FIELDS AND GRASSLANDS

Grasses are present everywhere from farming pastures, meadows and fields to a golf course or your carefully trimmed lawn. Forest meadows and fields can be overgrown, while farming pastures and lawns are usually more manicured. These areas can be small, but there are also vast grassy areas called grasslands.

There are two types of grasslands—temperate and savannah. Temperate grasslands, like the North American Prairie, teem with several varieties of grasses and flowering broadleaf plants. Few trees grow in temperate grasslands, and the trees that do are usually along waterlines. Unlike temperate grasslands, savannahs are primarily made up of only one or two kinds of grass in one area. Savannahs, like the African Savanna, have scattered deciduous trees and shrubs that grow in groups and tufts.

Grasses in the spring tend to be bright green, with some dead thatch beneath. In the summer, grass stalks become a deeper green and develop seed heads. When seed heads mature at the end of summer, they tend to change colors ranging from rich reds and browns to light straw. The stalks of grass begin to yellow in late summer and throughout fall. Grasses that exist in temperate climates die back during winter and turn straw and brown colors.

Consider the location and season of your model when choosing products and colors to create grassy areas. The same methods to make a prairie are also used to make a small lawn or golf course.
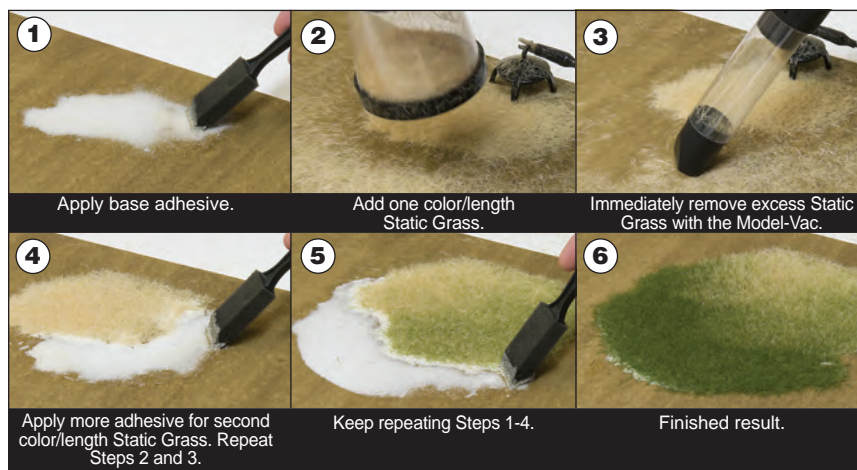

BLENDING

There is rarely one height and color of grass in a given area. Think of a pond. Grass near the water line tends to be a darker green than grass on the hillside nearby. Even the green grasses next to the water line have slight color and height variation. This happens everywhere due to inconsistencies in available nutrients, the amount of available water, how much sunlight is received and even different varieties of grasses. There are two general techniques that can be used to blend colors and heights in grassy areas.
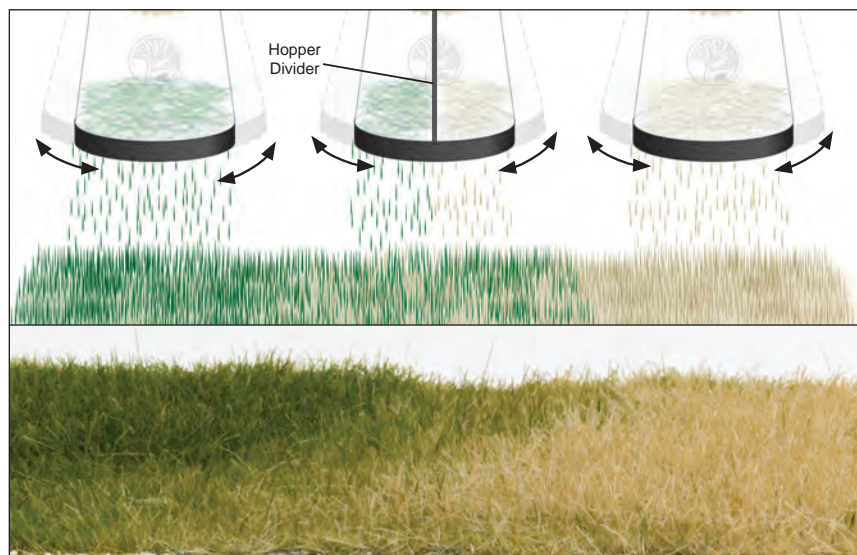
Blending with Base Adhesive

Use the base adhesive to control where different heights and colors are applied. To do this, apply the base adhesive in one patch. Then add one color or length of Static Grass over that patch. Apply more adhesive, pushing it into the edge of the already installed Static Grass. Add the second color or height over the second patch of adhesive. Continue this pattern until you have a whole field or lawn covered. This method will create a blended appearance and is great for controlling where Static Grass is installed.

| 1 Apply base adhesive. | 2 Add one color/length Static Grass. | 3 Immediately remove excess Static Grass with the Model-Vac. |
| 4 Apply more adhesive for second color/length Static Grass. Repeat Steps 2 and 3. | 5 Keep repeating Steps 1-4. | 6 Finished result. |

Blending with Hopper Divider

Using the hopper divider, load two different heights or colors of Static Grass in the Static King hopper, and apply it in one area. This is a quick way to create realistically blended grasses.

Hopper Divider

MODELING TALL GRASSES

Temperate grasslands and savannahs contain very tall grasses that can grow from 4'-10'. Try using Field Grass when you need to model exceptionally tall grasses.
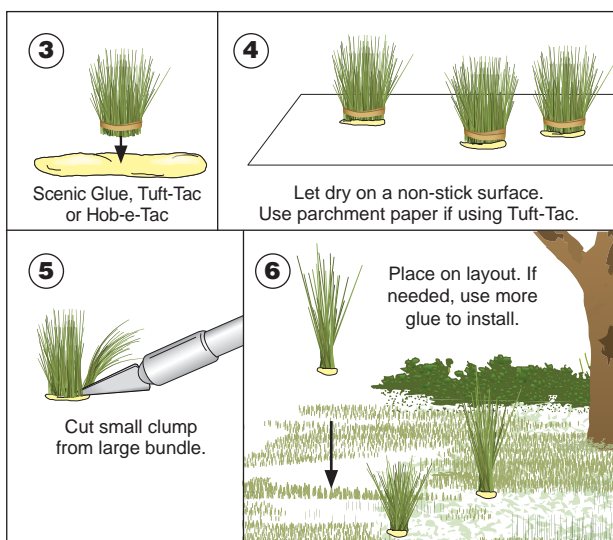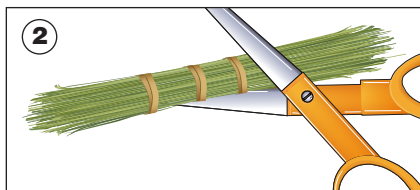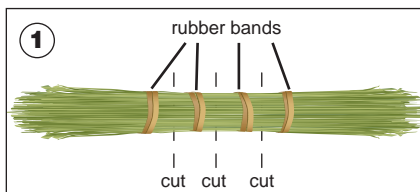
Field Grass is ideal for modeling tufts of tall grass and is approximately 2 1/2" to 3" long. Field Grass can be trimmed to any length. The colors of Field Grass are different than Static Grass and can be mixed together to create variation within an individual tuft of grass. Field Grass can be used to create an entire field, accent Static Grass in the field for texture and color variation, or simply add small accents along roads, railroad tracks and buildings.

Field Grass can be placed in individual tufts on a layout and attached with your choice of Tuft-Tac, Scenic Glue or Hob-e-Tac (pages 104-105). Individual placement can be time-consuming. To make Field Grass tufts faster, roll a large clump of Field Grass into a bundle. Wrap 3-4 rubber bands around the bundle, spaced evenly at the approximate height you want the Field Grass. With Scissors, cut the bundle between the rubber bands. Dip the cut ends of Field Grass into the adhesive and place on a non-stick surface (use parchment paper for Tuft-Tac). When you are ready to plant your Field Grass, peel (or cut) off small tufts from the large bundle. If you used Scenic Glue, dip the small tuft into a little more Scenic Glue and place on the layout. If you used Hob-e-Tac or Tuft-Tac, the adhesive will remain sticky, and the small tuft can be placed on the terrain shell. The bundle of Field Grass does not need to be used immediately but can be used over the course of several months.

1
rubber bands
cut   cut   cut

2

3
Scenic Glue, Tuft-Tac or Hob-e-Tac

4
Let dry on a non-stick surface.
Use parchment paper if using Tuft-Tac.

5
Cut small clump from large bundle.

6
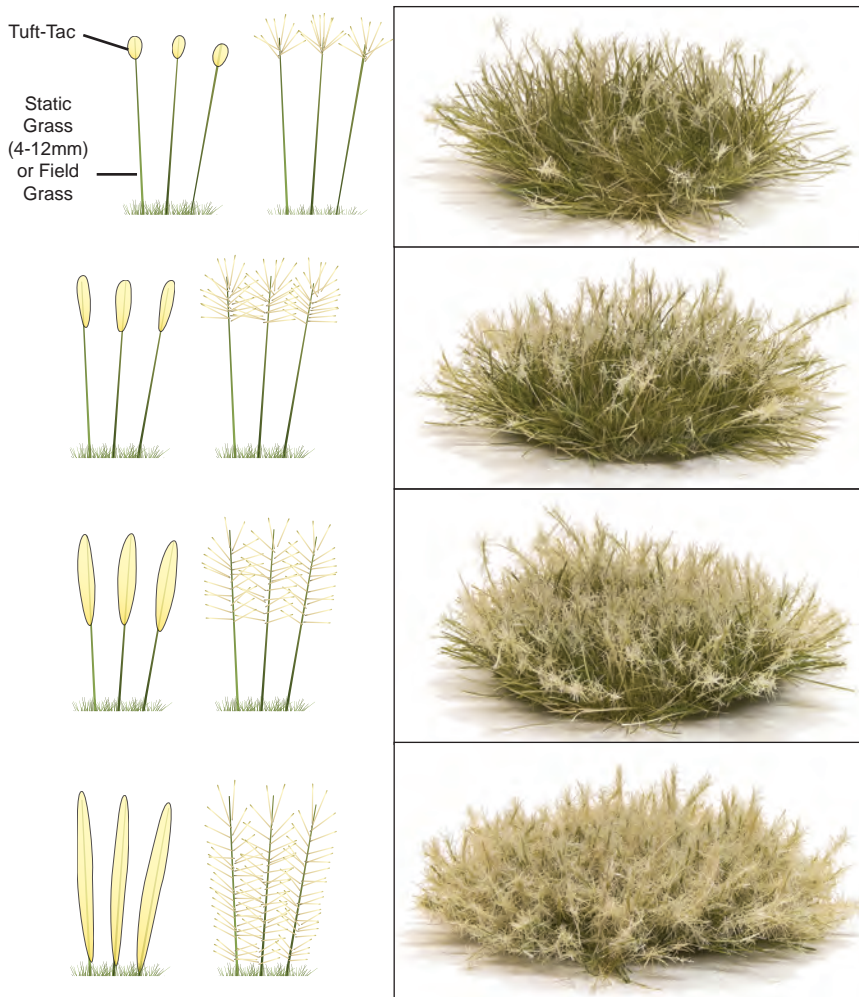Place on layout. If needed, use more glue to install.

MAKING/ACCENTING TUFTS ONLINE VIDEO

Most grasses and weeds produce colorful seed heads or small flowers. Red switch is a great example of grass that creates dramatic and colorful seed heads. Other grasses and plants like dandelions produce seed heads that are fluffy and float above surrounding grasses. Cattails are another plant that produce a distinctive seed head. A realistic prairie, meadow or lawn will have these features.

Grasses and weeds in this late stage of development can be modeled with Static Grass and Field Grass tufts (pages 125-126). Tufts are easier to handle and allow you to experiment without permanently installing on your layout.

Different plants can be created by controlling where the Tuft-Tac is applied on the Static Grass blade. Use this chart to help you determine what kind of look you want to create.

Tuft-Tac

Static Grass (4-12mm) or Field Grass

Follow these tips to create specific seeding and flowering grasses, or broadleaf weeds and plants.

Compact Seed Heads (Cattails)

Attach Plant Hues to the tips of Static Grass or to Field Grass. This will create tightly bound seed heads that are close to the grass or plant's stalk.

This technique is great for making cattails. To create a cattail brown, mix 1/4 tsp of Golden, 1 1/2 tsp of Red Switch, and 2 tsp Shadow Green Plant Hues together in a clear plastic bag. Apply a small amount of Tuft-Tac on the tips of the tuft. Then use the Static King to apply this mixture to the pre-made tuft, or leave it in a cup and dip the tuft in the mixture.

Fluffy Seed Heads

For seed heads that are fluffy and appear to float above low-growing grasses, use 2mm Static Grass attached to Field Grass or 4-12mm Static Grass. 2mm Straw is recommended for dry grasses nearing the end of their life cycle. For a floating appearance, create a tuft with 4mm-7mm as undergrowth and 12mm as the top growth. Paint the Tuft-Tac onto the top most tips of the grasses. Then apply the 2mm to the tips of the grass tuft. If you prefer a bushier look, paint the Tuft-Tac farther down the Static Grass stalk.

Branch-Like Stalks

For broadleaf weeds and plants that appear to have branch-like stalks at the top, use 2mm, 4mm or 7mm Light Green, Medium Green and Dark Green. The larger the Static Grass, the more weed and plant-like the tuft will appear after application. Once this layer of Static Grass has dried, add additional layers to create even taller branch-like stalks.

Blooming Plants

To model blooming plants, use Plant Hues and Flowers to accent 2mm Static Grass already installed on the tips of a tuft. This creates the effect of seed clusters and flowers on branchy plants.
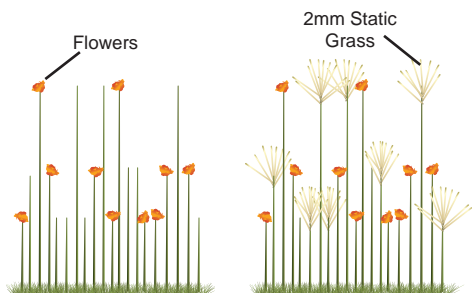

Overgrown Grass and Large Flowering Plants

Attach 12mm Static Grass to the tips of other pre-installed Static Grass to make the application taller and more overgrown. Layer more Static Grass, Plant Hues and Flowers to create large flowering plants or very tall grasses.

Flowers and Seed Heads

To create flowers and seed heads, dab Tuft-Tac glue only on some of the tallest Static Grass stalks. Dip these stalks into Flowers or Plant Hues. Let it dry, and then paint Tuft-Tac on other tall grass stalks. Apply 2mm Static Grass on those tips. The effect will look like flowers growing up through seeding grasses.

Flowers

2mm Static Grass

Small Broadleaf Plants

Paint Tuft-Tac over a very thin tuft of Field Grass, almost down to the base adhesive. Then dip the whole Field Grass tuft into Coarse Turf. The Field Grass tuft will resemble small broadleaf plants and saplings.

CREATING REALISTIC VARIATION

Brambles and broadleaf plants create natural variation in grassy areas. Savannahs and temperate grasslands are both known to have broadleaf plants. Meadows, fields and lawns all have plants like shrubs, bushes and brambles living in and around them. To create this kind of variation, follow these tips.

Broadleaf Plant Life

Plant Field Grass tufts that look like saplings in fields and along the edges of fields to model tall broadleaf plant life and saplings.

Plant Life Along Tree Lines

Place Underbrush, Bushes and Briar Patch on the edges of groups of trees to represent bushes and brambles reaching for sunlight. Grasses don't typically grow all the way up to the base of a tree trunk, so leave some Earth colored Turf underneath.

Undergrowth

Layer Static Grass over Fine and Coarse Turf to create the appearance of undergrowth beneath the grass. A sparse layer of Static Grass over the Turf will look like there is a thick undergrowth of weeds beneath the Static Grass. Sprinkle Fine or Coarse Turf over the thick applications of Static Grass to create the look of broadleaf plants and weeds that are reaching through the grasses for sunlight.

Animal Paths

Leave bare spots in fields where animals like cows or deer trample the grass. If you are adding these pathways after installation, use the thatch comb to remove and press down the Static Grass to create a matted look.

Fence Lines

Grasses along fence lines tend to be tall because the mower cannot get close enough to the fence. Use Tufts to install tall grasses or apply Static Grass in stages, starting with the taller grass along the fence line.

Grasses Over Rocky Areas

Apply Static Grass over Ballast, Talus or Gravel along railways and roadways to create the look of grass growing through the rock. Small tufts of grass can be added between rail ties. Make the tuft short enough for a train to pass over without derailing. Trim the tuft with scissors to adjust the height. Use tufts to add grassy strips down gravel roads and weeds popping out of broken sidewalks.

Finishing Grassy Areas

Finish grassy areas with a light sprinkle of Plant Hues, Fine and Coarse Turf, or Flowers. This will add subtle highlights and lowlights to a grassy area.

PLANT HUES

FLOWERS

FINE TURF

COARSE TURF

DESERTS

Deserts are typically hot and dry with limited plant life, but that does not make them any less impressive. Locations like the Grand Canyon, Australian Outback or the Sahara Desert are known for their unique landscape and colors. Modeling a desert will require some creativity and a willingness to experiment with colors and products.

MIXING PRODUCTS FOR CUSTOM COLORS

To model a realistic desert, you will need to think outside of a product's primary use. Desert soils are rocky and gravelly, ranging from red and brown to light tan. These colors can be persistent across the whole horizon, or they can be striped or dotted throughout. Use reference photos to identify what soil colors are in the specific desert you want to model. Find similar colors of Earth Colors Liquid Pigment and other products like Turf, Plant Hues, Gravel, Talus, Ballast and Static Grass.

Start by coloring the terrain shell with Earth Colors Liquid Pigment as you normally would. Pick the color that best represents the type of desert you are modeling. As deserts are very rocky, you may want more of the terrain shell to show through than would be present in other scenes. Try opaque coloring to create deep, rich desert terrain colors. Mix pigments together to create custom colors.

Next, you will need to install ground cover over the colored terrain shell. Using a mixture of materials will help create natural variation and interest. Mix the following suggested products in a clear, sealable plastic bag until they match the colors in your reference photos. Then, sprinkle them over the terrain shell or flyspeck onto cliffs and hillsides:

- **For gray and whitish deserts-** Use Buff Fine Gravel mixed with either Soft Flake Snow™ (for a bright white) or Buff Fine Ballast (for a whitish tan look).

- **For tan deserts-** Use Buff Fine Ballast mixed with Earth or Yellow Grass Fine Turf. Yellow Grass Fine Turf can be used for highlights and Earth Fine Turf for lowlights. For some darker, coarser texture, add a little Brown Fine Ballast.

- **For reddish desert features-** Use Iron Ore and Brown Fine Ballast layered or mixed with Buff Fine Ballast.

BUFF GRAVEL AND SOFT FLAKE SNOW

BUFF GRAVEL AND BUFF BALLAST

BUFF BALLAST

BUFF BALLAST AND YELLOW GRASS FINE TURF

BUFF BALLAST AND EARTH FINE TURF

BUFF BALLAST, BROWN BALLAST AND IRON ORE BALLAST

BROWN BALLAST AND IRON ORE BALLAST

Accenting the Soil Colors

Accenting the desert soil ground cover with different colors or coarser materials will add texture and realism. You can accent desert soil in a variety of ways. Follow the color and texture suggestions below to accent your desert ground cover. Mix the materials in a sealable plastic bag. Then shake the bag until the color is uniform. For fine texture-materials, like Plant Hues, Accent Powder or Fine Turf, use a dry brush and paint them on. Using a dry brush will control the application. If you do not need to control the application, sprinkle the materials on.

• Use Accent Powder, included in the Gravel (page 107) package, to add tan colored lowlights (in light colored deserts) or highlights (in darker colored deserts).

• Mix Golden, Wheat and a small amount of Red Switch Plant Hues (page 130) together. This will create a reddish-light brown mixture. Use this mixture to highlight reddish deserts or add lowlights to a whitish desert.

• Mix Red Switch and Golden Plant Hues together. This will create a red-rust color. Use the mixture to highlight reddish-brown desert soil.

• Use Burnt Grass or Green Grass Fine Turf to add small patches of low-growing plant life. Use sparingly.

• Some deserts, like in Nevada and Arizona, have red, orange, yellow or green colors in the rocks and soil. For reddish-yellow areas, mix Red, Orange or Yellow Flowers with Brown and Iron Ore Ballast until the desired color is achieved. For areas with more green, mix Green Grass and Burnt Grass Fine Turf with Yellow Flowers until the desired color is achieved.

• Add coarser Ballast on top of the ground cover to emphasize rocky areas. For reddish desert rocks, use different sizes of Iron Ore, Brown and Dark Brown Ballast. Use varying sizes of Buff, Light Gray and Gray Blend Ballast for whitish or tan-colored deserts.

• Use Talus where you need more naturally shaped rocks. You can use the available colors individually or mix them together. Color the Talus for unique desert rocks. Follow the instructions in the Talus section to color Talus with Liquid Pigment (page 121).