

# History Of Quilling

By Eileen Walters

## History:

Quilling is also known as paper rolling, filigree, mosaic and paper scrolling. 16th and 17th century French and Italian nuns, ladies in the Stuart, Georgian and Regency periods and North American settlers all practised the art of quilling and some sources say it was even practised in Ancient Egypt. Nuns on the continent decorated reliquaries and pictures with quilled shapes adding gilding and other ornamentation. The ecclesiastical connection was maintained when the art spread to England with the development of paper, though vellum and parchment were also used. Poorer churches gilded or silvered paper and it was difficult to distinguish it from real gold or silver filigree work.

This craft was always practised by 'ladies of leisure' – never by the 'working class'. Work panels, coats of arms and later tea caddies, work boxes, screens, cabinets and frames were all decorated with quilling. After falling out of fashion for a while an attempt to re-introduce the craft was made by Wm. Bemrose and in 1875, a kit called 'Mosaicon' was produced together with a handbook and later a reference in an Edwardian book of household management entitled 'Floral Mosaicon' was also found.

Many museums around the country and abroad have examples of antique work either on display or stored behind the scenes. With the introduction of modern papers and techniques, quilling is currently enjoying a well deserved revival. Most of the basic shapes used in the art of quilling are made from either tight or closed loose coils. Below is an introduction for beginners to the techniques of the basic shapes.

## Techniques:

### Tight Coils:

**Peg:** Roll a strip of paper on the quilling tool and glue the end before taking it off.



**Bell or Cup:** Roll a strip of paper onto the quilling tool and glue the end before taking it off.



Then push up into a bell shape and glue the inside to help it keep it's shape.

### Closed Loose Coils

**Closed Loose Coil:** Roll the paper on the quilling tool then drop it onto the work board and allow it to uncurl for a while. Put a small amount of glue onto the end and hold gently for a few seconds until dry. It's a good idea to make several like this before glueing.



**Teardrop:** Start with a closed coil as above. After glueing, pinch one end to form a point and make the teardrop shape.



**Eye:** Start with a closed coil. After glueing hold between finger and thumb of each hand and pinch gently to form the eye shape.



**Diamond:** Start with a closed coil and pinch to form an eye shape (as above) but when pinching the ends, push the shape together so as to form a diamond.



**Square:** Start with a closed coil. Lightly pinch just the outer ring or two of the coil at opposite ends, then lightly pinch the other two sides to form a square.



**Triangle:** Start with a closed coil. Then make in the same way as the square (above) but pinch only three sides each a third of the way round the coil.



**Leaf:** Start with a closed coil, pinch the ends to make an eye shape and when holding between finger and thumb gently twist to form an 'S' shape or leaf.



**Petal:** Start with a closed coil. Pinch the top to form a teardrop and as you pinch, twist slightly to make a curved petal.



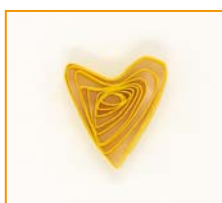
**Oval:** Start with a closed coil and squeeze the sides gently without pinching to flatten slightly into an oval.



**Half Moon:** Start with a closed coil and push one side in around a pencil or quilling tool handle. Lightly pinch each end of the resulting curve.



**Heart:** Start with a closed coil. Pinch at one end to form a point. Push the opposite end around a pencil to make the top of the heart.



**Holly:** Start with a closed coil. Pinch the coil around the centre with a pair of tweezers, then pinch and push each end towards the tweezers to make the six points.



**Eccentric Coil:** Start with a closed coil, pull the centre to one side and glue in place. This can be done using tweezers or placed on a board and held with pins.



The two cards shown in this article are made from just two or three of these basic, simple shapes with double strips of paper for the stems.

Tight coils are perfect for all sorts of flower centres while the eye shapes and teardrops (used in these designs) are as good for many types of petal as the more curved 'petal' shape is.

Much of the information in this article is taken from the Quilling Guild Members handbook.





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