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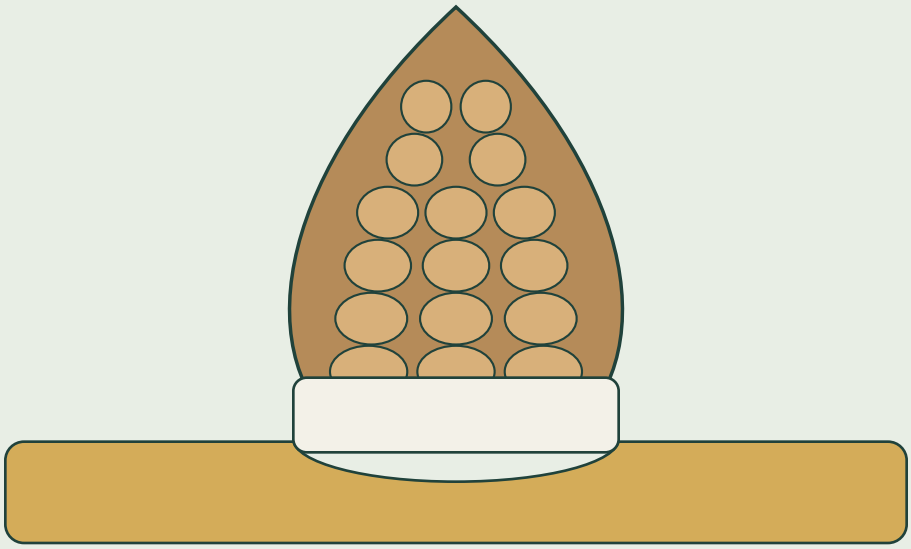
MAKE / BOTANICAL & NATURAL-MATERIAL CRAFTS

Create a Small Pinecone Table Accent



REMOVABLE CONE / BROAD BASE

14 practical steps · Choose · fit · support

Original diagrams and two printable maker records

Illustrative plans — not physical test results

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Before you start

A pinecone’s overlapping scales are already a decorative pattern. This project makes a small, low tabletop accent using one sound, naturally dried cone and a paperboard collar attached to a broad base. The cone rests inside the collar and remains removable. There is no wire, hot glue, drilling, candle or load-bearing attachment. The purpose is a quiet indoor decoration that can be inspected and cleaned, not a container for food or a fire-resistant object. Do not gather cones from protected areas or transport unknown pest-bearing material.

Materials: one small, known dry pinecone from a permitted local source or craft supplier, a firm 140 by 100 mm board or rigid craft tray, stiff craft cardstock for a low collar, pencil, ruler, flexible paper measuring strip, scissors appropriate to card, and a labelled paper-craft adhesive suitable for the base and cardstock. Use spare card for a fit trial. Choose a cone with a broad sound base, no sharp broken scales, visible pests or dampness. Keep the dry natural material away from food, heat, flame, children and pets.

Plan the project

Start with a broad flat base measuring about 140 by 100 mm. Mark its centre at (70,50) mm. Choose a modest cone that can rest low and centrally without overhang; an illustrative maximum plan footprint is 55 by 55 mm. Do not infer stability from its width alone. Make a shallow circular collar around the lower portion, below the wider scales. Wrap a narrow paper measuring strip around the actual lower cone section without compressing it, and allow enough clearance to slide the cone in and out. The circumference is a measured fit reference, not a rating.

For an illustrative inner collar diameter of 42 mm, the circumference is about 132 mm (pi times 42). A test strip 147 mm long provides about 15 mm for the join overlap. Actual cardstock thickness, cone shape and fitting clearance change the final length. Cut the collar as a 30 mm high strip: 20 mm upright wall plus a 10 mm tab zone. Snip the tab zone at approximately 10 mm intervals, fold the tabs outward and attach them to the base. Adjust the trial strip before using adhesive. The cone must rest directly on the base, not balance on the folded tabs or rim.

Steps 01–02

1. Choose the cone and confirm the collection rules

Select a locally purchased craft cone or a naturally fallen cone from land where collection is allowed. Parks Canada prohibits collection of natural objects in its protected places. Check the local rules and avoid moving natural material across regions where pest or invasive-species restrictions apply. Choose one identifiable dry cone that is intact and free of visible pests, debris or dampness. Leave unknown, brittle, mouldy or damaged specimens outside the project.

2. Inspect the scales and natural base

Set the cone on a lined tray. Observe its bottom, sides and tip without squeezing the scales. A cone that rocks strongly, sheds pieces or has sharp broken scales is a poor candidate for a removable table accent. Do not trim woody scales with craft scissors or force them open. If the cone seems damp, keep it separate from craft stock and choose a verified dry one instead. Naturally dried cones can change shape with moisture; do not assume they will remain identical forever.

Steps 03–04

3. Prepare a stable low board

Choose a rigid flat board or low tray that sits evenly on a level table. The worked 140 by 100 mm size is illustrative; a wider cone needs a larger support. Check the underside for protrusions and protect the table with suitable pads or a mat if needed. Avoid a thin card that twists under the cone. Mark the centre and a 55 mm footprint guide on a separate drawing or lightly on the base.

4. Sketch the cone footprint and the collar

Place the cone near the centre of the board in its naturally stable orientation. Trace an approximate footprint on scrap paper, then measure its lower contact region with a flexible strip. Do not press the strip against sharp or fragile scales. Decide how high a collar can sit without obstructing removal. Pattern 1 shows a low collar and centre mark. If the cone has no suitable broad resting region, select another specimen rather than trying to secure a tall unstable arrangement.

Steps 05–06

5. Make a temporary collar strip

Cut a 30 mm high card strip: 20 mm wall and a 10 mm tab zone. For the example diameter 42 mm, start with 147 mm length including 15 mm overlap. Actual fit matters more than the example arithmetic. Gently curve the strip with your hands and hold its ends together using a removable paper clip away from the cone. Confirm that the lower cone region enters and leaves without catching. Do not push the cone into a narrow ring.

6. Adjust the trial and mark the joining area

Rest the cone directly on the board, with the loose collar around its lower section. The collar should guide the base without clamping scales or holding the cone up. Adjust the strip length until the cone can be lifted out by supporting the whole cone. Record the final circumference and overlap. If the ring is too loose to provide useful lateral guidance or too tight to remove, revise the strip. Keep the cone low; the collar is not a fastening rated for transport.

Steps 07–08

7. Cut and fold the outward tabs

Remove the cone. Mark the tab line 10 mm from one long edge, then make short cuts up to that line at roughly 10 mm intervals. Use scissors on a clear stable surface, keeping fingers away from the blades. Fold all tabs outward. Avoid cutting through the upright 20 mm wall. At the overlap zone remove only a duplicated tab if it prevents the join from lying flat; keep enough surface for the paper join. Pattern 2 shows the tab direction.

8. Join the collar away from the cone

Read the chosen paper-craft adhesive directions. Form the ring using the marked overlap; apply the adhesive as directed to the join, not to the cone. Keep the wall upright and the tabs pointing out. Hold or clip the overlap only as allowed by the maker, then let it dry or cure completely before trial fitting. If the seam opens or the cardstock tears, remake it. Do not use hot glue or a wire tie to compensate for an unsuitable adhesive.

Steps 09–10

9. Attach the dry collar to the broad base

Place the dry ring on the centre mark, then lift it away and apply compatible adhesive to the outward tabs as specified. Seat the ring level on the board. Keep the centre clear so the cone rests on the flat base, not on a mound of adhesive. Follow the maker’s cure conditions. Leave the cone off until the assembly is dry and ready; if the adhesive is not suitable for the base material, use a compatible paperboard base or a ready-made shallow tray.

10. Place the cone into the finished cradle

After the collar and base have completed the required drying or cure, support the cone in both hands and lower it into the ring without forcing scales. Confirm it contacts the base. Look from the side: the collar should surround only the lower area and leave the rest of the cone free. If the cone hangs on the rim, remove it and adjust the design. Do not glue the cone down simply because the fit is uncertain.

Steps 11–12

11. Inspect the resting stability on a level surface

With the board resting on a level table, observe whether the cone sits evenly, leans excessively or tends to slide in its collar. Check that the board itself does not rock and that the cone does not project outside the base. Gently reposition the supported assembly as in normal placement, without shaking, tipping, dropping or lifting by the cone. If unstable, choose a broader base or a lower suitable cone. This observation does not certify impact resistance.

12. Add a small optional paper accent

If desired, add a flat paper strip or a simple seasonal label to the board outside the collar. Keep it flat and avoid tall decorations, loose glitter, seed pods or extra weight that could upset the arrangement. Do not use food, fragrance oil, aerosol coating or a candle in this accent. The natural scales and paper are combustible; keep the display clear of flames, heaters and other heat sources.

Steps 13–14

13. Display and maintain the removable cone

Place the accent on a dry indoor surface away from traffic, dampness, food and pets. Do not use it on a hot surface or as a candle holder. To move it, remove and support the cone separately or carry the board level with the cone supported; do not lift by the collar. Check for dust, loose scales, pests or moisture. Avoid soaking or baking an uncertain natural specimen; replace it if the condition is unsuitable.

14. Complete the fit and condition record

Record cone source, footprint, measured circumference, final strip length and overlap, collar height, adhesive instructions and actual cure. Note the resting condition and choose DISPLAY READY, CHANGE/REMAKE or HOLD. If the cone later changes shape, remove it and reassess the fit before use. The collar does not certify stability, pest treatment or fire safety. Store the cone and cradle dry, with labels and without crushing the scales.

Fix, care and preserve

Cone rests on rim. Increase clearance or use a lower collar; the cone should contact the base.

Collar seam opens. Replace the collar using compatible adhesive and full cure.

Board rocks. Use a wider, flatter rigid support; do not add weight on top.

Scales shed or insects appear. Isolate and remove unsuitable material; do not spray or bake it indoors.

Cone expands or contracts. Remove it, reassess the fit and change the collar if needed.

Source & evidence boundary

Original Steadleaf English prose, calculations, vector artwork, diagrams and maker records. The following sources provide factual context, not certification of this design. Follow actual component instructions and local collection, disposal and plant-movement rules.

Parks Canada, Visitor guidelines
https://parks.canada.ca/voyage-travel/regles-rules

University of Florida IFAS Extension, Drying and Preserving Plant Materials for Decorative Uses
https://ask.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/EP004

Purdue Extension, Preserving Plant Materials
https://ag.purdue.edu/department/hla/extension/extension-publications-library/ext-pubs/ho-102-w.html

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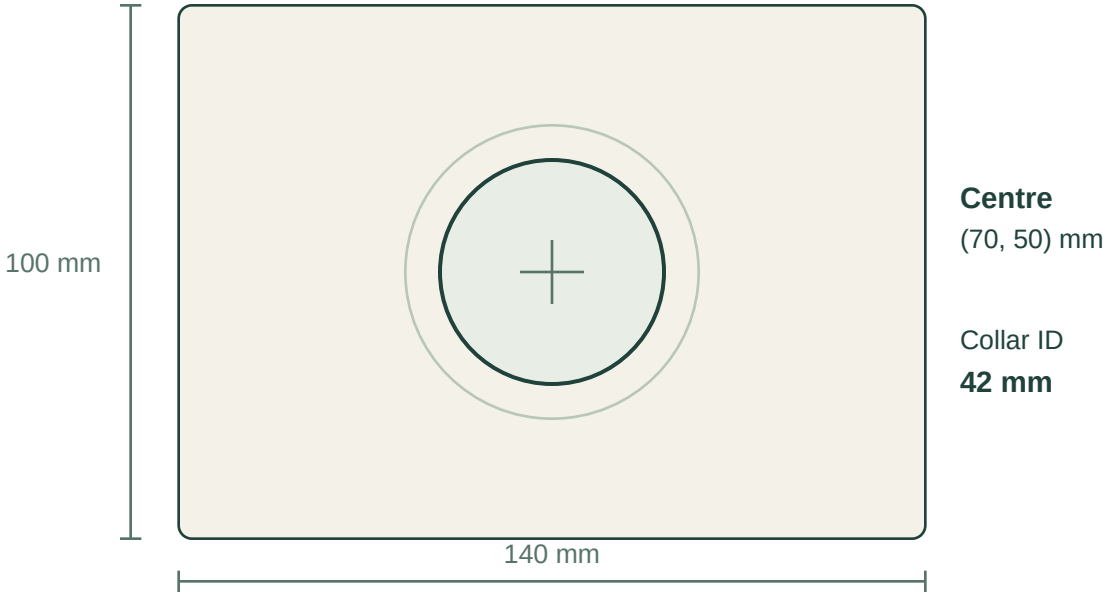
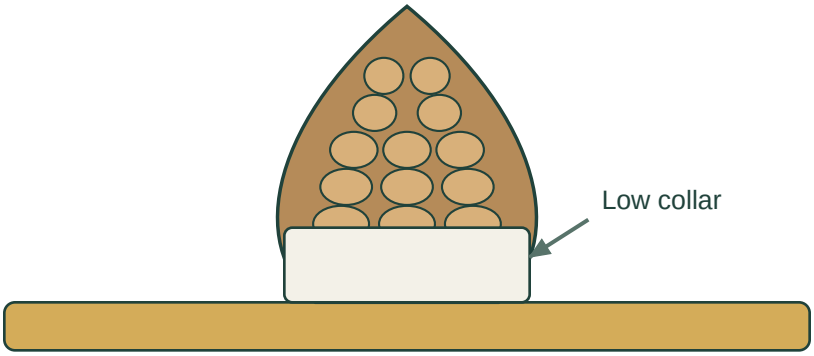
Base and collar dimensions

Top and side schematics show a 140 x 100 mm base, centred collar, and a low pinecone resting on the base. The example 42 mm inner diameter gives about 132 mm circumference, plus 15 mm overlap.

A / TOP VIEW — STABLE BASE



B / SIDE VIEW — CONE RESTS ON THE BOARD

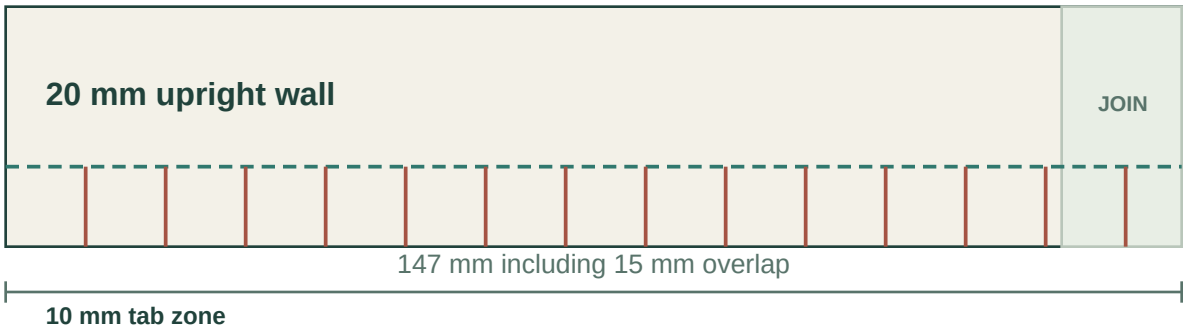


Cone remains removable. No height or stability rating.

Cut, fold and assemble the collar

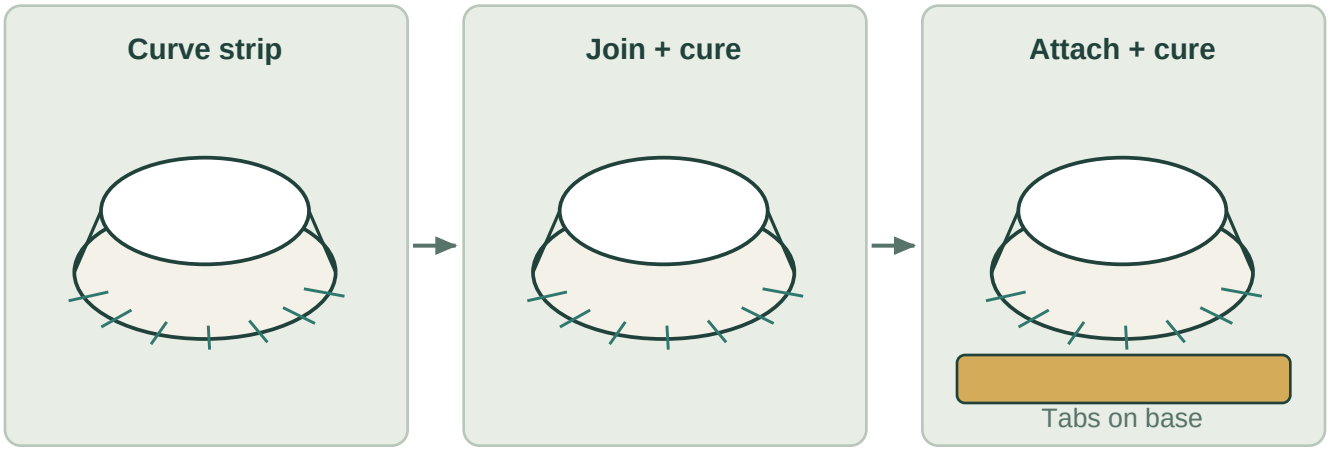
Illustrative 147 x 30 mm strip, 20 mm wall and 10 mm tab zone; cuts only through the tab zone, outward folds and seam join. Attach to the base and let cure before inserting the removable cone.

A / ILLUSTRATIVE COLLAR STRIP



Cut only the tab zone at ~10 mm intervals; fold outward at the dashed line.

B / CURVE, JOIN, ATTACH



Cone stays out until the actual adhesive has completed its required drying / cure.

Cone and collar plan

Enter actual observations only. Mark missing information UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED. This is a craft record, not a safety or preservation certificate.

Permitted source / condition / known type

Cone footprint / approximate height / base contact

Board dimensions / surface condition

Measured lower circumference / clearance

Trial strip length / overlap / wall and tab dimensions

Adhesive product / label instructions

Trial fit: FREE / CATCH / NO FIT / UNKNOWN

Decision: PROCEED / CHANGE / HOLD

Final fit and care

Enter actual observations only. Mark missing information UNKNOWN or NOT CHECKED. This is a craft record, not a safety or preservation certificate.

Actual collar and base dimensions

Seam and tab condition / cure status

Cone contacts base? / removable without force?

Resting alignment and board condition

Decorative label / display location

Disposition: DISPLAY READY / CHANGE-REMAKE / HOLD

Moisture, pest or damage review trigger

Date / reason