



Dennis Andreas

Railroad Report

JTT Scenery Products

Stimulate the customer's imagination by showcasing scenery products.

As important as buildings and track are to a layout, it's the foliage and ground cover that make up the scenery and add the final touches. Having a broad selection of these products is a must for any hobby shop. This includes having materials and products in a range of sizes from N to O including all the colors of nature.

To fill this niche we will be taking a look at some JTT Scenery Products. JTT & Partners was established in June 2000 by John Truong. JTT manufactures over 800 items of scenery and model parts such as miniature trees, armatures, turf and ground foam, gravel and ballast, skylights, basswood, human figures, automobiles, and furniture for model railroading, architectural models, and movie scenes.

As mentioned, a layout is not complete without Nature's touch. If you don't have one in your store, consider creating a small display board utilizing some scenery products. If you have a train display in your store, accent it. There is nothing better than a hands-on display to get your customers filled with ideas, with additional sales as the result. Our little project represents one season but you could break up the board into multiple seasons for the best impact. You might want to factor in such things as the surrounding landscape of your store's location. The point is, an in-store display can be an invaluable way to help your customers understand the process of adding scenery, and for you to make the sale.

The JTT line is packaged to hang on a rack or on peg board hooks, but some of the larger items are boxed. The packaging is clear and sturdy, so customers don't need to



This is only a small sampling of the huge assortment of JTT Scenery Products available for consumers to choose from.

open items for a better look. JTT has pre-made trees and bushes of various sizes and loose foliage for the low level bushes. For those that want to create their own foliage, they also offer tree armatures, bedding, grass mats and a line of styrene vehicles and figures ready to paint.

The folks from MRC sent a nice cross-section of materials to work with and it was decided to do a garden nursery-farm theme to showcase what was sent. This is a standalone display built on pink foam. Also used is a Badger airbrush and the company's acrylic paints to create and color the foam for the look of earth.

Pink foam is easy to work with but messy, however it is cheap. If you're not happy with your first attempt, start again

with another piece, don't be discouraged. By texturing the foam with various grits of sand paper, we can create everything from a dirt field to a concrete road.

Once the foam has been cut to the size required, begin to layout the items and fiddle with placement. Take a look from different angles and give yourself some perspective as to where tall and short belong. Place a few things, gaze at it, and come back. Allow yourself to be creative and have some fun.



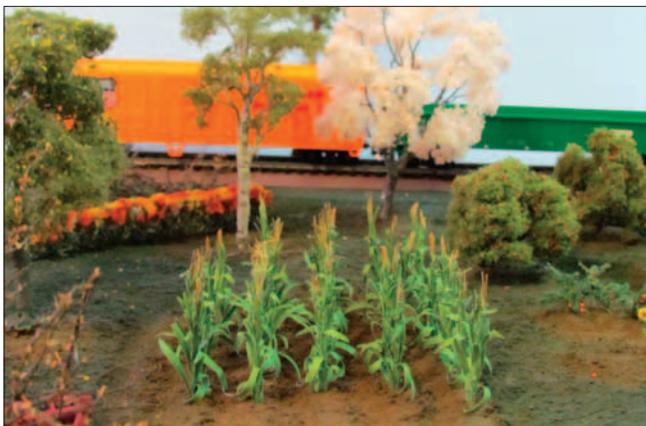
Small details like the father and son riding a tractor through the sunflower garden is what makes a scene come alive.



Pink foam insulation is first cut to size, then various grades of sandpaper are used to give the base some texture.

Now that you have a sense of what goes where, mark the areas with a permanent marker. Add foot paths and possibly a road. You'll need rows for the plants and trees and where you want grass or dirt. After you are satisfied, begin the texturing. Although our display is mainly flat you can still sand the foam to make depressions and raised beds. If you're scared or just plain lazy, JTT makes self adhesive ground cover. This can be cut to shape and just stuck in place.

For this example, to get the impression of dirt and grass, various coarse sand papers were used to raise the surface texture. This was then painted with a base color of a medium brown to cover the pink colored foam and provide a good starting base. By using various earth tone colors, an airbrush was used to create the grass to dirt transition but



Try to showcase as many products as possible in your display, like this cornfield which was included in the garden nursery.

hand painting works well also. Note that lawns and meadows are made up of a few shades of green, so mix it up a bit. In place of painting you can also use various colors of ballast and grass for the earth textures.

Now that the base is prepared, it's time to add the JTT foliage. There is no "right" way to do this unless you are a tree-hugging purist, but then all of your displays would look the same. When installing the items be careful not to squeeze them too much. This will cause compaction of the material JTT uses for the replication of leaves. Use an awl or bamboo skewer to bore the mounting holes. All JTT products come with a mounting stake molded in-place for easy "planting." From our selection we installed some tomatoes in the middle with sun flowers in front. Behind

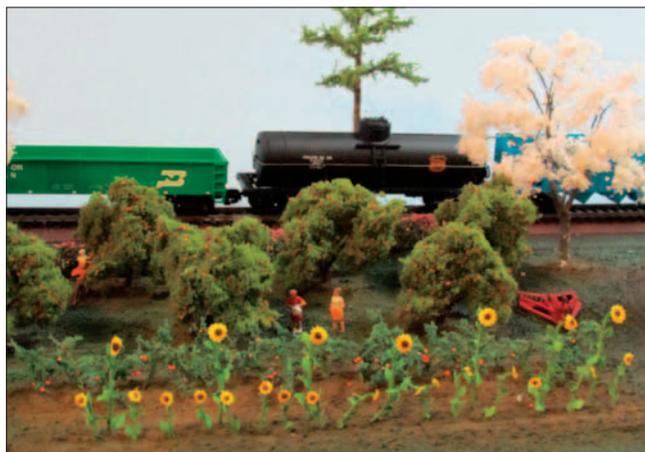


There are a variety of trees available which can be used to represent any season, such as these spring cherry blossoms the tomatoes are fruit trees with a father and son picking and two ladies loading up their bags with fruit. As the items are set in place you may need to fluff them a bit.

Overall the JTT products were found to be quite life like. There really isn't any set size when it comes to plants and the mix and match creates depth when viewing, so some O gauge corn stalks and sun flower plants were mixed in with the HO products. They may appear a little tall, but nature can work in funny ways. The important thing to remember is you want to showcase the possibilities to your customers, so mix the products up a little.

The really good views are the ones at eye level. Fire-up your train enthusiast's imagination. Suggest he picture himself sitting on a country porch sipping an ice-cold lemonade as the mile-long 3:00 freight passes. That's what creating a landscape scene is all about and a sample board may be just what's needed to get him started.

With a little work you can create a focal point for your train section. The more you stimulate your customer's brain, you will stimulate some spending. Remember it's all about enjoyment.



Adding little details like the fruit pickers filling their baskets with apples draws a person's eye and stimulates their imagination.

Not to limit what JTT offers to what we have to show, be sure to visit their web site, www.jttmicroscale.com, for a complete selection of everything the company has to offer. All JTT Scenery Products are available through Model Rectifier Corporation. **HM**