



Cempasuchil Paper Flower

The decorated family altars in homes and at cemeteries are an important feature of the *Día de los Muertos*/Day of the Dead celebration. Prominent in the decorations are a type of marigold (*Tagetes erecta*) found wild in some parts of Mexico. Mexicans call them *cempasúchil*, a Nahuatl word meaning “twenty flower” for their many petals. These orange flowers are used to make brilliant mounds and arches. The scent is believed to attract the souls towards the altars where offerings of food await them. The flowers you make can be twisted to a sneaker or around your wrist, or placed in a vase.

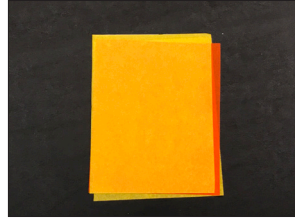
Materials:

tissue paper
pipe cleaner (chenille stem)

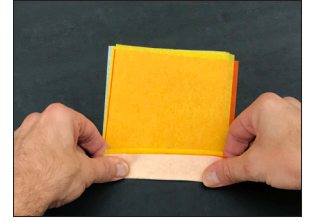


Instructions:

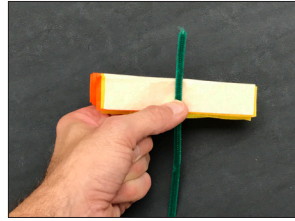
Cut tissue paper into 5" x 7" rectangles. Place 4 to 5 rectangles on top of each other.



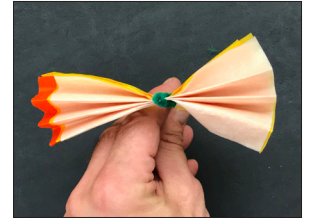
Do the "fan-fold" from the bottom to the top, flipping stack over with each fold. 1/2" folds work best. Crease folds well.



Place pipe cleaner across middle of paper strip and 2/3 up making a cross or lower-case "t."



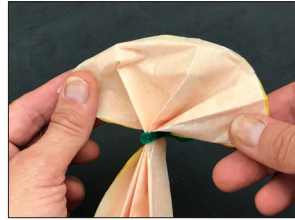
Wrap pipe cleaner around paper and twist. You should have a "bow-tie."



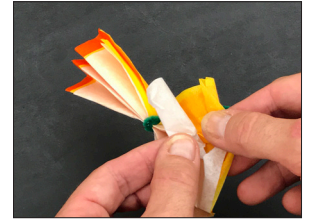
Unfold & fluff the petals as follows:

To unfold and fluff the petals, work on one half of the "bow tie," before starting the other half.

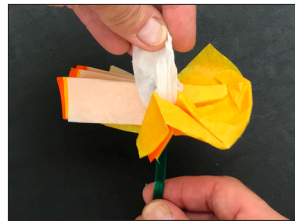
Loosely fan-out one half of the "bow-tie."



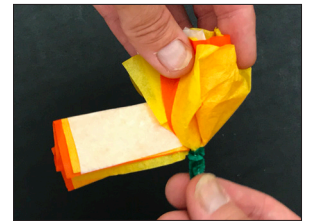
Gently separate the top layer from the rest and draw it toward the center pipe cleaner. Gently pull the next sheet away and towards the center, and so on, completing one side.



Hold stem in one hand so flower is vertical and pull petals up gently to fluff.



Repeat on other side.



Finished!

