



DIY APOTHECARY BOTTLES



VINTAGE STYLE
APOTHECARY BOTTLES

BY SARAH WHERRY FOR HALLOZWEEN





WHAT YOU NEED

- Bottles or jars, any size and shape, both with and without lids (try to remove the labels first but there are options for those stubborn labels that won't come off)
- String (plain cooking twine will work)
- PVA glue
- Apothecary labels (the ones we've used are included at the back of this booklet; simply print them at home on plain paper)
- Acrylic paint in brown, dark blue and black
- Paint brush
- Old rag or cloth
- Old corks and burlap (not essential)
- Paper
- Scissors



STEP 1



This is a relatively quick and very easy project, but one that yields a great result. Firstly, gather all of your supplies together and choose which bottles you're going to work with.

You don't have to buy bottles, you can literally use empty ones you have laying around. If you drink alcohol, there are so many amazing ones out there! We usually go for the 'pretty' or unusual ones if we're buying something, and once it's finished, it becomes part of our Halloween display. But there's usually plenty of other bottle options around the house too. Medicine bottles are absolutely wonderful too.

You usually can't tell because they're covered in bright plastic labels, but peel the label away and you'll be pleasantly surprised. They don't have to be glass either. Some of my best bottle makeovers have come from plastic bottles and they store so well in between seasons.

For this tutorial, I'm using some I've collected as well as redoing older ones from past years.

The tips shown here are easily adjusted for any bottle project and you'll find yourself looking at all of those kitchen condiments with a new eye after this I guarantee. Have fun!

- Sarah

STEP 2

Once you've chosen which bottle you'll start with, decide which label is going on it. I've chosen one of the skinny labels for this green gin bottle. Cut out your label and place it against the bottle for size. You'll see from the photos that this bottle has an indented area almost the entire circumference of the bottle but my label won't go that far.



In this instance, just cut some plain paper to fill the gap, glue that down with a liberal amount of PVA glue, and then glue your label in place over the top, using still more glue.

Then take some more glue and rub it over the top of the label.

The reason you want to do this, is so that you create a barrier for later on when you put paint on the label to age it. If you don't have glue over the top, the paint will stick to the paper and you won't be able to wipe it away to create an aged look – you'll just be painting over your label.

So wipe glue all over your label, then set aside to dry.

STEP 3

I wanted some string on the edges of this label to finish it off. So again, more glue and simply push the string into place. You can also use hot glue for this step if you prefer.

Once it's dry, move onto Step 4, which is ageing the bottle.

If you don't want to age your bottle, you are now done and can admire your work!



STEP 4

To age your bottles, you'll need basic acrylic paint, a dry cloth to wipe it away, and a damp cloth to wash away any excess if you use too much paint. I rarely use brushes as I find I have more control using my fingers. I use dark brown and dark blue paint, saving black for touch ups.

Squeeze a very small amount of paint either directly onto your bottle, or your finger, then use your fingers to smear it all over the bottle. Include the lid if it has one, and if the bottle has embossing or other details, really push the paint over those areas. Don't completely cover the label with paint though, just push the paint over the edges.

Once that is done, use your dry cloth to gently wipe and dab away at the paint. You want to simply smooth it and it should give you a cloudy, aged appearance instead of the globs of paint you started with.



If your label looks a little too dark or has too much paint, simply use the damp cloth to wipe away the paint until you're happy with how it looks.



Remember, you can repeat this step as many times as you need to until you are happy. Painting, then wiping away. The glue you applied to your label earlier will make your label more stained than painted, so remember to be liberal with the glue back at Step 2 and you'll be really able to stain it up well.



What you'll be left with is a beautifully aged bottle that just needs time to dry.

PROJECT #2

STEP 1

This next bottle is one of my favourites. It was hiding under a bright pink plastic heartburn medication label. It's a glass bottle and it's been on our mantle for about a year so it's time to give it a Halloween makeover!

The mini brown bottle in the image? That was under a plastic wrap label for children's ibuprofen. It's plastic, but until you pick it up you'd never know. As with the previous instructions, decide on both your bottle and label. I'm using a Voodoo Magic one. Smother your bottle in PVA glue, place your label over the top, and again, be very liberal with the glue over the top of the label. Set it aside to dry.



STEP 2

Note: Ignore this step if you aren't using a cork for a lid.

I have a collection of corks because I like wine and tequila (not together, obviously). I wanted to add a cork stopper to this bottle and found one in my collection that worked well.

Using a dry brush technique (where you have a small amount of paint on a dry brush, no water) I brushed my cork with dark brown paint until I was happy with the amount of 'ageing'.



STEP 3

I also wanted to add string to this bottle.

That is as simple as it sounds; tie string to the top of the bottle, then wind it around until you've decided it's enough.

To secure it, you can either tie it to itself, or just cut it and use glue to adhere it.

Once that's done, use more glue over the top, just as you do with the labels, then let it dry.



STEP 4

Using paint and a dry brush technique again, paint dark brown paint over the twine or string.

Using either a brush or your fingers, age the bottle itself with dark brown paint.

Again, remember to wipe away any excess paint until you're happy with the result.

FINISHED PRODUCT

Once it's dry, you have a very unique, easy and effective apothecary bottle to add to your collection!



PROJECT #3

STEP 1

For the last bottle, I wanted to show you how to deal with labels that won't come off. Sometimes, no matter what you try, the original label just won't budge. One way to deal with this problem is to paint your bottle. This bottle is one I made years ago and I wanted to update it. I couldn't get the label off and was left with a mess.

I used white paint (and a brush!) and painted two coats of paint directly over the label and the whole bottle. As it dried, I noticed it was producing a kind of crackle effect which I really liked; bonus! I decided on one of the skinny labels and cut it out and glued it down once my paint was dry.



STEP 2

This bottle already had string at the top, but I wanted to add more at the bottom and underneath the string at the neck.

Use the same technique as the last bottle, tie it off and apply PVA liberally afterwards, and then wait for it to dry.

Then, if you like, you can age it. That's totally optional; it might not work with your decor so you'd be totally done at this point!



STEP 3

I used dark brown paint and a dry brush and painted over the whole bottle, focusing on the edges of the label and the string areas. Then I wiped away (very gently on this one as the paint will peel off if you're too rough) any excess paint. I think you'll agree it looks excellent!



So there you have it. These techniques are really simple and you can use them for any bottle. You can also cover bottles with burlap and/or string completely if you want, or just put labels on bottles that still have liquid in them and don't age them if you're going for a more classic look.

Another tip for you is to use hot glue to create pretend wax, or shapes on the top of bottle lids. Simply drip your hot glue where you want it, then once it's dry, dry brush paint over the top in your choice of colour. Once you've started, you'll definitely find yourself wanting to save all your bottles and jars!



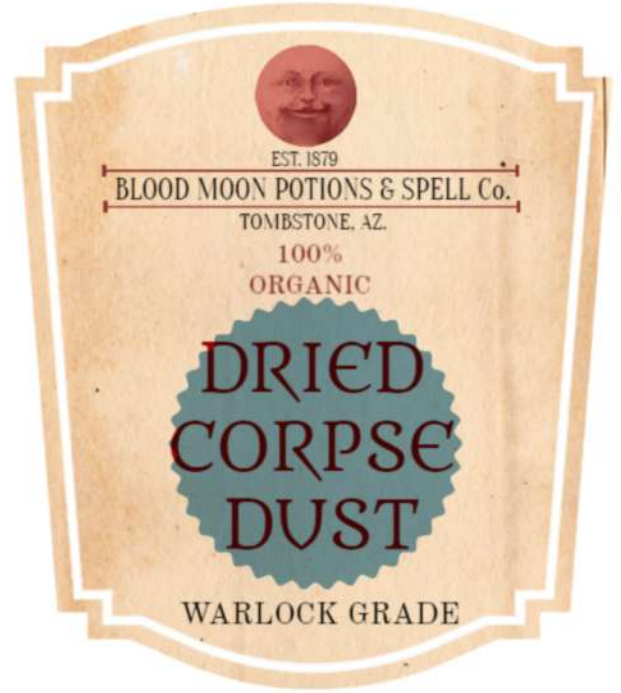
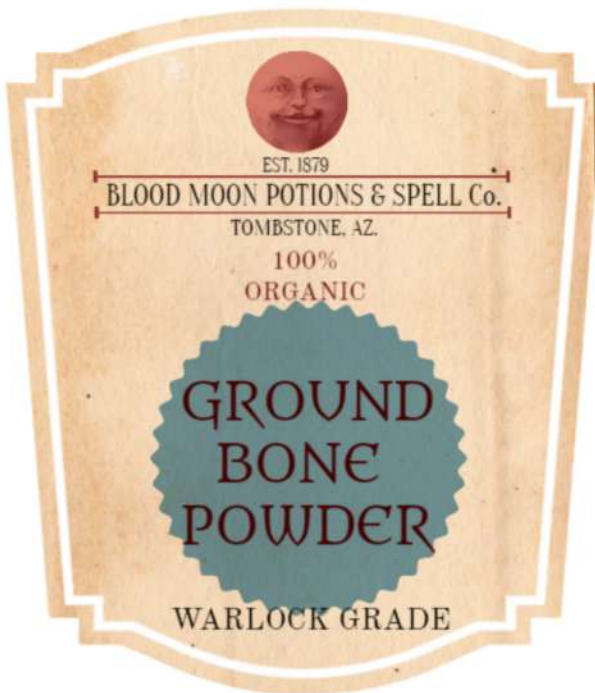
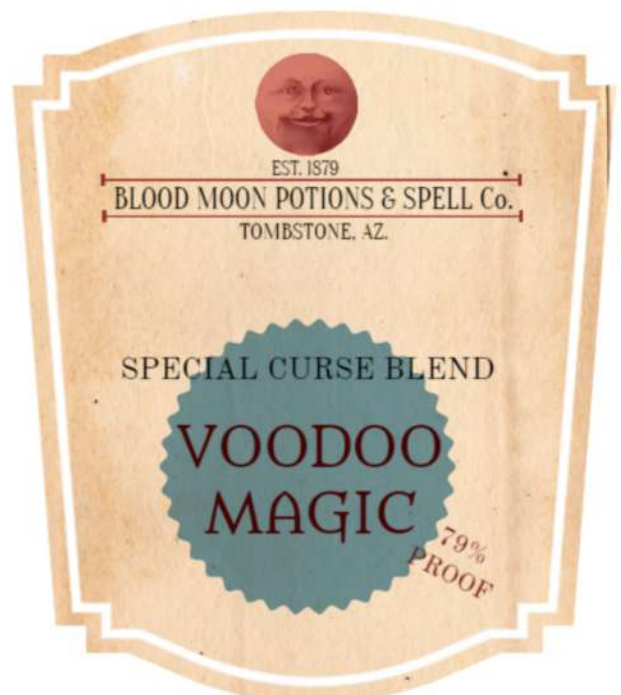
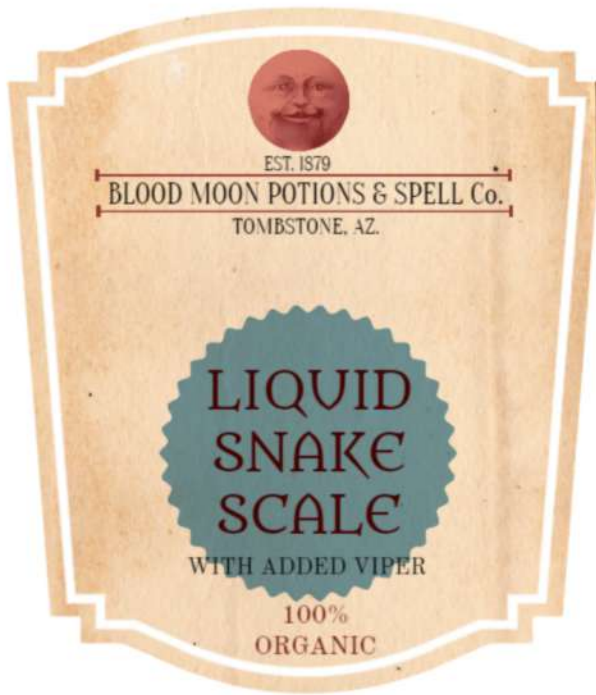
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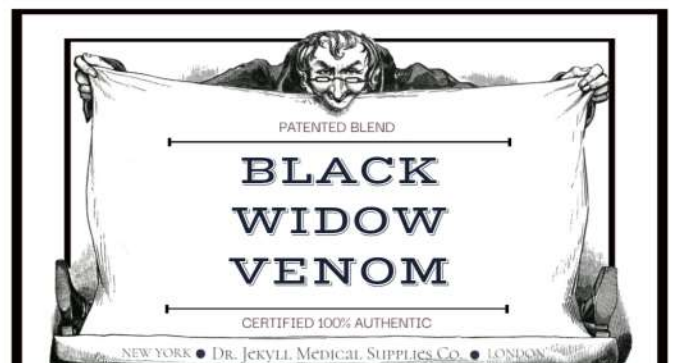
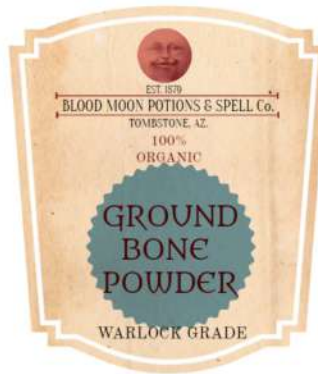
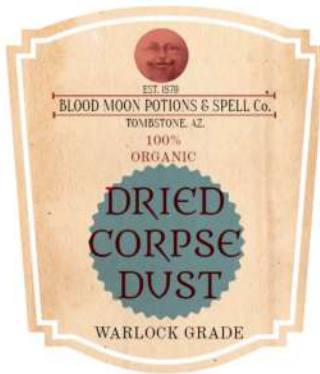
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