



Spring Flowers



By Jeri Warhaftig

Photographs by Neil Fabricant

Difficulty level: Advanced beginner

These little garden beads provide an opportunity to practice some advanced beginner beadmaking skills. It is a forgiving bead since variations in the murrini and the colors or the application of the glass add to the quirkiness and originality and are NEVER wrong! At the torch, this tutorial encourages the beadmaker to notice where the glass is held relative to the location of the flame and where one rod of glass is relative to another. Different zones of heat are used for different steps. Encasing is done by passing the rod through the flame, murrini cane is heated using the hottest center of the flame and stringer is applied with the radiant heat adjacent to the flame.

Other heat lessons are taught by the need to work with a cool core (for the base bead or the murrini cane to be inserted in the optic mold) while heating the outer skin of the glass. All of these steps teach beadmakers about their torch and about the use of heat in making a glass bead. The end result will delight a child.



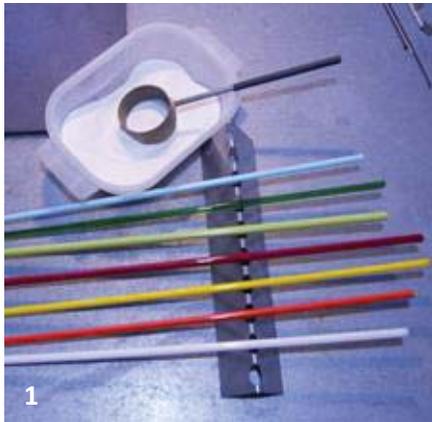
Let's make some Spring Flowers!



These beads are made of soft glass, 104 COE. The color selections are easily varied to what is on hand. The preparation of the bead's various components provides helpful practice in encasing glass rods as well as making and applying murrini.

Tools and Materials:

- P224 light sky blue
- P212 pea green
- T030 dark emerald green
- S438 dark purple red
- S408 medium lemon yellow
- S422 orange
- P204 white
- S444 light brown
- White Thompson Enamel (9000 series is compatible)
- Sifter (I like the JC style sifter from Arrow Springs but any will do)
- Optic Mold – ABR Imagery - Image 372
- Punties –Trimlett Twisters by Heather Trimlett
- Tungsten tweezer is handy (Arrow Springs)
- Cattwalk press – Focal Tumble Tile (with base)
- Disc nippers (to cut murrini slices)



Step 1: I like to pull everything together before I need it. This photo shows all of the glass rods I will need and the white enamel powder I'll be using. So let's start building the components for our beads!

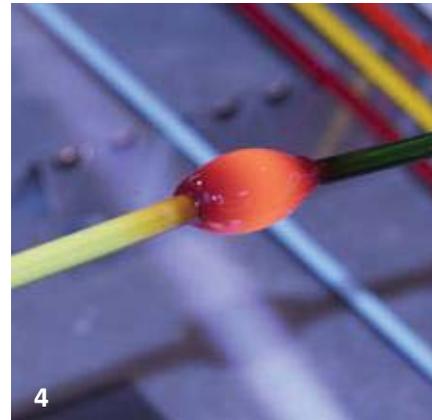
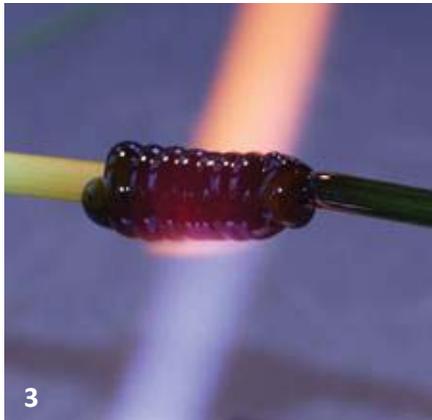
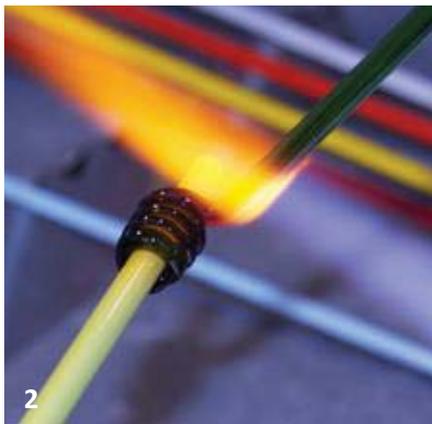
Creating the cased cane for stems, leaves, and grass:



Step 2: After gently warming about an inch at the end of the rod of pea green, encase the opaque rod with transparent dark emerald green. The pea green is held just under the flame, and the transparent rod is passed through the flame onto the pea green.

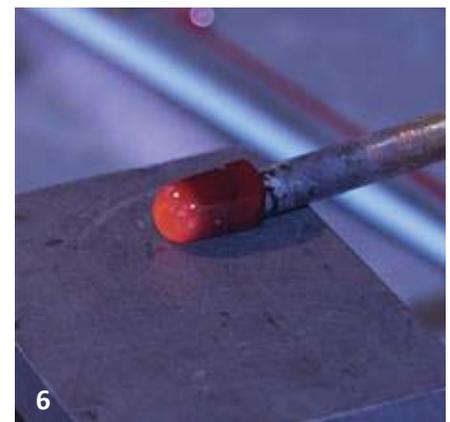
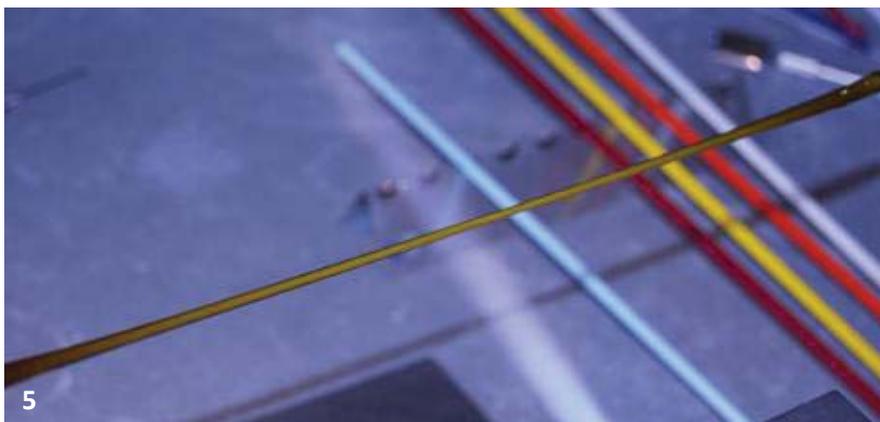
TIP: Try to hold the rods of glass at right angles to each other and place each transparent coil snugly up against the preceding one, so that there are no gaps that could trap air bubbles. After you have tried this method a few times, add in a slight clockwise roll to the encasing rod (the transparent one in this example). It will help you press one hot coil up against the preceding one.

Steps 3 - 5: After the inch of pea green is covered, move the encasing rod around so it is in line with the base rod. Heat the encased portion while rotating it both clockwise and counter-clockwise, so it doesn't droop. When it is hot throughout, rise above the flame, keep it on center by rocking to and fro, and pull it into a fat stringer, about 2mm to 3mm thick.



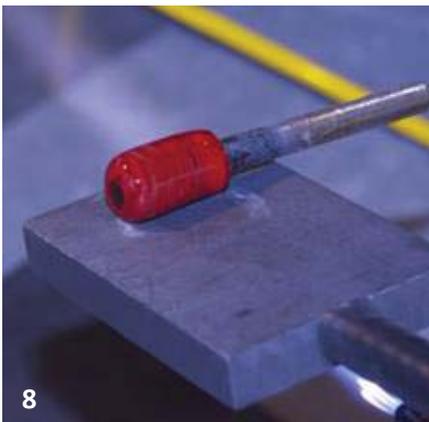
Creating the striped flower murrini cane:

Step 6: Prepare a 2mm stringer of Dark Purple Red and set aside, then attach about 3/4-inch to 1-inch of orange glass on the end of a heated steel punty, and roll it to the diameter of a rod of glass (about 4mm to 5mm).





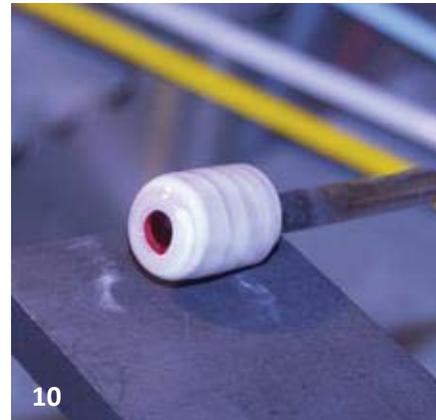
Steps 7 and 8: Using the same coiling method as above, encase the orange with yellow, disconnect the yellow rod, and roll it smooth using a marver. If it is too soupy to control, let the glass get stiff again, and then just reheat the surface so that you can smooth it on a marver.



Steps 9 and 10: Again using the same coiling technique, encase the orange/yellow cane with a layer of white. (If you have trouble controlling the white, which can be soupy in the flame, use one side of the flame, instead of passing the rod directly through the flame.) Then roll the white smooth.

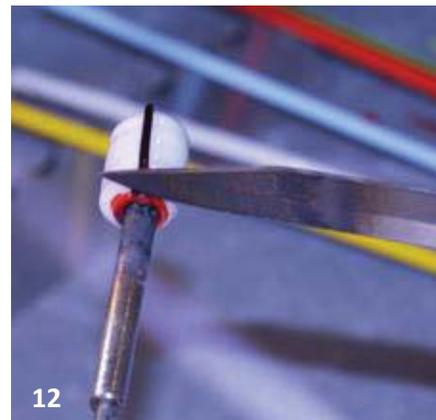
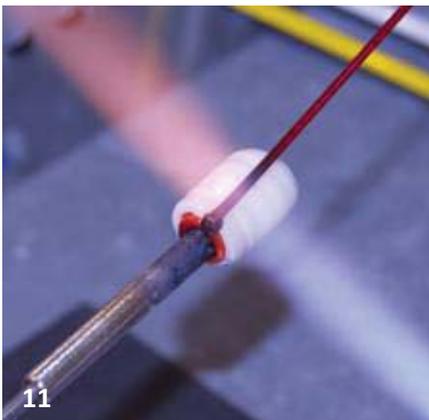
Step 11: Hold the encased cane just under the flame, heat the tip of the dark purple red stringer, and adhere it to the base of the cane, at the steel punty. Don't put the stringer in the flame, instead, bring the cane and the stringer up to the underside of the flame, and use the flame's radiant heat to soften the stringer.

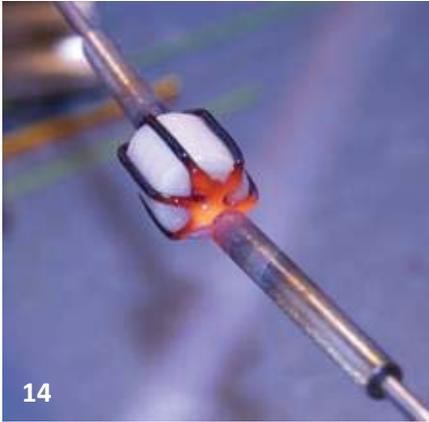
Step 12: Bring the stringer around to the front end of the cane, and burn it off. Then take a moment to heat the stringer thoroughly onto the surface of the cane (since at this point it is barely tacked down). Sometimes it is helpful to use a tool to attach the beginning and end of the stringer so that they are fully adhered.



Step 13: Continue adding stripes all the way around. I like to use an even number since it helps me space them, but for this murrini I used 7 stripes, and the uneven spacing doesn't matter!

Be sure to heat each stringer thoroughly after applying and to periodically re-heat the entire cane.





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Steps 14 and 15: Heat the unattached end of the cane by directing it into the flame, and then press another punty against that end. While the end is still molten, bend the new punty up, down, right and left, so that it picks up all the stripes, which helps pull them evenly.



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Steps 16 and 17: Heat the entire cane. To get even heat, be sure to direct the flame from one edge of the cane at one punty, to the other end at the other punty, and roll the cane in the flame as you would a hot gather of glass. The goal is to keep your hands steady and in one spot, so the cane doesn't get stretched too soon.

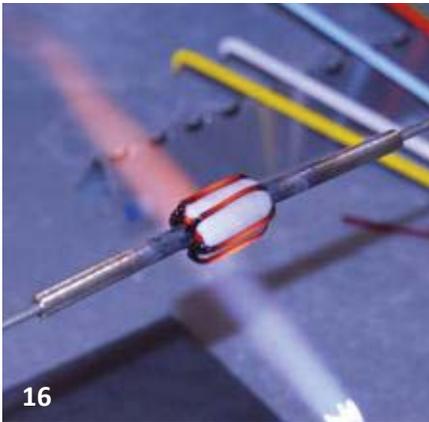
Step 18: When it is evenly heated, rise above the flame for about 3-5 seconds as the brightest glow diminishes and then pull slowly.

Step 19: The finished cane is about 4mm in diameter.

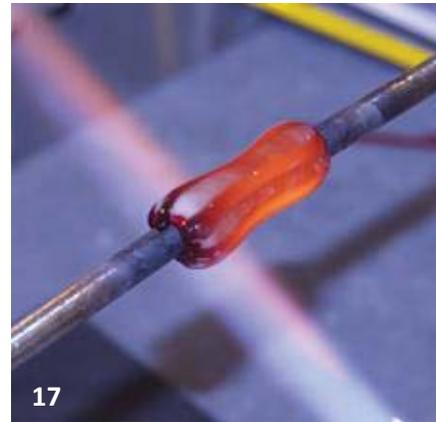


Creating the murrini cane for star center flower:

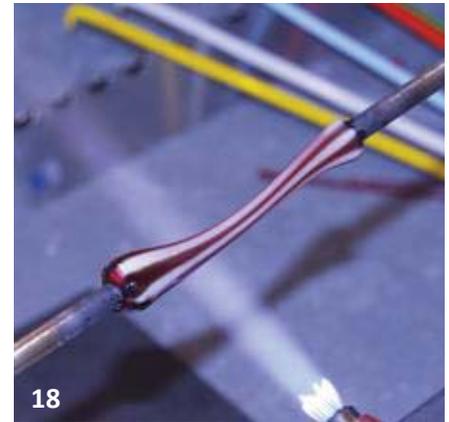
Steps 20 and 21: Prepare a 2mm stringer of the brown glass and set aside. The core of this murrini is yellow, about 6mm to 7mm in diameter and about 3/4-inch long, attached to one punty. Heat the cane to its core, then allow it to cool slightly. Return the cane to the hottest part of the flame, so that the surface gets hot. When it returns to a glow, but before it is floppy, plunge it into the optic mold (I used a five-pointed mold).



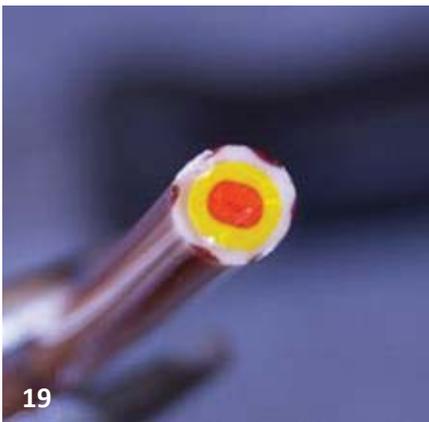
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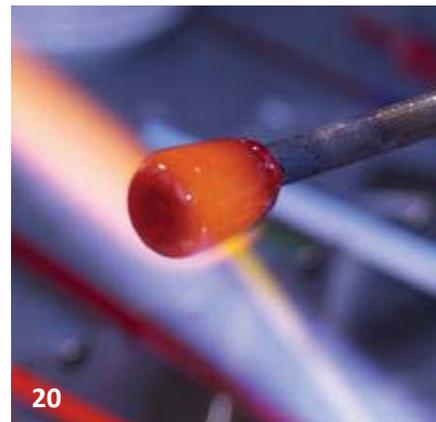
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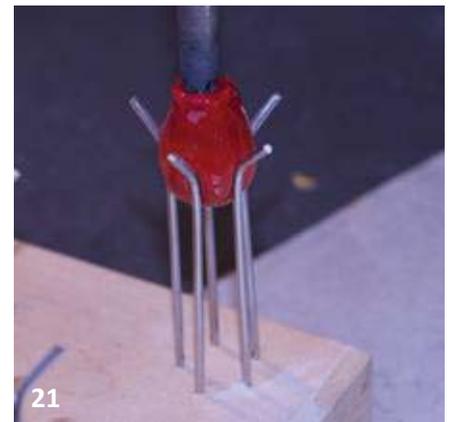
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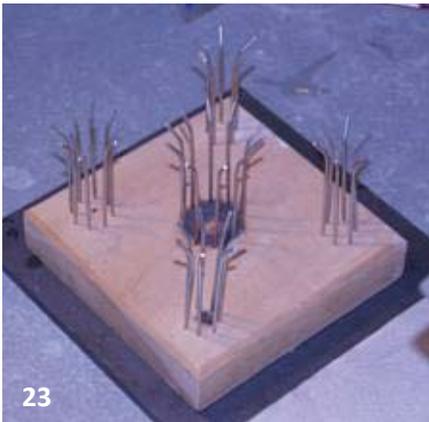


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Step 22: This is what the end of the gather looks like after it comes out of the mold.

Step 23: This photo shows the mold I use. It has five different options so you can make a variety of different canes with one mold.

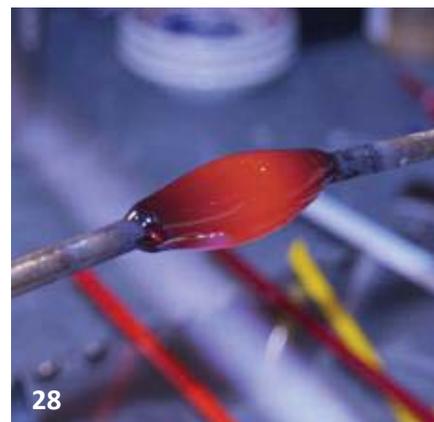
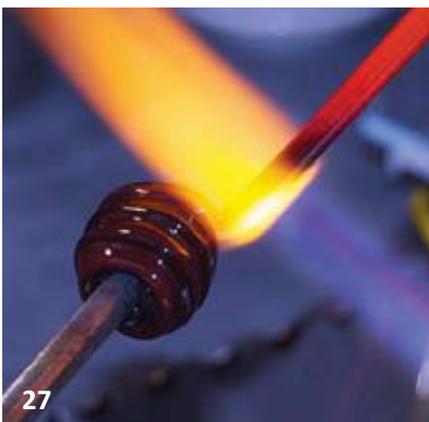


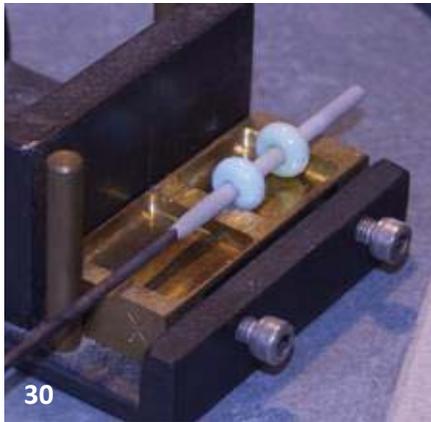
Step 24: Using the same method as in the earlier murrini, apply stripes of brown stringer to fill up the indentations in the cane, this could be one or two stripes of stringer, depending on how fat you made the stringer. Make sure the stringer is well attached at each end.

Steps 25 and 26: Next, encase the entire cane with the same brown color. To do this, create a large juicy gather at the end of the brown rod, raise the murrini cane above the flame and swipe the gather from one end of the cane to the other, then use the flame to help you disconnect the stiffening gather. Don't worry if your crevices distort a little, the softening adds to the look of the flower.

Step 27: After the cane is encased with brown, encase it with orange, using the coiling method.

Steps 28 and 29: Heat the entire cane, and pull it to about 4-5 mm. I like to pull this cane with both thick and thin parts, which gives me different diameter murrini slices.





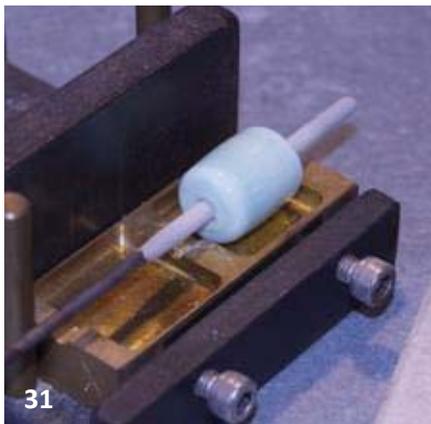
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Creating the base bead:

Nip 4 or five murrini chips from each cane about 2-3 mm thick. By varying the diameter of the murrini, and the thickness, the flower's appearance will change every time!

Step 30: Using the edge of the press as a width guide, lay down two spacer sized beads on a mandrel, just inside the edge of the cavity.

Steps 31 - 33: Add glass until you have a fat cylinder. I do this by eye. Heat and press.

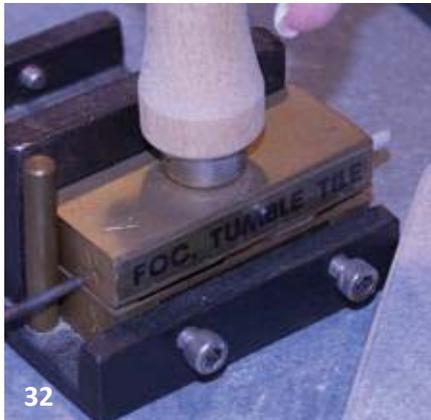


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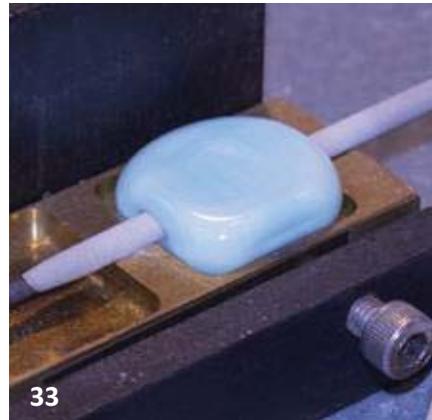
Step 34: Add a little more glass to square the shape after you heat and press it in order to fill the press.

Step 35: Use the top part of the mold as a marver to help you keep the square edges as you add glass to the shape.

Step 36: After the shape is achieved, warm one side of the bead to a dull glow. This will be the front side. Hold the bead over the enamel dish and sift a light covering of white enamel onto the bead. Then warm the bead gently to ensure the enamel is adhered. You will see the enamel create little balls of color on the surface.



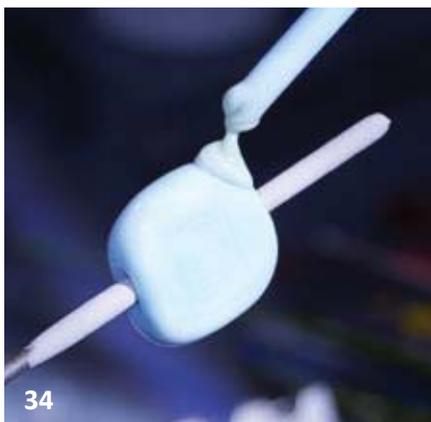
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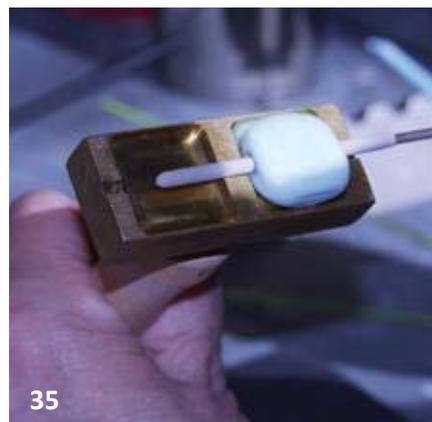
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This is not meant to make the entire surface white. It should just make it speckled.

The enamel is an easier surface on which to apply canes and murrini because it is a little stickier at a cooler temperature and it also adds visual interest to the bead. I usually add enamel to the other side too.



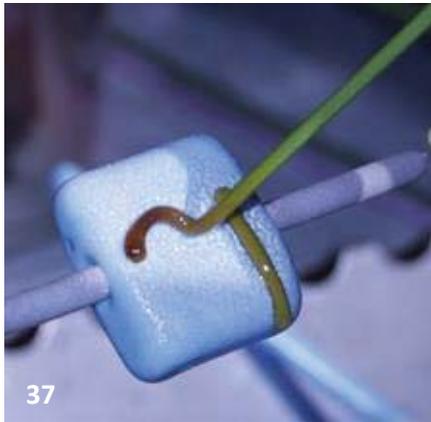
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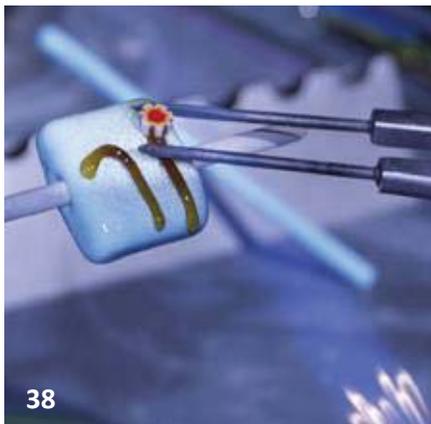


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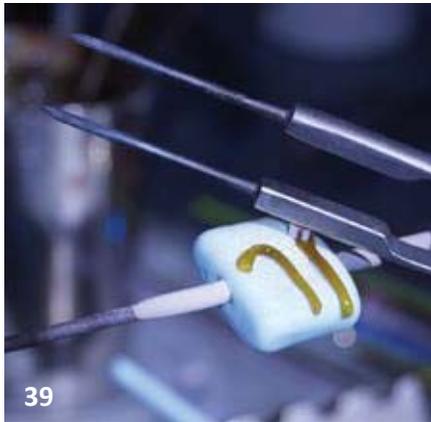
Decorating the bead:

Step 37: Lightly warm about 1 inch of the green cased-cane from step one above, then also heat the bead. Working in the radiant heat just adjacent to the flame, apply two stems on which the flower murrini will sit. I like to add a bend to one stem. After they are applied, add a little heat so that they are well adhered but still in relief.



Step 38: Pick up the first flower murrini. Tungsten tweezers are easiest since you can use them in the flame and they aren't likely to stick to the murrini.

Warm the murrini cautiously by starting in the cool part of the flame and gradually moving toward the heat. Keep the bead warm while you are doing this and try to preheat where you are going to place the murrini. Then put the murrini on the top of the stem.



Step 39: Press it onto the surface.

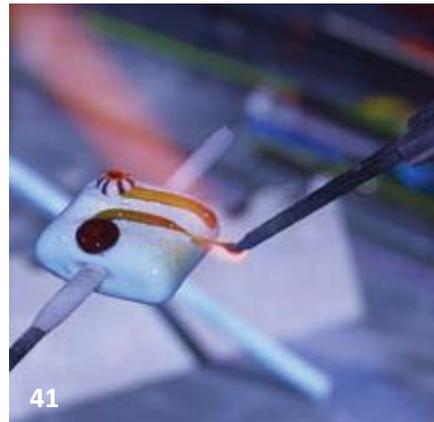
Step 40: Repeat the process to add the second murrini. The more heat you direct at the striped murrini, the more it will draw into the center, showing more stripes and less center.

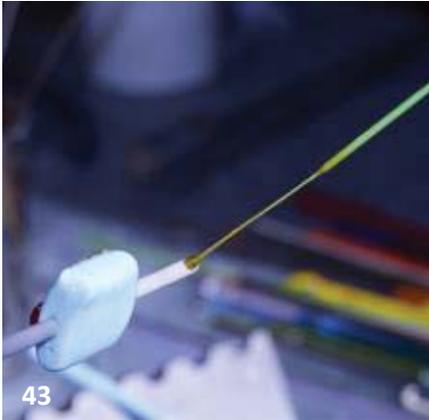
TIP: To keep either murrini from closing up, repeatedly heat and then quickly press the murrini until it is well adhered but still raised from the surface.



Step 41: Before adding leaves and grass, take a moment to clean up any little blobs that remain at the base of your stems, just heat the spot and grab the molten glass with pointy tweezers.

Step 42: To apply leaves, heat a small gather at the end of the green-cased cane and press the molten gather onto the bead. Spread the gather to one side while keeping it pressed against the bead surface, and then use the flame to disconnect the cane from the leaf.





Step 43: To create thinner pieces of stringer for grass, gather the end of the encased cane, and heat a spot on the bead release, away from the bead. Touch the gather to the mandrel and pull a little skinny stringer. It will easily pull away from the bead release, or you can flame cut it.

Step 44: Use that stringer to add little blades of grass to the bead. This is a good time to use a slightly different color green just to add variety.

And your spring flower is done! Give it a little heat and pop it into the kiln so you can make a lot more!



Jeri Warhaftig is a glass artist and teacher who works collaboratively with her husband, Neil Fabricant. Much of their work entails the surface alteration of glass through sandblasting, flat lapping and carving. Jeri is the author of *Glass Bead Workshop* and *Creating Glass Beads*, both published by Lark.

Jeri and Neil manufacture, teach, and sell Puffy Mandrels, the unique mandrel used for making hollow beads. All of Jeri's demo beads from her classes and her most recent book are donated to Beads of Courage. She was thrilled when her bead was chosen for the Beads in Space trip on the Space Shuttle Endeavor.

To learn more about Jeri's work and her puffy mandrels: www.jeribeads.com

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