



## Once upon a time...

I went on a trip to Russia to help run a summer camp for about 125 underprivileged children and orphans. Their excitement to create with the very simple materials I brought was intoxicating. I absolutely fell in love with those kids. From that point, I knew I had to start a workshop back home. Nine years later, in 2010 the doors of The Little Bits Workshop opened in River Forest, IL. I had an idea a year or so after opening to make a cottage out of a cigar box and other repurposed bits. Rummaging through a drawer I discovered two bottle caps that I'd found on the street in Kaluga, Russia. They made perfect little stools in the very first Little Bits Cottage.

Since that first cottage, we've taught hundreds of kids how to make Little Bits Cottages and it never gets old. At the Workshop, we've designed and developed many projects, but this one is everybody's favorite and we are certain you will agree.



*Lita Forsyth*  
LITA FORSYTH

The Little Bits Cottage Kit™ ©2015 Made in the USA

# THE LITTLE BITS cottage

A DIY GUIDE  
to building and decorating a mini upcycled  
cottage with bits from the recycle bin



explore the art  
of upcycling!





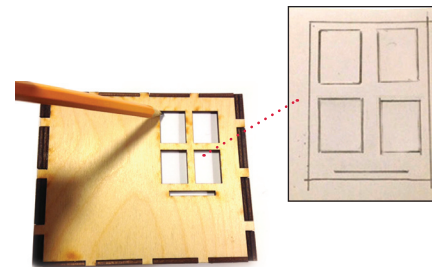
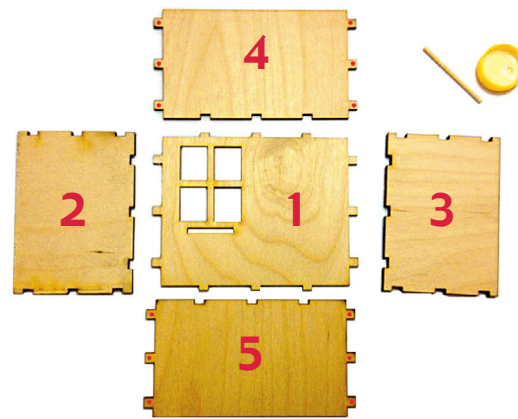
The Little Bits Cottage Kit<sup>®</sup> is a launching point for imagination and starts with a scavenger hunt. The kit includes:

- the main structure for one cottage
- wallpaper
- wood pieces to make furniture
- fabric
- a grab bag-o-bits to get started
- Mod Podge<sup>®</sup>, wood glue, Sculpey<sup>®</sup>

Half the fun of making a Little Bits Cottage is discovering objects in your recycle bin, junk drawer or jewelry box that could actually become a burner on a stove, a knob on a faucet or a dining room chair.

This kit is designed to be a skill-builder with assistance from an adult to guide young imagineers through the steps of measuring, designing, considering proportion, using sharp tools and learning how to sew. Check out The Little Bits Workshop website for more inspiration and the endless possibilities in your recycle bin!

[thelittlebitsworkshop.com](http://thelittlebitsworkshop.com)



## 2 Wallpaper

Cut out your favorite wallpaper. Line up the edge of the wallpaper with the inner edge of the left wall. Then tuck the paper into the cottage and crease it at the corners. Take the wallpaper out and make the creases into crisp folds. Put the wallpaper back in. Turn the box around to trace the window and windowsill onto the back of the wallpaper as shown above. Take the paper out and draw a line with a ruler 1/8" wider than the window. Cut it out along the outer line.

Use Mod Podge<sup>®</sup> to adhere the wallpaper to the walls. Apply it generously to both the surface of the walls and the back surface of the paper. Then gently install the wallpaper by smoothing it down from left to right.

After the wallpaper is installed, put a thin line of wood glue on the window sill tab and insert it into the slot under the window.



## 1 Construct the Cottage

Lay out cottage pieces as shown. Apply glue to all the edges of piece 1. Then apply glue to the tabs seen with red dots on pieces 4 and 5. Assemble 2, 3, 4 and 5 and hold together using a rubber band. Next, insert piece 1 making sure the window is in the upper left corner when looking into the Cottage. Be sure tabs seat firmly into the grooves on all sides.



## Tools that you will need:

exacto blade or utility knife  
glue gun & sticks  
needle & thread

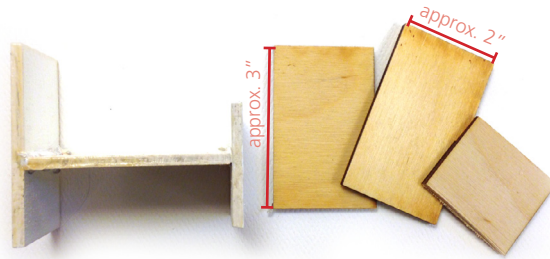
ruler  
scissors  
wire cutter

## Optional supplies:

nail polish  
paint

### To make a little bed:

The wood included in the kit can be easily cut with a utility knife and a straight edge. Score the wood on both sides and break it by hand. Next hot glue the pieces together as shown. Painting is optional.



### To make a little quilt & pillow:

For the quilt, cut 2 contrasting pieces of cloth  $4\frac{1}{2}'' \times 3\frac{1}{2}''$ . Put the two right sides together and sew a running stitch along 3 sides leaving one of the short ends open. Turn it right side out and whip stitch the short open end closed.

To make a pillow, fold

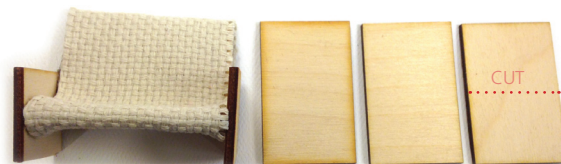
a  $3\frac{1}{4}'' \times 2\frac{3}{4}''$  piece of cloth in half with right sides together. Sew two sides together with a running stitch, turn right side out, stuff with batting and whip stitch the short end closed. Remember to fold the raw edges in on both the pillow and quilt before sewing them shut.



### To make a little sofa:

Cut one of the rectangles in half to create the side arms of the sofa. Cut the wood by scoring it on both sides with a utility knife and snapping it in half by hand.

Hot glue the pieces



together as shown. The board for the back should be tipped back at an angle. Cut a strip of cloth long enough to wrap

around bottom, seat, and back of the sofa. Choose thick upholstery cloth so the hot glue does not show through.



### To make a little chair,

hot glue the pieces together as shown: a bottle cap, a pull tab from a can and a skewer cut into four 1" chair legs. To cut the skewer, score it with a dull, old pair of scissors or a utility knife and break it. A little bit of sandpaper may be needed to smooth out the ends. A button glued to the back of the chair over the pull tab helps hold it on securely to the bottle cap. Nail polish is ideal for painting the pieces after they are glued. For the cushion, cut a circle of fabric  $\frac{1}{2}''$  bigger in diameter than a bottle cap. Sew a running stitch around the outer edges, put a little puff of batting or cotton in it, cinch it up and knot it. Hot glue the cushion down into the bottle cap.

### To make a little whisk & spatula:

Strip the paper off of two common twist ties. There's just enough wire inside to make a whisk. Twist it up as shown. A spatula can be made by cutting off a piece of a paper clip with wire cutters and hot gluing it to a snippet of a pop can. Remember to use junky scissors when cutting a can.



### To make a little stove,

a  $1\frac{1}{8}'' \times 7\frac{7}{8}'' \times 1\frac{1}{2}''$  Milk Duds® box is the perfect size. Paint it with 2-3 coats of nail polish, hot glue 4 tiny buttons on top for burners and glue a small piece of wood or cardboard to the back for the "oven control panel." For the clock timer, look in catalogs or magazines for a photo of a clock or just download an online image of a clock and print it out to size. It helps to weigh down the bottom of the stove with a washer or a coin hot glued to the back of the box bottom. For the knobs, use four straight pins and four beads then poke them into the box with a little hot glue on the pins. The oven door handle is cut from a pop can. Use an exacto blade to poke tiny holes into the front of the box. Then use your old scissors to cut the can into the appropriate size for a handle...about  $1\frac{1}{4}'' \times \frac{1}{8}''$  with pointed ends. Fold it and poke it into the box with a dab of hot glue on the ends.



### To make a little vase or teapot,

hot glue a large button to a bead. The rose pictured to the right was a stray earring, but any tiny dried or silk flowers can be glued into the bead.

Sculpey was added to the owl bead shown here and baked in the oven for 10 minutes at 280°. To give it a similar shine as the bead, paint with a coat of clear nail polish.

Sculpey is great for making dishes, fruit, utensils, pencils and all kinds of other little objects.



### To make little books & pencils:

There are many ways to make books. The easiest is to fold a piece of leather or vinyl in half and hot glue it shut.

**TIP:** These little pieces to the right were from an architect's sample book of leather. Interior decorators and paint stores ALWAYS have discontinued sample books to give away for free. Just ask!

Flip through magazines and catalogs to find tiny pictures of book covers or images. Next, cut out some columns of text from magazines or use blank paper for the inside pages. To create specific books, go to Amazon.com and download a book cover, print them out.

Pencils can be made by rolling Sculpey around graphite (used in mechanical pencils). Add a bit of wood colored Sculpey to the tip to look just like a pencil. Bake it in the oven for 10 minutes at 280°.



**To make a little table or desk,** hot glue evenly cut skewers or a cork to a button, lid or one of the pieces of wood in the kit. Corks can easily be cut with a common steak knife or any other kitchen knife with a serrated edge.



**To make a little sink & faucet:** The kit includes a piece of wood with a circle cut out of it. This is the kitchen counter top. If painted with sparkly nail polish it will resemble granite! The hole is sized for a common bottle cap to fit down in and become a sink. Before putting the bottle cap in create a "drain" by poking a hole in the cap with an awl. A tiny snap glued in the hole resembles a drain stopper.

The faucet is made from Sculpey and a plastic silver bead. (Bake the Sculpey before hot gluing it into the bead.) The handles are a combination of silver floral beads and silver seed beads. Trim two straight pins with wire cutters and put them through the handle beads to steady them. Use an awl or nail to poke a slight hole in the wood under the handles for the pins to set into. Before putting the pins in the beads, put a tiny bit of hot glue on the pins. Then hot glue all the pieces into place.



**To make a little clock,** hot glue three buttons together: two for the clock and one for the base. Then use Mod Podge to adhere the image of a clock to the front of the button. For an extra thrill, paint a few coats of glow-in-the-dark craft paint to the face of the clock. It will go on looking a bit thick and green but will dry clear.

