A handmade holiday, one project at a time

Nine project cards + three actual-size template sheets. Choose a project first, then check your supplies before shopping.

For one of each project

- ☐ 10 matching gusseted paper bags (start with 7; add as needed).
- ☐ About 10 sheets of lightweight or medium-weight craft paper, 80-160 gsm. Include two 12-inch lengths for the rosette strips; join shorter paper if needed.
- ☐ About 8 sheets of light cardstock, 160-180 gsm, including at least two kraft sheets. This allowance includes spare material and circle backings.
- ☐ One clean 7 x 7 inch piece of thin cardboard for the wreath base.
- ☐ At least 3 yards of cotton string and 10 inches of ribbon.
- ☐ One strong glue stick, one small bottle of tacky glue, double-sided craft tape, and clear tape.
- ☐ Scissors, pencil, ruler, small clips, and a hole punch.
- ☐ Optional: white paint pen or white colored pencil; blunt folding tool.

Before you print

Print single-sided. Use 100% / Actual Size, not Fit, for pages 11-13. Check the 1-inch square before tracing. Use the PDF matching your paper size. Template shapes have solid cut lines and dashed fold lines.

Project times are planning estimates and exclude adhesive drying. Follow the adhesive label. These are indoor paper decorations: keep them away from flame, heat, damp, and pets who chew paper or string. Supervise children with scissors and small parts.

Shopping options and full guide: hypevineblog.com/easy-paper-christmas-decorations/ (available when the article is published). This checklist contains no affiliate shopping links.

Paper-Bag Stars

1 large star | 20-30 minutes, plus drying

GATHER

- 7-10 plain paper lunch bags, all the same size
- Strong glue stick or a thin layer of tacky glue
- Scissors, pencil, 12 inches of cotton string
- Clear tape and 2 small paper clips

MAKE IT

1. Lay a bag flat with its opening at the top and its folded bottom flap facing down. Apply glue in an upside-down T: across the closed bottom edge and up the vertical center. Keep the gusseted sides free of glue.

2. Stack another bag on top in exactly the same orientation and press. Repeat until seven bags are stacked. Keep extra bags nearby; the number needed depends on the width and depth of your bags.

3. Draw a point at the open end, starting the diagonal cuts about 2 inches below the top corners. Cut through only as many layers as your scissors handle easily. Use the first cut bag as a guide if cutting in smaller stacks.

4. Let the adhesive set according to its label. Gently fan the stack open until the first and last bags meet. If they do not meet comfortably, close it and add one bag at a time with the same glue pattern. Never stretch the paper to force it shut.

5. Clip the first and last faces together for a star that can fold flat, or glue them for a permanent finish. Reinforce a hanging point with clear tape, make a small hole, and thread the string through.

6. Hang indoors from a suitable hook. For storage, remove the clips and close the star like a book.

Helpful tip: Start with plain pointed tips. Side cutouts are optional and can weaken a first attempt. Leave the central glued spine intact.

If something goes wrong: If the star will not open, check for glue along the side gussets. A tear at the hanging hole usually means the hole needs tape reinforcement.

Style it: A pair of cream stars looks lovely over a sideboard. Keep paper away from fireplaces, heaters, and candles.

Accordion-Fan Tree Ornaments

1 flat tree ornament, about 5 inches tall | 10-15 minutes each, plus drying

GATHER

- One 6 x 4 inch rectangle of 80-120 gsm green paper
- One 1/2 x 2 inch strip of brown cardstock
- Glue stick, narrow craft tape, scissors, ruler
- One 8 inch string loop; optional small paper star

MAKE IT

1. Place the rectangle with the 6 inch edge horizontal and the 4 inch edge vertical. Mark every 1/2 inch across the 6 inch edge.

2. Make alternating forward and backward folds at the marks, keeping every crease parallel to the 4 inch sides. Your compressed accordion should be about 1/2 inch wide and 4 inches tall.

3. Pinch the top 1/2 inch of the accordion together and wrap that pinched end with a narrow strip of craft tape. Spread the opposite end into a fan. The pinched end becomes the tree tip.

4. Glue the brown strip vertically behind the center so about 1 inch extends below the fan as a trunk. Let the join dry before lifting.

5. Tape the knotted ends of an 8 inch hanging loop behind the pinched tip. Cover the join with a small paper star if you like.

6. Adjust the bottom folds so the tree opens evenly, then hang it on a branch or attach it to a gift.

Helpful tip: Use lightweight paper for this project. Thick cardstock makes the pinched tip bulky and harder to secure.

If something goes wrong: If the fan springs closed, reinforce the pinched tip and gently widen the lower folds. Keep this ornament flat; it is not a freestanding tree.

Style it: Mix two shades of green and repeat the same cream star topper for a coordinated tree.

Pleated Paper Rosettes

1 rosette, about 4 inches across | 20-25 minutes each, plus drying

GATHER

- Two 2 x 12 inch paper strips, 80-120 gsm
- Two 1 1/2 inch cardstock circles
- Double-sided craft tape, tacky glue, ruler, scissors
- One 8 inch hanging loop and small clips

MAKE IT

1. Mark each 12 inch strip at 1/2 inch intervals. Accordion-fold each strip at the marks, with creases parallel to the short 2 inch ends.

2. Overlap one end panel from each strip and tape them together, continuing the zigzag pattern. Join the remaining ends the same way to make a pleated ring.

3. Stand the ring on a protected table. Gently draw one rim toward the center while pushing the other rim outward and down, forming a flat pleated circle. Keep hold of the center; it will want to spring up.

4. Spread a thin layer of tacky glue on one cardstock circle. Place it over the center and hold the pleats flat until the bond can support them. Follow the glue label for drying time.

5. Once secure, turn the rosette over. Glue the string ends beneath the second cardstock circle and press that circle over the back center. Support the piece while it dries fully.

6. Use the front circle as a simple label or cover it with a contrasting paper circle. Hang only after both joins are dry.

Helpful tip: Cut strips from 12 x 12 inch craft paper. If you only have Letter or A4 sheets, join shorter pieces to make two 12 inch strips before folding.

If something goes wrong: A popping center needs more setting time or a stronger paper-craft adhesive. Avoid soaking the thin paper with glue.

Style it: Cranberry rosettes with cream centers make cheerful tree decorations and gift toppers.

Classic Paper-Chain Garland

A chain of 24 links; finished length varies | 20-30 minutes

GATHER

- Three sheets of colored paper, at least 8 x 10 inches each
- Scissors, ruler, pencil
- Glue stick or double-sided craft tape

MAKE IT

1. Measure and cut twenty-four strips, each 1 inch wide and 6 inches long. A 6 x 8 inch portion of each sheet gives eight strips.
2. Arrange the strips in a repeating color sequence before joining them. This makes it easier to keep the pattern consistent.
3. Curve the first strip into a ring, overlap its ends by about 1/2 inch, and glue or tape the overlap. Press firmly.
4. Pass the second strip through the first ring. Form another ring and secure the ends with the same overlap.
5. Repeat until all 24 strips are linked. Let glued joints set flat before hanging.
6. Drape the finished chain loosely over a dry shelf or attach it to suitable hooks. Add extra links if you need a longer garland; do not pull the existing links tight.

Helpful tip: Use colored printer paper or gift-wrap offcuts with enough body to hold a ring. Very thin tissue tears easily.

If something goes wrong: If links keep opening, increase the overlap slightly and switch to double-sided craft tape, especially on glossy paper.

Style it: A cream, green, cranberry repeat brings a familiar, nostalgic touch to an indoor doorway.

Folded-Circle Paper Baubles

1 bauble, about 3 inches across | 20-25 minutes each, plus drying

GATHER

- Six 3 inch paper circles, roughly 120-160 gsm
- Circle template from this pack, scissors, glue stick
- One 10 inch length of cotton string
- Small paper clips

MAKE IT

1. Trace the 3 inch circle template six times and cut out the circles. Use two or three coordinating colors, or double-sided patterned paper.

2. Fold every circle exactly in half. For single-sided patterned paper, fold with the pattern inside; the plain outer halves will be glued together.

3. Apply glue to one outer half of the first folded circle and press it against one outer half of the second. Align the curved edges and center folds.

4. Continue joining outer half-faces until all six folded circles form a stack. Leave the first and last outer faces unglued for now.

5. Fold the string in half and knot its ends. Lay the knotted end along the central spine, leaving a loop above the bauble, and secure with a little glue.

6. Glue the final two outer faces together around the string. Open the six paper fins evenly, clip joins as needed, and let the bauble dry before hanging.

Helpful tip: Accurate circles matter more than fancy paper. Cut one test circle, then use it to check the rest.

If something goes wrong: If the fins sit unevenly, realign the glued edges while the adhesive is still workable. Heavy card can leave a bulky spine.

Style it: Try alternating cream and cranberry fins for a soft striped effect.

Standing Folded Paper Trees

1 freestanding tree, 6 inches tall | 25-35 minutes each, plus drying

GATHER

- Three Letter or A4 sheets of 160-180 gsm cardstock
- The 3 1/2 x 6 inch tree triangle template
- Glue stick, ruler, scissors, small paper clips

MAKE IT

1. Trace and cut six triangles using the template. Each triangle is 3 1/2 inches wide at the base and 6 inches tall. Keep all six base edges straight.

2. Score a light line from each tip to the center of its base with a blunt folding tool or the back of a spoon. Fold every triangle in half along this line.

3. Glue one outer half-face to an outer half-face of the next folded triangle. Match the tips and base edges carefully.

4. Repeat with all six pieces, keeping the center folds together. Glue the first and last outer half-faces together to close the shape into a six-fin tree.

5. Spread the fins evenly around the center. Stand the tree on a flat table and check that all bottom edges touch it before the glue fully sets.

6. Let it dry standing upright. If necessary, trim a tiny amount from an uneven base edge after drying.

Helpful tip: Use the template at actual size and keep the bottom edges level. This simple triangular silhouette avoids fiddly branch cuts.

If something goes wrong: If the tree tips, spread its fins evenly and check the base. Softer paper may sag; light cardstock gives better support.

Style it: Make a small grove in green and cream. Display on a dry mantel with flameless candles placed separately.

Simple Paper-Cone Trees

1 cone tree, about 5 3/4 inches tall | 15-20 minutes each

GATHER

- One sheet of 160-180 gsm cardstock
- Quarter-circle template from this pack
- Double-sided craft tape, scissors
- Optional paper dots or strips cut from scraps

MAKE IT

1. Print the quarter-circle template at actual size. Cut it out and trace it onto cardstock, or use it directly if your printer supports the cardstock.

2. Cut along the two straight edges and curved edge. The two straight edges are each 6 inches long.

3. Gently curve the paper with your hands. Bring the two straight edges together, overlapping them by about 1/4 inch to form a cone.

4. Tape the overlap from the inside, then press the seam firmly. The quarter-circle's corner becomes the top of the tree.

5. Stand the cone on the table. If it rocks, adjust the overlap before firmly securing it, or trim a small amount from the lower edge.

6. Decorate with small paper dots or short paper strips. Keep embellishments lightweight so the tree remains balanced.

Helpful tip: Curl the cardstock gently before taping. A gradual curve gives a cleaner cone than a sharply creased seam.

If something goes wrong: If the seam opens, use fresh craft tape on clean, dry paper and reinforce from the inside.

Style it: White dots on forest-green cones create a simple snowy look without loose glitter.

Layered Paper-Leaf Wreath

1 indoor wreath, roughly 9 inches across | 35-45 minutes, plus drying

GATHER

- One clean thin cardboard sheet at least 7 x 7 inches
- Two sheets of green paper or light cardstock
- Ring and 2 1/2 inch leaf templates from this pack
- Tacky glue, scissors, pencil, 10 inches of ribbon
- Optional small red paper circles

MAKE IT

1. Trace the 7 inch outer circle and 3 1/2 inch inner circle onto thin cardboard. Cut out the ring. An adult can fold the center gently to start a scissor cut, then flatten it again.

2. Trace and cut about 24-30 leaves, each 2 1/2 inches long. Gently crease each leaf lengthwise for dimension, then open it slightly.

3. Tie the ribbon around the top of the bare ring to form a hanging loop. Position the knot at the back.

4. Arrange the leaves around the ring before gluing. Point them in the same direction, alternating slightly inward and outward to cover the cardboard.

5. Glue only the lower third of each leaf. Work around the ring, overlapping each base with the next leaf. Tuck the last few bases beneath the first leaves to hide the joins.

6. Add clusters of red paper circles if desired. Dry flat, then hang indoors on a suitable hook.

Helpful tip: Save cereal-box cardboard for the base and use paper scraps for the leaves. A small color variation adds depth.

If something goes wrong: If cardboard shows through, add a leaf over that gap after the first layer dries. The exact leaf count depends on spacing.

Style it: Use on an interior door or above a desk. Paper wreaths do not suit rain, steam, or outdoor damp.

Paper Gingerbread-House Garland

5 houses on a 4 foot string | 30-40 minutes, plus ink drying

GATHER

- Two Letter or A4 sheets of kraft cardstock
- House template from this pack
- White paint pen or white colored pencil
- Scissors, hole punch, ruler, 4 feet of cotton string

MAKE IT

1. Trace and cut five house silhouettes. Each has a 3 inch wide body, 2 1/2 inch tall walls, and a centered roof peak giving a total height of 4 inches.

2. Draw a door and windows in pencil first. Leave at least 1/2 inch of clear space near the upper wall corners for the hanging holes.

3. Trace your details with a white paint pen or colored pencil. Add simple roof dots or scallops, keeping the houses easy to read from a distance.

4. Allow the ink to dry fully. Punch one hole near each upper wall corner, at least 1/4 inch in from the edge.

5. Thread the string from front to back through one hole and back to front through the other, so the long span runs behind each house. Repeat for all five.

6. Space the houses about 4 inches apart along the string. Add a small piece of tape behind each house if it slides. Hang the garland indoors with slack at both ends.

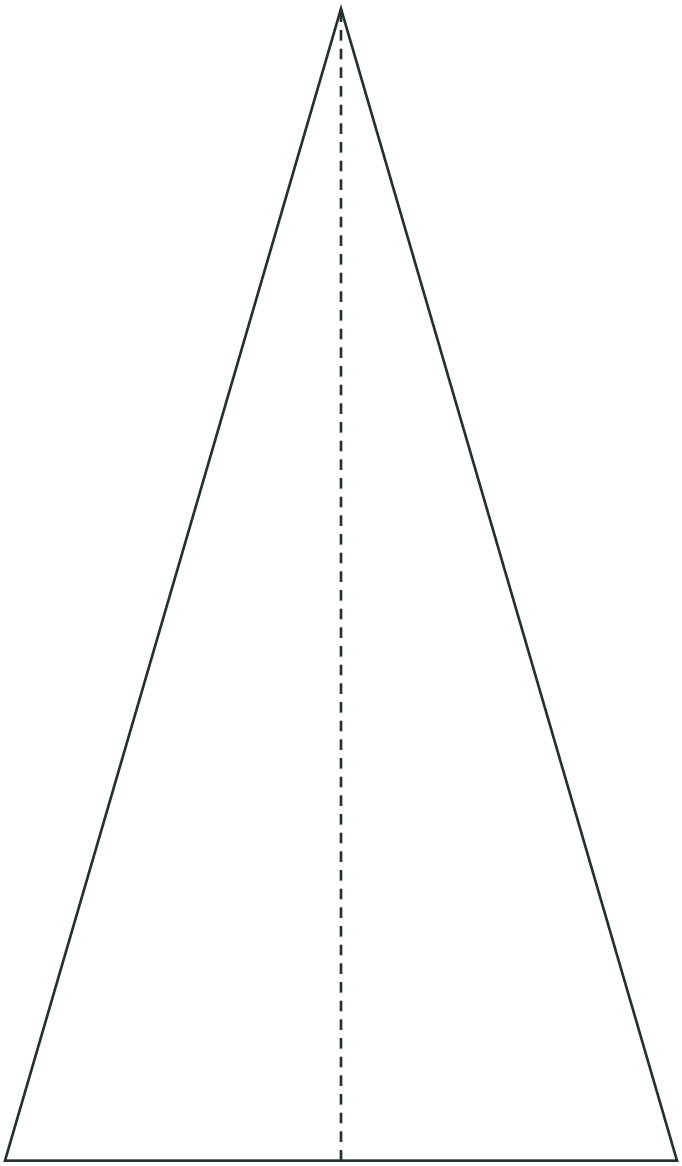
Helpful tip: Try the pen on a kraft scrap first. A white colored pencil is a low-mess alternative that needs no drying time.

If something goes wrong: If a hole tears, reinforce the back with clear tape and punch again slightly farther from the edge.

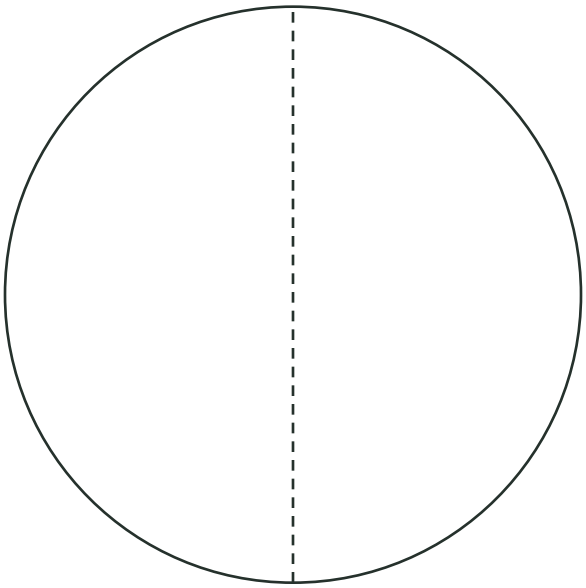
Style it: Let the houses sit at slightly different heights for a relaxed village effect on a shelf.

Trees, baubles & village

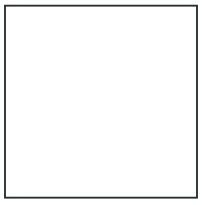
Actual size / 100%. Trace six triangles for Project 6, six circles for Project 5, and five houses for Project 9. Cut outer lines; fold dashed lines.



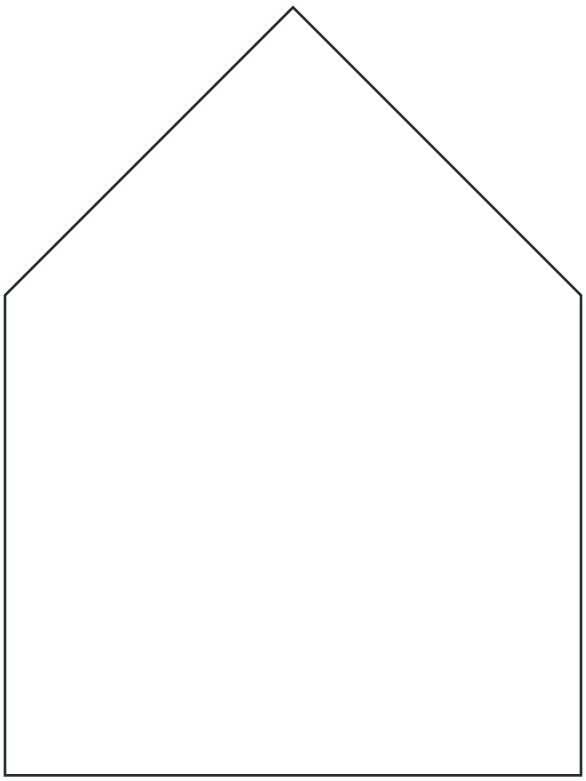
TREE / 3 1/2 x 6 inches



BAUBLE / 3 inch diameter



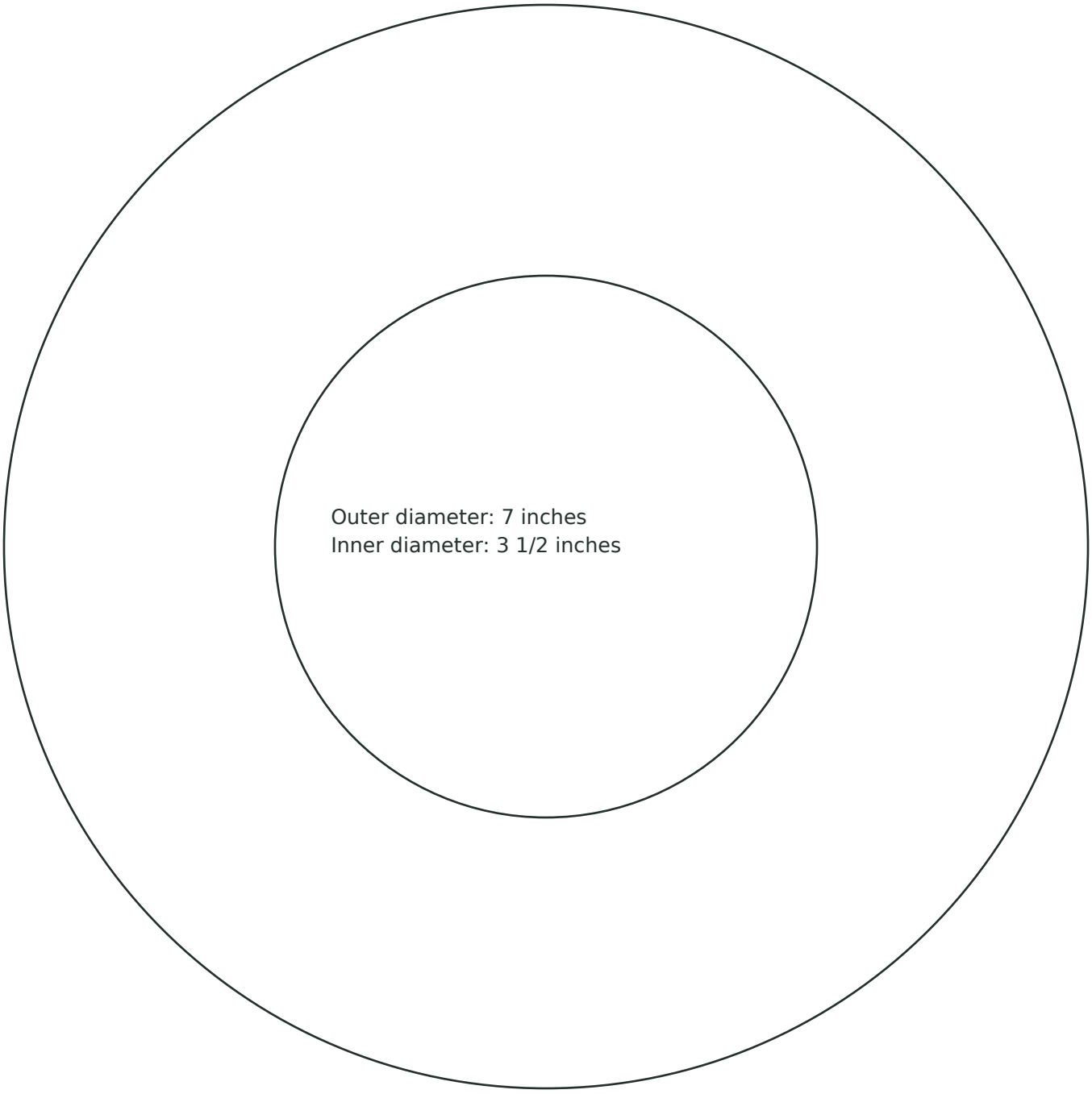
This square must measure 1 x 1 inch (25.4 mm).

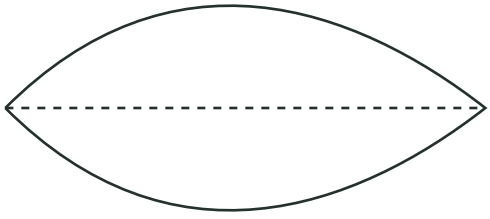


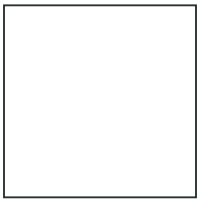
HOUSE / 3 x 4 inches

Wreath ring & leaf

Project 8. Trace the ring on thin cardboard. Cut both solid circles. Trace 24-30 leaves on paper. The leaf below is 2 1/2 inches long.



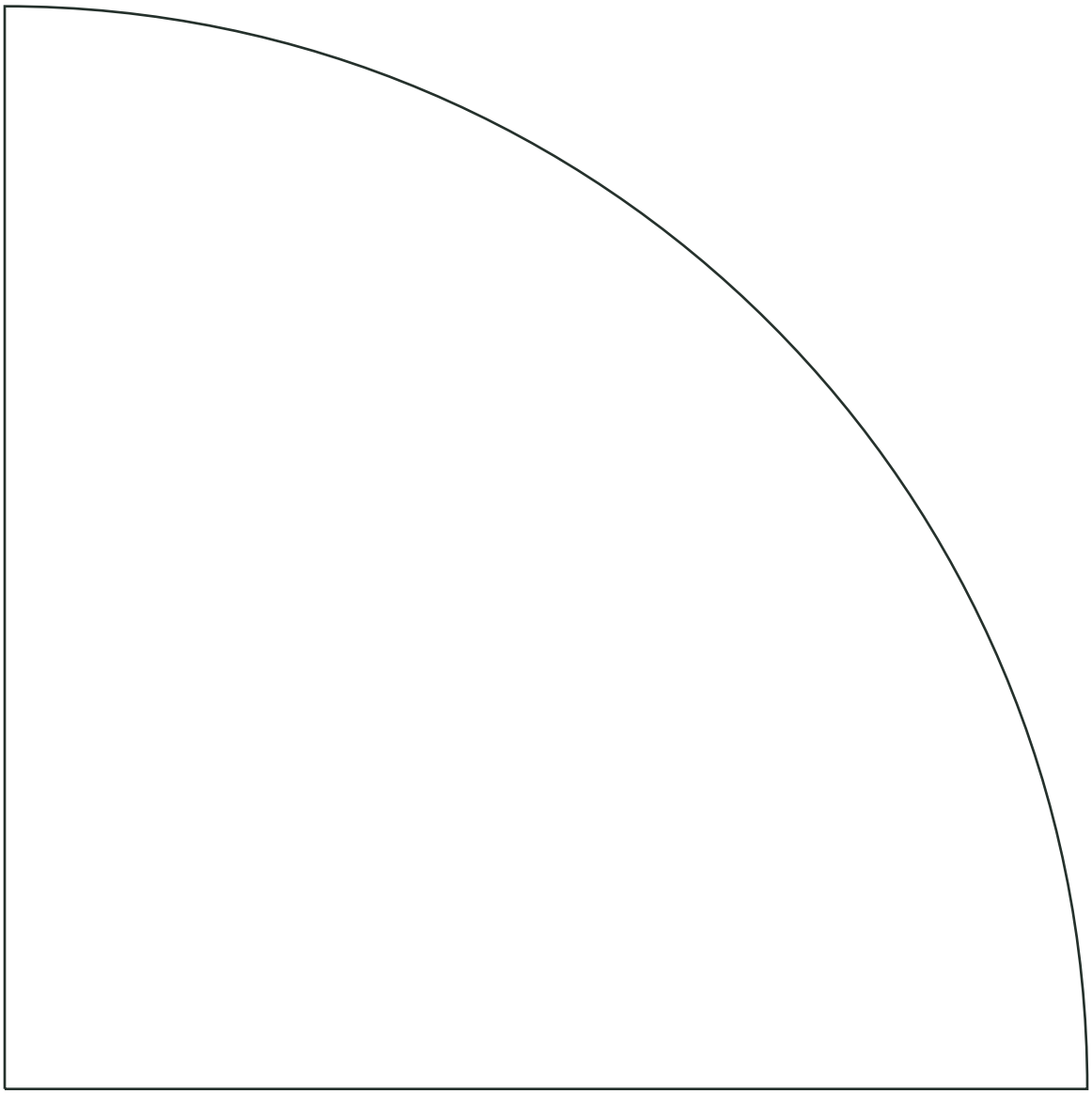




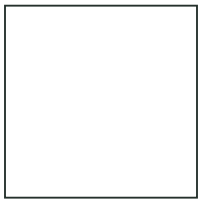
This square must measure 1 x 1 inch (25.4 mm).

Paper-cone tree

Project 7. Cut the quarter-circle below. Curve it into a cone and overlap the straight edges by about 1/4 inch. Tape inside the seam. Each straight edge is 6 inches.



No printer? Draw two perpendicular 6-inch lines from one corner. Use a compass set to 6 inches to connect their ends with a quarter-circle arc.



This square must measure
1 x 1 inch (25.4 mm).