

Gelatin Bubbles

By

Tami Utley

www.sugarartbytami.com

Materials:

Water Balloons

Unflavored Gelatin

Luster Dust (Super pearl or others)

Toothpick or tweezers

Small microwave safe bowl

Duct tape

Styrofoam or slotted plate

paintbrush



- Gelatin mixture: 2 parts cold water to 1 part unflavored gelatin (like Knox). Start by putting your cold water into a microwave safe bowl. Add a little luster dust, the amount will depend on how translucent you want your bubble, I normally did about 1/8 tsp or less. Food color can also be used, but remember the gelatin is a little yellow so will change your color slightly. I used super pearl but have used many others.



- Stir and then sprinkle your gelatin over the water so it will all get absorbed. Let sit for 5 minutes to 'sponge'.



- During this time, blow up your water balloon, I only blow mine up half way or less to get the size bubble I want. If there is a nipple on the end of your balloon you will need to pull the nipple to where the knot is. Twist the two together and tape with duct tape. See the series of photos below.



- You should have a nice round balloon shape now. Coat your balloon thinly with shortening, and then wipe off the excess. If you have too much, the gelatin won't stay on.

Note ** You can also add a toothpick to the knot of your balloon as a sort of handle to hold and use later to stick into Styrofoam for drying



- Put your gelatin mixture into the microwave for about 10 seconds (depending on your microwave). You want the gelatin to heat up but not boil. Stir gently when it comes out, to make sure the gelatin is dissolved; remove any foam or un-dissolved gelatin. Be careful not to incorporate any air bubbles when you stir. Let cool for a minute or two so it is only lukewarm.



- Stir the mixture again gently as the luster dust will settle, and using tweezers or clamps grab the balloon by the duct taped knot and dip into the gelatin; rotating the balloon around to coat the entire surface except around the knot.



- Hold upright (knot on the bottom, round balloon on top) and tap to remove excess gelatin. You can also use a flat brush to paint the balloon and remove excess gelatin. The balloon will need to sit a few minutes to set before dipping again.



- The balloon will need 3 or 4 layers of gelatin to be thick enough once dry so repeat the previous two steps, two or three more times. If the gelatin mixture cools too much you can pop the bowl back into the microwave for 4 seconds to re-heat.

Note ** Gelatin shrinks as it dries so we need a fairly thick layer so the gelatin won't collapse when the balloon is popped.

- Place the balloon onto a holder with the knot side down to dry completely. I have a plastic plate with a slit in it. The gelatin won't stick to the plastic when dry. If a toothpick was used as a holder, it can be placed into Styrofoam to dry.



- The balloon can be placed in front of a fan to speed up drying time, or let the dry on its own. Without the fan it could take a full 24 hours to dry, possibly more, with the fan, only a few hours or overnight.
- Once dry, place your thumb or finger into the opening by the knot and press the balloon to help it separate from the gelatin.



- Then place scissors next to the knot and poke the balloon and it will deflate and release from the gelatin. If some balloon does stick, usually you can get a finger inside to rub the excess away.



- At this point you can cut the opening of the bubble with scissors to smooth it out, but this is the underside and the bubble will sit on your cake on this part so it won't show.



For more color, the bubble can be painted with luster dust and alcohol (gin or something clear) or lemon extract. Water will dissolve your bubble.

This can be put in the refrigerator or sit out and will last for months. I have placed the bubbles on buttercream, rolled buttercream and fondant with no problems, attaching with piping gel or icing.

A DVD will soon be available on this project.

