

Instructions: Recycled plastic bag carnations for by Lady Kitt

Recycling one plastic shopping bag to make two carnation- style flowers.

More info about the Drag Declares Emergency project here: www.ladykitt.com/drag-declares-emergency



Materials:

- Plastic shopping bags (to maximize the recycling benefits, use bags that have holes in them/ handles missing etc and not bags that can still be used for carrying stuff!)
- Florist wire (I recommend green lacquered 28 gauge wire, but any thin florist / jewellery / gardening wire or pipe cleaners will work)
- Twig / short branch / withies

Tools:

- Scissors
- Wire cutters
- Cutting board

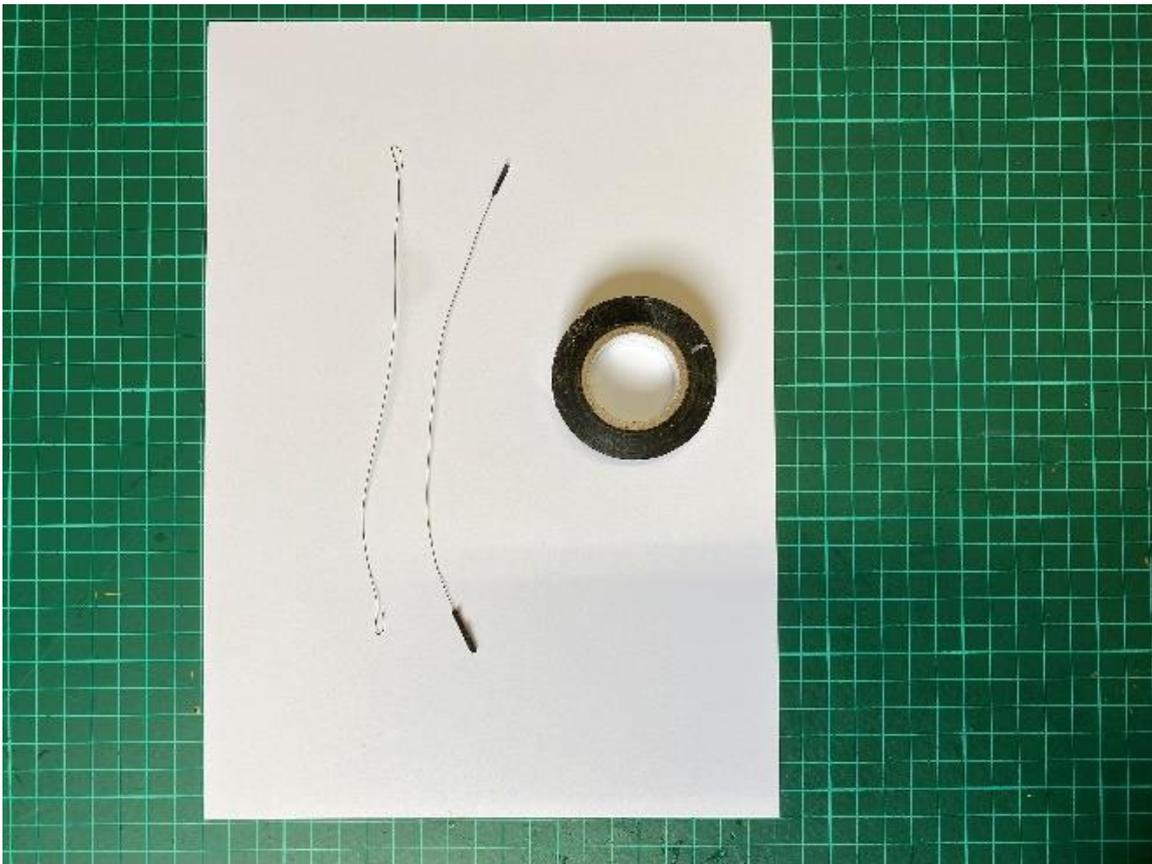


Health and safety:

- Handle scissors / wire cutters with care
- Supervise children using sharp tools
- Consider using gloves when handling wire

Method:

1. (Optional- may be useful if making these with children) Cut two lengths of wire/ pipe cleaner (each around 8 inches / 20cm long). Carefully fold the 4 ends of the wires upwards. With scissors cut four short strips of tape. Wrap a strip of tape around each of the four ends, so any sharp edges are covered. Set these aside for later



2. Lay out a plastic bag on the cutting board, as flat as possible. Most bags have pleated sides or a pleated base. Folding these inwards will help to keep the bag flat
3. Use scissor to cut off the handles of the bag by trimming along the top end in a straight line from one side top the other
4. Use scissors to cut off the bottom of the bag by trimming along the bottom from one side to the other. Try to keep the incision as close to the bottom of the bag as possible to maximise the amount of plastic you have left to use!



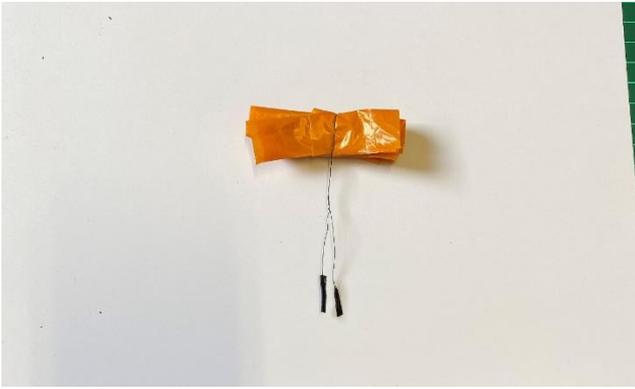
5. Cut one side of the bag from bottom to top so you are left with one long sheet of plastic
6. Cut this sheet length ways into 6, roughly equal, strips
7. Cut each of these strips in half horizontally, so you are left with 12 strips



8. Layer the strips in 2 piles of 6
9. Take a pile of strips and place it on the board with one of the short sides directly in front of you. Starting from the bottom, concertina fold the strips together. A concertina fold has many names! It is sometimes called a fan, zig zag, accordion or staircase fold.



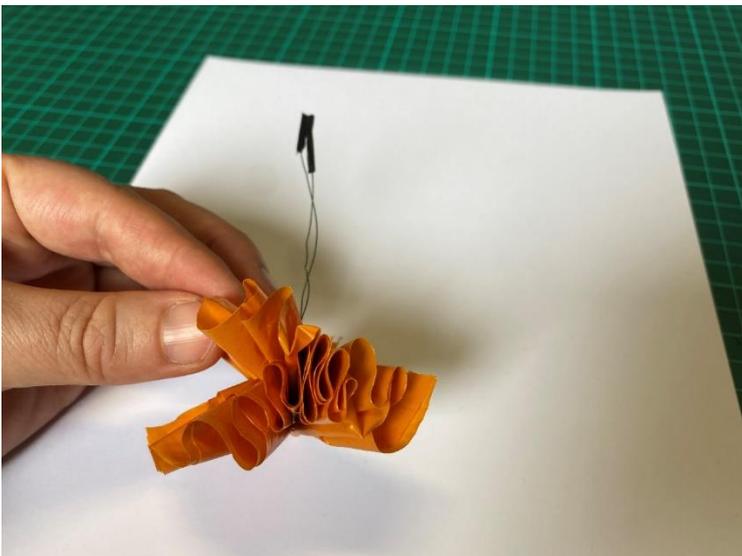
10. Once the first pile of plastic strips is completely folded, place one of the pre prepared lengths of wire around it's middle. Pull the wire together tightly around the centre of plastic and twist 3 or 4 times so they hold the strips securely together



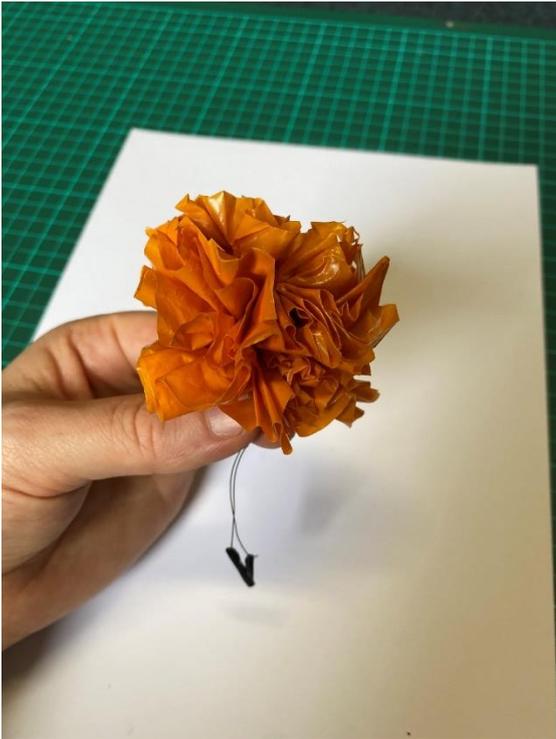
11. Fan out the layers of plastic at either side of the wire, so it forms a “bow tie” shape



12. Hold the two ends of the wire in one hand pointing down (this will become your flower stem). With your other hand pull the top layer of the plastic sheet upwards and towards the central wire, so it separates from the other 5 sheets. This is your first set of flower petals!



13. Continue to do this with each of the 6 layers on one side of the “bow tie”, then repeat with the 6 layers on the other side. You should now have a carnation shaped flower on top of a wire stem!



14. Use the scissors to tidy and shape the petals

15. Wrap the wires around a twig to create a flower with a stem

16. Repeat stages 9-15 to create your second flower

17. Once you have your basic flower shapes you can do all sorts of fun and creative things with them.

Maybe try:

- Dipping the flower head in paint (or glue then glitter) to give the edge of the petals contrasting colour / sparkle
- Collecting together a number of flowers to create a bouquet
- Attaching flowers to an Alice band or paper crown to make a colourful head dress
- Tying flowers to a length of ribbon as an alternative to bunting (as they are plastic they can survive outside in wet and windy weather for quite a while!)



In my work I use this technique to create installations and sculptures. I build structures from card, wire or withies and cover them in 100s (sometimes 1000s!) of these flowers. You can see some images by following this link: <https://www.ladykitt.com/flower-shrines>

I also use these flowers to create headdresses for drag characters, garlands and bunting for community celebrations (including pride).

