

Crazy Caterpillar Dog Chew Toy

Susan hammered fresh dandelion leaves, stems and flowers into the plain canvas fabric to give it some green and yellow coloring. This natural pigment is safe for a teething pup.

What you'll need

- 8-by-16-in. piece heavy cotton canvas
- Fresh dandelions (optional)
- Mallet or hammer (optional)
- Paper grocery sack (optional)
- Printouts of caterpillar template
- Pins
- Scissors
- Felt scraps for eyes and/or legs
- Leather cording for antenna and/or legs
- Large hand-sewing needle and embroidery floss to match felt
- Sewing machine fitted with heavy-duty or denim needle
- Thread to match canvas
- 4 rubber balls of same size, or stuffing
- 4 hair bands



How to make it

1. Optional: To create a natural dye on your canvas, hammer dandelions into the fabric using a mallet and using the grocery sack as a press cloth. Move the dandelion leaves, stems and flowers around and hammer repeatedly to create a mottled green and yellow design. Discard dandelions and paper sack when you've gotten the look you desire.
2. Assemble template. Pin template to the canvas and cut out. Use the eye templates to cut out 2 eyes, pupils and eyelids from scraps of felt. Use the leg templates to cut out 8 legs from felt, or cut 8 strips of leather cording for the legs. (If you use leather cording, cut each piece about 3 inches long and knot both ends of each piece.) Cut 2 pieces of leather cording, each about 3 inches long, for the antennae. Knot both ends of each piece.
3. Use the hand-sewing needle and colored embroidery floss to stitch the eye circles to the canvas where indicated by the template. Then attach the pupil circles of felt to the centers of the eyes. And then add the eyelids on top. Stitch all pieces down securely so your dog won't be able to pull the felt pieces off when chewing on the toy.

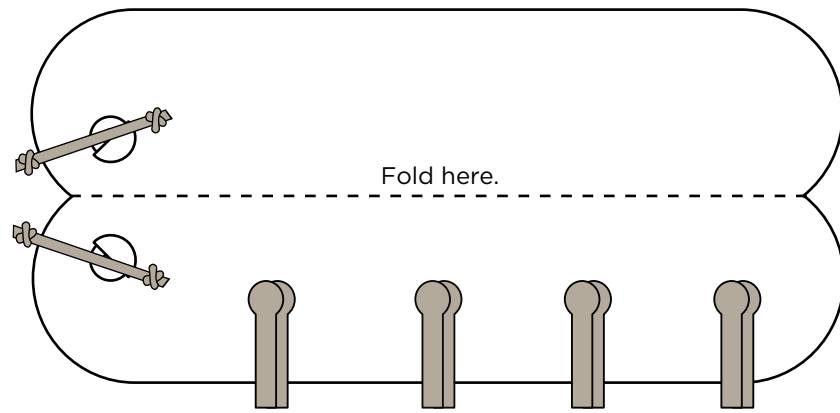


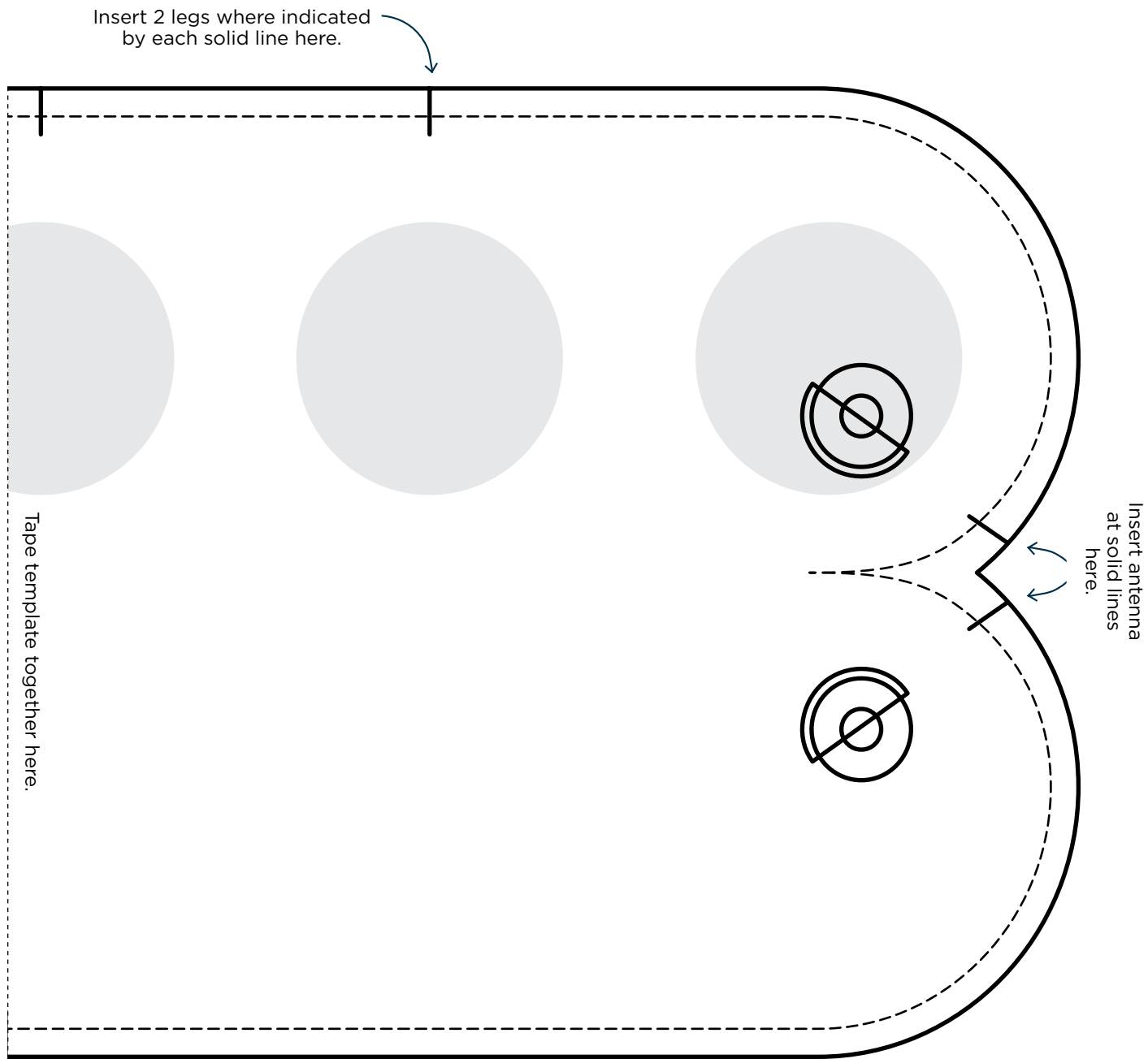
Diagram 1

Sandwich legs and antenna between
top and bottom of caterpillar.

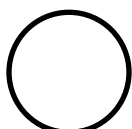
4. Fold the caterpillar in half and pin it together, right sides facing. Using the template and Diagram 1 as guides for placement, sandwich and pin the antenna and legs inside the caterpillar.
5. Sew along dotted lines where indicated by the template, using a $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch seam allowance and a small stitch length on your sewing machine. (Using a small stitch will keep the legs and antennae from pulling out as well as making the caterpillar more sturdy overall.) But do not sew the caterpillar completely closed. Keep open where indicated on the template for turning him inside out.
6. Turn the caterpillar inside out carefully, a few inches at a time.
7. Stuff the caterpillar with the 4 rubber balls or 4 small handfuls of stuffing. Use the hair ties to segment the caterpillar and hold the ball or bit of stuffing in place between each set of legs.
8. Using the sewing machine or the hand-sewing needle, sew the small opening closed at the end of the caterpillar.
9. Introduce him to your dog. Don't worry, he likes playing "ruff."

Caterpillar chew toy templates

Print out both pages. Tape pages together where indicated. Cut out template from canvas along solid lines. Cut eyes, pupils and eyelids from felt. Cut legs from felt or leather cording. Insert legs and antenna, and attach eyes where indicated. Stuff where indicated by gray circles. Sew along dotted lines, leaving an opening at back of caterpillar for turning later.



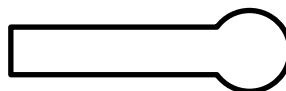
Cut 2 from felt



Cut 2 from felt



Cut 2 from felt



Cut 8 from felt or leather cording



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