

A Scenic Painters Starter Tool Kit



People sometimes ask what are the basic tools I need to start painting scenery. This is about as basic as it gets, and you'll ultimately need a good deal more than this but it's a start.

- A) **A 4" Masonry Brush.** This will probably have a plastic handle and nylon bristles. Its tough. The bristles will take a lot of cleaning and it costs about half as much as the natural bristled brush. Good for texturing but not good for holding paint and really bad at spattering and washes. Most of the wash will run down your arm rather than get spattered onto the scenery. Still, why ruin a good brush with texture? Get this from a good decorators suppliers
- B) **A 4" Flating In Brush.** This will have a copper ferrule, a wooden handle and natural bristles. It will hold paint and washes well and be good at spattering and flatting in colour. You may need a larger flatting in brush for priming cloths but other than that if you need a larger brush than a 4" use a roller. Get this from Flints.
- C) **A 2" Purdy.** Purdy make excellent quality brushes and rollers. Their artificial fibre brushes are really good for cutting in, (painting up to the edge of something). They are made with the outside bristles full length and the inside bristles getting shorter towards the middle of the brush. This results in a brush that holds its edge perfectly. They are great for painting straight lines too. This 2" (50 mm) brush can paint a line about 4 mm thick. The one in the picture is straight across the tips of the bristles but you can also et bevelled ones which some people prefer. Either way these brushes last for a long time if looked after and are worth the money. Sold at Flints and good decorator's suppliers.

- D) A Natural Sponge.** I find medium sized sponges the best. These should be used for painting things not wiping up paint or any form of cleaning. (They'll just fall to pieces.) A natural Sponge is great for creating broken finishes, ageing down and a wide variety of paint effects. They should be held fairly loosely so that the whole of the sponge is being used. Buy them from Flints or Brian Joseph as these suppliers will be sourcing the type of sponges that are good to paint with. You'll see from the picture that we want the fairly coarse textured sponges not the really soft fine ones. The coarse ones are stronger and nicer to paint with. Never rip one in half as it two halves will fall to pieces. Its also a good idea to get a car cleaning sponge for cleaning stuff up so you aren't tempted to use the good one!
- E) A Graining Comb.** This will be useful when creating a variety of different wood grains. Again you can get these from Flints or BJ Hardware. They can be used through glazes and even through texture to make a raised grain. This flat comb gives two graduated patterns with the grain getting finer towards the end of the tool. If you can get a rocker as well. This creates the heart grain. You can see these tools being used [in the film at the bottom of this page.](#)
- F) A Swan or Goose Feather.** Again get from Flints or better still go for a walk along a nice bit of river and keep your eyes open. This is used for marbling.
- G) A Set of Rosco Liners** These are the sort of brushes used for cloth painting but can also be used for lots of scenic painting finishes and for ageing and painting into scenery. I've used Rosco Liners for many years. They are good quality and if cleaned properly will last a good while. Make sure that you don't put them away wet as they will begin to loose bristles. Don't leave them soaking in water as the handles will swell up and split the ferrule. Rosco liners come in a set of seven or eight or as individual brushes. I buy the ones I need or sets of seven. The biggest brush is really big and really expensive. You can do without it.

What's Next

After you have this, you may want to start building up some basic hand tools, Chalk line, Stanley knife, scale rule, staple remover, tape measure etc. A spray gun will be needed if you are going to paint lots of scenery. Get a gravity feed gun of reasonable quality like a Devilbis or a Sata. Don't buy a cheap or a second hand spray gun. The Flints catalogue has some useful info here to help you choose.

In addition you'll need some 4" radiator or "rad" rollers. These are really useful. You can get a variety of rollers to attach to the handle, from loam and flock to long piled. The foam ones are especially useful as you can cut into the foam to create patterns. Some 9" rollers would also be useful as would a telescopic roller pole. The list goes on and on but the tools in the picture make a good start.