

Mixed Media - Button Blossoms

~ Julie Picarello ~



SUPPLY LIST:

Polymer Clay: I prefer Premo for color mixing, but really, any clay will be fine for this project. If using Premo, try to have *Ecrú* on hand. You will be blending clay to compliment the colors of the vintage button that you have chosen to use, so use the button palette as a guide. The total amount of clay needed will be less than one 2-oz brick overall.

Standard Polymer Tools:

pasta machine, roller/brayer, sharp tissue blade, water spritzer

Special Tools/Supplies:

16 ga wire

Hammer & bench block (optional)

Metal hole punch or disc cutter

Petal Cutter (approx. 1" long, ½" wide)

Circle cutters (approx. 1" round and ¾" round)

Pliers: heavy duty flush cutters, round nose, chain nose

Bail tool or pencil to wire wrap the bail loop

Metal discs and/or mesh in varying sizes

Sandpaper in 400/600/800 grits

Bench lathe or soft cloth for polishing

Imprint/Texture Tools:

Smaller-scale imprints will work best for the petals of the blossoms...circles, lines, dots, etc.

Buttons, Buttons, Buttons!



A word of warning...collecting buttons can become addictive. The image below is just a partial shot of my button boxes. Which are filled with buttons purchased mainly on EBay and Etsy. I like metal buttons with a metal shank, but I have used plastic buttons as well, you will just need to test them beforehand to ensure they can tolerate the oven temp.

The colors of the button you choose may help you with building your color palette for your imprint stack...but it could also be very different if you choose.

I typically use buttons that are between 1/4" to 3/4", but it really depends on the metal disc pieces you will be layering it with.

See the next pages for more info on metal discs and mesh that you may want to include in your blossom.

Etsy & EBay: Bead caps, filigree, metal stamping discs, perforated discs

Good Sources: [oritdotan](#), Creative Journeys, [themetals](#)

Hardware store/[Amazon](#): plaster washers

NOTE: look for pieces that have a center hole large enough to accommodate the metal shank of your button. If the hole is not large enough you can use a [metal hand punch](#) to enlarge it

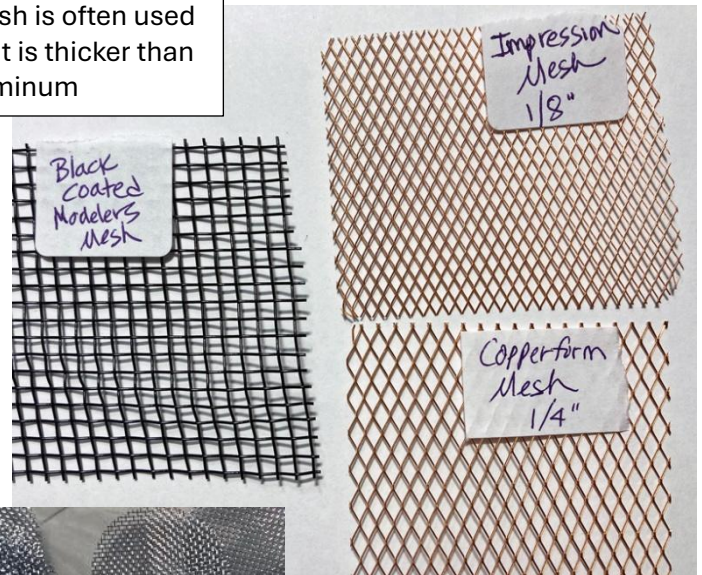




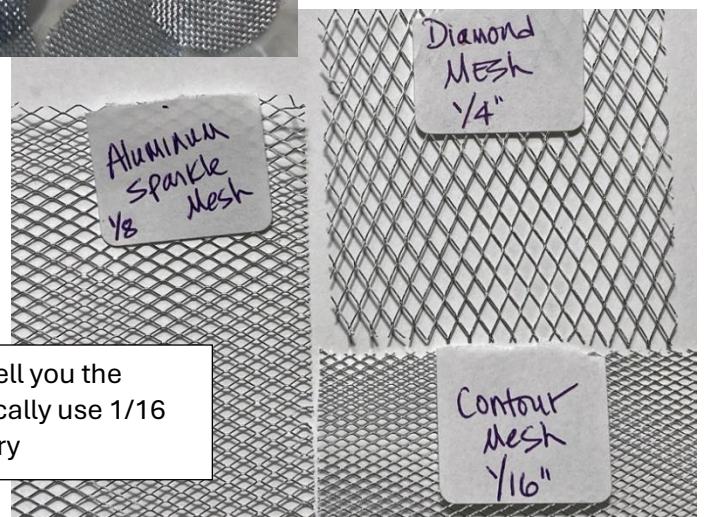
Adding a circle of mesh to your blossom can add a great deal of interest. There are many different mesh varieties that are fun to work with, and some of them can be colored with metal patina paint for an added design element in the centerpiece =>



Black Coated mesh is often used for armatures as it is thicker than the copper & aluminum



Smoke Shop nearby? You can pick up pre-cut aluminum rounds in this cute little holder



The package will tell you the pattern size; I typically use 1/16 or 1/8' in my jewelry

Button Blossoms combine the best of all worlds – the wonderful range of color and pattern of polymer, the strength and beauty of metal, and the fun of hunting for vintage buttons to create an eye-catching centerpiece. How cool to wear a piece of jewelry that includes a history – imagine what stories your vintage buttons could tell you!

Finish the blossom with hammered metal wire wrapped into a decorative stick bail -or- choose to add a polymer bail or pin back instead.



Step 1: Create Flower Petals

1) Texture or pattern clay for the surface of the petals; the final thickness of the sheet should be approximately 1/8 inch. Place a piece of plastic wrap on top of the patterned clay and use a cutter to stamp out six petals. The plastic will help to dome the petals and smooth the edges.

2) Roll a piece of scrap clay on a #4 medium setting on the pasta machine. Use a circle cutter to punch out the shape and gently place the petals equidistant around the circle. With a piece of deli paper on top, gently press the tips of the petals into the circle base so they are firmly connected. Cure for 30 minutes, let cool, then sand and buff to the desired shine.



Step 2: Add Centerpiece and Bail

1) Because raw clay is being attached to cured clay, use a brush or toothpick to apply a small amount of TLS to the center of the cured base. Roll a small ball of clay and press it down over the TLS so that a solid connection is made as the raw clay spreads into the gaps between the petals.

2) For the bail, wrap a loop on one end of a 16-gauge wire large enough for cord, chain, etc. Form an eye pin on the other end and then hammer the wire if desired for a textured look. Set the bail so the eye pin is centered on the raw clay over the cured base and press down to form an indentation. Roll a small ball of clay and press it firmly over the eye pin.



3) The button centerpiece can now be added. Stack the button and the punched metal disc together so the shank extends through the hole in the disc. Thread a small piece of wire through the shank and bend it so it holds the button in place. Press clay over the wire and shank until it is completely covered. Firmly press the button into the raw clay covering the eye pin, making sure that the

shank is embedded firmly in the clay. This clay-to-clay connection will ensure that the button centerpiece is securely attached. Cure again for 30 minutes.



Step 3: Finish the back of the flower:

1) Roll out a small amount of clay on a medium thin setting and punch out a circle with a cutter. This circle should be slightly larger than the one used in step #7, and it can be textured is desired.

2) Spread a thin layer of TLS over the circle on the back of the flower and then set the larger circle over it. Gently but firmly press down on the circle to ensure there is a connection to each petal, as this will give additional strength to the piece.

3) One last time, cure for 30 minutes, then sand and polish.