

Paint Brush Pocket Guide For Trees

Get Only What You Need

Remove Guesswork and Save Money

Use this on your smart phone or tablet as a reference when you're shopping for brushes. Or you can go "old school" and print it and take it with you when you shop.

Brushes

Recommended brands: Loew-Cornell, Winsor Newton, Heinz Jordan, Royal Langnickle, DecoArt Traditions Artist Brushes

The FLAT Brush



This brush is sometimes called a Shader, Flat Shader and Glaze or Wash brush.

Buy a #8

Buy a #12

Buy a 1-inch Flat (optional)

The FILBERT Brush



This brush may also come with the name of Cat's Tongue and Oval Wash Brush.

Optional when starting out, but when you do buy,

Buy a #6 or #8.

The ROUND Brush



Buy a #5.

The LINER Brush



Buy a 10/0 mid-length liner for fine work

Buy a #1 long liner for not so fine details

The DEERFOOT Brush



Buy a ¼ inch Deerfoot

Buy a ½ inch Deerfoot

Also comes in 1/8" too but I seldom use that size.

The ANGULAR BRISTLE Brush



This brush is also referred to as an Angular Foliage brush. It comes in 1/4", 1/2", 3/4" and 1".

Buy a ¼ inch

Buy a ½ inch

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PAIN

QUICK & EASY

TREES

Cheryl Poulin



HOW TO PAINT TREES



"Can you teach me how to paint trees?" I am asked that question a lot. The simple answer is, "Yes I can!". There are many ways of painting a tree. Different brushes help in creating different kinds of trees. And the style in which you paint will also influence how that tree will be painted.

If you've never painted before you can find information about all of the brushes I used for these trees in a handy reference at the end of this tutorial.

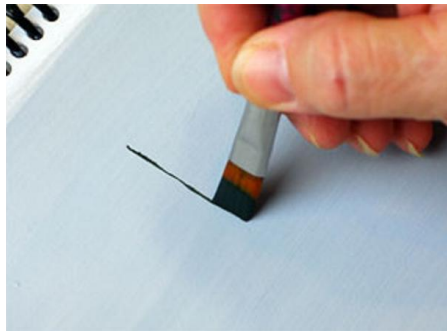
And to make this learning experience even more enjoyable, I have also provided a line drawing for use when following this tutorial on how to paint trees.

Evergreen Tree Using A Flat Brush

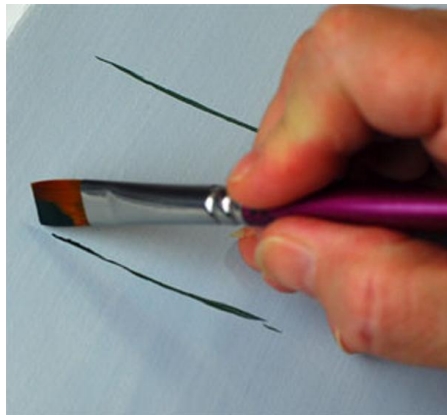


You can learn this free hand technique

Let's start with a simple evergreen tree using a Flat brush. For this example I used a #8 Flat.



Load a Flat brush with green paint. Blend it on your palette and then use the chisel of the brush to create the trunk. Clean the brush and blot it.



Pick up paint on the left side of the brush (sideload) and blend it on your palette. Place the corner of the brush down at the tip to create the top of the tree. Now drop the clean side of the brush down and apply the paint horizontally from side to side. Re-load the brush with paint as needed.

Evergreen Tree Using A Flat Brush



Continue all the way down to the base making wider and wider strokes. Rinse the brush and blot it. Sideload the right side of the brush and repeat the steps above.



While still wet, add some highlights in the same manner using White. When dry, add some stronger highlights here and there to suggest snow.

Simple Evergreen Using an Angle Bristle Brush



Next we'll learn how to paint trees with the Angle Bristle Brush, also known as a Foliage Brush. This brush creates wonderful texture when used in an up and down pouncing motion. We refer to this pouncing motion as "stippling". For this example I used a ½-inch Angle Bristle brush.



Start by drawing a pyramid shape with a straight line down the middle. The line in the middle represents the trunk of the tree. The angle brush has its bristles cut at an angle creating a short heel and a long toe.



Your first step is to load the brush with dark green paint, pounce the bristles on your palette until you see there's nice texture. Place the whole brush down with the toe pointing down and the heel pointing toward the trunk. Lift the brush and continue to stipple along the lower edge of the tree. Swing the toe of the brush from one side of the tree to the other while keeping the heel pointed at the trunk.

Simple Evergreen Using an Angle Bristle Brush



Continue stippling up the tree toward the tip leaving just a little space between the rows of branches. When you get to the tip use just the toe of the brush.



Next, load only the toe of the dirty brush into White. Pounce on your palette a couple of times. The toe should remain white but the heel should become a paler green. Stipple the tree in the same manner making sure to cover the spaces between the rows. And finally, clean the brush clean and blot it well on a dry paper towel. Load the toe into White. Add snowy highlights here and there to add interest.

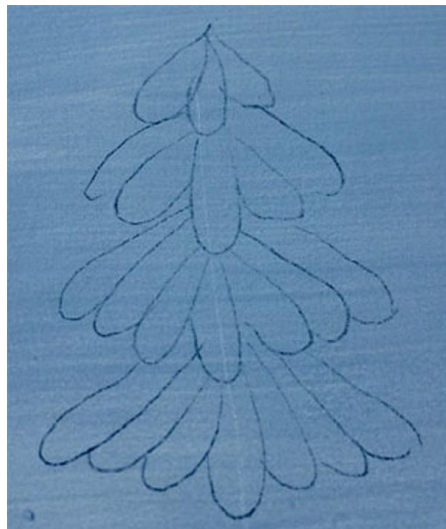
Simple Evergreen Using an Angle Bristle Brush



Folk Art Tree Using A Round Brush



Here's a fun way to learn how to paint trees using the Round Brush. This folk art tree is made up of comma strokes. There's a tutorial for learning how to do these pretty strokes on my website.



Folk Art Tree Using A Round Brush

Trace out the design. We'll paint this tree starting at the wide base and up the treetop. In order to paint this tree you'll have to turn your surface upside down.



In this example I used a #5 Round brush. Load the brush with dark green. Blend it well on the palette and re-shape it to a nice point.



Remove the paint from the tip using the edge of your palette.



Then load the very tip of the brush into White. Tap the brush once or twice on your palette to re-shape the tip.



Use the line drawing to guide you through the order in which each stroke is applied.

Folk Art Tree Using A Round Brush



Place the brush tip down, apply pressure and pull the stroke toward the middle of the tree while releasing the pressure. You should see a nice streaky blend of green and white. Repeat in the order given, reloading the brush for each individual stroke.

See this in closeup detail in my [online video course](#).

Pine Tree Using A Flat Brush



And now we'll learn how to paint trees in a slightly more realistic way. In this demonstration I used a 1-inch Flat but the actual tree featured here was done using a #8 Flat. Using the bigger brush makes it easier for me to show you the details.

Pine Tree Using A Flat Brush



Trace on the pattern for the bare tree. Use a #1 Liner brush to paint the tree with a dark brown.

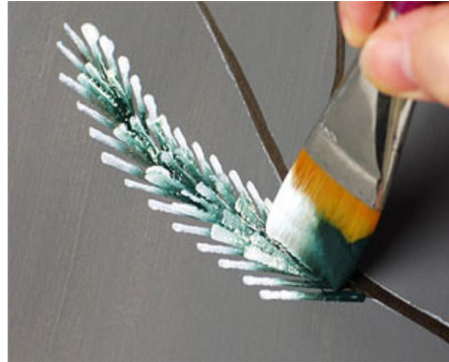


Let's make some easy pine needles, shall we? We'll start by double-loading the flat brush. Load one side into dark green and the other into White. Make sure the colors touch in the middle. Blend on you palette.



Pine Tree Using A Flat Brush

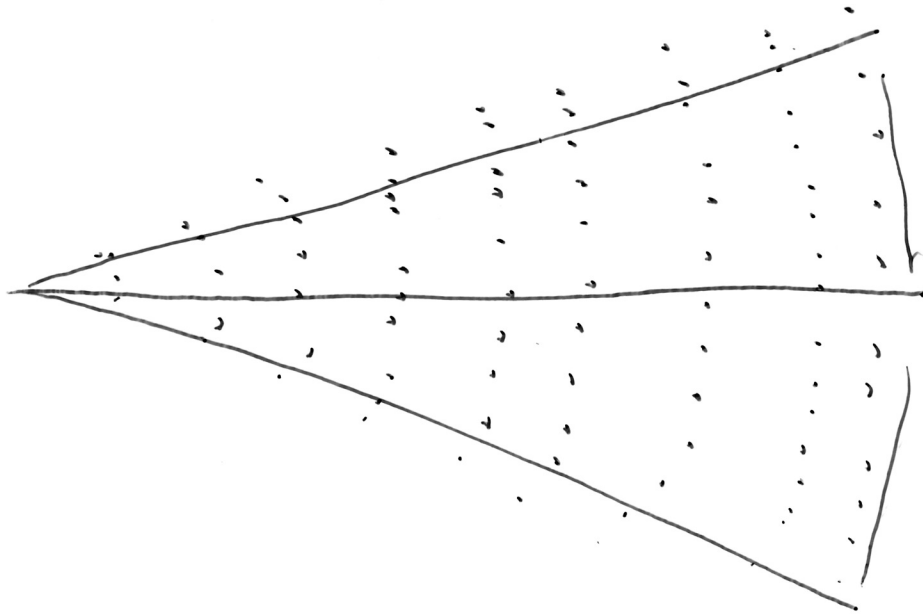
Position the chisel of the brush with the green side touching the branch and the white side pointing out. Start at the base of the branch. Press the brush down leaving a chisel imprint. Move up the branch and as you near the tip pivot the angle of the brush so that the tip tapers. Make your way down the other side.



To fill and add roundness to the branch, add more of these strokes in between both sides of the pine needles you've just created. Repeat for each branch, overlapping the pine needles where they overlap in places. I show this in closeup detail in my online video course. Check it out by [clicking here](#).



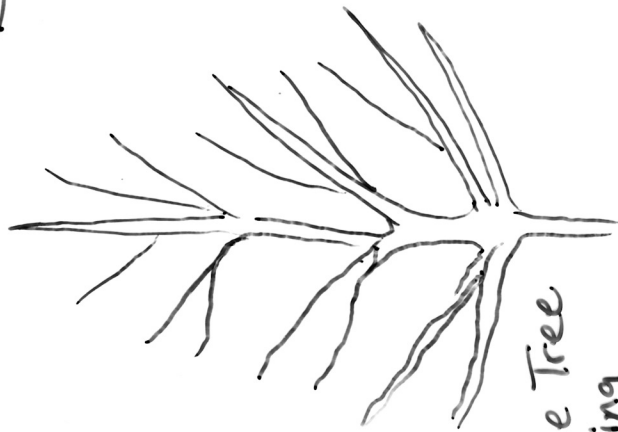
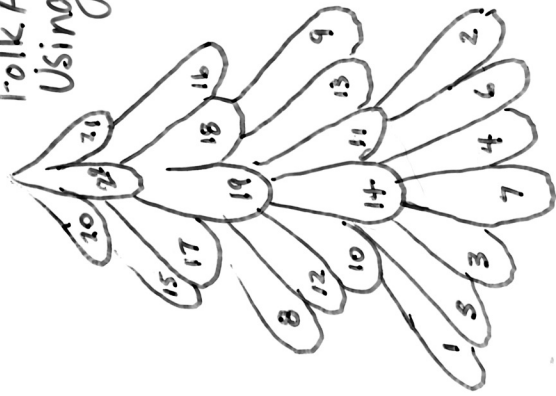
Evergreen Tree
Using 1/2-inch
Angle Bristle Brush



Evergreen Trees
Using #8 Flat



Folk Art Tree
Using #5 Round



Pine Tree
Using
#8 Flat

BONUS TREE PAINTING TUTORIAL

LET'S PAINT SOME TREES IN THE DISTANCE

Early Evening Summer Scene

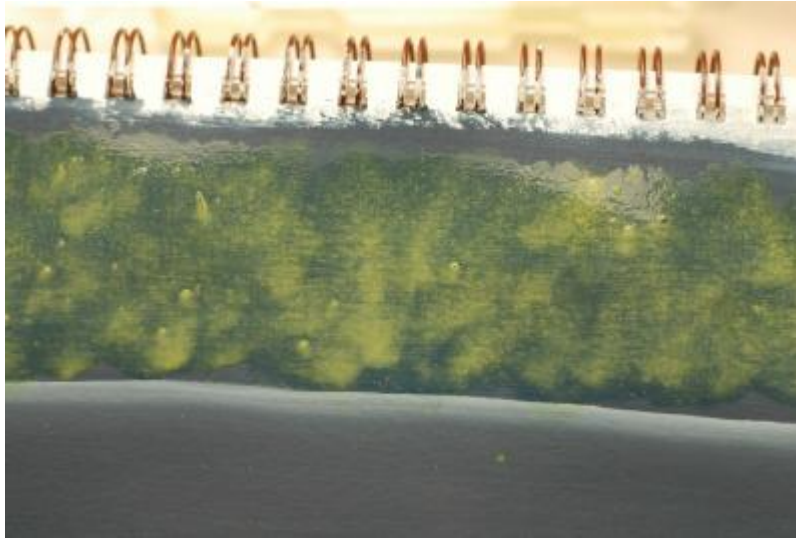


For this tutorial I prepared a page in my art journal with a coat of white gesso. This makes the paper less absorbent.



I base coated the page with Deep Midnight Blue. Then I used a #16 Flat brush, side-loaded into Grey Sky to create a horizon line.

Early Evening Summer Scene



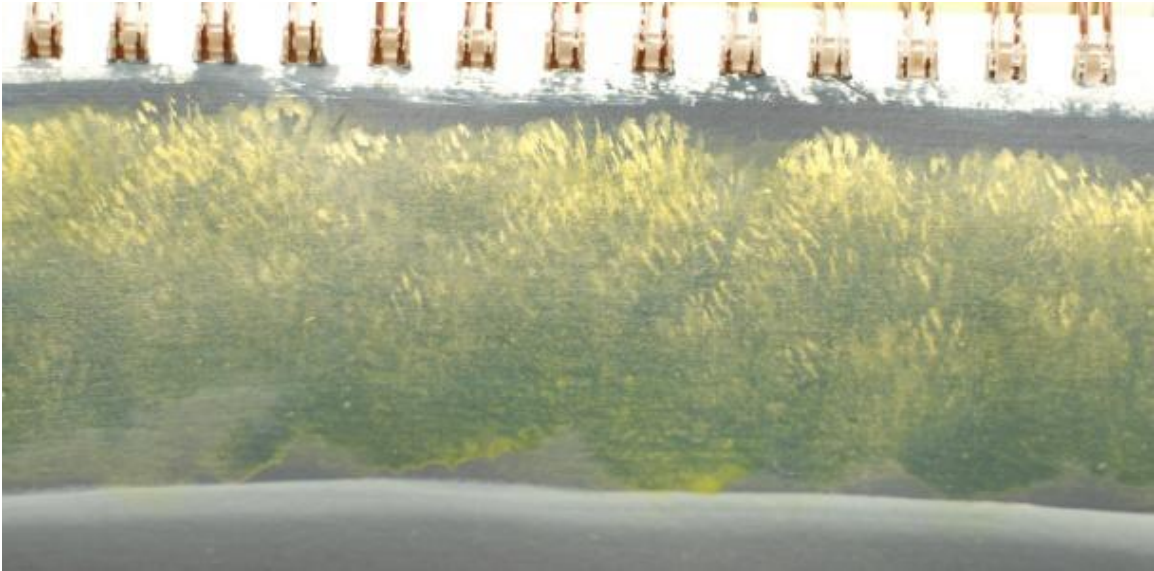
To create the faint foliage, first completely moisten the area above the horizon with clean water.

While wet, use a 1/2" Deerfoot loaded in thinned Hauser Light Green and stipple into the wet area.

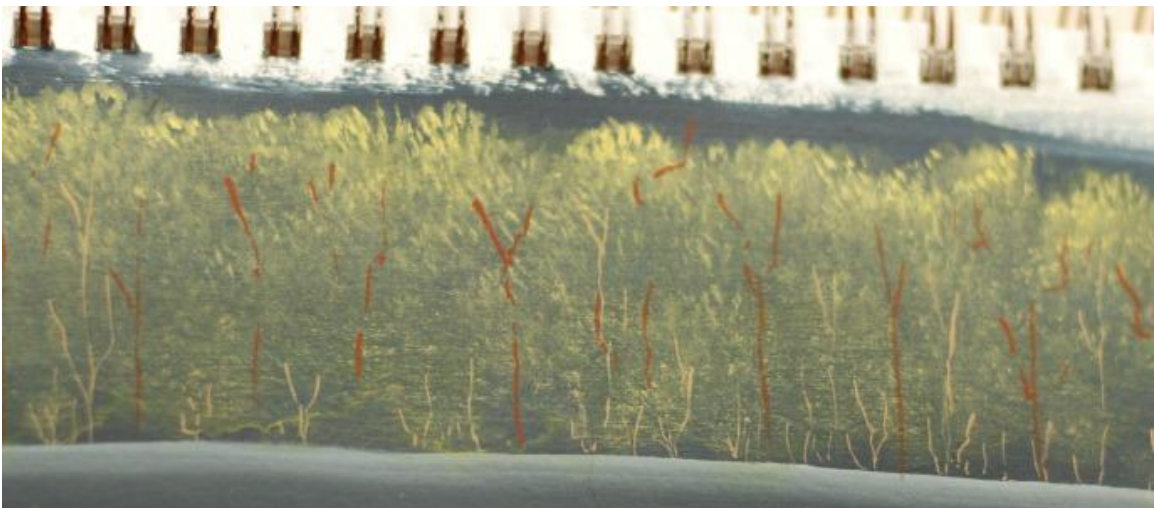


While still wet, dip the toe of the Deerfoot into Moon Yellow to create some lighter areas.

Early Evening Summer Scene



Continue to stipple randomly mostly near the top of the trees with Moon Yellow until things begin to dry.



Add hit and miss lines with a 10/0 Liner to suggest tree limbs. Use Burnt Sienna and then a mix of Burnt Sienna and Moon Yellow.

Evening Winter Scene



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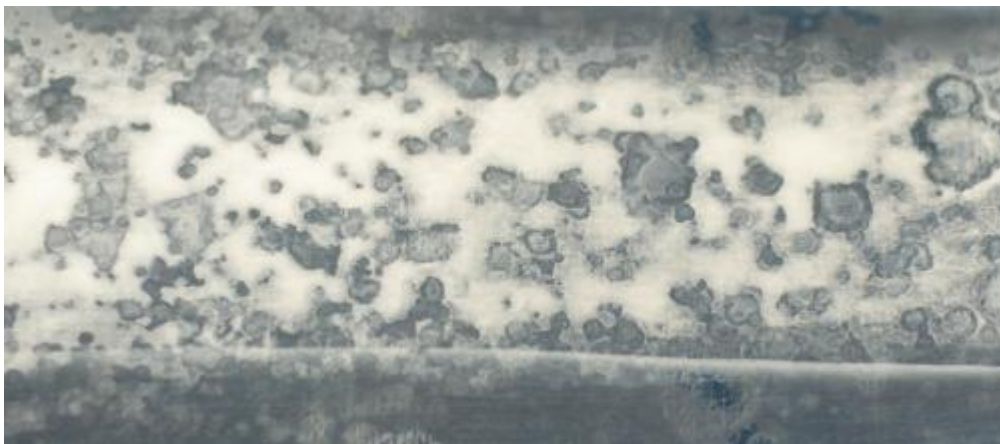
Evening Winter Scene



Apply a wash of White over the entire area above the horizon line.



While wet, mist with rubbing alcohol.



Evening Winter Scene

Wait 1 minute. Repeat with another mist.



Wait 30 seconds. Repeat. Notice how much less white pigment there is....



Wait 30 seconds. Repeat.
Continue like this until most of the White has evaporated.
Let dry completely.

Evening Winter Scene



Add hit and miss lines with a 10/0 Liner to suggest tree limbs. Use Grey Sky or White.



Spatter with White. See this in close-up detail in [my online video course](#).

Let's Paint Some Super Easy Evergreens!



Again, I prepared my journal page with white gesso.



Using the 10/0 Liner, create a tree trunk about 2-inches tall.

Let's Paint Some Super Easy Evergreens!



Load the 10/0 Liner into Evergreen and starting at the top, zigzag your way down the tree making wider and wide swipes as you go down to the base. You may need to reload the brush a few times along the way.



Repeat with Hauser Light Green.

Repeat with Avocado Dip.

And repeat with just a few swipes of Evergreen



Chéryl Poulin

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**HOW TO CHOOSE
THE RIGHT
BRUSHES
TO PAINT
TREES**

Cheryl Poulin



HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT BRUSHES TO PAINT TREES

by Cheryl Poulin

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www.your-decorative-painting-resource.com

I've prepared this e-book for you to print (or use on your smart phone or tablet) to serve as a reference when you're shopping for brushes to help you understand which brushes will serve you best. If you're new to decorative painting and acrylic paints this is going to be a very helpful book. Even if you're more experienced you may still learn something new here. This short e-book can save you time and money by helping you select the right brushes in the right sizes without trial and error.

OK, I'll admit it... I'm a bit of a nerd. I just HAVE to know how things are made, including paintbrushes. Knowing the purpose of a brush helps me decide which brush to choose so that I can paint great trees, as well as other painting topics that interest me.

I have provided a brush diagram to help you understand the anatomy of a brush. I hope you will get value from it. It's a rough sketch of 2 of the brushes you'll be using for painting trees. The illustration is of typical brushes used with acrylics in tole and decorative painting. The information printed on the handles is important to understand. And since sharing what I know is what stokes me, I want you to learn all you can from this book. So refer to the diagram as you read the info that follows.

Stuff About Brushes You Will Want To Know

Brush hairs, also referred to as filaments or bristles, can be made up of natural, synthetic or a combination of both materials. When you're painting with acrylics I'd recommend staying with the synthetic ones. They have a nice spring, they're durable, they provide great performance and they tend to be more affordable.

The **ferrule** holds the hairs in place and it's made of metal, usually nickel. The ferrule is crimped onto the brush handle.

The **handles** are mostly made of wood but some manufacturers create their brush handles from clear acrylic. I prefer the wood ones. A comfortable brush handle will feel balanced in your hand and softly taper along the length to the end.

The handle contains important information. If the handle doesn't have any information on it, it is likely a cheap, crafty brush that will not serve you well.

There is a **number** on the brush which represents its **size**, the lower the number the smaller the brush size.



HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT BRUSHES TO PAINT TREES

There is the **manufacturer's name**. There are many manufacturers out there and likely over time you will find one or two that you prefer to work with. It's just a matter of personal preference and experience.

You'll also find reference to the **type of hair** the brush is made of. The names will be specifically categorized like Mixtique, Golden Taklon, Royal Ruby, Aqualon and so on. This just means that brushes in that line are manufactured using the same hairs or filaments.

Then there's the **brand or series number**. It simply tells you that all of the brushes in that series are the same brush shape.

So then, a #16 White Nylon series 555 (I made that up) tells you that you're looking for a flat brush, with particular hairs in a certain size.

I did warn you about me being a nerd, right?!

HERE ARE THE MOST COMMONLY USED BRUSH SHAPES FOR PAINTING TREES

The FLAT Brush



This brush is sometimes called a Shader, Flat Shader and Glaze or Wash brush. The ferrule of this brush has been crimped flat. The hairs have been cut across to a fine chisel edge.

In decorative painting this brush is needed for basecoating and for floating color when shading and highlighting. It's also used to apply washes of color and for varnishing.

They come in various sizes. They are numbered #2 (being the smallest) to #16, any wider and they are then identified by their actual size, 1/2-inch, 3/4-inch, 1-inch and so on.

The size you choose will be determined by the painting instructions prepared for you. If you're just starting out I'd recommend a #8 and a #12 Flat. For adding background landscapes in your tree painting projects, owing a 1-inch Flat will also come in handy.

The Flat brush can be used for painting tree trunks and to create shadows and highlights. It can also be used to create leaves in just a few strokes.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT BRUSHES TO PAINT TREES

The FILBERT Brush



This brush may also come with the name of Cat's Tongue and Oval Wash Brush. It comes in various sizes like the Flat brush.

Basically the Filbert also has a flat crimped ferrule, making it a flat brush, however the hairs or filaments have been cut rounded at the tip. In this case the tip may also be referred to as the “toe”.

I love it for its ability to basecoat while automatically reducing ridges and texture. It's dreamy for basecoating round objects.

It can also be used in a dry brushing technique to simulate the bark of a tree. And the Filbert does beautiful rounded leaves.

If you're just starting out you don't have to have this brush in your kit right away. But keep it in mind for future. BUT, if you're like me and you have to buy every brush out there, a good size to start with would be a #6 or #8.

The ROUND Brush



The round brush doesn't have a flat crimped ferrule. In fact the ferrule is round, hence its name. They range in sizes from 20/0 and climb all the way up to size #10.

This is the brush that creates beautiful strobework, which is associated with more traditional tole and decorative painting. This is a great brush for creating primitive designs. So if you want to paint trees in the folk art style, this is the brush to use. It can also be used to create simple stroke leaves by varying the amount of pressure used at the start and end of the stroke.

I like to use a #5. Depending on the amount of pressure used I can create a lot of different sized strokes with just this one brush.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT BRUSHES TO PAINT TREES

The LINER Brush



Liners vary in size and in the length of the hairs. The longer the hair the longer you can paint without re-loading the brush. This is great if you're painting long lines, like tree limbs or when you want to create long uninterrupted wood grain in the bark, for instance.

However, to create finer details you'll need a mid-length or short liner. So, if you wanted to paint the veins on leaves the mid-length liner would be more appropriate. And, if you wanted to paint the eyelashes of a squirrel sitting in the tree, you'd need to use the short liner. Ha! Ha! Ha! You can also use the liner for doing small strokework.

My collection of brushes definitely has a 10/0 mid-length liner for fine work and a #1 long liner for not so fine details.

The DEERFOOT Brush



This is a Round brush in the Stippler family. It's used for creating soft visual texture as well as heavily textured techniques. The hairs or filaments of the brush have been cut in the shape of a hoof like that of a deer's. There is a short heel and a longer toe. The hairs splay and bounce easily, leaving lovely roundish brush marks that you layer for various effects.

Soaking the bristles in water for a few minutes will help to soften and open up the bristles.

It's used a lot for creating faint, distant foliage in a landscape both in a realistic or more folk art style.

I have two preferred sizes. I like the 1/4-inch and 1/2-inch Deerfoot for my projects. It comes in 1/8" too but I seldom use that size.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT BRUSHES TO PAINT TREES

The ANGULAR BRISTLE Brush



The Angular Bristle brush is also referred to as an Angular Foliage brush. It's similar to the Deerfoot in that it has a "heel" and a "toe" but the bristles are crimped flat instead of round.

It comes in 1/4", 1/2", 3/4" and 1".

Soaking the bristles in water for a few minutes will soften them up and help to splay the hairs apart. Once loaded in paint, you pounce the brush on your palette. When you achieve a nice "airy" stippled effect on the palette then you can create fabulous foliage for both evergreens and deciduous trees. It's great for landscapes and for creating other textures too.

The angular bristle sizes I use the most are 1/4" and a 1/2".

So there you have it. A handful of brushes to get you started painting trees. There are many other brush shapes for painting trees but with just these few you can do all sorts of trees. Experiment, explore and play with these brushes.

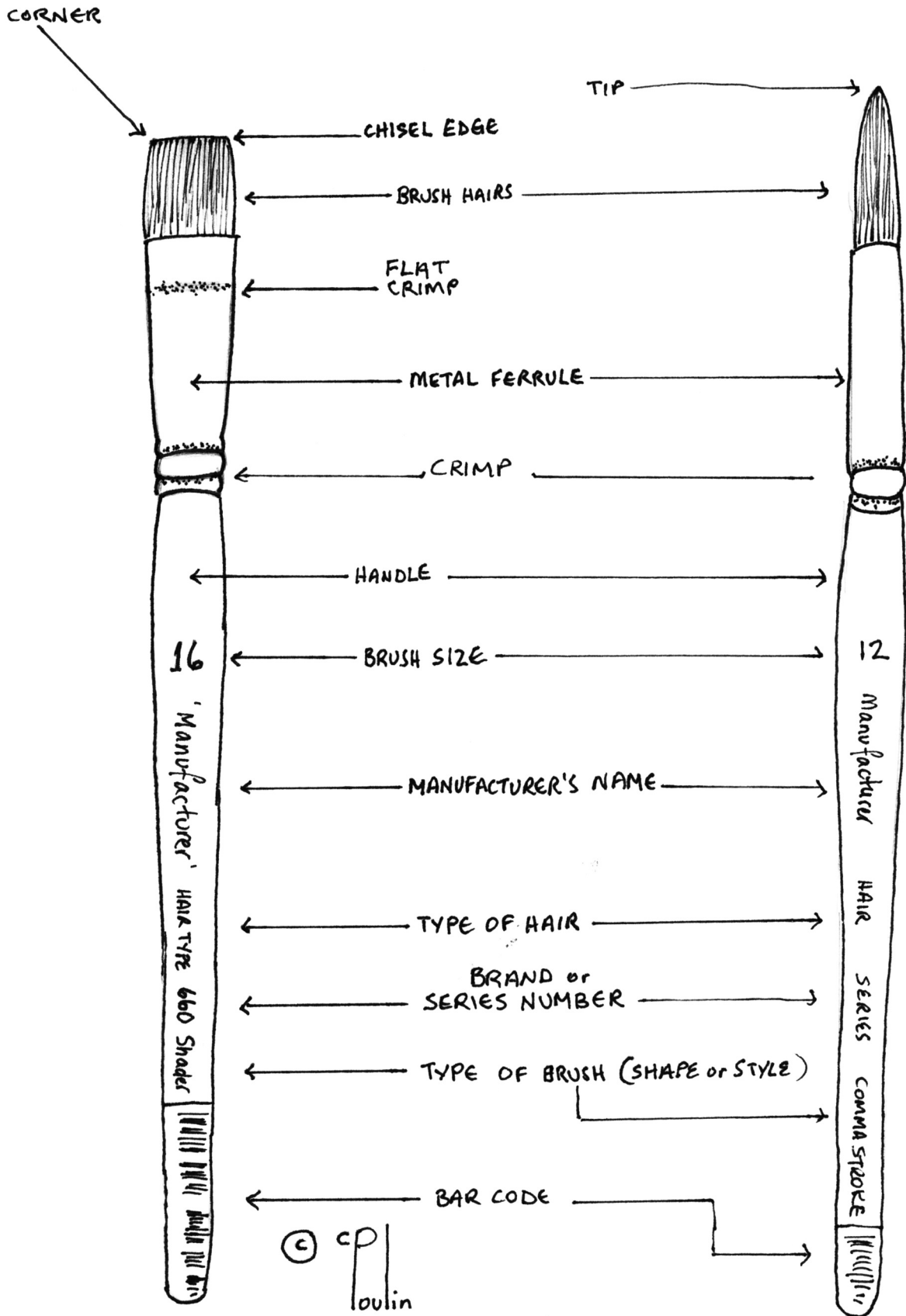
For examples of what some of these brushes can do, visit my [How To Paint Trees page](#) by following this link.

Thanks to Heinz Jordan & Company™ as well as Loew Cornell™ for supplying images of their fine line of art paint brushes. I love using their brushes.

If you have any questions, feel free to [contact me](#). I usually get back to folks within 48 hours.

Cheryl Poulin

ANATOMY OF A BRUSH!



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