

**THE ART OF  
MODELLING WAXEN  
FLOWERS, FRUIT**

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The art of modelling waxen flowers, fruit by G. W. Francis

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**G. W. FRANCIS**

**THE ART OF  
MODELLING WAXEN  
FLOWERS, FRUIT**



THE ART OF  
*Modelling*  
WAXEN FLOWERS,  
FRUIT,

ETC. ETC.

ILLUSTRATED  
WITH NUMEROUS WOOD ENGRAVINGS.

BY G. W. FRANCIS, F.L.S.

AUTHOR OF THE LITTLE ENGLISH FLORA, THE DICTIONARY OF  
ARTS, FAVORITES OF THE FLOWER GARDEN, THE ART OF  
LEVELLING, CHEMICAL EXPERIMENTS, ETC. ETC.



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AND ALL BOOKSELLERS.

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## P R E F A C E.

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No work has ever appeared upon the Making of WAXEN FRUIT, and but one on WAXEN FLOWERS, and this contains very little information of any kind. Knowing well how much the art is practised by Ladies, and how much more it would be pursued, were there a plain and correct guide to the operation, the Author has prepared the present little Work, hoping that it will forward the views and remove the difficulties of the learner in the delightful occupation of decorating her boudoir with imitations of such lovely objects. The instructions given are the result of experience, and comprize not merely the working with certain ready-prepared materials, but as much as is possible the preparation of them, that the learner may have nothing to retard her progress, but be enabled to pursue the art to its perfection through every difficulty.

THE  
ART OF MAKING  
WAXEN FRUIT AND FLOWERS,  
&c. &c.

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THESE are no imitations of natural objects more exact and pleasing than those made of wax, more especially the representations of Fruit and Flowers. So exact indeed are they, if well made, that the most practised eye cannot sometimes detect the real from the artificial.

In fruit, the choicest specimens of every clime may be thus assembled in a single vase, in all their apparent lusciousness and perfection; while in their waxen prototypes, lovely flowers may be viewed in all their gorgeous coloring, and transparent delicacy. As ornaments to the drawing room, when grouped with taste and blended with harmonic contrast, these waxen objects are not to be surpassed, whether we look at them as records of foreign productions seldom seen—of extraordinarily beautiful specimens of home growth—of favorites which it is desirable to preserve—or merely as beauties of ordinary production, which the eye delights to rest upon. Indeed all lovers of flowers (and who are not?) must admire these, their lovely *images*, transparent, vivid, and brilliant as they are.

The very beauty of waxen fruit and flowers induces the belief that to make them must be difficult. "I can never make any so beautiful as these," is a very oft repeated expression upon witnessing even a single group. Yet, in truth, no art is of more easy attainment; a little patience and a little taste are the whole mental requisites; these superadded to ordinary care in the manipulation, cannot fail very shortly to render proficient the

most inexperienced. Yet it is not to be denied, that a slight knowledge of the harmony of colors and of botany will greatly assist in the perfection of the more difficult of these works of elegance. The chief thing is to know *how to select the proper materials*, and *how to set about the work in a proper manner*; and it may be added, to commence with what is most easy. Should it be a fruit, let it be one of a single color, as an orange or a lemon; or if a flower, we might recommend a snowdrop, a violet, or a narcissus, in which there is no complexity, and little pencilling.

In London and other large towns, the requisite materials can always readily be procured, and it is not worth while that any of them should be home made; yet, as persons who desire to practice this art may live far in the country where it is difficult to obtain even the simpler requisites; and as circumstances often arise in which it is absolutely impossible to procure what may be wanted for a particular purpose, as in the case of a mould being required for a certain specimen of a fruit, or the extra thick wax desirable for particular flowers, &c., we intend to include in this our little book every available information; that the learner, however remotely situated may be his residence, or unique his model, may have as much as possible his difficulties removed, his mind stimulated, and his fingers directed to attain excellence.

Beginning with the easiest department, it is necessary to divide the subject into the making of Fruit, and the making of Flowers. These are quite distinct in themselves, the former includes the imitation of all solid objects, with melted wax poured into moulds. The latter includes those more delicate ones, which are made without moulds, of wax previously cut into thin sheets.

#### WAXEN FRUIT.

The art of making waxen fruit includes every small object made in a mould, thus the same instructions that direct to make an orange, are equally applicable to form an egg, a pea, a cucumber, the stem of a cactus or stapelia, a doll, a bust, or any similar article, observing that the principle upon which all are formed is, that a mould is requisite. This is first to be made or procured, then wax is to be cast in it, sometimes solid, sometimes hollow.



In many cases the objects will now be completely finished, with the exception of just trimming around where the mould joined; in other cases, the wax castings are to be painted with dry colors for some, and wet colors for others; and in different manners, according to the effect desired to be produced. Thus, the imitation of solid objects in wax necessarily resolves itself into three distinct portions, each of which we must consider in detail; and first, as to

#### MAKING MOULDS OF TWO PARTS.

The materials and implements requisite for making the proper moulds are plaster of Paris; some slips of stiff paper, or ribbons of tin cut from thin tin plates of their full length, and about three inches wide; some damp sand in a bowl; a pint basin; large spoon; small dinner knife; and jug of water. The plaster of Paris should be quite fresh, and of good quality, superfine if it can be procured, if not, the common plaster of the oilshops, and which is bought at about 4*d.* per bag, enough for several moulds; the superfine is very much to be preferred, as it is whiter, finer, harder, and more durable, it may be bought of any of the Italian figure makers, many of whom live about Covent Garden and Fetter Lane, London, at 1*s.* 6*d.* per bag of 14 lbs., or 9*d.* the half bag of 7 lbs. Thus provided, procure a regularly formed fruit, and one which is neither hard like a walnut, nor yet rough like a peach, nor irregular like a pine apple; an orange is a very good one for this purpose; then proceed as follows:—

*Mould for an Orange.*—Sink nearly one-half the orange into the sand which has been previously damped; and it will be better, for a reason afterwards explained, to sink that part of the orange to which the stalk was attached, so that the widest part of the orange shall be just above the sand. Make the sand smooth around it. Then take one of the longest pieces of tin, bend it round into a hoop a little more than an inch wider than the orange, and keep it of this form and size, by a bit of string tied round it, stick this hoop in the sand so as to inclose the orange, and be at an equal distance from it on every side, the upper edge of the tin standing up above the fruit, which is now prepared for casting from. If you have no tin, a piece of stiff and smooth brown paper, folded double, and one end fastened

to the other by a wafer or wax, and the slip then made to surround the fruit, will do as well as the tin, though it is more troublesome to insert into the sand.

Now prepare the plaster of Paris, which is to be poured on to the fruit. First pour water into the basin, (it may be half or three-quarters full,) sprinkle the plaster into the water quickly, till it comes up to the top of the water, or till you think you have enough to cover the exposed half of the fruit to half an inch in depth, pour off the superfluous water, and stir the whole together quickly, till well mixed, to about the consistence of thick cream or honey; then pour the mixed plaster upon the fruit, so as to cover it all over equally, or as nearly so as possible, the plaster will, of course, be stopped from running away by the tin edging. If it should be too thin, and therefore run too much off the fruit, so as to leave the top bare, or nearly so, you must, after pouring it on the fruit, watch till it begins to harden, and then with a knife plaster it on the deficient parts, or else quickly mix up a little more to pour on; the whole of this must not take up above a minute or two, or the plaster will begin to *set*, as it is called, that is, it will commence solidifying, for it is the property of calcined plaster of Paris to unite itself with water with so strong a chemical affinity, that from an impalpable powder it becomes a hard and solid substance.

While the half mould, now roughly formed, is becoming hard enough to handle, the basin and spoon must be carefully washed, ready for use again presently, for a second quantity of plaster must never be mixed up in any vessel, till all former quantities be carefully washed away, and be it remarked also, that if plaster gets hard and dry in a basin, spoon, or other vessel, the best way to remove it is to pour in a little water, when it will readily separate in one piece.

We will now suppose the plaster, which has been poured on the fruit, to have gotten about as hard as the flesh of a soft pear, or just hard enough to handle; when this is the case, take the whole up from the sand, take away with the point of the knife all sand which will drop from it, carefully remove the tin rim, and hold the mould by the fruit; now cut away any superfluous parts around the outside with a knife, as quickly as convenient, for it is

now momentarily getting harder, turn it up, and holding the mould itself in the hand, fruit uppermost, remove the orange, if it can be done readily without hurting the mould. Lay the fruit aside, cut away the lower edge of the mould where it has touched the sand, till the mould is exactly that of half the fruit, which is easily seen, by the shape of it internally. This is somewhat important, in order that the second half of the mould shall fit the fruit. If the tin has been of proper size, the mould will be half an inch thick around the edge.

The next operation is to prepare the second half of the mould, and that is easier and quicker to do than the first. First make two, three, or four holes with the round point of the knife in different parts of the edge of the former half, to such a depth and of such a size, that each will hold half a small marble or large pea. Then grease with tallow and sweet oil, melted together in equal proportions, and laid on with a small brush, the edge of the finished half, holes and all. Wipe the orange from all sand, and place it in the half mould exactly as it came out, so that it shall fit in every part; surround the finished half mould with a long slip of stiff paper or tin, which you must tie on with a string, or fasten with a wafer. Place the whole, thus prepared, on a table or flat surface, fruit uppermost; prepare some more liquid plaster, as in the former instance, pour it upon the fruit, and let it partly harden. Then take off the edging, trim up the outside, and when quite hard, insert the blade of the knife between the two halves and separate them. The whole mould will now be complete, and the fruit being taken out, it will be ready to cast in.



The cut above shows the moulding of the orange; A, represents it half buried in the sand, with the tin or paper around; B, is a view of the first half mould when complete.