

Garden Figures

(How they were made)



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Garden Figures.

Materials used:

Newspapers, scissors, masking tape, parcel string, chicken wire, pliers, tin shears, plastic bucket, and stick for mixing, hand operated water spray, sand and cement, PVA* adhesive, protective clothes including rubber gloves, leather gardening gloves, boots and goggles.

Also some Hessian (Burlap) fabric, old clothes, gloves and hat as required for the figure.

*For suitable PVA adhesive/cement additives available where you are (and appropriate usage and safety information) search Google for PVA Cement Additive.

Safety Note: Making Garden figures involves using sharp tools and materials as well as heavy materials and objects. This project is not suitable for children and adults should know and observe relevant safety precautions. The author accepts no responsibility for damage or accidents due to persons undertaking this activity.



1.

Ideas are planned out first taking into consideration the size, shape and balance of the project.

Making smaller projects is a good idea, being easier to handle and quick to complete, just one or two simple figures make an interesting garden setting.

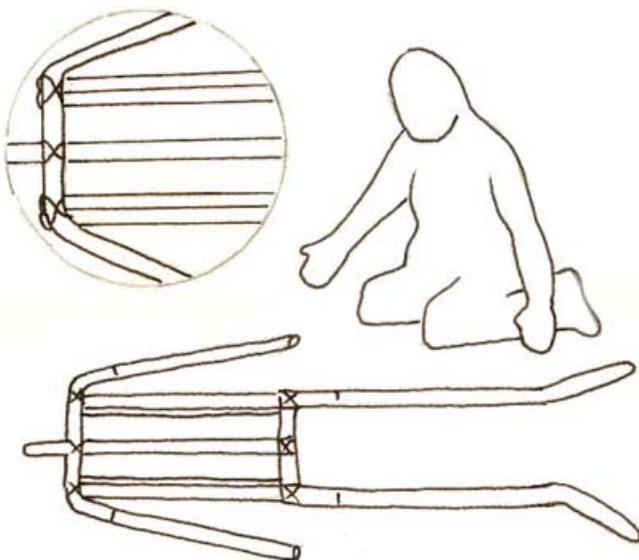
The particular example as described here was small life size, and being placed in a sitting position was stable, well balanced and in a natural pose.

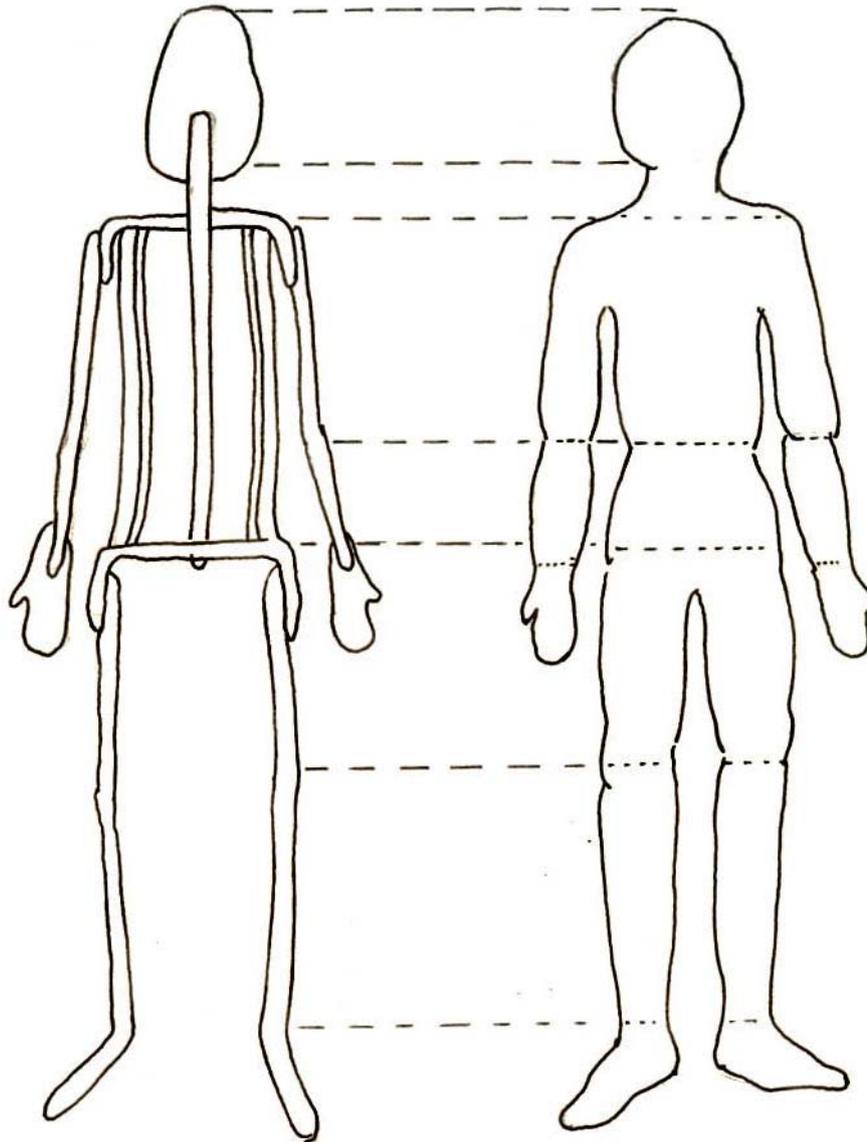
2.

First of all a basic framework was made from tubes of tightly rolled newspaper tubes. To make each tube, three or four sheets of newspaper were rolled up tightly and fastened with masking tape.

When sufficient tubes were made for the figure, they were laid on the ground and carefully arranged in a figure shape, then fastened together with masking tape as shown here.

Note that there are two rolls at each side length of the body section, so that a 'rib cage' can be made later, by fitting horizontal tubes between them.



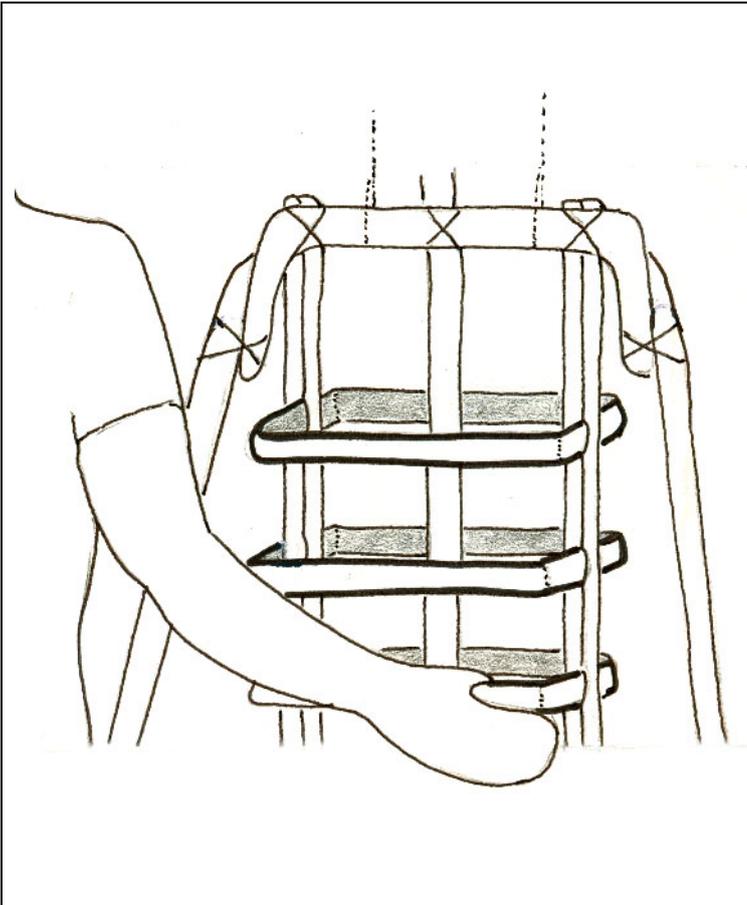


3.

Before the figure shape was completely fastened with string, a final check of the proportions was made. If the basic frame is carefully lifted up and held in front of a person, it is easy to compare the measurements.

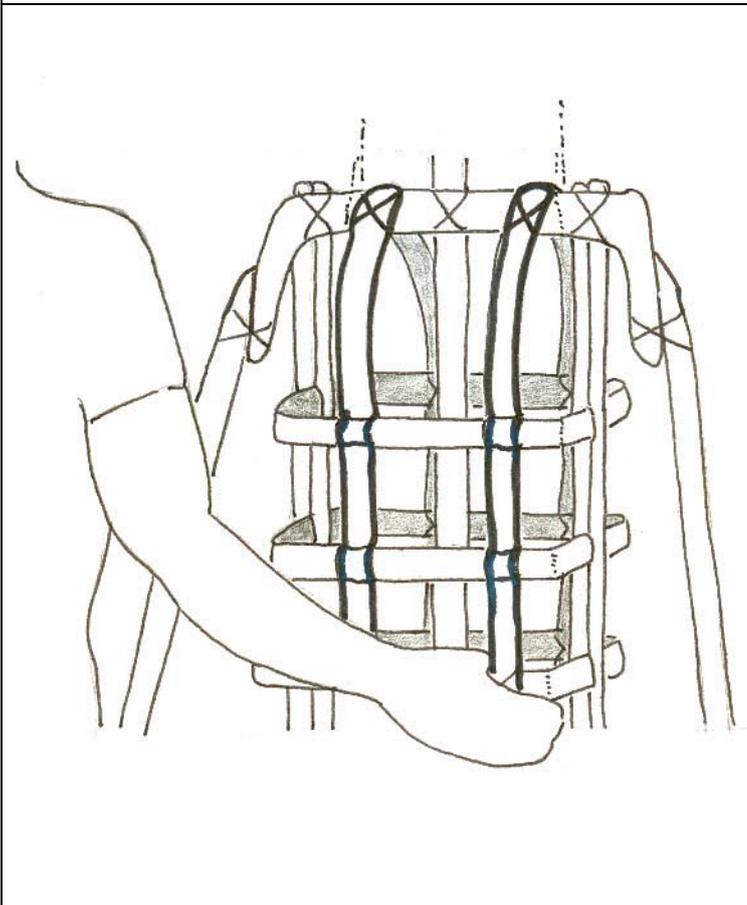
This figure was going to be seated, so a little extra length was allowed for the upper legs (thighs), for the tummy to rest on, otherwise the thigh sections of the finished figure might have appeared too short.

This is a good time to think carefully about proportions, before any further tubes are secured.



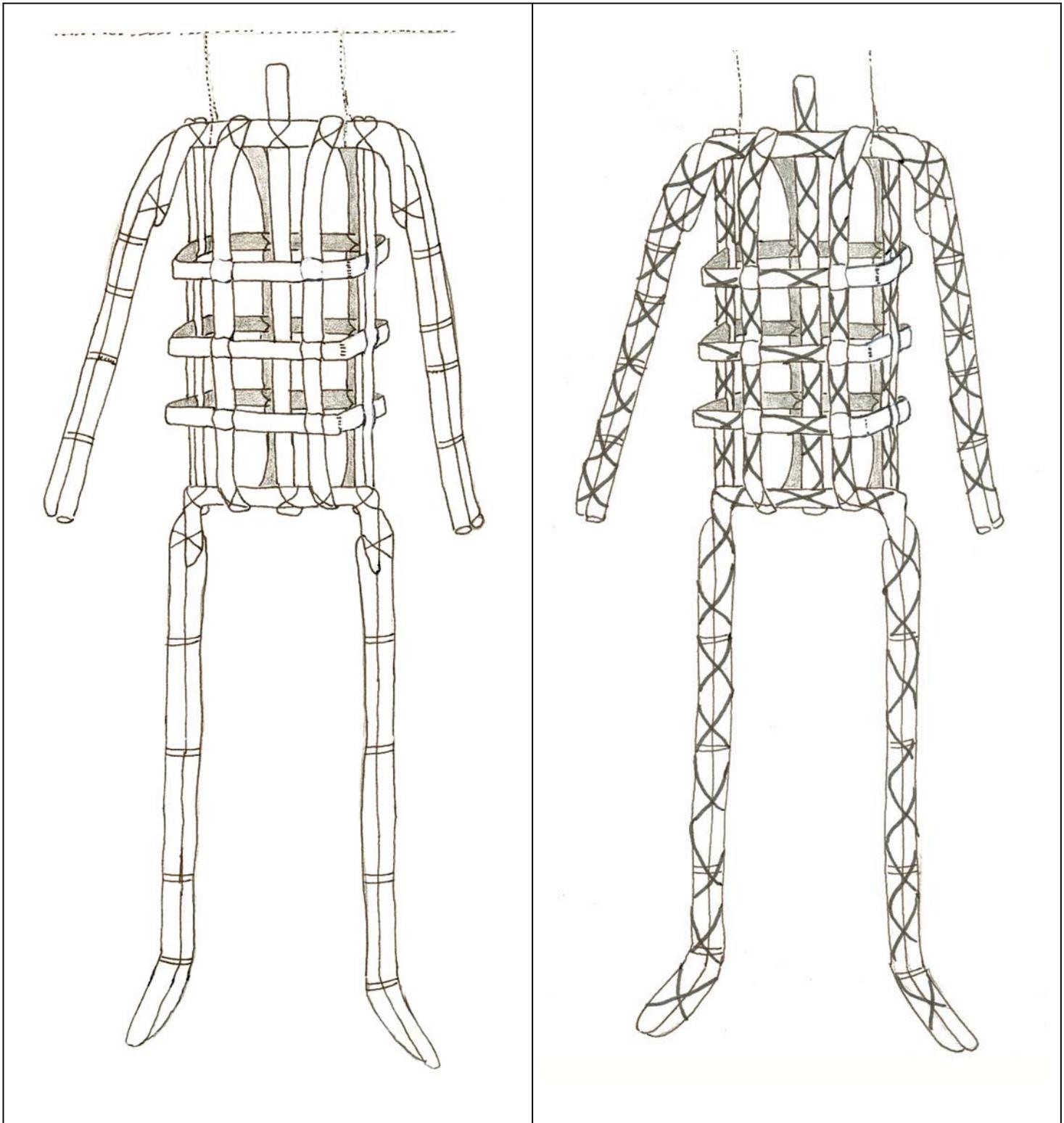
4.

This basic frame was then suspended from above making it easier to work around. Pushing tubes in-between the side sections as shown, then bent around and secured with masking tape and string makes the body section.



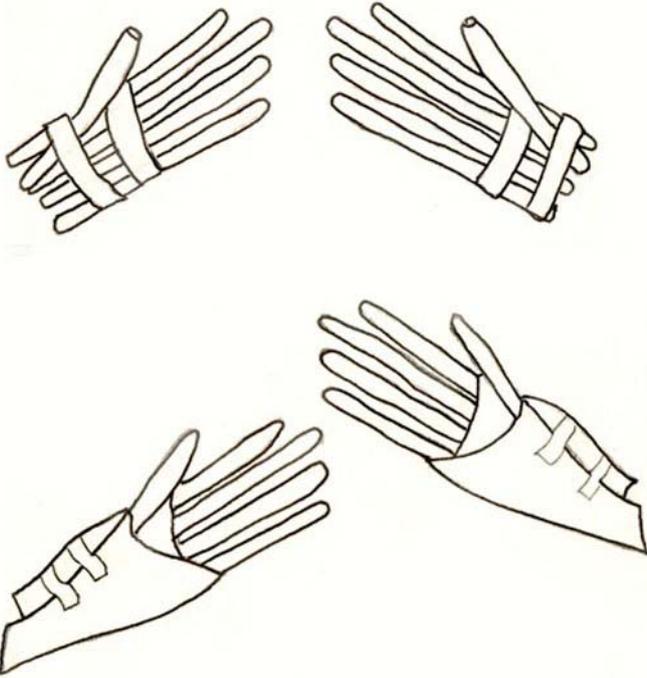
5.

Next adding two more lengths of rolled paper tubes vertically down the front and back as shown completed the body section. Be sure to fasten the joins firmly with string. Now the body should feel firmer.



6. Once the body section was completed, arms, legs and feet were thickened by adding several more newspaper tubes and securing them with tape.

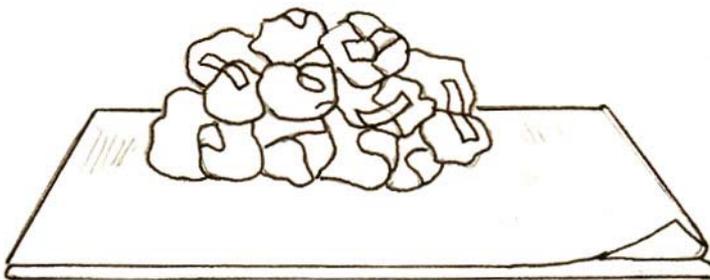
7. The entire figure was then strengthened by binding string tightly around each section, using two strings in a plaiting action.



8.

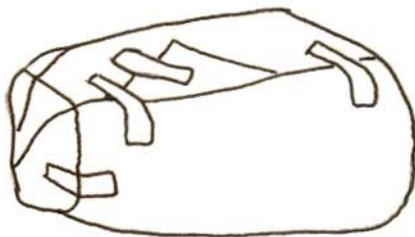
Left and right hands were made with small tubes of rolled paper. Four fingers and one thumb for each hand secured with masking tape.

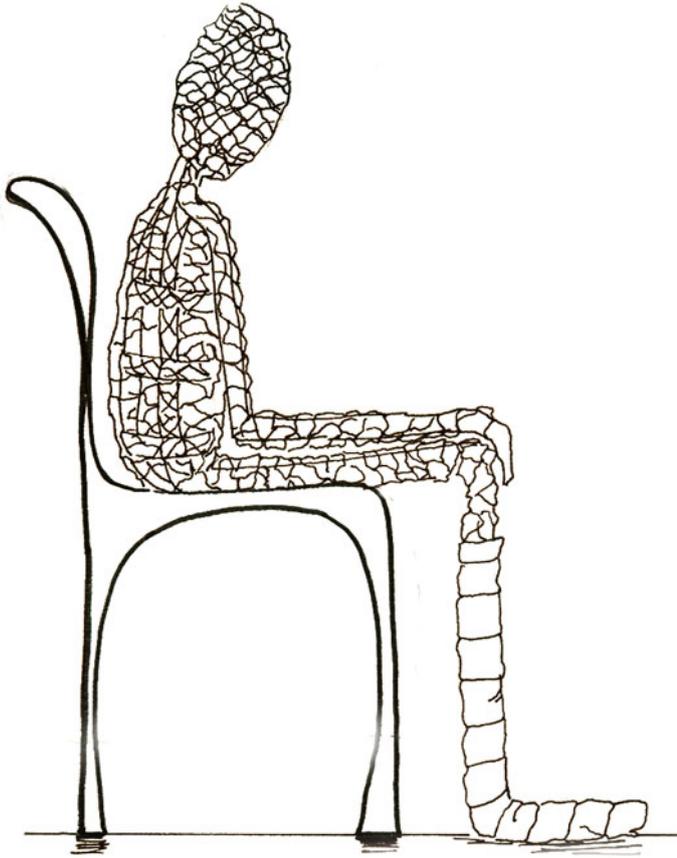
Then a folded sheet of paper was wrapped around the palm and secured with tape as shown.



9.

The head was made by parcelling together balls of crumpled newspaper, and when the correct size, the parcel was secured with masking tape and string, then covered with chicken wire (leather gardening gloves protecting against the sharp wire ends) before being firmly attached to the body.





10.

Using protective gloves and goggles, the whole figure was then covered with chicken wire cut roughly to shape with tin shears, the sections joined by twisting the wire ends together with pliers.

This figure was sitting in an old chair, which was covered with polythene before using the cement. The cover was removed once the project was completed.

Then working from the base upwards, (so the figure didn't get top heavy) wetted strips of fairly open weave fabric such as Hessian cloth (burlap), or similar were dipped into a bucket containing a mix of runny cement.

This creamy mix consists of one part cement, three parts soft sand, mixed with water and about one cup full of PVA additive to a bucket full of cement, helping make the mix smoother, and easier to stick to the fabric.

When completely covered the figure was left to dry fully before applying the clothes and hat.

At this stage some facial features were added to the head, using a thicker mix of cement.



11.

A light spray of water was applied to the surface of the dried cement before clothes were applied. The clothes were first dipped in water and wrung out, and then soaked in fresh liquid cement.

Also a pair of old gloves, wetted then dipped in the cement mix, were put on the hands which gave a more natural look to the hands.

The head was also sprayed with water before wetted string dipped in cement was applied to the head. When dry, an old hat, reinforced with some wire to stop it from flopping down, was fixed on and sprayed lightly with water before being brushed with the cement mix.