

How to Make a Stepping Stone

As Father's Day approaches—and with it, long green days outdoors—here's a “card” that your child can make to last for years and years. Using a few simple materials from your local craft store, you can create an artistic garden stepping stone that shows your appreciation for Dad. All year round, you can let Dad know that you're literally “following” in his footsteps!

What You Need:

- 1 5-lb. bag of dry cement, available in craft or hardware stores
- 1 cement mold (you can find plastic ones in many shapes at a craft store, or just use a sturdy corrugated cardboard base from a large pizza box, reinforced at the seams with a little duct tape!)
- Wooden paint stick for stirring
- Plastic bucket
- Chopstick or bamboo skewer for marking words in concrete
- Broken tile and/or round colored glass pieces (available at craft stores or, if you ask, at hardware or tile stores)



What You Do:

1. Find a sunny, protected part of your back yard where it's OK to mess around. Then, prepare your stepping stone “mold.” If you're using a plastic piece (available inexpensively at many craft stores), just place it on a level surface. If you're making your own, cut off the bottom of a sturdy, corrugated pizza box, and reinforce corners and open edges with a little duct tape.
2. Following the directions on your concrete package carefully, pour the concrete powder into your plastic bucket, and then add the amount of water required on package directions. Immediately begin mixing everything together with your mixing stick. Don't be surprised if it thickens pretty quickly, and feels stiff. You don't want concrete to get too runny!
3. As soon as water and powder are all mixed together, pour the mixture all at once into the mold. Tap the mold lightly to help the concrete settle evenly and to pop out any air bubbles. As the mixture evens out, make sure you rinse your plastic bucket thoroughly. Once the concrete dries, it's going to be much more difficult to clean up!
4. At this point, your stepping stone is ready for the best part: decoration! Give your child a chopstick or bamboo skewer, and invite her to scratch out a message for Dad, along with the date of Father's Day this year. Then encourage her to break out her creative energies with tile and glass pieces! To mark this moment in your child's life, you might have her (and other siblings) to press hands or feet into the concrete, and surround them with jewels; or you can arrange tile pieces into a flower, star, or tree design.
5. Your concrete may seem to dry fast, but do beware: it's not going to be fully ready until it has sat in a dry, sunny place for at least 2 days. When it has dried all the way, it will naturally pull away from the edges of the mold, and it will pop out easily. Present it with pride on Father's Day—and enjoy it in your garden for years to come.