

Chain Link Fence

What graveyard scene would be complete without a fence? We have all seen the typical would be wrought iron fence that uses wood for a cross section, which is usually not very realistic because the wood is too thick to resemble a piece of flat iron. There is a way to modify this to make it more realistic, but we will save that for another lesson!

Instead, we are going to make a chain link fence that will look more realistic, cost less, and take less time to make, and will serve as both a finishing touch to your scene and act as a barrier to curtail the would be inquisitives from getting too close to your display. And, as an extra touch, we are going to add led's to the eyes to give it a little extra flair. (if desired)

Let's begin

The first step is to fit the skull to the pvc, to do this, carefully cut an x on the bottom of the skull and bend in the plastic with your fingers. Check your fitting by placing the skull over the pvc to see if it has a big enough hole. You want it to fit so that the pvc slightly pushes the plastic when slipping in, in other words, you want a snug vs. sloppy fit. Also, because of the way the skull is molded, it may sit looking upward on the pvc, if you prefer the skull to sit straight, we will correct this when we get ready to glue it on. See figures to the right.



Next, we will add the led's (optional) to the skulls. Before pushing the led's into the pre-drilled hole, add a bead of glue around the bottom of the lens, lead the wires thru the bottom of the skull and twist the positive and negative wires together. Your led's have been prewired and the wire with the black dash at the end is the positive. Just make sure that thru the wiring process, you always have the wires in parallel (dashes) wired together.



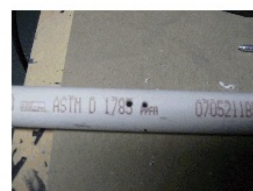
When this is done, set aside for now. Figure 1A

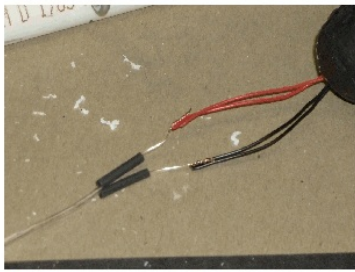


1A

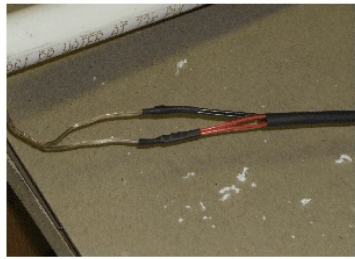
Now we want to get the posts ready. The first step is to drill pilot holes for the wires and eye screw (1/8" for the eye screw). You want to make sure that your holes are direct across from one another. An easy way to do this is to make a line on the top of the pvc, then measure approx. 8" down from the top of the pvc and make a mark for the drill. The 2 outer posts will only have holes on one side, while the 2 inner posts will have 2 sets of starter holes, (2 on each side).

On the inner posts, drill the holes on one side slightly above your 8" mark, this way, the eye screws won't run into each other. The other hole is for the wire to run up to the skull, you want this hole a little above the other and a little bit bigger. Next, put in the eye screws and run your wire out of the top, you may need to tie a string to the wire to help "fish" the wire out the top. See figures below.



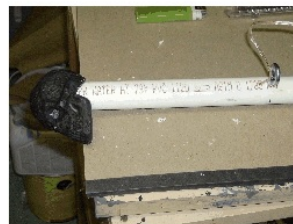


The next step is to wire the led wires to our leads, before we twist them together, you will want to cut a piece of (small) shrink tube to fit over the bare wires. Slip the tube over the lead wires, twist all together (remember to match the dashes up) bend back over the wire, slip the tube over and melt with the lighter. See the figures to the left. After this is done, gently pull and guide the wires back down into the pvc until your skull fits back over the pvc, but don't glue yet!



Now, before continuing to the next post to repeat the process, we want to add the chain. To do this, cut the end link with tin snips and fit onto the eye. Next, run the wire thru several of the chain links to help keep the wire in line with the chain. Once this is done, we can then run the lead wire to the next post to repeat the wiring process. Remember that the inner posts will actually have 3 sets of wire, the skull leads, and leads from both sides of the post. See figures below right.

Once we have all the wires in place, we will want to run a final lead up thru the last post that will connect to the battery patch. We want to drill another pilot hole towards the bottom (about 1") and run a wire all the way to the top of the skull to join the other wires and out the hole.



Before we begin glueing, we want to make sure that all the wiring is correct, test by attaching the battery patch and make sure all the leds light up, if not, you will have to retrace the wires to make sure they are all wired in series. If you are unsure, you could test your wiring each step of the way by simply touching the 2 wires to the battery to make sure the leds work before applying the shrink tube.

Once everything is correct, we can now glue the skulls. place all of the posts in line so that all the chains are in a straight line, then turn the skulls so they all face forward and glue around the bottom, smoothing the glue as you go with your finger. If you want the skull to be more front facing instead of tilted upward, simply place a rubber band around it to help hold it downward while the glue dries. We also want to add glue to the wire pilot holes to help prevent the wires from being accidently pulled out. See figure 2E.



2E

When the glue has dried, you can now paint your fence, be careful when you paint the underside of the skull so you don't get overspray on the leds. If you prefer, you can add a small piece of masking tape over the leds to assure that you don't get paint on it. As a final step, I spot spray and "mist" the fence with a reddish brown primer to give it a rusted appearance. Once you see how cool this looks in the yard, I'm sure you will want to expand on this and fence the whole yard!

Happy Haunting

