

- Bridal jewellery special!
- 8 Recipes for bridesmaid jewellery ideas
- Top 10 tiaras and fascinators
- Inspiring jewellery featuring the latest SWAROVSKI ELEMENTS!

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love blossoms

Delicately coloured silver leaves and flowers linked by semi-precious rose quartz beads make this necklace perfect for a wedding at any time of year, by Julia Rai.

gather these supplies...

- 25g-50g silver metal clay
- Silver clay paste
- Silver clay syringe
- 6 Fine silver embeddable eyelets
- Silver eye pins
- Silver jump rings
- 14mm x 5mm Teardrop shaped rose quartz beads
- Silver chain and clasp
- Adirondack alcohol ink - shell pink, citrus
- StazOn alcohol ink - metallic gold
- Alcohol ink blending solution

tools required...

Roller, playing cards, paintbrushes, plastic paint palette, olive oil or badger balm, small piece of leather, emery board or sandpaper, small needle files, Teflon sheet, steel burnisher, flower cutters in two sizes, leaf embossing cutters, fibre blanket or vermiculite, brass or steel brush, ceramic tile or piece of glass, round nose pliers, cutters, chain nose pliers

About our designer...

Julia Rai

I am an artist and teacher working predominantly in metal clay. I run the Metal Clay Academy, the largest online resource for metal clay artists in the world. I also teach metal clay classes at the Cornwall School of Art, Craft and Jewellery and around the UK. I hold the prestigious Metal Clay Masters Registry credential at level four.



shopping guide

Silver clay, embeddable fine silver eyelets from Bluebell Design Studio - www.bluebelldesignstudio.co.uk - 07782 324258
Flower cutters, leaf embossing cutters from Cakes Cookies and Crafts Shop - www.cakescookiesandcrafts.co.uk - 01524 389684
Rose quartz beads, eye pins from Fire Mountain Gems - www.firemountaingems.com
Adirondack alcohol ink, StazOn alcohol ink from The Craft Barn - www.thecraftbarn.co.uk - 01342 836398
Silver chain, clasp from Cookson - www.cooksongold.com - 0845 100 1122

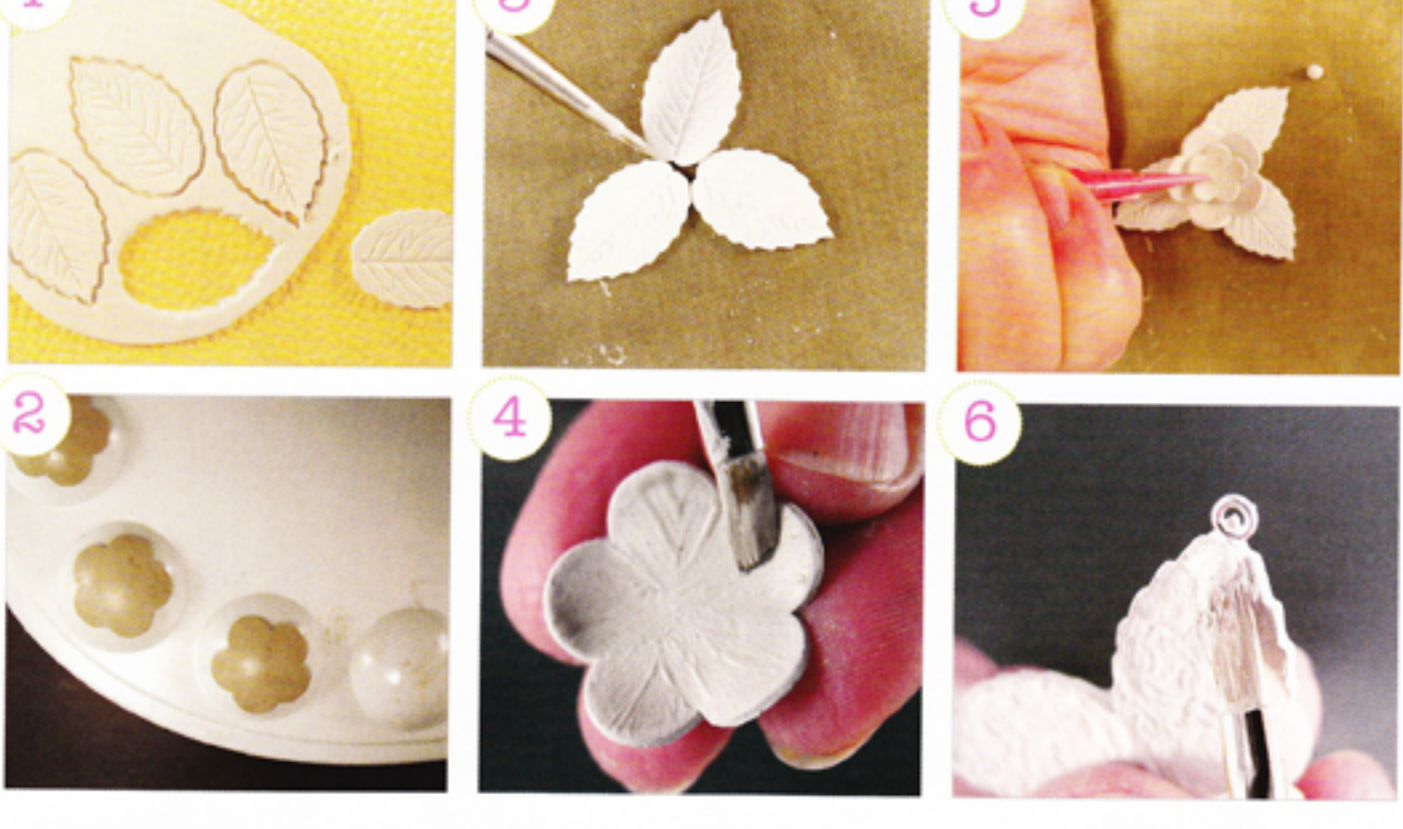
The leaf and flower clusters on this necklace are made using cake decorating cutters. Alcohol inks add subtle colour and could be matched to the overall palette of the wedding. Rose quartz is the semi-precious stone signifying love, especially love in marriage, so it is perfect for bridal jewellery.

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Here's how...



1 Roll the metal clay four playing cards thick onto a piece of oiled leather. This will add a subtle texture to the back of your leaves. Use an oiled embossing leaf cutter to cut out leaves. To use these cutters, press down on the collar of the cutter first to cut the leaf shape, and then push the plunger down firmly to emboss the leaf pattern on the clay. Cut out seven leaf shapes and allow to dry.

2 To make the flower shapes stand out from the leaves, dry them on a curved surface. I've used an upturned paint palette. Oil the palette, roll the metal clay three cards thick, cut out the flower shapes (three large and three small) and transfer them to the palette. Gently press down the petals all around so they make good contact with the curved surface. Allow them to dry on the palette.

3 Refine the edges of the dried leaves using an emery board, sandpaper or small files. Experiment with the arrangement of the leaves. I have used three leaves for the central cluster and two leaves in the side clusters. Stick the leaves together at the edges using a little paste and leave them to dry. Reinforce the joins on the back using paste or syringe for precision and dry again.

4 Refine the edges of the dried flowers. If you want a high shine on the flowers after firing, smooth the surface with polishing papers. Alternatively, use thick paste and paint some texture onto the finished flowers, and then allow them to dry. Roll up small pieces of metal clay to make three balls for the centre of the flowers and leave these to dry.

5 Attach the flowers to the leaves using syringe clay. Lightly dampen the area before you add the syringe so you get good contact. The syringe allows you to place the paste exactly where you want it. Press the flowers gently into place, a small one on top of a larger one, offsetting the petals of the smaller flower. Stick a ball in the centre of each flower and dry.

6 Check the underside of each cluster and reinforce with syringe if necessary, then allow this to dry. Check how the clusters are going to link together and add the embeddable eyelets. Use thick paste or syringe to stick the 'key' part of the eyelet to the top of the leaf. Make sure you allow the eye part to protrude slightly beyond the point of the leaf. Allow to dry.

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7 Fire the clusters at 900 °C for two hours in a kiln supported on fibre blanket or vermiculite. Tumble polish or use a brass or steel brush to shine the clusters. If you want a high shine, use polishing papers in sequence until you achieve the finish you like. Use a steel burnisher on the edges of the leaves and flowers taking care not to scratch the surface.

8 Colour the leaves, larger flowers and the centre of the flowers with alcohol ink. The ink dries quickly so disperse a small drop onto a glass or ceramic tile and seal the bottle. Apply the ink using a small paintbrush. If you make a mistake, remove any unwanted ink with a cotton swab dipped in the ink blending solution. This is also used to clean the ink from surfaces, your brush and hands. Allow to dry.

9 Thread a round rose quartz bead onto an eye pin, cut off the excess and form a loop to create a double ended connector. Open the loop at one end of the connector and attach it to the eyelet on the leaf cluster. Repeat this at the other end of the connector to join the side cluster to the main cluster.

10 Connect the other side cluster to the main cluster so you have a group of three. Thread the teardrop and round beads onto two more eye pins and create elements to be connected to the side clusters. Attach these in the same way as before. Thread on more beads to reach the desired length, then use jump rings to connect silver chain as necessary and finish with a clasp.

Variation...

Leaf and Blossom Earrings

HERE'S HOW: Use the same leaf embossing cutters to create two leaves. Cut smaller flowers and dry on a curved surface, a marble works well for this size. Roll tiny balls of metal clay for the centres of the leaf using syringe, then stick the flowers over the eyelets. Stick the dried balls in the centre of the flowers, dry, then fire. Thread a small bead onto an eye pin and use this to connect the leaf element to the ear wires. Colour the flowers and leaves using alcohol ink to match the necklace.

Take special care to check the size of cutters you buy online. Cake decorating suppliers are a rich source of unusual cutters but make sure they are small enough for metal clay.

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