Making Lights: DIY Tin Can Lanterns

It's remarkable what you can make with trash! Here's an attractive way to recycle tin cans into simple lanterns. This project uses small cans, but if you use larger ones, you might find glass jars that fit inside them to protect the candles from the wind. If you don't have any wire coat hangers, 1/10 in (2mm) diameter galvanized fencing wire is a good substitute.

You will need:
- Tin cans
- Cloth
- Mineral spirits
- Sand
- Paper and pencil
- Sticky tape
- Fabric bag filled with sand
- Masonry nails
- Hammer
- Small locking pliers
- Wire coat hangers
- Small bolt cutters
- Ring-bending pliers
- Newspaper
- Spray paint

Step 1
Remove the label and any blobs of glue from the can. Pack the can with sand, top up with water, and freeze overnight.

Step 2
Draw your design on a piece of paper to fit the size of the can or photocopy a template. Tape in place. If you're drawing your own design, ensure that the gap between holes is at least as large as the diameter of each hole.

Step 3
Place the can on the sandbag. Punch holes in the can. Place the can in the freezer for about 30 minutes after each 10 minutes of work to ensure the can remains solid. If you're making several lanterns, work on them in rotation.

Step 4
Once your design is complete, punch a pair of holes opposite each other 3/8 in. (1 cm) below the top of the can for fitting the handle. Remove the sand. Make a handle out of a 10 in. (25 cm) length of wire.

Step 5
Fill the can with newspaper and spray-paint it evenly. Make sure you work in a well-ventilated area or outside. Once the can is dry, attach the handle.