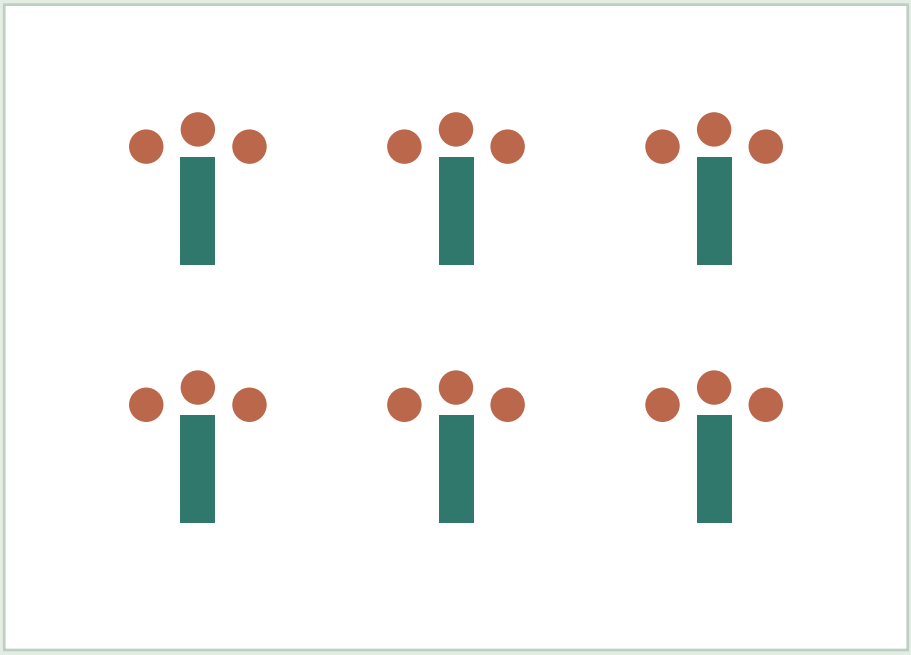
STEADLEAF PRESS
MAKE / PRINTING, STENCILS & COLOR

Make a Nature-Inspired Stamp Pattern from Erasers



TWO SMALL FACES / SIX REED MOTIFS

14 practical steps · Select · compose · stamp

Original diagrams and two printable maker records

Illustrative plans — not physical test results

Before you start

An eraser can make a simple print without becoming a carved sculpture. This project uses a narrow rectangular eraser face for a reed and a small round flat eraser face for seed dots. Their arrangement, rather than a carved detail, makes the botanical motif. Use purpose-made craft erasers or known sound ordinary erasers with suitable flat faces; do not heat, sand, sharpen or cut unknown rubber.

Materials: one narrow rectangular eraser with a flat face about 8 x 25 mm, one round flat eraser face about 8 mm diameter, a compatible water-based paper-printing paint, two dedicated applicators or trays if using two colours, 210 x 150 mm paper and matching scrap, ruler, pencil, non-food palette, clean dry support and drying area. If exact sizes are unavailable, use smaller flat faces or ready-made stamps and recalculate the footprint. Keep small pieces and paint away from children, pets and food.

Plan the project

Use a 210 x 150 mm landscape sheet with six motif centres: x = 45, 105, 165 and y = 45, 105 mm, measured from upper left. Pitch is 60 mm in each direction. Each motif occupies an illustrative 40 x 40 mm square. At each centre (cx,cy), place the vertical rectangular reed face centred at (cx,cy+3); its nominal extents are x = cx ± 4 and y = cy–9.5 to cy+15.5. Place three 8 mm dots centred at (cx–12,cy–12), (cx+12,cy–12), (cx,cy–16). The upper central dot and stem have a nominal 2.5 mm gap.

The left and right dots sit 4 mm clear of the stem's horizontal extent before considering their height; all three are separated from one another. The entire motif fits the nominal 40 mm square: x extents ±16, y from –20 to +15.5. At 60 mm pitch the enclosing squares leave 20 mm gap and at least 25 mm margin horizontally and vertically on the example paper. Choose one colour for the stem and another for dots or a single colour for all. This is a measured schematic: the actual eraser footprint governs.

Steps 01–02

1. Choose the rectangular face

Look for a clean, firm rectangular eraser with a narrow flat end close to 8 by 25 mm. Inspect for splits, crumbs and rounded edges that prevent even contact. Do not carve or slice an ordinary eraser; choose an already suitable shape or a purpose-made stamp if needed. Record the actual dimensions on Record 1.

2. Choose the round face

Use an intact small cylindrical craft eraser with a flat end around 8 mm diameter, held comfortably without removing a tiny detachable piece. A pencil eraser may work if it is firmly attached and the flat face is suitable. Reject loose or deteriorating pieces. Keep all small materials contained on the work tray and use no blade, heat or abrasive.

Steps 03–04

3. Check paint compatibility

Select water-based paint explicitly intended for paper printing. Read its handling, ventilation, cleanup and drying directions; check whether it can transfer from your actual stamp face on scrap. Water-based does not mean edible or skin-safe. Do not use solvents or unsupported additives to change the eraser surface. Use a dedicated non-food palette.

4. Measure the footprints

Trace both clean dry faces on waste paper. Measure the widest horizontal and vertical extents, and compare them with the 8 x 25 and 8 mm examples. If the actual sizes are larger, make a larger motif cell or choose smaller stamps. Keep all planned impressions separated; do not force a stamp into a space by pressing harder.

Steps 05–06

5. Sketch the reed motif

On a 40 x 40 mm planning box mark its centre. Draw the vertical rectangle with its centre 3 mm below the motif centre, and the three circles at the listed offsets. The centre dot should not overlap the rectangle: its lower edge is at cy−12 and the rectangle starts at cy−9.5. Check the actual footprint using the traced stamp shapes.

6. Draw the six-centre grid

On a separate sketch plot the 210 x 150 mm sheet, x centres 45, 105, 165 and y centres 45 and 105. Draw six 40 mm boxes centred at these positions. Each box leaves 20 mm between neighbouring boxes. A 20 mm half-width and half-height leave 25 mm between the outer box edges and the paper edges in this example.

Steps 07–08

7. Trial the stem impression

Coat the rectangular face lightly with compatible paint and press straight down onto a matching offcut. Lift vertically. Observe coverage after the specified drying interval. If it is faint, change one variable such as film evenness rather than flooding the face. If the material crumbles or paint beads badly, use a suitable replacement stamp.

8. Trial the dot impression

Use a separate applicator or tray for the dots when choosing a contrasting colour. Print three dots on scrap, keeping the face horizontal and lifting vertically. Check their real diameter, edge quality and whether the stamp is easy to control. Do not push a tiny loose piece with a sharp tool. Record the chosen film and contact method.

Steps 09–10

9. Trial one complete motif

Use the 40 mm box as a placement guide. Print the stem at the planned offset and the three dots in their positions. If the wet stem might be touched by your hand or stamp, let it dry before adding dots. Compare the dry motif with the plan; adjust the spacing on fresh scrap if any actual footprint overlaps. A little variation is part of hand printing.

10. Transfer the reference positions

Mark small pencil references on the final paper or a removable external guide, indicating the six motif centres and upper orientation. Recheck the actual sheet dimensions. Use a dry paper template to locate each individual reed-and-dot position, lifting the template before painting. Avoid a wet paint area and do not erase marks across wet impressions.

Steps 11–12

11. Print the six stems

Print the rectangular stem once in each cell at its recorded offset. Work from the top row to the bottom in a sequence that keeps your hand away from wet paint. Recoat lightly as needed. If an edge is imperfect, leave it until dry before deciding whether to remake the sheet. Do not double-print a wet mark.

12. Add the eighteen seed dots

Once the stem paint can be handled or overprinted according to its label, add three separate dots in each motif cell. Use the chosen dot colour and face. Count six stems and eighteen dots, twenty-four impressions in total; record deliberate omissions separately. Keep the upper dot and stem separated, adapting placement to actual stamp size.

Steps 13–14

13. Dry and store the print

Allow the paint to dry according to instructions with paper supported flat and away from strong heat. Clean stamp faces only with a method compatible with their material and the paint; do not soak or use solvent to rescue an unsuitable eraser. Contain small pieces and discard damaged material according to local guidance. Store the dry print flat and labelled.

14. Record the repeat

Enter the actual eraser types, dimensions, paint, trial result, grid, counts and dry condition. Mark READY, CHANGE/REMAKE or HOLD. Preserve the original motif sketch so it can be adapted to other known safe stamps. This is original arrangement geometry, not a promise of identical prints, archival permanence or a safety certification.

Fix, care and preserve

Stem and dot overlap. Increase actual spacing or use a smaller face; revise on scrap first.

Impression is patchy. Check the flatness and film separately, without increasing force excessively.

Eraser crumbles. Stop, contain loose pieces and replace the stamp.

Colours contaminate. Use dedicated applicators and a clean separate face.

Motif drifts. Re-establish the measured reference points and print only on dry neighbouring areas.

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 product instructions and local disposal guidance.

Health Canada, Arts and crafts safety

https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/home-garden-safety/use-arts-crafts-materials-safely.html

Canadian Conservation Institute, Caring for paper objects

https://www.canada.ca/en/conservation-institute/services/preventive-conservation/guidelines-collections/paper-objects.html

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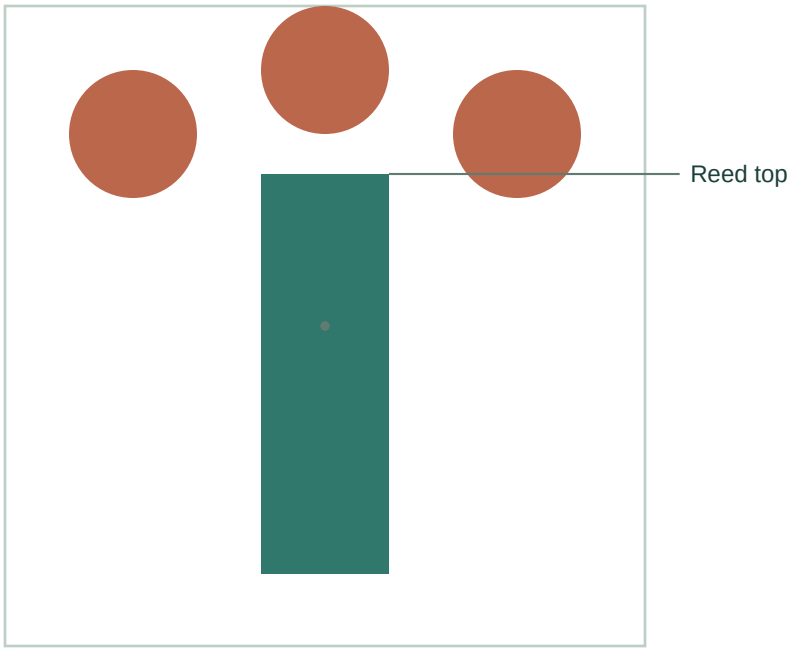
Reed-and-seed motif

Nominal 40 x 40 mm footprint. Reed: 8 x 25 mm at (cx,cy+3). Dots: diameter 8 mm, centred (cx–12,cy–12), (cx+12,cy–12), (cx,cy–16).

ONE REED-AND-SEED MOTIF / SCHEMATIC



40 × 40 mm cell • 8 × 25 mm reed • 8 mm dots

Central dot-to-reed gap: 2.5 mm

Six-motif stamping grid

210 x 150 mm sheet; centres x = 45,105,165 and y = 45,105. Six stems and eighteen dots; 24 total impressions. 60 mm pitch, 20 mm nominal cell gap.

THREE COLUMNS × TWO ROWS



210 × 150 mm • 60 mm pitch • 24 impressions

Eraser and motif trial

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

Rectangular eraser / actual footprint

Round eraser / actual footprint

Paint product / compatibility

Actual motif offsets / gap

Stem trial / adjustment

Dot trial / adjustment

Combined motif observation

Decision: PROCEED / CHANGE / HOLD

Repeat and care

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

Sheet size / six centre positions

Stem count / dot count

Omitted or changed positions

Colour and coverage

Actual drying / date

Disposition: READY / CHANGE-REMAKE / HOLD

Stamp cleanup and disposal

Storage / unresolved issue