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How to Build a Library Bookmas Tree

Kate Krause

The Texas Medical Center Library, digitalcommons@exch.library.tmc.edu

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How to Build a Library BookMas Tree

Kate Krause
Digital Projects Librarian
Texas Medical Center Library
1133 John Freeman Blvd., Houston, TX 77030
Tel: 713-799-7126 / Fax: 713-799-7180
Email: kathryn.krause@exch.library.tmc.edu



The TMC Library Bookmas Tree, 2010

FAQ :

What is it made of?

- a bunch of old bound periodicals
- Rebar: 6 lengths of 8-10' rebar depending on how big you want the tree to be
- Light to top the tree
- Extension cord
- String
- Duct tape
- Thin pliable wire or twist-ties to attach the rubber chicken coop mesh together
- Thick non-pliable wire to wrap around the tree frame to keep the rounded shape
- Rubber chicken coop mesh
- Ribbon to decorate the books with
- Work gloves
- Very very tall people to get the top bits

How many books did it take? Approximately 578. All checked out to my name. I sure hope I don't turn them in late. We could have created a new location code for them but we were in a rush.

What happens if someone wants one of the books? We suddenly pretend we don't speak English. Or we say "Sure, just kneel down and pull out the one you need. See what happens." Actually this has not been a problem for us yet. We pulled mostly older years that don't get much usage.

How much did it cost? About \$60-90. Everything was bought at Home Depot or Lowes.

How long did it take? About half a day. It depends on how many people you have helping. We had several volunteers coming and going. The most time-consuming part was finding the books in the stacks and bringing them down to the lobby.

Hints, tips, tricks;

- Build it near a power source so you can plug the star in.
- Use larger books at the bottom, smaller at the top.
- Don't worry about using all the same shade of green.
- Wear grody clothes and work gloves. You'll get completely covered in dust and rust.
- The thickness of the books is more important than the length of the books.
- If you have a gap in a row, just space out all the books in the entire row. No one will ever notice.
- Put comfy chairs around the tree. People like to sit by it and study.
- Take pictures of how you put it up so you remember how to do it the next year!

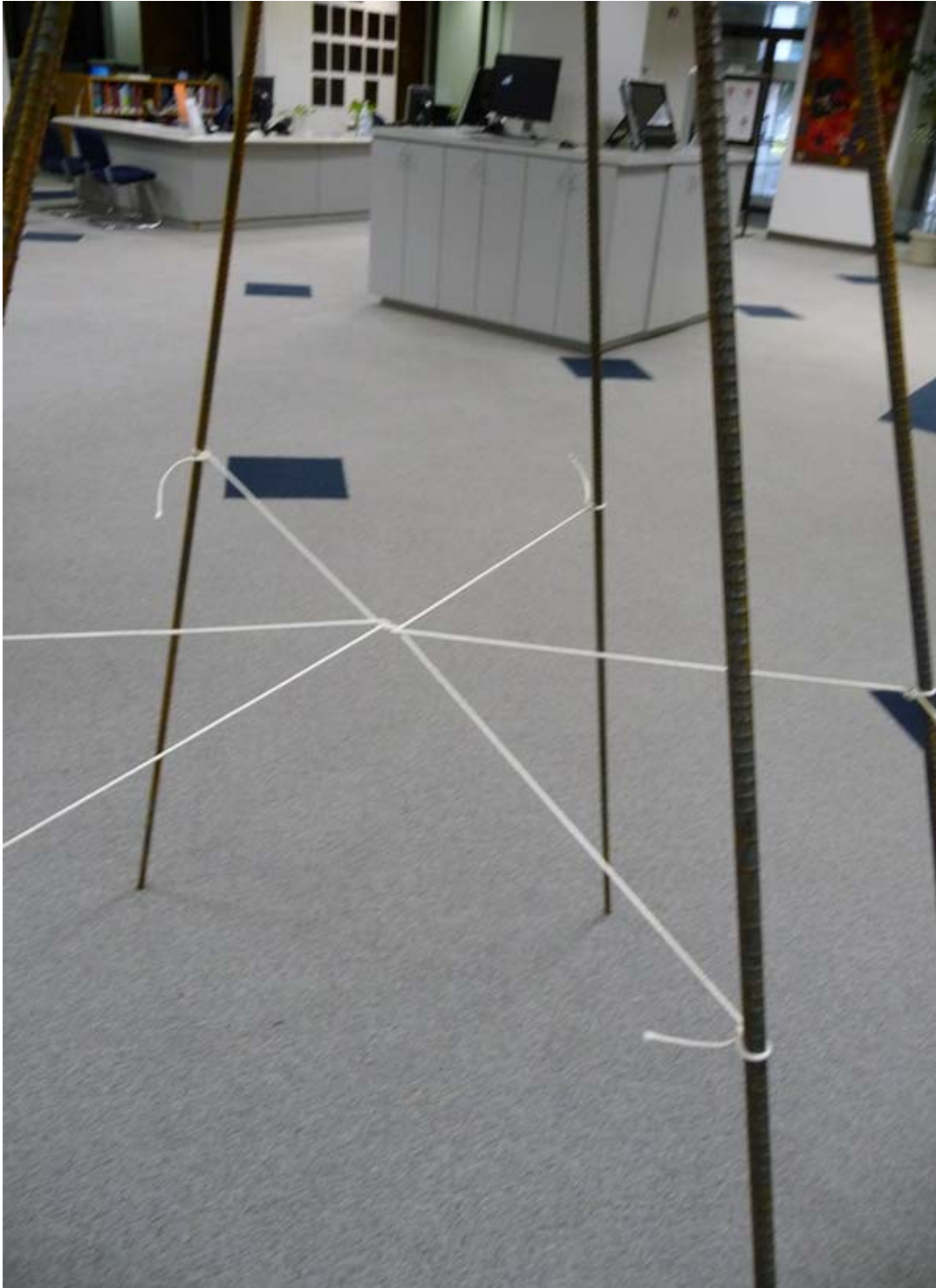
How to do it

Build a teepee out of 8-10' lengths of rebar depending on how big you want the tree to be. Tie them together at the top. Try and tie the rebar as close to the top as possible. We didn't do a very good job here but it worked out fine. Make sure the bars are all evenly spread apart at the bottom and form as near a perfect circle as possible. (You can take a string, tie one end to the floor in the middle and then just rotate it around to see if the bottom of all the bars are equidistant from the center).



Step 1: Build a teepee out of rebar

We reinforced the bars by tying them in the middle to each other to keep inward tension.



Step 2: Reinforce the teepee

Wrap the thick wire around the tree to give it some form. The wire should be fairly stiff and thick (not easily bendable or cuttable) so that it can establish a circular shape on the outside of the rebar teepee. Start from the stop and go down.

Just leave the extra bit inside the tree frame. Use the thinner wire or even twist-ties to attach the thick wire to the rebar.



Step 3: Coil thick wire around the teepee

Hang the star topper at the top. It doesn't have to be perfect for now, just let it hang. Drape the extension cord through the middle of the tree and out the bottom of one side to reach the power outlet. Start draping your rubber chicken

coop wire around the tree. This is easier with two people. In fact the whole thing is easier with two people. Unless the second person happens to have an engineering degree and thinks you're doing everything wrong. (Love you, Shannon!)



Step 4: Drape rubber chicken coop mesh around the teepee

There are a few ways you can do this part. We ended up cutting a vertical line in the chicken wire every few feet and then used wire to make the rubber mesh taught. It's similar to sewing darts in a shirt. Try to keep the form as taught as possible. An alternate way to do it would be to cut triangular shapes to attach to each section between rebars. Do what the person with the engineering degree says to do. This is what the book will be leaning against. Here's the first bottom row done. Note the dangling star topper, the excess wire on the floor in the middle of the tree and the extension cord dangling through the middle of the tree and coming out one side to be near the plug.



Step 5: Make sure the light topper is in position ahead of time

When you've got the entire tree draped in the rubber chicken coop mesh , start stacking books at the base. Use the biggest ones you've got for the bottom. Make sure they're all the same thickness. And make sure they all touch the rebar and/or mesh at least in part.



Step 6: Start stacking the biggest books you have at the bottom

Continue stacking books around the base of the tree. Try to get each row to be books that are the same thickness and size. Don't worry about varying shades of green. It makes the tree look even better.



Step 7: Continue stacking books using slightly smaller books the higher you go

Stack books all the way to the top. Push the excess extension cord down through the tree and position the star topper. Get the tallest person (eg: Ross, 6'8") to teeter on a chair and lean over to put the top few books on and the star. He ended up duct-taping it to get it to stick up straight.



Step 8: Get a tall person to duct-tape the star at the top

Get some multi-colored books and wrap them like presents to put around the bottom of the tree. Voila! You are done!



Step 9: Tah-Dah!!!!

Many thanks to Shannon Basher, Ryan Casantos and everyone else who helped!