

DIY – Clay Pot Caves

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I've found a quick easy DIY (Do It Yourself) way to create holes in clay pots. I know some folks can't stand the sight of these 'orange creations' in a show tank. However, these are a necessity in my fish room for providing a home or shelter in the form of a fabricated shell or cave. All of my different African shellies and catfish as well as all my loaches love these caves.

For spawning certain fish species these clay pot caves have proven to be indispensable. I've had South American fish spawn on the outside of a clay pot and had smaller fish spawn on the inside when the pot is laid on its side. Also, in order to artificially raise fry you can easily remove the clay pot and eggs when the parents won't care for or protect them.



What you'll need (before you begin):

1. A clay pot
2. A round file – single cut tooth pattern
3. An automatic center punch
4. A pair of safety glasses (of course!)
5. Five minutes or less (after you have all items at your finger tips)

Steps:

1. Place the tip of the automatic center punch on the clay pot where you'd like to start. I'm using the smallest clay pot I could find at a dollar store.
2. Holding the pot and punch firmly, push down on the back of the punch until it clicks. Take care of your eyes as the pot will blow shrapnel about quite fiercely, so get your safety glasses on! You may need to punch two to three times in the same spot. Once you have the first hole you're set to go.
3. Continue to punch through the pot making your way around the original hole. You can make the opening pretty much any shape or size.
4. Using the round file, finish shaping the cave opening and smooth out the perimeter to remove any sharp edges.

Notes:

- Think safety first! If you're not comfortable ask for assistance or ask someone to create one for you.
- You'll need to create an opening in the bottom part of the pot. I've not successfully made an opening at the top or the upper collar of a pot using this punch.
- You'll be able to fabricate one of these in less than three minutes once you've created a couple.
- I purchased my automatic center punch at Home Depot for \$20 – I'm sure they sell cheaper ones elsewhere.

If you have any questions or would like more details, please don't hesitate to send me an email.

All photos by Kevin Reimer

