

Weathering Rusty Stumps paper shingles

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Mike Chambers 2008

Rusty Stumps Scale Models produces an excellent line of shingles, including these random-cut 'cedar' shakes. Although they're paper, they are easily stained and weathered to look like the real thing.

Those of us who build Craftsman structure kits or who scratchbuild 'craftsman-level' structures are amply aware of the many different roofing and shingling products available to the modeler.

Perhaps the oldest and best known are those from Campbell Scale Models. Die-cut, gummed, and spooled strips of brown paper, they were for many years the de-facto standard for wood shingle roofs among structure modelers.

In recent years, however, modern technology in the form of computer software, lasers,

and printers has brought a wide diversity of materials and styles to the modeler's workbench.

Whether you're a kit builder or a scratch builder, laser-cut sheets of paper shingle material are now commonly available from [Rusty Stumps](#) and others manufacturers. A few companies, such as Paper Creek, offer printed roofing material that is hard to distinguish from the 'real thing' at first glance.

As realistic as the new products are, they're like any other model and easily lend themselves to various

weathering techniques for additional realism.

While the techniques described on the following pages can be used with any paper shingle product, I'll demonstrate how to use them to weather and age random-cut 'cedar' shake shingles from Rusty Stumps Scale Models. No special materials are required — just a few inexpensive paints and an old brush — and there are no fussy, fiddley painting skills to master. So let's get to weathering and aging — our model roofs, that is.

First, a look at the real thing...



Before getting into the specifics of materials and techniques, it might be worthwhile to study the so-called 'prototype.' In this case, the shingles in the photos above are actual cedar shingles taken from the same roof. They had been on the roof for more than 20 years when the homeowner decided to have the roof torn off and replaced. Note the variety of colors and textures.

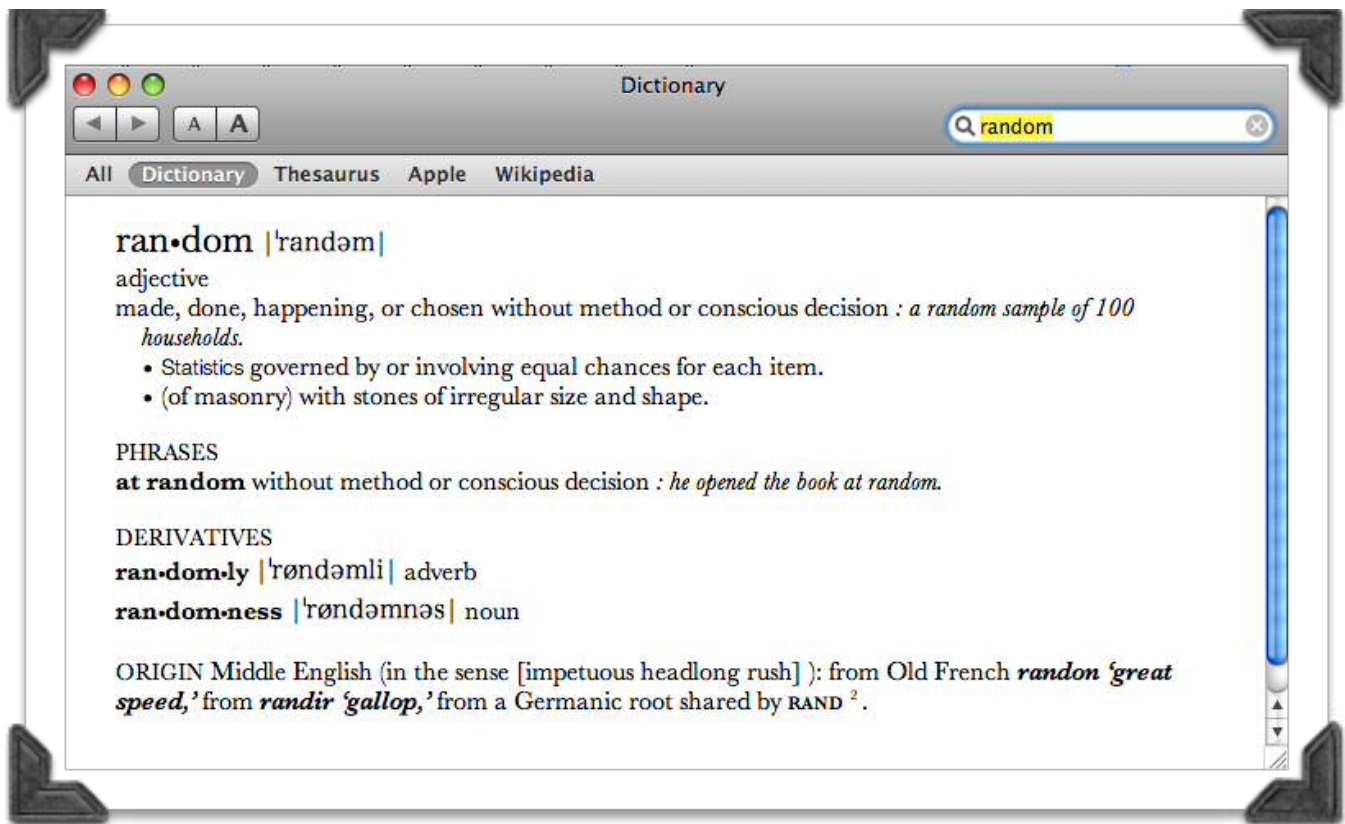
What you'll need...

No, you don't really need an airbrush. But since many modelers prefer an airbrush to spray cans, I included mine in the photo. Whichever is your preference, you will need some way to spray a light coating of paint on the sheets of shingling material. For this step I prefer to use Floquil Roof Brown and/or Rail Brown. But you should also know that both Krylon and Rustoleum make comparable or identical colors in larger, less expensive 'rattle cans.'



You'll also need several inexpensive craft paints, available from Michaels, Hobby Lobby, JoAnn's, A.C Moore, and similar arts and crafts stores. The Americana line is available directly from [DecoArt](http://DecoArt.com) as well. The brands and colors I use are (from left to right in the photo) Delta Ceramcoat "Mudstone," Americana "Traditional Raw Umber," "Khaki Tan," "Traditional Raw Sienna," and "Asphaltum." I also use Winsor & Newton's "Ivory Black" gouache when trying to achieve a heavily weathered or stained appearance.





Step 1... (In case there's any doubt, 'random' is the key to all of the steps that follow.) 🤪



First, you need to consider how weathered/decrepit the shingles are supposed to appear. For the purposes of this tutorial, the shingles will be moderately to heavily weathered. For a newer or less weathered appearance, you would want to use Khaki Tan and Raw Sienna paints instead of those called for in Step 2.

I usually start with the manila or medium brown 'HO Random Shake Shingle (D5002)' from Rusty Stumps Scale Models. Although Rusty has several different colors available, these two seem to work the best for the weathering methods which follow.

Using an airbrush or a spray can, randomly apply a light coat of Floquil 'Roof Brown' (or an equivalent color) to the sheet of shingle material. Be sure to let spots of the original paper color show through. Don't worry if it looks speckled - it's supposed to. Also don't worry about spraying a solvent-based paint like Floquil onto the adhesive backed paper (if you bought the adhesive backed variety). The paint will not affect the adhesive.

Step 2...



After the Roof Brown has dried, use an old, stiff paint brush to randomly 'whisk and scrub' Americana "Traditional Raw Umber" (or an equivalent color) onto the shingles. Just make sure you keep the brush strokes running up and down with the 'grain' of the shingles themselves. Don't worry about opacity. As the brush runs out of paint, the pigment will appear lighter and lighter on the paper until you reload the brush. In fact, sometimes I even thin the paint with a drop or two of blue windshield washer fluid to actually stain, rather than paint, the shingles. Again, random application is the key here. As can be seen in the photo above, the sheet of shingles will look like a mess when you're through.

Step 3...



Following the same procedure as in Step 2, apply Ceramcoat 'Mudstone.' As a side-note, Mudstone is an exact color match for Floquil/Polly 'Grime.'

Step 4...

At this point, you're essentially done. You should have a sheet of moderate to heavily weathered shingles ready to cut apart and apply to the sub-roof, as outlined in Steps 6 and 7. If, however, you want a more heavily aged and weathered appearance, go on to Step 5.

Step 5...



Squeeze out a small dab of 'Ivory Black' gouache (or a similar color) and thin it slightly with Solvaset or plain water. Gouache is a type of watercolor pigment and thins very easily. However, it is opaque, rather than transparent (like ordinary watercolors), so a small dab will go a long way even when thinned.

Using a small, stiff brush, lightly whisk streaks of gouache up and down the shingles. If you feel it looks too 'heavy,' use a finger to smooth out the pigment and spread it thinner. If it still looks too heavy, wet your brush and move the pigment around more. Even when dry gouache can still be re-wetted and brushed again. When weathering shingles with gouache, there are two things to remember: apply it randomly, and don't overdo it. Just streaks of black here and there will be sufficient.



Unlike the shingles in the two photos above, this sheet has had the "full monte" applied to it: Roof Brown, raw umber, a few streaks of Asphaltum, some Mudstone, and several streaks of Ivory Black gouache. It's now ready to

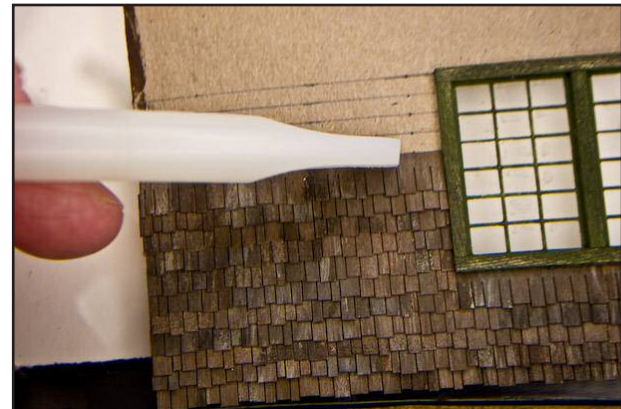
be cut into individual strips of shingles and applied to the sub-roof. See Steps 6 and 7 below and the photos which follow for examples of how these shingles will look when applied.

Step 6...



Once again, the concept of randomness applies. After cutting apart the strips of shingles, mix them up into a pile. This will ensure the appearance of individual shingles and uneven weathering when the strips are applied to the roof.

Step 7...



When applying the strips of shingles, be sure to keep the 'overlaps' correctly spaced. The splits (or 'drip lines') should occur roughly halfway across the shingle below. Of course, this isn't always possible, but I've found that cutting the strips and even individual shingles to a needed length and width helps keep the overlapped offsets visually correct.

To help ensure that the strips stay in place after being attached, I use a Woodland Scenics

burnisher to 'set' each strip on the cardboard. The pointed end is used to tack the strip down after initial placement. Then I use the blunt end to actually burnish the strip in place and bond the adhesive to the cardboard sub-roof.

The photos page 6 and to the right are of an engine house roof with skylights. I drew guidelines 1/8" apart to help maintain the correct overlap between courses of shingles and to help keep each strip parallel to the top and bottom edges of the roof. The orange strip above the skylight window is a small piece of masking tape painted with an inexpensive burnt sienna craft paint and lightly dusted with raw umber chalk powder. It represents 'flashing' over the top of the window framing.



The shingles were then applied over the flashing. By doing so, it kept the cardboard sub-roof from showing through the shingle splits and at the ends.

Note the random yet weathered appearance of individual shingles. It's a look that is very easy to accomplish. And the degree of aging and weathering is very easy to control by simply substituting paint shades and the amount of 'whisking and scrubbing' you choose to employ.

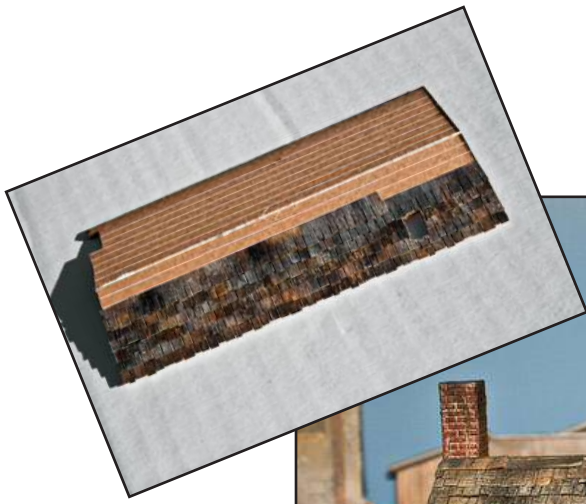
And now a few examples...

This is the as-yet unfinished engine house referred to above. Note the two distinctly different shingle colors. The main engine house roof received a far heavier weathered appearance because it's supposed to help convey



the impression of the main structure being much older than the attached machine shop. Therefore, the machine shop, being several years 'newer,' has a much lighter, newer appearing shingle roof. To achieve the look of relatively new cedar shingles, I did not spray the base paper with

Roof Brown or Rail Brown. Rather, I skipped that step altogether, and applied Americana Khaki Tan and Traditional Raw Sienna in place of the darker Raw UMBER and Asphaltum. Mudstone was lightly and sparingly whisked across small sections of the shingle sheet before the strips were separated.



Rusty Stumps' "Reed & deYoung Tobacconist's" kit is supposed to be a somewhat weatherbeaten waterfront structure. With that in mind, I applied a fairly heavy weathered appearance to the shingles.



Only raw umber and Mudstone were used to weather the shingles on my scratch built "Tie Hacker's Cabin" diorama. I wanted the weathering of the roof to match that of the unpainted cabin itself. The 'pitch' in the valleys is Gallery Glass 'Liquid Leading,' available at Michaels, Hobby Lobby, and other craft outlets.





The "Tie Hacker's Cabin" diorama features Rusty Stumps HO scale paper 'random cut cedar' shingles and Rusty Stumps laser-cut door and window products. In addition, Rusty Stumps corrugated roofing was used on the diorama's tool shed and for the ridge cap on the cabin roof.

