

Welcome to the...

World's Greatest Hobby™

Getting started with model trains

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Scale Model Trains

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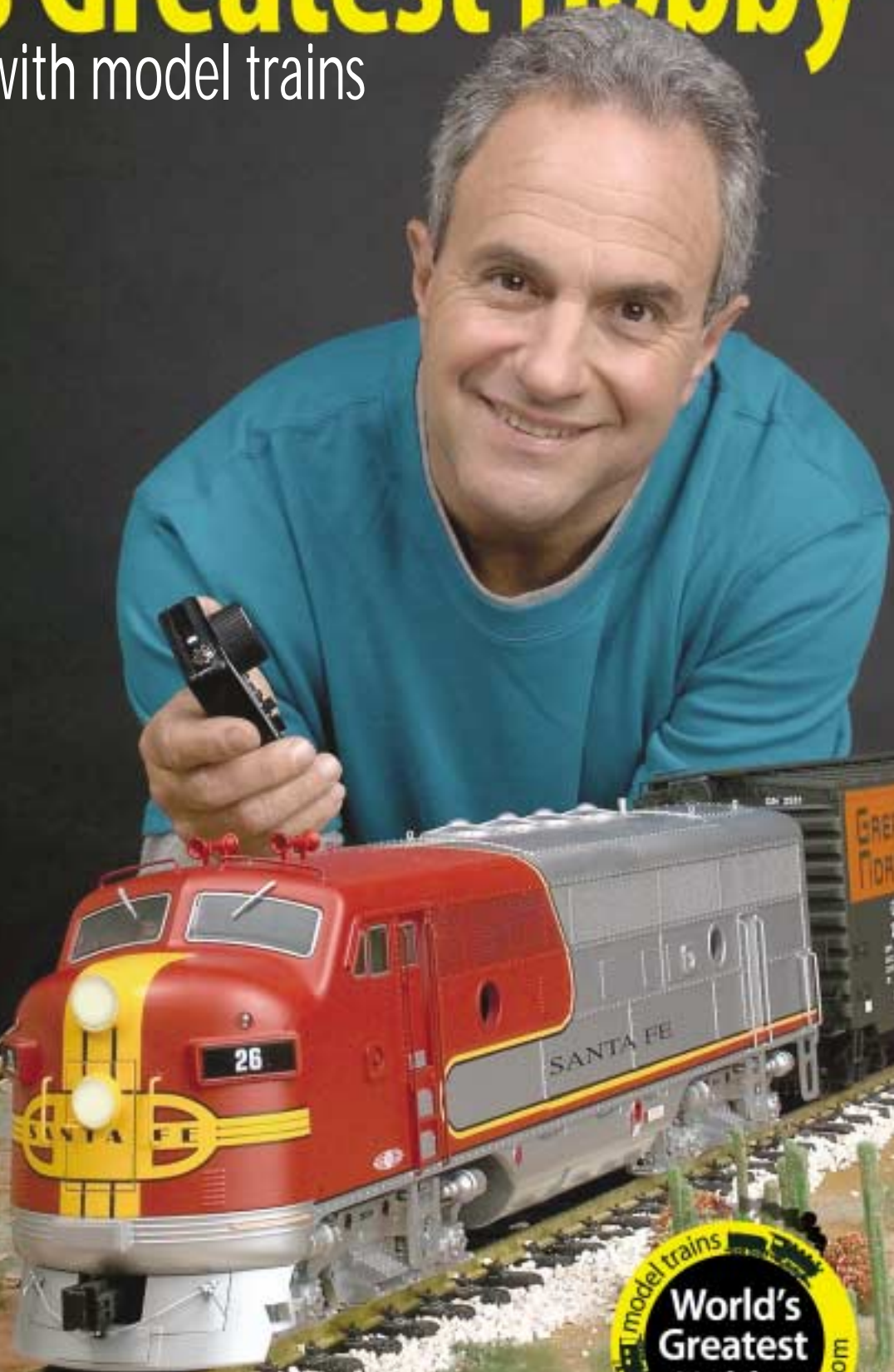
Toy Train Collecting

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Garden Railroading



Why it's "The World's Greatest Hobby"

SINCE YOU'VE PICKED UP THIS booklet, you already know we think model railroading is the greatest hobby in the world, but you may wonder exactly why we feel that way.

In a word the answer is "diversity." Unlike other leisure-time activities, model railroading doesn't have a right and wrong way to do things. You can participate in the way that works best for you. And, since you've customized the hobby to your tastes and needs, you're definitely going to have a good time.

Model railroading offers a range of fun and excitement. You'll get to work with your hands, work with your mind, and have a great time exercising your imagination as you express yourself through something uniquely your own.

Some of the enjoyable activities that model railroaders choose from include: carpentry, electronics, painting, model building, engineering, historical research, and many, many more.

But you don't have to do all, or even any, of these to be a model railroader. You can concentrate on those things you find most interesting now, secure in the knowledge that the others will still be there months and years from now patiently waiting if the mood should strike.

Different strokes for different folks

With such a broad hobby it should come as no surprise that there is more than one approach to model railroading. In fact, there are three major divisions of the hobby.

The largest segment of the hobby is scale model railroading. Scale model railroaders set out to duplicate the locomotives and cars used by real railroads. But it doesn't stop with the trains. The goal of most scale modelers is the creation of a miniature world – a layout – featuring not only the trains but a complete and precise replica of their surroundings.

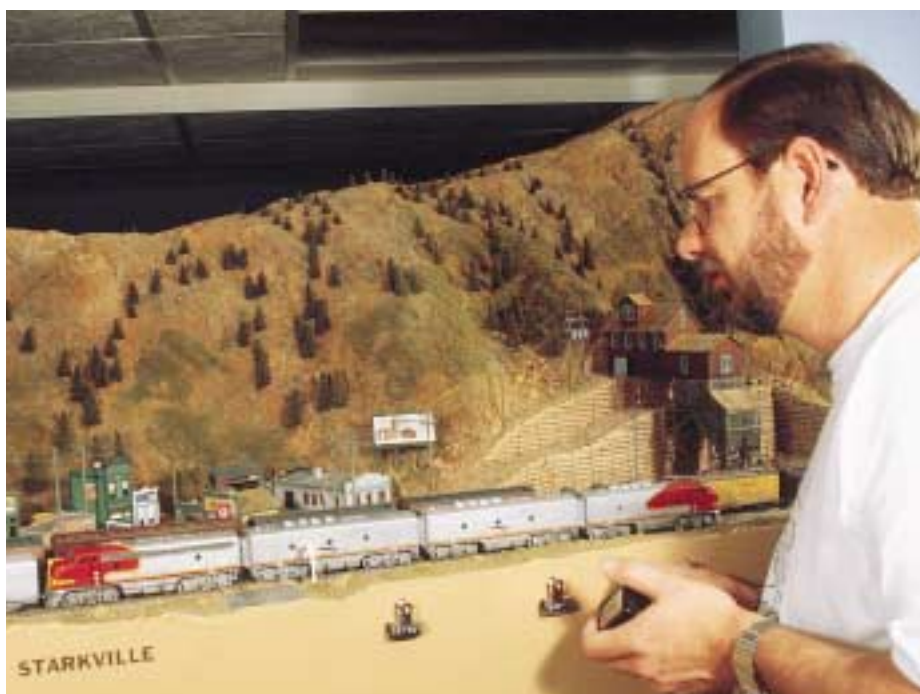
Then there are model railroaders who are primarily interested in what we call "toy trains." Perhaps you had a Lionel or American Flyer train set when you were younger, or remember that your father or older brother had a train set up under the Christmas tree every year.

Toy trains, which tend to be larger and less finely detailed than their scale counterparts, are better than ever. The traditional manufacturers have been joined by a legion of new companies offering a wide variety of exciting and colorful trains and accessories.

Garden railroaders are the third group. They enjoy creating outdoor settings for their trains. Those trains are bigger than traditional toy trains and are rugged

▼ If there's one thing that sets model railroading apart from other hobbies and crafts it's movement – you get to control the train as it travels through the setting you built. Nothing equals the thrill of running a train through a finished scene.

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enough to stand up to outdoor use in all weather. A garden railroad offers a unique opportunity to create a setting that combines nature and machines.

Fun for all ages

Many model railroaders find a hobby they intended to be just for them ends up including the rest of the family. More and more married couples actively participate in the hobby together. And kids of all ages have always been fascinated by model trains.

What better gift can you give your children or grandchildren than your time? In

this world of computers and instant gratification you'll be giving your time as you share with them a lifetime hobby that teaches patience and the joys of creating something with your hands.

The time you spend together building a railroad is true quality time – the kind of time yet another night staring at the television cannot possibly hope to match.

Movement sets it apart

The most appealing aspect of model trains of all sizes is the way they move. No other hobby combines so many interests

▲ Who can resist the big, colorful trains that make up a prewar layout? The vivid colors and fanciful accessories bring back wonderful memories of simpler times.

and levels of participation with a chance to watch things move under their own power through a world you created.

This booklet can only offer a glimpse into the exciting world of model trains. A lifetime of joys and challenges lies ahead. We hope you decide to join us on this magical journey.

All Aboard!



Size to Fit Any Interest or Space

YOU DON'T HAVE TO SPEND MUCH time with model trains to realize that they come in a number of different sizes. These differences are one of the things that make model trains so much fun because there are advantages to each size. Let's take a look at them so you can think about which size may be best for you.

Long ago, these sizes were arbitrary – whatever the craftsman making the miniature locomotive or car decided would look good. Now, of course, these sizes have precise meaning, which is why hobbyists usually choose one as their favorite.

We differentiate model and toy trains according to their scale and their gauge.

“Scale” relates to the comparative ratio of measurements between a miniature and its full-size prototype.

Dedicated scale modelers expect that every element of their models will have been designed to be in the same proportion. Collectors and operators of toy trains are less demanding and understand that



Large Scale

O Scale

S Scale

liberties may have been taken to create attractive playthings that fit on their track.

“Gauge,” the second aspect of a model’s size, refers to the space between the rails of the track. Precision and consistency are essential when dealing with gauge. Manufacturers must be able to guarantee that the wheels of all the models they advertise as being of that gauge do indeed fit on that size track so all trains can be used together.

The largest of them all

Toy trains have been built to a variety of gauges since the 19th century. The largest have been abandoned because those trains took up so much room and hobbyists preferred creating realistic layouts with structures and scenery in the space at their disposal.

The one exception to this trend is garden railroading. Big garden railway trains

running on Gauge 1 track operate outdoors (and sometimes indoors). This track has 45 mm between the rails.

Models are offered in a range of scales, all of which operate on Gauge 1 track. Collectively, they are called “large scale trains.” To give you an idea of the size of these trains, an actual 50-foot-long boxcar would measure 26½ inches in large scale.

The most popular gauge for toy trains is O (pronounced “oh”), with 1¼ inches between the rails. The rugged O and O-27 gauge (circles of track have diameters of 31 and 27 inches, respectively) trains produced by Lionel in the 1940s and ’50s helped introduce millions of children to this hobby. Many of those youngsters, now grown up, still enjoy trains of this size.

Hobbyists realize that the toys of their youth weren’t scale models. Most of today’s O gauge trains feature greater realism and can be described as scale, having been built to a ratio of 1:48. That means a 50-foot boxcar would be 12½ inches long in O.

Smaller and not quite as popular among toy train enthusiasts are S gauge trains. These locomotives and cars, many of which were once marketed under the American Flyer brand, run on track whose rails are spaced ⅞ inches apart. Today’s S gauge trains are almost all scale models, with nearly every feature being designed to a ratio of 1:64.

Small and very popular

Overshadowing the various toy trains are scale models built to be approximately half the size of O gauge models (that’s why we call them “HO” – pronounced “aitch-oh”).

These trains have a relationship of 1:87 to their full-size compatriots, and the track gauge measures 16.5 mm. Our 50-foot boxcar is now down to 7 inches in length.

HO trains are small enough to allow you to plan a satisfying layout in a compact space, say a 4 x 8-foot sheet of plywood, and still be large enough to show off lots of detail and be easy to work with and enjoy. As important, this segment of the hobby offers an enormous range of kits and ready-to-run models. No wonder HO railroading is the most popular of the scales, with more than two-thirds of modelers making it their top choice.

Smaller still but growing in popularity is N scale. Rolling stock and locomotives of this size are designed to be in a ratio of 1:160 to their prototypes. The track

SCALES AT A GLANCE

Z scale: Trains built to a ratio of 1:220. A 75-foot-long locomotive measures 4 inches long. The rails of the track are 6.5 mm apart.

N scale: Trains built to a ratio of 1:160. A 75-foot-long locomotive is 5½ inches long. The rails of the track are spaced 9 mm apart.

HO scale: Trains built to a ratio of 1:87. A 75-foot-long locomotive is 10½ inches long. The rails of the track are 16.5 mm apart.

S scale: Trains built to a ratio of 1:64. A 75-foot-long locomotive is 14 inches long. The rails of S gauge track are ⅞ inches apart.

O scale: Trains built to a ratio of 1:48. A 75-foot-long locomotive is 18¾ inches long. The rails of O gauge track are 1¼ inches apart.

G scale: These trains are built to a ratio of 1:22.5. A 75-foot-long locomotive is 40 inches long. G and other large scale trains run on Gauge 1 track with rails 45 mm apart.

gauge is 9 mm between the rails. Despite being so small, N scale works well for modelers who don’t have a lot of space at their disposal (apartment dwellers, for example) or who prefer to run their trains through truly expansive scenery.

Even smaller are Z scale trains. Their proportion to the prototype is 1:220, and they run on track whose rails are 6.5 mm apart. How tiny is this scale? Well, that 50-foot boxcar measures just 2¾ inches in Z.

Which size is best?

You can see that no one scale is right for everyone. Look at several of them and consider how much space you have to devote to your trains, whether you want to run longer trains amid towering scenery, and how much you can spend on your hobby. Talk with experienced modelers and learn what they like. And don’t worry if you change your mind and later decide that a different scale is a better choice for you.

The important thing is to get started and move ahead with an open mind. Try building models in one scale and then see how you feel. Maybe you’ll want to explore something larger or smaller. Soon you’ll hit upon a scale that’s right for you. Then prepare to have a blast!



HO Scale

N Scale

Creating a World in Miniature

WHAT IS IT ABOUT SCALE MODEL railroading that makes it such a great hobby? At the heart of it all is our fascination with miniatures of all kinds. We find a thrill in studying tiny duplicates of real objects. Even though a precision model of a locomotive is a work of art in its own right, placing that same model in the context of a complete setting makes it come to life. There are many ways to enjoy scale model railroading, but building a complete model railroad that evokes a sense of time and place is the heart of this hobby.

Many paths

Many scale model railroaders recall their childhood when a train set allowed them to exercise control over an imaginary world. As adults, they find they have the means and skills to bring that world to life.

This is often combined with an interest in real railroads – called the “prototype.”

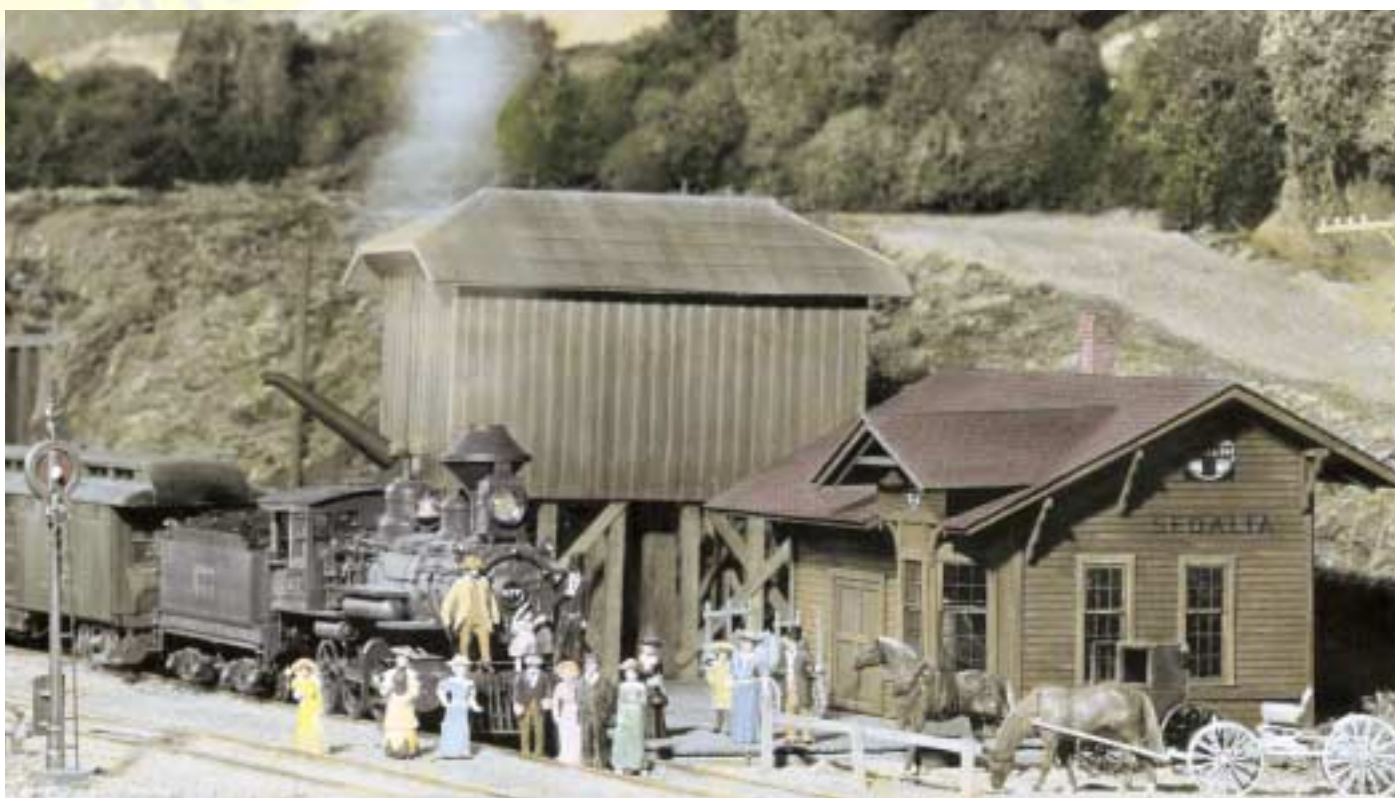
Although there is a tremendous variety of fine-running, beautifully detailed locomotives, cars, buildings, and accessories available to scale model railroaders, this is still a very personal and creative hobby.

You will put something of yourself – your unique stamp – onto everything you do. There are no minimum requirements for entry, and all levels of participation, skills, and interest are welcome to join in the fun of model railroading, meaning there is a place for you.

▼ Some model railroaders look upon the hobby as a time machine that lets them visit a distant time and place. This 1890s HO scale scene was photographed in black and white then colorized to look like an old postcard.



▲ Narrow gauge railroads blend the mystique of the old West with spectacular scenery and the sights and sounds of the “iron horse.”





Fun in all kinds of ways

So who are these scale model railroaders? They come from all walks of life and enjoy the hobby in different ways. There are even model railroaders who rarely, if ever, build a model. They enjoy reading about the hobby and dream about the model railroad they're going to build "someday." We call these enthusiasts "armchair modelers."

Other hobbyists build detailed models of locomotives or cars. Some focus on building structures and scenery. For them, model railroading is a form of sculpture. They may even look upon the trains as a secondary consideration – providing movement in an otherwise static world.

Then there are those who focus on mechanical and electrical things to the point that they never build scenery.

But the majority of model railroaders find the greatest enjoyment in combining all these approaches, tailoring the hobby to suit their current whims and interests.

A virtual time machine

Have you ever wanted to visit an earlier time or different place? Well, you can use model railroading as your ticket – back to the days of mighty steam locomotives, streamlined passenger trains, or the old West. Or you can choose the excitement of railroading today.

While some model railroaders build layouts that are precise models of real places, just as many modelers enjoy creating a world that "might have been," complete with plausible, "free-lance" railroads.

An evolving hobby

Despite the variety of commercial products available, model railroading is a creative endeavor. Some even consider it art.

▲ The small size of N scale trains is a great way to capture big, open spaces, like this view of one of the Southern Pacific's famed *Daylight* trains racing along the Pacific Coast.

If two model railroaders started with identical track plans, their finished layouts would look nothing like one another. One might create a whimsical desert setting, while the other could end up with a busy urban scene.

The track plan is merely a blueprint, a diagram showing where the pieces should go. It provides a starting place but it takes the scenery and settings, and the creativity of the modeler, to breathe life into the layout and make it unique.

Starting small

Most model railroaders start small – a 4x8-foot layout is the most common size, at least in HO scale (N scale starter layouts can be even smaller). They add a few buildings, some scenery, and additional cars and locomotives as the mood strikes.

For some modelers a small layout provides enough fun for many years of enjoyment. More often, though, the empire builder in all of us takes over and soon plans are afoot to fill the attic, basement, garage, or spare room.

No matter how big or small no layout is ever really finished. There's always some new technique to try and something to improve or change. A model railroad is a form of evolutionary art that changes and grows with its creator.

Scale model railroading is a great release from the pressures of everyday life. We learn more about our world, exercise those creative energies, and have fun in the process. What more could you ask? 🚂

SCALE MODELING TERMS

Benchwork: A sturdy, level frame which is the foundation of a model railroad layout. Wood is the most popular material for benchwork.

Free-lance: Modeling that doesn't closely follow an actual railroad.

Kitbashing: Taking one or more model railroad kits and changing the construction process or combining parts from different kits to create a unique model.

Motive power: Another word for locomotives, the pieces of rolling stock that do the work of moving trains down the road.

Narrow gauge: Rails spaced closer together than the standard gauge of 4'-8½". Three-foot was the most common narrow gauge in the U. S.

Operation: Running trains on a layout in a way that simulates real railroad activity.

Power pack: Electrical device used to supply current to a model train and control its speed and direction.

Rolling stock: Any piece of railroad equipment that rides on the rails.

Scratchbuilding: Making a model from raw materials and parts, not using kits.

Sectional track: Prefabricated interlocking track sections that can be easily assembled and disassembled.

Weathering: Making new models look more realistic by simulating age and exposure to the elements.

The Colorful World of Toy Trains

INTERESTED IN TOY TRAINS? GREAT! You'll be a part of a legacy of colorful, imaginative replicas that stretches back more than 150 years and has brought untold joy to millions of children and adults all around the world. No matter whether you collect vintage metal or plastic models or operate the latest locomotives equipped with state-of-the-art sound systems and cordless remote control, you'll discover that toy trains open up a world of pleasure.

The first miniature trains appeared not long after the first full-size ones hit the rails in the middle decades of the 19th century. These colorful, heavy replicas delighted the children who pulled them along floors and pushed them over crude track. The craftsmen making

these trains took liberties with their appearance so their playthings provided more fun. Ever since, although the materials used for toy trains have changed and the models have taken on greater realism, kids and adults have enjoyed playing with them.

A glorious past

The pleasures of toy trains have only increased over the ensuing decades until, in the 21st century, manufacturers are producing models that rank with the finest ever made. To be sure, some collectors insist that European trains from the late 19th and early 20th centuries are the best. Others prefer the large "Standard" or "Wide" gauge locomotives and cars made in the 1920s and '30s by such American firms as Lionel, Ives, and American

Flyer. The beauty and elegance of these trains, they say, have never been surpassed.

Of course, for many enthusiasts, the decades after World War II represent the golden age. In the 1940s and '50s, Lionel cataloged an incredible array of sets, engines, operating cars, and accessories. Families bought a Lionel O gauge train or a slightly smaller S gauge set in the American Flyer line because it seemed to be the perfect gift for their children. Millions of kids learned the joys and fun of running a rail empire in miniature.





▲ Collectors like to display their old or contemporary models. The colorful prewar and postwar streamliners shown here have a nostalgic appeal that touches many hobbyists.

These kids didn't mind that their playthings were not scale replicas of the trains running on the Santa Fe or Union Pacific. They were too busy transporting tiny passengers and loading what purported to be coal or lumber. So what if the locomotives were short and the rolling stock squat. These were toys. No one expected them to be the ultimate in realism.

Many of these postwar kids grew up to become collectors and operators of toy trains. Their relaxed attitude about the appearance of vintage models and their enjoyment of the innovative movement remain undiminished. The ranks of hobbyists continue to swell as nostalgia for the trains of their youth and interest in both newer and older pieces inspires newcomers to enter the hobby.

An exciting future

In addition to collecting toy trains many enthusiasts operate them, regardless of whether those models were made half a century ago or last year. In fact, the interest in current models made by such companies as K-Line, Lionel, MTH Electric Trains, and Williams is booming. That's because this current crop of locomotives, rolling stock, and accessories surpasses in performance and detail anything produced in the past.

▼ Many toy train enthusiasts enjoy operating vintage models, such as these Lionel O gauge trains, either in toy-like or realistic settings. They often fill their layouts with signals, bridges, freight loaders, and houses.



Increasing numbers of people attracted to these new trains want to build layouts for them. Some of the folks we call "operators" prefer O gauge railroads with a definite toy-like look to them. Others follow the lead of scale modelers and insist on realistic structures, proportional accessories, and stunning scenery. Their layouts, known in the hobby as "hi-rail," combine the best elements of toy and scale railroading.

TOY TRAIN TERMS

Collector: Toy train enthusiast who acquires vintage or contemporary models to display or study.

Modern-era: Descriptive term for toy trains manufactured since 1970.

Operator: Toy train enthusiast who acquires vintage or contemporary models to repair, restore, or run on track.

Postwar: Descriptive term for toy trains manufactured between 1945 and 1969.

Prewar: Descriptive term for toy trains made in 1942 or earlier in the 20th century.

Reproduction: Toy train patterned after an antique that is long out of production.

Restoration: Toy train returned to its original operating condition and appearance by repair and repainting.

The toy train side of the world's greatest hobby remains exceptionally vibrant and offers untold enjoyment to individuals of all ages. So, whether you decide to collect and display models from the past or operate the outstanding new trains of today, you'll find great satisfaction in this hobby. You're sure to develop new skills and make new friends, all the while having the time of your life. Welcome aboard!

Getting Your Feet Wet

YOU MAY FIND YOURSELF LOOKING at photographs of finished model railroads and thinking, "I could never build anything like that." But really you can!

Building a model railroad no matter if it's for scale models or toy trains takes time, but the most important skill needed is the willingness to jump in and try it. Years ago you had to be part artist and part machinist to build a model railroad. But thanks to the easy-to-use products available today anyone can build a model railroad.

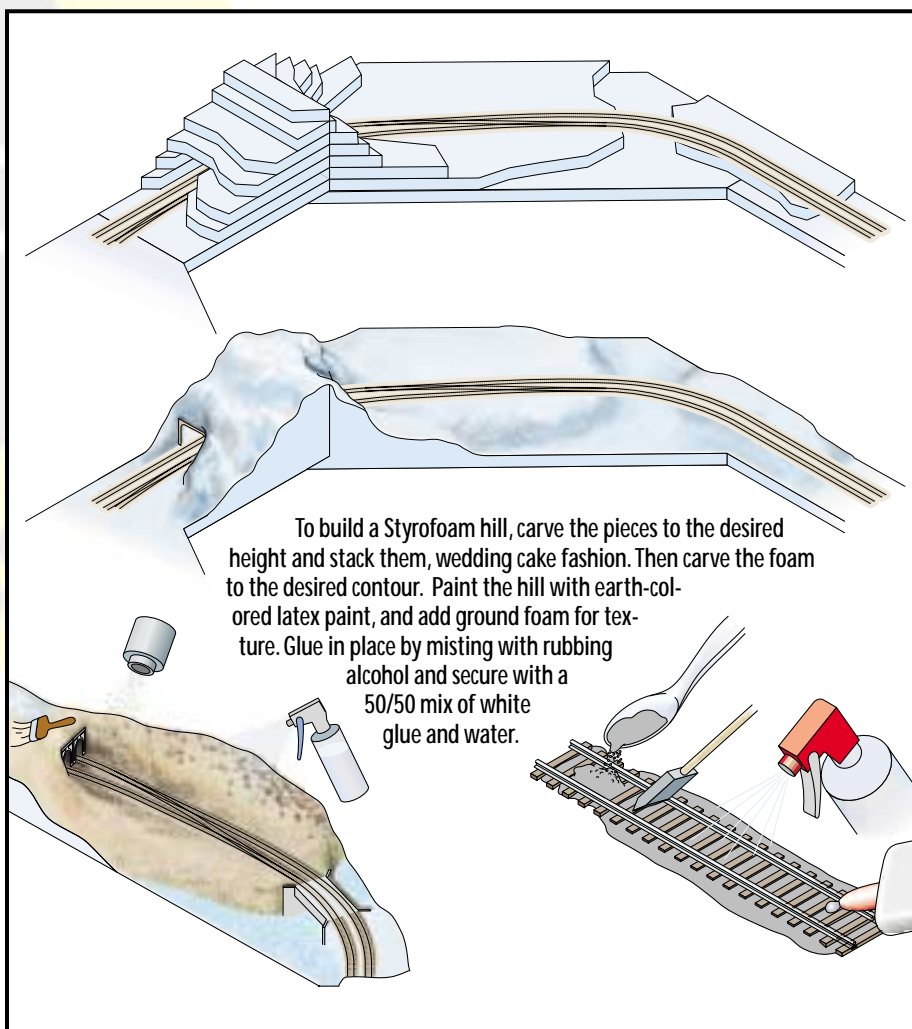
You only need a few basic tools to construct a layout, and it's very likely you have most of them already. Although wood is still commonly used to build layouts, thanks to advances in home-building technology layouts made from synthetic material such as Styrofoam are becoming common. This provides an ideal solution for apartment or condominium dwellers who don't own woodworking tools or have to watch the noise. You can even buy a basic Styrofoam layout in a box from Woodland

Scenics, so you can build a model railroad without setting foot in a lumberyard.

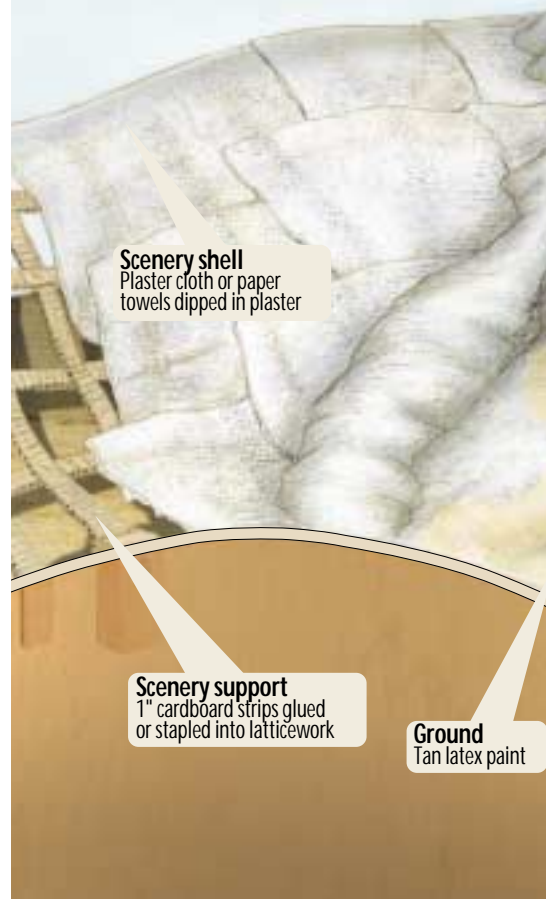
Beyond a firm foundation

And the ease of layout construction doesn't end with the benchwork. Ready-to-run locomotives and cars, and track that comes with roadbed and ballast, are two of the innovations that are making layout building accessible to more people.

Wiring has always been a challenge to model railroaders but command control,




Scenery Techniques



especially Digital Command Control (DCC) – where each locomotive can be controlled independently of all others – is becoming more widespread.

Buildings are another example of how far the model railroad hobby has come. You can buy easy-to-assemble kits for everything from a fishing shanty to a huge steel or paper mill.

For years some modelers felt building scenery was too hard. But no more. Anyone can get superb results with commercial products. Grass is represented with foam rubber that's been ground up and dyed. You can carve your own rocks from plaster, or cast them in latex rubber molds that you can purchase or make yourself.

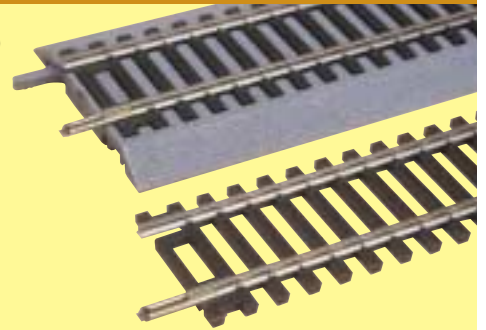
This is still a creative hobby, but these innovative and easy-to-use products mean you don't have to be an artist to be a model railroader. Instead of figuring out how to do something, you can use the products made specifically for model railroading. Then use the time and effort you save to make your railroad truly unique. 

SECTIONAL TRACK

SECTIONAL TRACK CONSISTS OF CURVED and straight sections that can be joined together and then be easily taken apart and reassembled to create different track arrangements. Sectional track is what most model railroaders start with simply because it's what you'll find in many train sets.

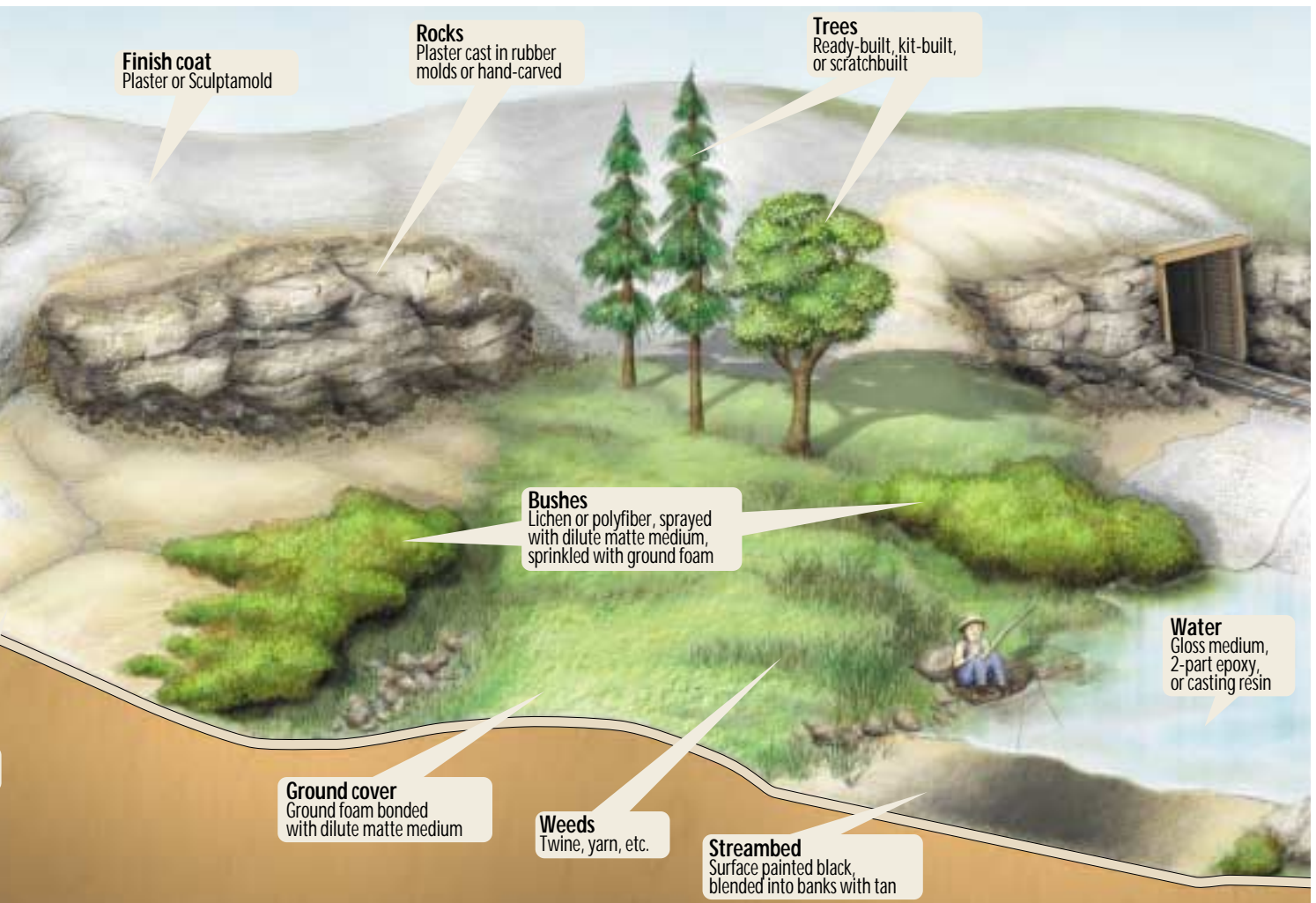
Straight, curved, and turnout (switch) sections are available in all the popular scales. Shorter fitter sections, such as half curves, 1/4 straights, and the like needed to complete any plan more complex than a basic oval or simple circle are also available. Or you can cut a section of track to fit.

Some sectional track features plastic roadbed sections (the gray section beneath the track shown here). These look like real railroad ballast and feature interlocking tabs that help hold the track sections securely in place.



When assembling sectional track do not force the pieces together. Make sure both ends of the rails are lined up with the metal rail joiners and fit snugly with little or no gap. If your track has molded roadbed make the tabs lock securely between sections.

Although the standard geometry of sectional track somewhat limits layout design options, for ease and simplicity it can't be beat!



Railroading in the Great Outdoors

DO YOU ENJOY GARDENING? GREAT! You can combine that interest with large trains. It's called garden railroading. The lush greens of the trees, graceful curves of the track, and the persistent rumbling of a train work in harmony to form a slice of everyday life in miniature.

The difference between a traditional indoor model railroad and a garden railway is the difference between realism and reality. An indoor layout creates the illusion of reality by using artificial materials – mountains are made of plaster or foam, and rivers

are created using plastic resin. A garden railroad brings everything outdoors. Mountains are made of dirt, rivers are real water, and rocks are actual stone.

While this hobby may be new to you, it has been around for more than a century, primarily in Great Britain. In the United States, garden railroading achieved some popularity in the 1920s and '30s, but nearly died out by the end of World War II. Its resurgence was due in large part to the advent of colorful LGB trains from Germany in the late 1960s. As the company introduced

more American-style trains, people took notice and garden railways began to spring up all over the country. Since then, numerous other manufacturers of large-scale trains have entered the market.

Fun in the sun

Part of the fun in this hobby is following the practices of a full-size railroad and

▼ A garden railroad is a fascinating addition to any landscape and is a great way for the whole family to enjoy model railroading.



GARDEN RR TERMS

Battery power: Onboard batteries that provide power to a locomotive that's controlled by radio.

Flextrack: Longer sections of track that are flexible enough to bend to any desired curvature.

Gauge 1: 45 mm (just over 1¾") between the rails. Although a garden railroad can be built to run on any gauge of track, gauge 1 is most commonly used.

Groundcovers: Low-growing plants that spread to cover the ground, useful for filling in areas and preventing weeds and erosion.

Large scale: A generic term that includes all trains running on gauge 1 track.

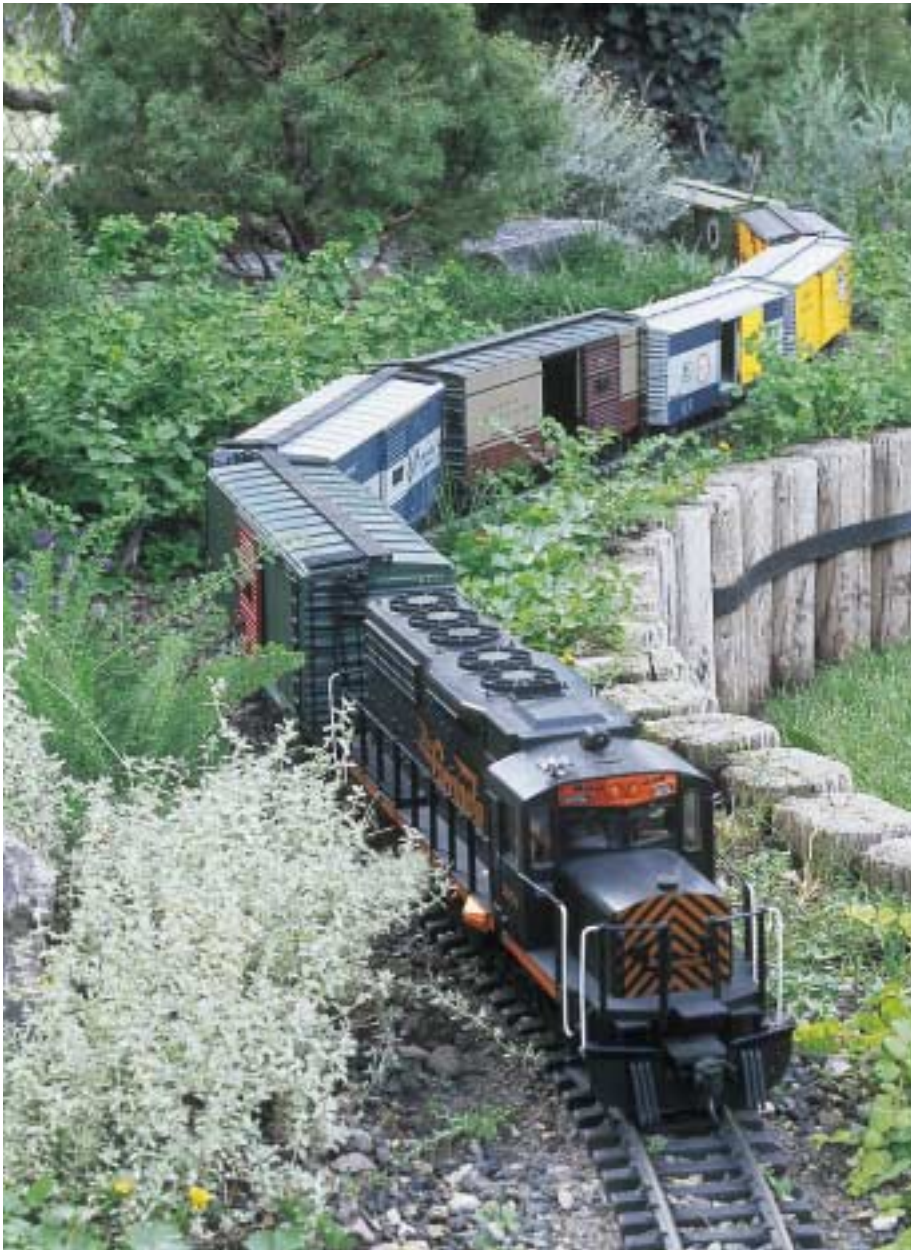
Live steam: Miniature locomotives that run on steam, just like real locomotives. They have fire in their fire-boxes and boil water in their boilers.

Railway garden: Garden planted with dwarf and miniature plants to be in scale with the trains.

Roadbed: The material that supports the track and provides drainage. In garden railways, this is most often ballast (crushed rock and rock dust).

Sectional track: Commercially made track that comes in predetermined straight lengths and curved sections with a set radius.

Water feature: A pond, river, or waterfall on your railway, often incorporating fish and water plants.



▲ Notice how the train looks natural in its surroundings. Garden railroaders are adept at using the dwarf varieties of plants to accent the trains without dominating them.

working with the landscape. You need to consider the topography of your land and any existing gardens, trees, or other obstacles when planning your railway. If your backyard is sloped, you might build wood or metal trestles or raise the line on earthworks and use timber or stone retaining walls. The choice is strictly up to you. After all, it's your railroad!

You may think that garden railroading is a hobby strictly for gardeners or people who like trains. The truth is that anyone


who loves being outdoors can be a garden railroader. Your railroad can reflect those interests. If you enjoy electrical challenges, for instance, you can build a line with a complex track plan. If you have some carpentry skills, you can make buildings from scratch and model a city. And if you like to work with machines, try building and operating a live-steam locomotive.

The railway garden

The "garden" part of garden railroading is another fascinating aspect of this hobby. Many nurseries and specialty plant growers sell dwarf and miniature versions of all types of plants. These specimens are ideal for garden railroads since they fit with

the scale of the trains by having smaller features and a slower growth rate than their full-size cousins.

Don't think you have a green thumb? Many beautiful railway gardens have been created by people who claim not to be gardeners. There are plenty of resources available to help get you started. You can start by visiting a local nursery or landscaping center. Employees there will be happy to answer your questions.

Garden railroading is a deep and exceptionally rewarding hobby anyone can enjoy. It might be the best hobby for your family, because increasing numbers of women, children, and families are enjoying it together. Give it a try. 

Step into the World's Greatest Hobby

OKAY, YOU'RE ALL SET TO BECOME a model railroader. You're convinced that this is the world's greatest hobby, one that's just right for you. What do you do now?

Diving into a new hobby means you're bound to have lots of questions. You also face many choices. We can't answer all your concerns in this booklet, which is why you'll find a listing of helpful resources on the next two pages to get you started. But first we'd like to offer you a few tips.

ONE: Read. Read everything you can get your hands on. It's the quickest way to get up to speed and help you determine where you'd like to focus.

If you're interested in real (prototype) railroads, there are thousands of books, many of which cover one railroad in great

detail. For toy train collectors and operators, there are books outlining the various types and styles of toy trains produced over the years. And we've never met a garden railroader who didn't have at least a few gardening books and magazines along with all those railroad publications.



▶ You can run your trains on the floor but you'll be happier if they're on a dedicated table like this one. Model railroad benchwork doesn't have to be fancy, but it should be sturdy.

TWO: Make it a family activity. Turn off the television and spend the time working on the railroad with the rest of the family. Be sure to keep the activity age-appropriate for children.

THREE: Visit a hobby shop. There are over 2000 hobby shops around the country that sell model railroad products. Check your Yellow Pages for shops in your area. These are great places to shop and learn. Many hobby shops offer workshops for beginners. Go to greatesthobby.com and click on Assistance Directory to find a shop in your area.

FOUR: Attend a show. There's nothing like a day at a model train show to get those creative juices flowing. You'll get a chance to see layouts in every possible scale and gauge. The people manning the booths or operating the layouts at these shows are usually hobbyists themselves. They'll be more than willing to answer your questions. Check your local paper, the listings in *Model Railroader* magazine, or visit www.greatesthobby.com to find a show near you.

FIVE: Get it off the floor! Carpet fuzz can damage locomotive mechanisms. And it's easy to kick a train that's on the floor.

▼ This basic assortment of tools is all you need to get started in model railroading. Over time your collection of tools will grow and change with your interests.



Dirt and dust aren't as much of a problem as they used to be since most track included with today's train sets features pre-molded roadbed that holds the sections securely together and prevents dirt from reaching moving parts.

Still, the best solution is a dedicated place for your model railroad. Your trains will be safer and operate better if they're elevated off the floor on a table. The trains will be easier to see, and building and running the railroad will be a whole lot easier on your back and knees!

SIX: Spruce up the surroundings. Consider installing additional lighting, finish the walls and ceiling (to cut down on dust and dirt, any model railroad's biggest enemies) and install nice shelves for those

treasures that aren't on the layout. You'll enjoy spending more time with your hobby if you have a pleasant, well-lit space.


SEVEN: Start small. Don't be intimidated by huge layouts that appear in the magazines. Be inspired by them as you enjoy dreaming about your "someday" empire, but start off with something less ambitious.

The reason is simple – a small layout or module can be completed fairly soon, so you can explore every aspect of the hobby while your enthusiasm is still fully charged.

EIGHT: Start with a published track plan. You'll be much better off if you follow a track plan from a book or magazine. You can assemble the track confident that the layout will actually fit.

As you run trains on your first layout, you'll discover more and more about your interests. Maybe you like a lot of switching, or perhaps you prefer to watch the train rolling through the scenery. Some modelers like the challenge of running lots of trains at once. Eventually you can tailor that original layout to meet your needs.

NINE: Get a basic tool kit. You need only a few tools to be a model railroader. A hobby knife, screwdrivers, needle files, needle-nose pliers, tweezers, and a scale rule will get you off to a good start.

TEN: Have fun. Lots of fun. The only true measure of success of any hobby is how much you enjoy participating in it. Model railroaders all over the world are having a blast doing what they love. Here's your chance to do the same. 

Where Do I Go Next?

YOU'VE MADE THE DECISION THAT model railroading would make an ideal hobby. Now what? To help you take the next step we've compiled this list of resources. It's by no means all-inclusive but will provide a good starting point. You'll find information on train shows, publications, videos, and Web sites with the appropriate contact information.

Hobby Shops

To find a shop in your area, check your Yellow Pages or check the hobby shop directories at the back of most model railroad magazines. To locate a shop that offers workshops for beginners, go to greatesthobby.com.

Train Shows

There are dozens of shows held throughout the year all across the country. Check the Coming Events section of *Model Railroader* magazine for details. There are several sponsors of large shows held in different cities. Contact them directly for show times and locations:

Greenberg Shows, 1393 Progress Way, Suite 907, Eldersburg, MD 21784, 410-795-7447, greenbergshows.com

Great American Train Show, P. O. Box 1745, Lombard, IL 60148, 630-834-0652, gats.com

National Train Show, (an annual show sponsored by the National Model Railroad Association), 4121 Cromwell Rd., Chattanooga, TN 37421, nmra.org

Scale Model Railroading

Publications

Model Railroader, P. O. Box 1612, Waukesha WI 53187-1612, 800-533-6644, modelrailroader.com

Canadian Railway Modeller, Box 99, Station F, 355 Henderson Hwy., Winnipeg, MB Canada R2L 2A5, 201-669-0168, cdnrwymod.com

Mainline Modeler, 13110 Beverly Park Rd., Mukilteo, WA 98275-5847, 800-810-7660

Model Railroad News, P. O. Box 1080, Merlin, OR 97532-1080, 541-955-1096, modelrailroadnews.com

Model Railroading, 2600 S. Parker Rd., Ste. 1-211, Aurora, CO 80014, 303-338-1700, modelrailroadingmag.com

N Scale, 13110 Beverly Park Rd., Mukilteo, WA 98275-5847, 800-810-7660

N Scale Railroading, P. O. Box 77296, Seattle, WA 98177-0296, 206-364-1295

Narrow Gauge & Short Line Gazette, P. O. Box 26, Los Altos, CA 94023-0026, 800-545-4102

Railmodel Journal, 2403 Champa St., Denver, CO 80205-2621, 303-296-1600

Railroad Model Craftsman, P. O. Box 700, Newton, NJ 07860-0700, 973-383-3355, rrmodelcraftsman.com

Ztrack Magazine Ltd., 6142 Northcliff Blvd., Dublin OH 43016, 614-764-1703, ztrack.com

Books

Basic Model Railroading: Getting Started in the Hobby, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

N Scale Model Railroading: Getting Started in the Hobby, by Marty McGuirk, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

Practical Guide to HO Model Railroading,

presented by *Model Railroader* magazine, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

Videos

Allen Keller Productions, 7410 Lebanon Church Rd., Talbott, TN 37877, 423-586-7928, allenkeller.com

Video tours of great layouts

Green Frog Productions, Ltd., 4880 Lower Roswell Rd., Ste. 40-419, Marietta, GA 30068, 800-227-1336, greenfrog.com
How-to and prototype videos

Model Railroad Scenery Made Easy, presented by *Model Railroader* magazine, 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

Pentrex, P. O. Box 94911, Pasadena, CA 91109-4911, 800-950-9333
Layout visit and prototype videos

Clubs and associations

National Model Railroad Association, 4121 Cromwell Rd., Chattanooga, TN 423-899-4869, nmra.org

National Association of S Gaugers, 280 Gordon Rd., Matawan, NJ 07747, trainweb.com/nasg

Ntrak, 15913 Brawner



Dr., Dumfries, VA 22026, ntrak.org

A listing of regional and local clubs can be found in the Coming Events section in each issue of *Model Railroader* magazine.

Toy Trains

Publications

Classic Toy Trains, P. O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612, 800-533-6644, classtrain.com

O Gauge Railroad, 65 S. Broad St., Nazareth, PA 18064-0239, 610-759-0406

S Gaugian, 7236 W. Madison St., Forest Park, IL 60130, 708-366-1973

Books

Toy Train Collecting and Operating, by John Grams, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

Greenberg Pocket Price Guides, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

The O Gauge Railroad Primer, Myron G. Biggar Group, 610-759-0406

Your First O Gauge Layout, by Mike Ashby, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

Videos

I Love Toy Trains series, TM Books & Video, Box 279, New Buffalo, MI 49117, 800-892-2822, tmbooks-video.com

Clubs and associations

American Flyer Collectors Club, P. O. Box 13269, Pittsburgh, PA 15243

Lionel Collectors Club of America, Business Office, P. O. Box 479, LaSalle, IL 61301, lionelcollectors.org

Lionel Operating Train Society, P. O. Box 62240, Cincinnati, OH 45241, lots-trains.org

Toy Train Collectors Society, Louis A. Bohn, 109 Howedale Dr., Rochester, NY 14616

Toy Train Operating Society, 25 W. Walnut St., Ste. 308, Pasadena, CA 91103, 626-578-0673, ttos.org

Train Collectors Association, P. O. Box 468, Strasburg, PA 17579, 717-687-8623, traincollectors.org

Garden Railroading

Publications

Garden Railways, P. O. Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187-1612, 800-533-6644, gardenrailways.com

Steam in the Garden, 6629 SR 38, Newark Valley, NY 13811, 607-642-8119, steamup.com

Books

Garden Railroading: Getting Started in the Hobby, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

A Beginner's Guide to Large-Scale Model Railroading, by Marc Horovitz and Russ Larson, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

Explore the World of LGB, edited by David Buffington. Available through LGB of America, 6444 Nancy Ridge Drive, San Diego, CA 92121, 858-535-9387

Getting Started in Garden Railroading, by Allan Miller, Krause Publications, 715-445-2214, krause.com

The Large-Scale Model Railroading Handbook, by Robert Schleicher, Krause Publications, 715-445-2214, krause.com

ALL SCALES AND TYPES

greatesthobby.com

This site has everything you need to get started in model trains. Locate local hobby shops and clubs in your area, find answers to frequently asked questions, and much more.

trains.com

Provides up-to-the-minute information about all scales and types of trains. You'll find the latest news releases, train shows, new model railroad products, and even fun and games for kids.

hobbyretailer.com

Your best resource to locating a hobby shop anywhere in North America. Simply type in a city or state and hit return to find shops in your area.

Tracks Ahead program on PBS: mptv.org/Trax_main.htm

This half-hour show features collections, layouts, and garden railroads in all scales of trains. To order video tapes of past episodes, call 800-9RAILTV (972-4588).

Videos

Building a Basic Garden Railroad, Kalmbach Publishing Co., 800-533-6644, kalmbachbooks.com

Broadcast Images, Inc., 9340 Hazard Way, Ste. B, San Diego, CA 92123, 858-974-7999
Tours of garden railways

Digital Video Images, Inc., P. O. Box 2584, Littleton, CO 80161-2584, 303-220-8998, modelrailroadvideos.com
How-to and prototype videos

Sidestreet Bannerworks, P. O. Box 460222, Denver, CO 80224, 303-377-7785, sidestreet.info
Beginning garden railway and live steam videos

Clubs and associations

LGB Model Railroad Club, Inc., 1854 Erin Dr., Altoona, PA 16602, 814-962-4326

A listing of regional and local clubs can be found in the Club Directory of each issue of *Garden Railways* magazine.



The Wide World of Model Railroading



OVER THE NEXT FEW PAGES YOU'LL tour the exciting world of model railroading. Detailed miniature worlds, colorful collections, intriguing gardens, and exciting toy train displays – all these and much more await you. One thing you can be certain of is that any railroad possibility you can think of is the special interest of some modeler, somewhere.

▶ You can almost hear the flanges screech in protest as this Lionel no. 624 Chesapeake & Ohio switcher eases around the elevated loop on this O gauge layout. Postwar accessories and structures combined with contemporary scenery techniques give this layout a broad appeal.

▶ While some modelers prefer the nostalgia of steam there is no denying the excitement of real railroading today. Modern high-horsepower diesel locomotives, like this HO model, have a real nonsense appearance that says "It's time to get the job done."

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▲ Plantings can add diversity to your garden railroad. This railroad, called the Rustin & Decrepit, uses plants of different heights, textures, and colors to suggest a lush valley.

▶ Toy trains have been a holiday tradition for generations. This O gauge layout captures the nostalgic feelings so many folks have for wintry mornings and vintage trains. You can enjoy that connection too.



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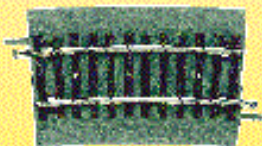
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WHAT IS THE WORLD'S GREATEST HOBBY CAMPAIGN?

Now that you know what the world's greatest hobby is you may be interested in knowing more about the publicity campaign and the sponsors who are involved in getting the word out about model railroading.

The World's Greatest Hobby campaign is an effort to promote model railroading through all channels. Initiated by Kalmbach Publishing, one of the largest publishers of hobby magazines and books, including *Model Railroader*, *Classic Toy Trains*, and *Garden Railways*, the effort has grown to include the active support of other model railroad publishers, model train manufacturers, the Model Railroad Industry Association, and a variety of model railroad organizations and businesses.

The campaign uses advertising and public relations to promote the hobby. More important for you, the campaign is dedicated to helping folks interested in model railroading get off to a solid start.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of this effort is the active support of volunteer groups and individual hobbyists. These "ambassadors" are ordinary model railroaders who love the hobby and want to let the rest of the world know how enjoyable it is.


Perhaps you received this booklet when you attended a model railroad show, perhaps curiosity compelled you to visit the local hobby shop where you learned a little about model railroading, or perhaps you heard a presentation about model railroading from one of those ambassadors.



The World's Greatest Hobby campaign exists primarily as a means to coordinate these grass roots efforts. It also distributes videos, introductory booklets, and other support, as well as providing promotional material to the sponsors of all kinds and sizes of train shows.

The campaign also maintains greatesthobby.com, a Web site with lots of tips and helpful information designed to help you get started.

If you're involved with an organization – club, civic organization, church or school group, youth leadership council, or any other interested audience that would like to learn more about model railroading, visit the Web site or contact us at 877-426-5082 to find a member of our speakers bureau who is willing to share his or her hobby experience with you.

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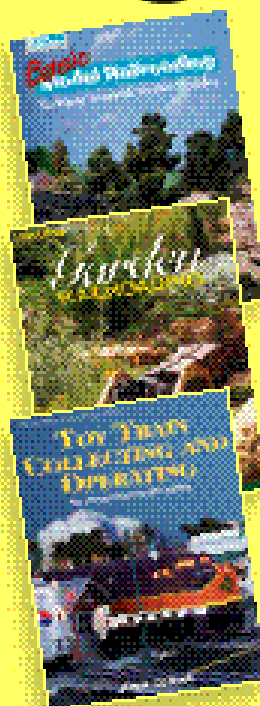
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