or they will definitely break! Bummer when it is the very last bend made. The photo at right shows a love seat without a rear leg. It broke off while I was finishing the adjustments for the legs . . . grrrr!
- Use the flush cutters (if you have them) to remove as many sharp points as possible, and then use an Emory board or small file to smooth them down before joining pieces or painting.

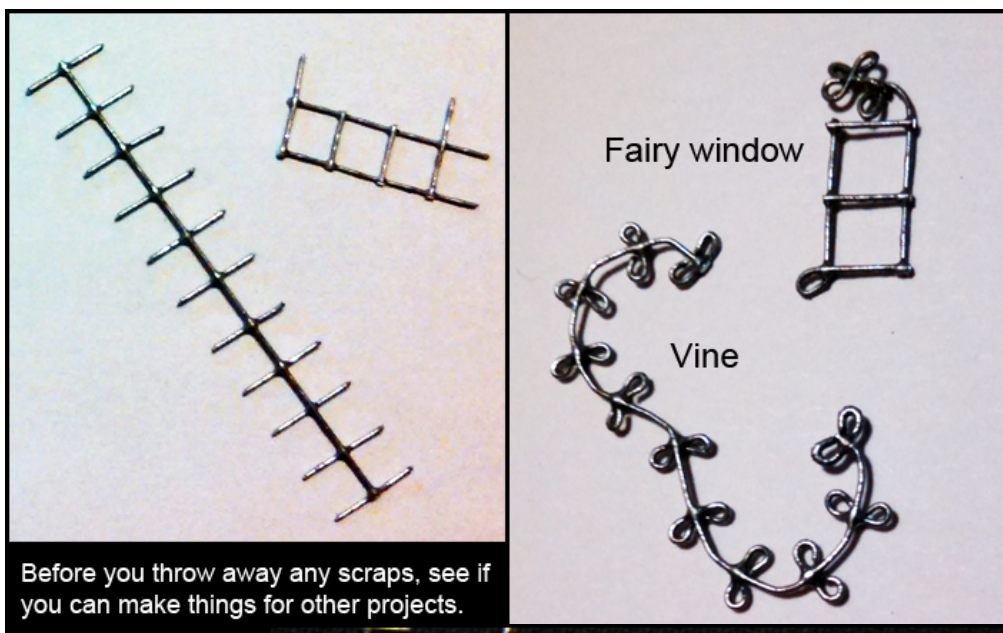


BEST TIP: BONUS GOODIES

Awe, you thought this tutorial was over! I saved the best for last. You will have a pile of scrap hardware cloth after making your projects, along with a few mishaps. Don't throw them away just yet!

- The stray pieces could be used to practice scrolling or curling the wires.
- Practice making bends you're not comfortable with using the scraps.
- Even the smallest bits of hardware cloth could be used to make embellishments for other projects.

*I hope you
can get a few
ideas from
these examples.*



OK, now we're done!

I hope I was able to explain enough about forming hardware cloth to get you started.

Have fun and thanks for reading!

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Bev Walker

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