



Workshop from Home with Taylor Mezo Resources for June 9, 2026

- Taylor works in a shared studio with her husband. It is roughly 15x15 sq ft (4.57x4.57 sq m) in size.
- She uses [Standard Clay Company's #103 Red earthenware](#) clay.
- Taylor bisque fires to cone 2 and glaze fires to cone 04.
- Taylor primarily uses slab-building techniques, although most of her cups and mugs are wheel thrown.
- She likes to use a Cedar Heights Redart terra sigillata on her work, and mixes most of her glazes. She uses the same base glaze (listed below) with different Mason Stains to create a variety of colors. For certain colors, like reds and purples, she uses [Mayco Foundations](#).
- Taylor's favorite tool is a slab roller because it helps her roll out huge slabs that would normally take forever by hand. It really speeds up her process!
- Taylor does not have an assistant. She does it all!

Taylor's Favorite Tools

slab roller or rolling pin with guide sticks	Xiem angle cutter tool
Hardie Backer boards (not Drywall)	manila folders or cereal boxes for templates
magic water	MudTools red rubber rib
wooden rib	dulled X-Acto knife
wooden knife with a soft squared edge	bendable ruler
Needle tool	Upholstery foam
Sponges, rough and finishing sponge	

Glazing Materials

Taylor Mezo's Glaze
Cone 04

Ferro Frit 3124	80%
Nepheline Syenite	10
OM 4 Ball Clay	10
	100%

Add:

Zircopax	10%
Mason Stains	5–10% (depending on the color)

<https://ceramicartsnetwork.org>

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P.O. Box 1555
Westerville, OH 43086-1555

Taylor's Templates:



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Links from Taylor Mezo:

Website: <https://tayloramezo.com>

Etsy: <https://www.etsy.com/shop/TaylorAMezo>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/tayloramezo/>

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CeramicArtsNetwork.org provides free daily newsletters, access to *Ceramics Monthly* and *Pottery Making Illustrated* magazines, membership to the International Ceramic Artists Network (ICAN), and links you to all the related products and services that these groups offer.

CeramicArtsNetwork.org is owned and managed by The American Ceramic Society, a more than 120-year-old non-profit organization that promotes the professional needs of the international ceramic arts community.

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Plant Propagators

by Taylor Mezo



I consider planters to be one of the most versatile ceramic forms you can make. This form has the ability to be sculptural and outlandish, while still maintaining its function: to house a plant. Just like many of the ceramic forms we make, planters can come in a variety of shapes and interpretations. Depending on the plant being housed, the planter may need features like a drainage hole or a drip tray. But as long as your vessel holds some volume, and your plants aren't too picky, most designs can be modified to become a planter.

I designed this plant propagator specifically for "Planted," a group show and pop-up organized by Dirt Folk for the 2025 National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts (NCECA) conference. I knew from the start that I didn't want to make a traditional cylindrical planter. Instead, I took one of my vase templates (1), added some modifications, and created this three-footed raised propagator. Before you start building your planter, think about what kind of plant you want to put in it, then use that to modify your design.

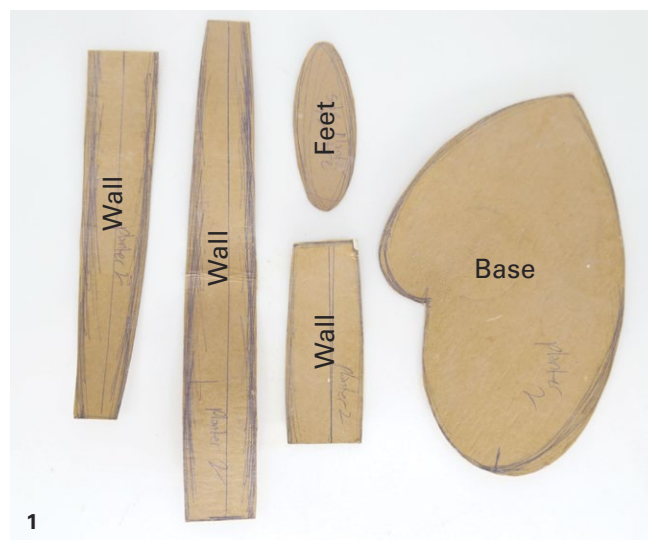
I wanted this planter to house lucky bamboo, so I skipped the drainage hole and drip tray and opted for a spacious vessel to hold the water and allow the roots to grow.

Tracing and Cutting the Pieces

Red earthenware is my preferred clay, and this is usually what conventional planters are made out of. Start by tracing your template (2) for the base and the tripod feet on a ¼-inch (0.6-cm)-thick slab of clay. I find it easier to build this form when the clay is a little stiffer (somewhere between soft leather hard and medium leather hard), so that it keeps its shape. Use a bevel cutter tool to cut the edges of each piece so that the beveled edge is 60 degrees (3). I used the 60-degree side of the bevel cutter because it creates a more plump form with softer corners, as opposed to the boxy corners of a 45-degree cut.

Building the Base

A foam pad is essential to make and maintain the round form. All of these pieces come together to create an enclosed form. By building the base as an enclosed form, the air inside keeps the shape plump, plus this will help the form stay this way when you start to add the tripod feet later. Begin with the biggest piece of the template (there should be two of these), this will be the bottom. I use a ceramic mango tool (two thick pinch pots connected at the rims, bisque fired, and used to press volume into slabs) to roll over the slab, pressing it into the foam (4), this slightly stretches the slab into a soft curve. You can also use your thumbs or a tennis ball to do this instead. Keeping this piece on the foam pad, start to attach the longer strips of clay to the edges of the newly curved piece (5). Blend a small coil of clay into the connection point to ensure that the seams are watertight and sealed.



My propagator template is cut from a cereal box. Pieces include: feet (cut 3), base (cut 2), wall, and the neck.



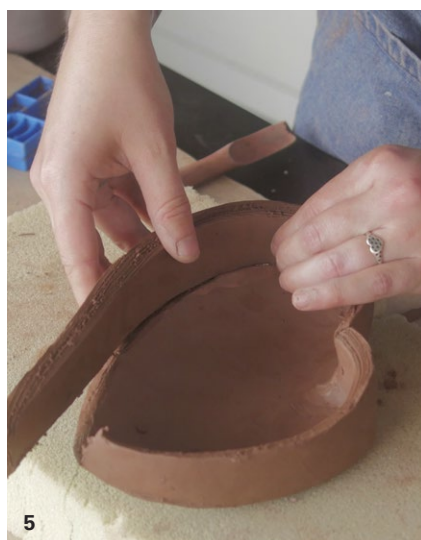
Roll out an even slab and cut two base pieces using the template.



Bevel the edges with the long side of a bevel cutter to create a 60-degree cut.



Over foam, gently roll a ceramic mango tool over the base to give it volume.



With the base sitting on foam, attach the walls to the base.



Attach the second base piece. Use foam to prevent the form from losing volume.



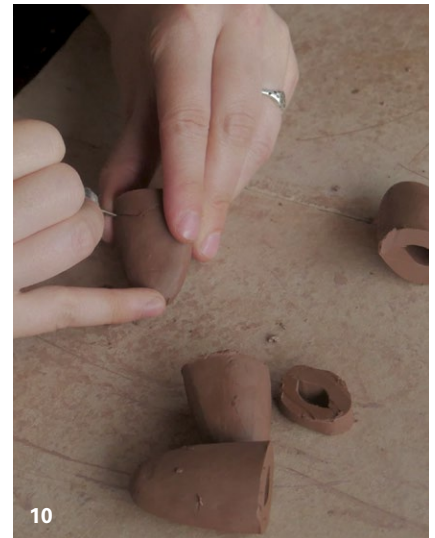
Flood the seams with water, then compress the seams with a red polymer rib.



8
Form the ovals into pea pods by stretching them with your fingers on the foam.



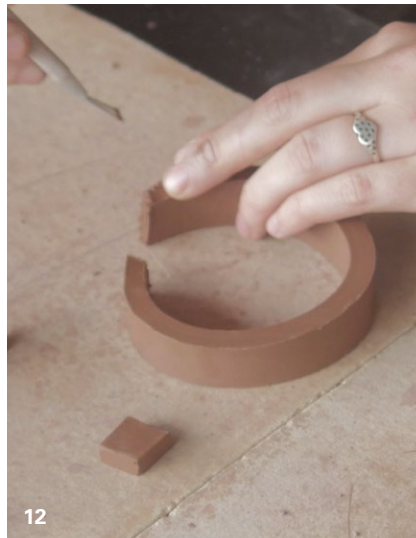
9
Join the two halves of the oval together as if you were making a pierogi.



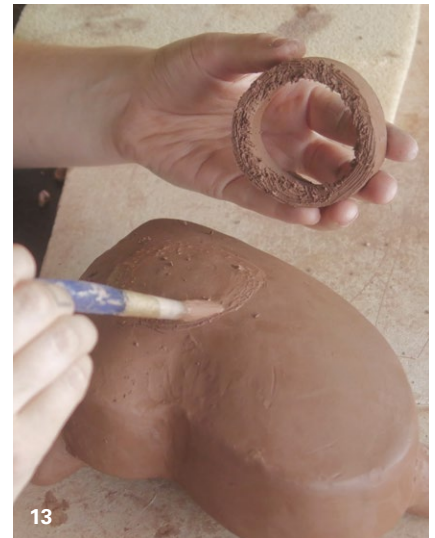
10
Cut the foot in half horizontally to make two shorter oval feet.



11
Attach the oval feet to your base at a slight outward angle for stability.



12
Cut a strip of clay to make a small ring for the lip around the opening.



13
Slip and score the ring to the base and then make sure it is level.



14
Stamp a pattern. Metal cookie cutters work best to leave a crisp line in clay.



15
Cut open the space inside the rim then poke holes in each foot.

Next, shape the top piece using the same pressing method, then attach it, enclosing the form (6). Once all of the pieces are together in the enclosed form, run a wet brush along the outside seams and compress them with a red polymer rib (7). Sometimes these slabs don't line up perfectly, but compressing the seam with a red polymer rib and water gives it a clean corner. **Tip:** I discovered that flooding the seams with water from a brush forces any air in the seam out. And when I follow quickly after with a red polymer rib, the seams seal very tight and strong.



Top to bottom *Side Plate Side Car*, 9 in. (22.9 cm) in height, red earthenware, brass wire, 2024. *Formica Candelabra*, 16 in. (40.6 cm) in length, red earthenware, terra sigillata, glaze, 2023. *Coaster Side Car*, 7 in. (17.8 cm) in height, red earthenware, terra sigillata, glaze, 2024. *Polka Dot Plant Propagator*, 11 in. (27.9 cm) in length, red earthenware, glaze, 2025. All photos: Jacob Brady.



Adding Feet

The remaining pieces cut out from the slab will be used for the tripod feet. Just like the base, these will be tiny enclosed forms. Two of the slender oval pieces come together to form a foot. Cut the edges at the same 60-degree bevel, place them on the foam pad, and push your finger into the center to give them volume (8). Attach the two ovals, pinching the edges together (9), and smoothing the seams with water and a red polymer rib.

Cut the slender oval in half to make two shorter feet (10), so building two of these slender ovals will make four short feet total. You'll only be using three of these, because three feet tend to be more balanced than four. **Optional:** If you want a taller foot, you don't have to cut the oval in half, but you will have to trace more of the oval templates out of a slab.

Join the feet to the base around the bottom corner with them slightly angled out like a tripod for maximum stability. Add a small coil around each connection point and compress with a wooden tool to prevent cracks around the seams (11).

Creating an Opening

Now that the form is mostly assembled, the enclosed form must be opened to make room for the plant. This can be done simply by cutting an opening in the top of the form. Personally, I like a little raised lip around the opening because it looks more finished, and it prevents water from splashing out.

Cut a strip of clay from your slab to make a small ring; this will be the lip around the opening of the propagator (12). Attach this to the top of the form before cutting an opening or letting any of the air out of the enclosed form (13); otherwise, the shape may start to slump in from the downward pressure of attaching the rim.

Finishing Up

Clean up the propagator using a mix of the metal rib and gentle sponging. My go-to decorating method is stamping with small metal cookie or fondant cutters to make a pattern on the surface (14). Now, cut out the area inside the rim. After cleaning up, use a pin to poke holes in each of the feet to let the air out before drying and firing (15).



Taylor Mezo is a ceramic artist from Illinois, currently living in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She works primarily in red earthenware clay to create sculptural yet functional wares. To see more, visit Instagram at @tayloramezo.