Monstera Leaf

Visit anyplace tropical and you will see monstera plants climbing up trees so their huge leaves can drink in the sunlight.

Priming the Mold

Always start by priming your molds. There are only two priming products that should be used: Hotline Primo Primer and ZYP BN Lubricoat Aerosol (formerly MR-97).

With either product, clean the mold with a stiff nylon brush and/or toothbrush to remove any old kiln wash or boron nitride. (This step can be skipped if the mold is brand new.)

If you are using Hotline Primo Primer, mix the product according to directions. Apply the Primo Primer with a soft artist's brush (not a hake brush) and use a hair dryer to completely dry the coat. Give the mold four to five thin, even coats drying each coat with a hair dryer before applying the next. Make sure to keep the Primo well stirred as it settles quickly. The mold should be totally dry before filling. There is no reason to pre-fire the mold.

Since the Monstera Leaf is a very large mold, we suggest a different technique than we traditionally recommend for applying ZYP. However, we always suggest wearing a dust mask and applying ZYP outside.

Start by completely removing any primer from previous firings from the mold using a simple kitchen brush with stiff, nylon bristles. This step, of course, can be skipped, if the mold is brand new.

Place the mold on a chair, vertically, with the mold leaning against the chair's back. *Note: You may want to protect the chair with an old towel or a piece of butcher paper.* Shake the ZYP can until you hear the marble inside rattle and then continue shaking for a full 60 seconds. Hold the can upright, 12 inches (30 cm) from mold and, in a sweeping motion, spray the mold for three to four seconds. Rotate the mold by 180 degrees, and, again spray the mold with the same sweeping motion for three to four seconds. If it is the first time the mold has been treated with ZYP, wait five minutes, and repeat the above process.

Filling

The suggested fill weight for the Monstera Leaf is 500 grams.

To accentuate the mold's veining details, create a mixture of two parts Dark Green powder and one part Black powder.

It's always a best practice to wear a dust mask when working with glass powders or other fine particles.

Use a fine sifter to distribute two or three grams of the mixture across the mold. Gently tapping the sides of the mold will cause the mixture to drop into the details. Use a soft artists brush to brush away any of the powder that remains on the mold's edges or the ridges that create the leaf's segments.

The mold can be filled with any combination of colors. Fine frit produces best results. We have found the most realistic results by combining two frit mixtures: A lighter green for the leaf's body and a darker green for the leaf's tips.

The total amount of frit that needs to be put in the mold (fill weight) is 500 grams. For the leaf body you will combine 2 kinds of frit. In a small, lidded container, add 70 grams of light green transparent fine frit. Then add 130 grams of clear fine frit to total 200 grams. Cover the container and shake until well combined.

For the leaf tips and the body, create a mixture of 105 grams of dark green transparent fine frit and the remainder in clear fine frit to total of 300 grams.

Distribute the first mixture (the lighter of the two) into the leaf body leaving an empty one-half to one inch "trough" around the edge of the mold and the ridges. We will fill these areas with the darker of the two frit mixtures later. Note: Please visit the Colour de Verre website, www.colourdeverre.com/go/monstera, for videos showing how this leaf design is filled.

When all the lighter mixture has been distributed, continue to fill now using the darker of the two mixtures.

After all the frit is in the mold, use a soft artist's brush to make sure all the ridges are exposed and that there are no frit "bridges" crossing the ridges. Make sure to pay special attention to the ridge ends. This will lead to a cleaner casting with smoother edges. Before firing, use your fingers to make sure all the frit is relatively level. The frit will be slightly higher in the center of the body and tips.

Elevate the mold off the kiln shelf with three one inch kiln posts. This will allow the mold and its contents to be heated evenly. Fire the mold according to the casting schedule. The firing schedule's low target temperature and long hold will prevent the frit from becoming too liquid and balling up due to surface tension. This will keep the leaf thin and delicate.

Slumping Individual Leaves

Monstera Leaf castings can be slumped into beautiful bowls. One of our favorite slumping surfaces for the Monstera Leaf is the Bullseye Ball Surface Mold (#8734).

Wash the Monstera Leaf to remove any residual primer. Prime the slumping surface according to the manufacturer's instructions. Place the leaf on the slumping surface with the texture side up. Fire the piece. After the piece is slumped, three bump-ons (small, rubber feet) can be added to the leaf's bottom so it is stable when sitting on a table.

Creating Larger Pieces

Multiple leaves can be tack fused to one another and then shaped.

To tack fuse multiple pieces together, start by protecting the kiln shelf with a good shelf primer or ThinFire™ shelf paper. Overlap the pieces in a pleasing manner and fire according to the Multiple Leaf Tack Fusing Schedule.

Once the combined leaves have cooled, place them in a large, kiln-washed slumping form and fire according to the Combined Multiple Leaf Slumping Schedule.

Casting Schedule*

Segment	Ramp	Temperature	Hold
1	300ºF/165ºC	1315-1335ºF/712-723ºC	45-60 minutes
2	AFAP	900ºF/482ºC	60 minutes
3	100ºF/60ºC	600ºF/315ºC	Off. No venting

* Schedule for Bullseye Glass. AFAP means "As Fast As Possible", no venting.

Individual Leaf Slumping Schedule*

Segment	Ramp	Temperature	Hold
1	300ºF/165ºC	1215ºF/657ºC	10-15 minutes
2	AFAP	900ºF/482ºC	60 minutes
3	100ºF/60ºC	600ºF/315ºC	Off. No venting

* Schedule for Bullseye Glass. AFAP means "As Fast As Possible", no venting.

When tack fusing or slumping combined leaves, it is important to follow the slow ramps. The larger pieces will have a wide range of thicknesses and can crack if ramp speeds are too rapid.

Multiple Leaf Tack Fusing Schedule*

Segment	Ramp	Temperature	Hold
1	200ºF/110ºC †	300ºF/150ºC	10 minutes
2	200ºF/110ºC †	1000ºF/535ºC	30 minutes
3	200ºF/110ºC †	1200ºF/650ºC	45-60 minutes
4	100ºF/60ºC †	1265-1275ºF/683-688ºC	10 minutes
5	AFAP	900ºF/482ºC	90 minutes (180 minutes for 4 or more leaves)
6	50ºF/30ºC	800ºF/425ºC	0 minutes
7	100ºF/60ºC	600ºF/315ºC	0 minutes
8	200ºF/110ºC	100ºF/40ºC	Off. No venting

Combined Multiple Leaf Slumping Schedule*

Segment	Ramp	Temperature	Hold
1	80ºF/45ºC ††	300ºF/150ºC	30 minutes
2	80ºF/45ºC ††	1000ºF/535ºC	85 minutes
3	50ºF/30ºC	1215ºF/658ºC	5 minutes
4	AFAP	900ºF/482ºC	90 minutes (180 minutes for 4 or more leaves)
5	50ºF/30ºC	800ºF/425ºC	0 minutes
6	100ºF/60ºC	600ºF/315ºC	0 minutes
7	200ºF/110ºC	100ºF/40ºC	Off. No venting

* Schedule for Bullseye Glass. AFAP means “As Fast As Possible”, no venting.

† Schedules were developed for side element kilns. Slow ramps by50ºF/30ºC for top element kilns.

†† Slow ramps by30ºF/15ºC for top element kilns and more than three leaves.