



STRAWBERRY PHONE GRIP TUTORIAL

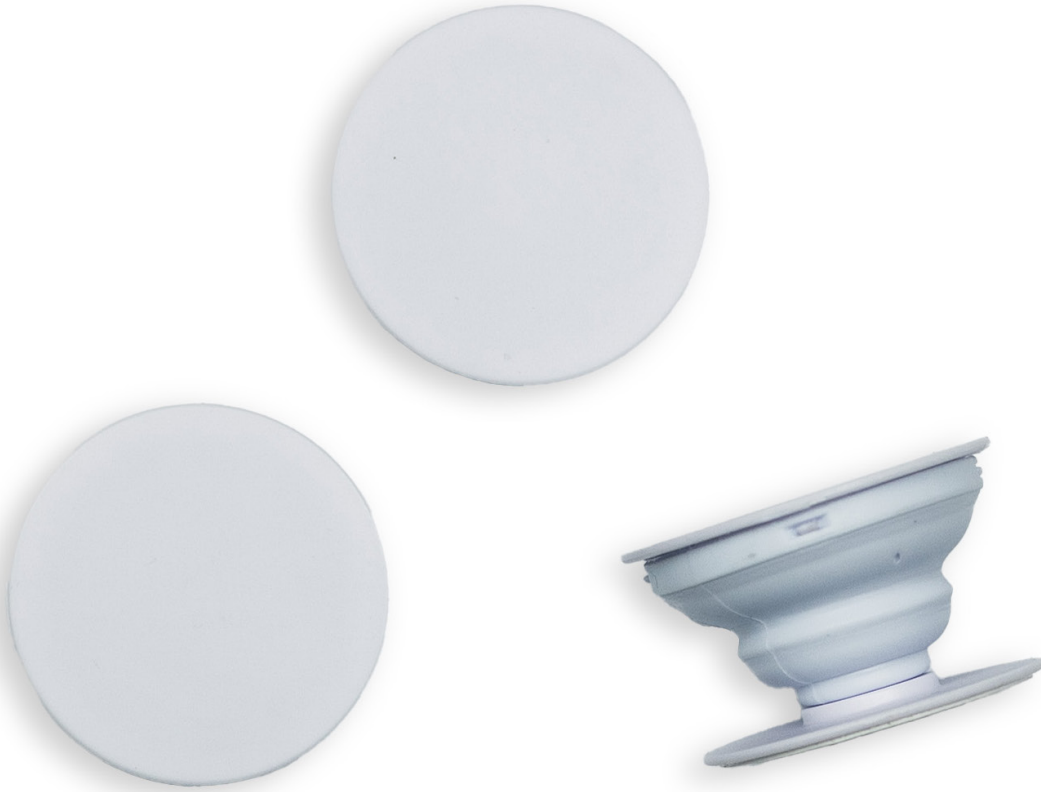
"In today's advent calendar box, you'll discover several phone grips, as I'd like to invite you on an exciting strawberry exploration journey where you can choose to create one of two or both strawberry phone grips by following the tutorials I've provided," welcomes you, Margita Alsina, to another day within the calendar. We have been accessorising our earlobes, our necks, wrists, and fingers with polymer clay for years; now it's time we extend accessories to our technology too.

ABOUT MARGITA ALSINA

Margita Alsina discovered polymer clay in 2014 and has since embraced it as an essential part of her creative life. With a decade of experience, she has explored various techniques and approaches to achieve diverse designs using this versatile medium. Margita enjoys observing how fellow artists approach their work and is happy to share tips within the polymer clay community. Her journey reflects a passion for continuous learning and collaboration in art.



www.instagram.com/madebymargita
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PRODUCTS IN THE ADVENT CALENDAR

PHONE GRIPS

A phone grip is an accessory attached at the back of the mobile phone to allow the user to hold the phone more securely. It is especially beneficial during lengthy phone calls, as it enables your fingers to use less energy when holding the phone. A phone grip prevents the phone from slipping out of your hold and ensures easier one-hand use. And now, you can decorate your own!

LIST OF TOOLS AND MATERIALS

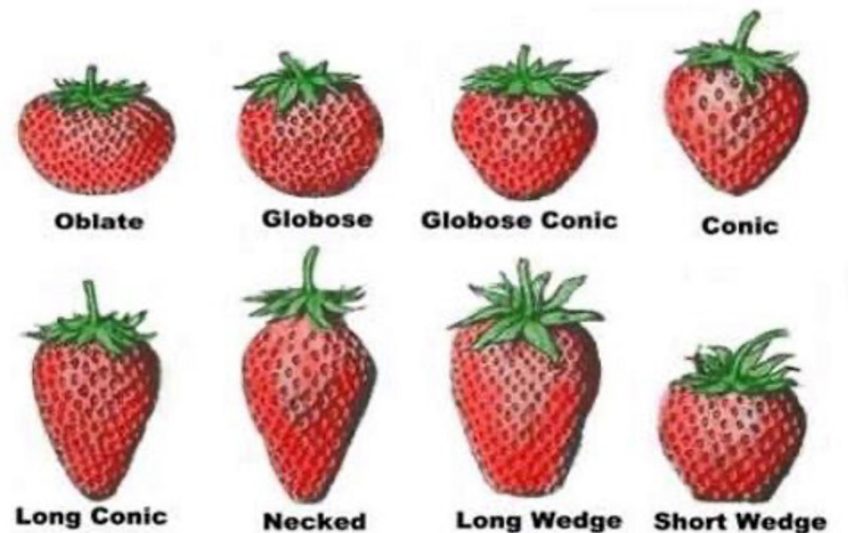
- polymer clay - red, yellow, white, dark and bright green
- machine
- phone grip
- micro cutters
- rigid blade
- scalpel
- needle tool
- ball tool
- small and very fine paint brushes
- wet wipes
- green alcohol ink
- yellow acrylic paint
- liquid clay
- isopropyl rubbing alcohol
- cotton pad
- red pastel
- sandpaper, rough grit
- two part epoxy glue recommended
- sample sized two part epoxy resin + PPE
- matt varnish

INSPIRATION BEHIND THE PROJECT

“Did you know that a strawberry is not a berry in the botanical sense? Berries are simple fruits stemming from one flower with only one ovary, while strawberries are derived from one flower with multiple ovaries,” explains Margita, who is inspired by both the small wild strawberries found in nature and the man-made strawberries found in supermarkets.

“First, I invite you to reflect on your childhood memories of strawberries—a time before GMO foods existed and when not all fruits on the market had a consistent, uniform appearance. Can you recall the distinct shapes of the strawberries you grew up with? Now that you’re older, have you observed the wide variety of shapes they come in, especially when you travel to different countries?” Margita invites you to think deeper.

“Have you noticed that most strawberries in ancient art and folklore are depicted in a globose or globose-conic shape, while contemporary art consistently shows a conic form? That’s because the modern strawberry is a man-made hybrid of the small wild strawberry.”

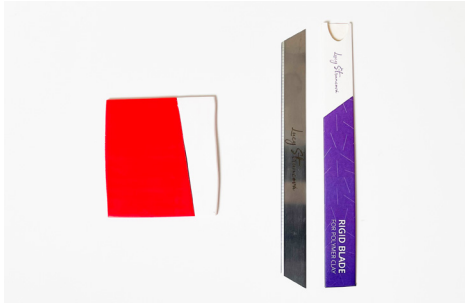


“I asked my mother the same questions, and to her, strawberries are globose-shaped, whilst I grew up enjoying short wedge-shaped strawberries from my friend’s garden and oblate strawberries when wild berry picking in Latvia,” continues Margita. Now that she lives in Scotland, she mostly sees naked strawberries sold in supermarkets.

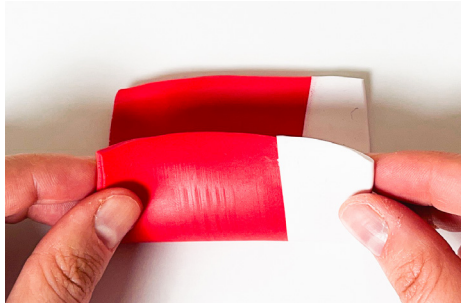
As a part of the project, Margita thought not only about the shapes but also their color. “Aside from the recent trend of cultivating white strawberries, we’re all accustomed to seeing them in red, aren’t we? While agreeing on the color is simple, I’m sure opinions vary when it comes to the ripening process of the fruit,” shares Margita.

Certain strawberries ripen from the top, leaving the bottoms green, while others mature evenly with varying shades of red throughout. There are also varieties that develop “white shoulders,” where the area next to the sepal remains white. “I have eaten them all, but I’ve only created those with green bottoms, like my strawberry creature shown below. To add some variety, let’s focus on creating strawberries with ,white shoulders’ today.”

GLOBOSE STRAWBERRY PHONE GRIP



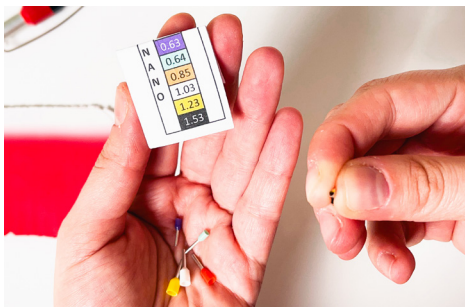
At the thickest setting of the pasta machine, 4.8 mm, prepare a small strip of white clay and a sheet or red clay, minimum width of 5 cm.



Fold the sheet in half and run it through the machine to make a blend.



Repeat the prior process until the two colours have formed a gradient known as skinner blend, named after Judith Skinner, pioneer artists in polymer clay.



Use the smallest micro cutter.



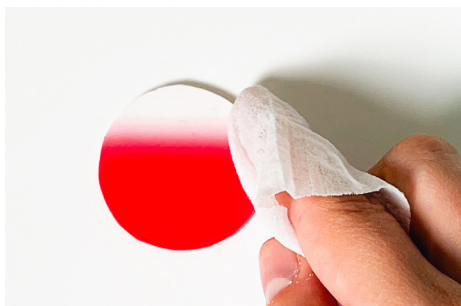
Pinch the cutter with your fingers or use pliers to misshape the circle into organic seed shape.



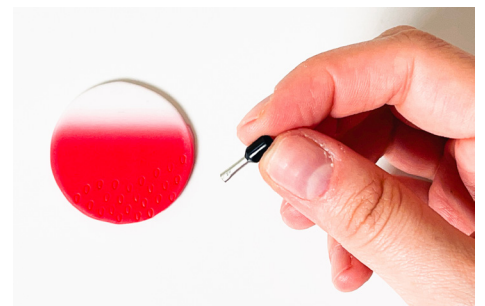
Position the phone grip facing down on the top, white part of the polymer clay sheet. Cut out a circular shape using a scalpel. Remember to keep the blade perpendicular for a neat cut.



Remove the excess clay, leaving only the circle on the work surface.



Soften the sharply cut edges of the circle using a wet wipe.



Create a continuous strawberry seed pattern pushing the previously misshaped micro cutter onto the surface of the clay.

Advent Calendar



Condition a small amount of dark green polymer clay 1.8 mm thick on the machine. Using a needle tool, sketch a shape mimicking a strawberry sepal.



Cut out the sepal silhouette using a scalpel.



Keep the rest of the green polymer clay aside for the stem.



Create texture by using a needle tool to carve lines directed towards the center of the sepal.



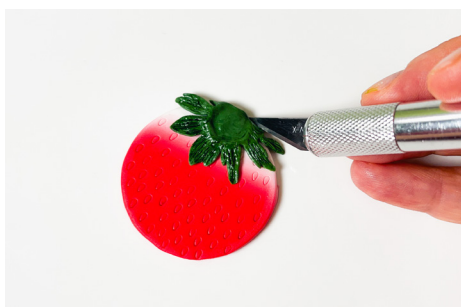
Using a ball tool, create an indent for the stem to be added.



Optionally, using a small brush, apply a generous amount of alcohol ink to the surface of the clay to fill the textured dents. Leave it to dry before lifting the clay using the rigid blade.



Position the sepal atop the strawberry base, allowing it to slightly overlap so that the edge conceals the top of the sheet when viewed from above.



Using the scalpel, push the overlapping sepal leaves toward the base of the strawberry, covering the top neatly. Cut any unnecessary excess off, keeping within the circle of the phone grip.



Use yellow acrylic paint and very fine nail art brushes for painting the seeds.

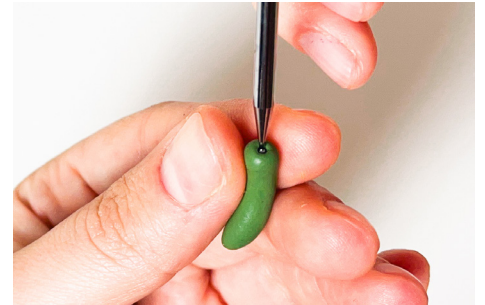
Advent Calendar



Apply two coats of paint. If you accidentally paint over the outline of the seed, use the needle tool to scrape the paint off.



Add red pastel to create more depth of appearance on the surface of the fruit.



Use the previously left over green clay to create a stem. Add a little indent at the top of the stem using a small ball tool so it will create the illusion of a hollow stem.



Make a clean cut at the bottom of the stem and apply a small amount of liquid clay.



Place the stem on the sepal and use the small ball tool to blend the seams as well as adding texture to the stem. Choose to keep your stem short or longer and curved to the side remembering that your phone grip is a functional item which has to be comfortable to hold. Bake for 30 minutes.



Once baked, dry sand the edges of the strawberry until they are pleasant to the touch and rough sand the back of the design with the lowest grit.



Rough sand the surface of the phone grip with the most coarse sandpaper.



Clean the sanded surfaces with a cotton pad and isopropyl rubbing alcohol.

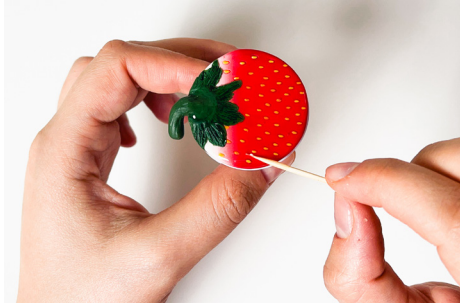


Use this 2 part epoxy glue or super glue instead. Two-part epoxy with longer curing times are typically stronger.

Advent Calendar



Apply the glue on the back of the strawberry leaving 4 - 5 mm gap away from the edge as glue will spread out when pushed against the surface of the phone grip.



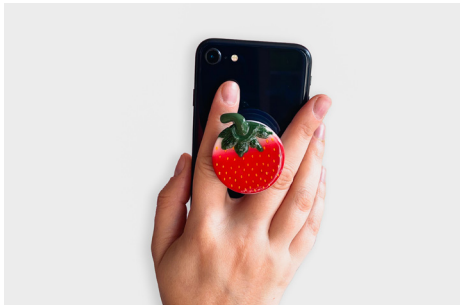
If your acrylic paint fades after baking, add another layer of yellow paint at this stage. Optionally, use 2 part epoxy resin to glaze the surface of this strawberry, but ensure you wear protective equipment.



Use isopropyl rubbing alcohol to clean the phone surface before applying the grip. After that, remove the backing paper from the sticker of the phone grip.



Firmly apply the sticky side onto the phone.



Your handmade phone grip is ready for your next call!

CONICAL STRAWBERRY PHONE GRIP



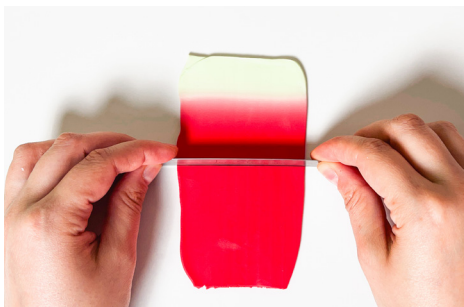
Blend a small quantity of yellow and green into white clay to achieve a soft green hue.



Roll out sheets of red and soft green polymer clay on the thickest setting machine, 4.8 mm. Create a blend sheet as shown.



Fold this sheet of clay in half, then pass it through the machine repeatedly until the two colours create a gradient, often referred to as a Skinner blend.



Cut the clay sheet in half and set aside the piece of red clay for later use.



Use the strawberry template to cut out the conical shape from the polymer clay sheet. Ensure that the shape of the strawberry is larger than the phone grip. So, at least, 5 cm. To have a green bottom instead of the green upper part, rotate it. Discard the stencil and excess clay.



Pastels will enhance the depth of the colour. Coat your small paintbrush with red pastel and apply strokes along the bottom edge. Instead of re-dipping your paintbrush, use the excess particles left on the brush to apply strokes around the upper perimeter of the shape.



Create a patchy look to mimic the process of uneven ripening of the fruit.



Pick the smallest micro cutter. Use pliers to misshape the circle into organic seed shape. Use the misshaped cutter to stamp the seeds very close to one another at the bottom of the conical shape, gradually increasing the gap between the seeds as you move up toward the top of the fruit.



Seed markings at the center of the fruit should be straight, while on sides should curve slightly toward the top center of the fruit, where the stem connects. In order to get the illusion that the berry is not a flat object.

Advent Calendar



Use yellow acrylic paint and the finest paint brush you have. In case you go outside the lines, allow the paint to dry and scrape it away using a needle tool. I enjoy applying two coats to achieve a vibrant burst of colour. Once painted, cure this strawberry in the oven for 10 minutes.



After baking the fruit, take the red polymer clay sheet that we set aside earlier. Using the phone grip to cut out a circle.



Remove the circle that you cut from the sheet, and use your phone grip to ensure that the cut-out hole is sufficiently large for the phone grip to fit comfortably. Apply a layer of liquid clay along the edges of the semi-cured strawberry.



Place the sheet of red clay on top of the strawberry shape.



Trim away the excess polymer clay using your scalpel.



Carefully slide the rigid blade underneath the polymer clay sheet separating it from your work surface.



Smooth out the sharp seams to create a rounded appearance with your thumb. If you consider yourself a beginner, you can put this strawberry back in the oven for 10 minutes now.



Condition the green clay and get a sheet 1.8 mm thick. Then, use the strawberry pattern to cut out the sepal.



Set aside a small portion of green clay for later do the stem. Now take a large ball tool and make an indentation in the sepal where the stem will grow from.

Advent Calendar



Create texture by using a needle tool to carve lines directed towards the centre of the sepal.



Using a small brush apply a generous amount of lime green alcohol ink to the surface to fill the textured indents. Proceed to paint the edges. Leave it to dry for a little before lifting the clay from the surface by sliding the rigid blade underneath the sepal.



If you didn't bake the strawberry for an additional 10 minutes in the previous steps, be sure to lift it gently and hold it solely by the semi-cured clay. Position the sepal atop the strawberry base edge, allowing it to slightly overlap onto the front.



Once happy with the positioning of the sepal, reinforce it by applying a pressure down the sepal with the ball tool.



Using the rigid blade, push each sepal leaf against the base of the strawberry. This will improve the adhesion of green clay to previously cured red clay whilst adding further detail to the texture at the same time.



To achieve pointed tips for each leaf, pull the green polymer clay outward from the leaf's edge.



Use the leftover green clay to create a stem for the strawberry.



With a needle tool, create several rough lines on the surface of the green clay and then roll out the clay until you reach your preferred stem thickness. Reducing the thickness will force the rough texture to gradually soften into a more subtle finish.



Due to alcohol ink being sticky, no liquid clay is applied, just place the stem on top of the strawberry.

Advent Calendar



Use the needle tool to roll it down toward the sepal and blend the seam between the two pieces of polymer clay.



Be sure to blend the seam between the stem and the sepal from all angles.



Paint the stem with the same alcohol ink used on the sepal. Bake it for the full recommended duration at the temperature suggested by the manufacturer of your chosen polymer clay brand.



If your acrylic paint faded in the oven, add another layer of yellow paint on the seeds.



Rough sand the surface of the phone grip with the most coarse sandpaper.



Now rough sand the back of the strawberry where the phone grip will fit.



Clean the sanded surfaces with a cotton pad and isopropyl rubbing alcohol.



Clean the sanded surfaces with a cotton pad and isopropyl rubbing alcohol.



Use this 2 part epoxy glue or super glue instead, but epoxy glues are usually stronger.



Apply your chosen glue on the back of the polymer clay strawberry and place the phone grip directly on the glued recessed area.



Apply two coats of varathane polyurethane clear varnish with a brush.



Once varnish has dried, use isopropyl rubbing alcohol to clean the phone surface. Remove the backing paper from the phone grip and firmly apply onto the phone.



Your handmade phone grip is ready!

CONICAL STRAWBERRY



GLOBOSE STRAWBERRY

COMPARISON

If you would like to follow only one of the above tutorials, here is a side by side comparison of both phone grips:

Comparison	Wild Strawberry	Bred Strawberry
Inspiration	Found in nature, near forrest	Shop bought
Shape	Globose	Conic
Colour	Dark green, white to red	Light green, mint green to patchy red
Seeds	Subtle, small, flat uniformed appearance	Bright, curved at either side to create illusion of a round object
Size	Same size as the phone grip, fits every smartphone	Larger than the surface of the phone grip, designed for larger smartphones
Curing stages	1 curing required	2 - 3 curing stages depending on your preference and skill level
Finish	Epoxy resin, high gloss, increased durability	Satin varnish