Chapter 3

Eco-friendly Effects

Nature has always been a major contributor to art. Inspiration is derived from the patterns, textures, and lighting we see around us. Some artists use material found in nature as a basis for their work. A huge tree was snapped off close to the base in my neighborhood – a local sculptor used a chainsaw to turn the stump into a grizzly bear.

This chapter takes two approaches to applying nature to art. We’ll use natural textures and photographs for implementation in our images, as well as incorporating natural elements in images from scratch, using only the tools given to us by Adobe Photoshop.
Aged wood etching

1. To begin, rather than generate wood from scratch, we'll be using an existing photo and apply a realistic etch effect to it. Open Al-Wood1.jpg found on the CD. (If you are interested in learning how to create wood grain textures from scratch, Photoshop Most Wanted volume 1 tells you how to go about it.)

2. Click the 'Create a new layer' icon at the bottom of the Layers palette. Name the new layer 'Base Shape'.

3. Hit the D key to reset the default colors in the foreground and background. Go to the toolbox and click on the Custom Shape tool. In the options bar, click on the 'Fill pixels' icon. Ensure that Mode is set to Normal and Opacity to 100%.

4. The Custom Shape options bar has a window called Shape. Click the small arrow to the right of the Shape window to open and view the shapes available. The shape used in this tutorial is called World, and found in the Symbols shape set. This set may not be loaded yet, so click the small arrow in the upper right corner of the Shapes palette. This opens the Shapes menu where you can select and load the Symbols shape set.

5. When loaded, choose the shape named World.

6. Draw your shape so that it is centered in the middle of the image.

7. CTRL/Cmd-click the 'Base Shape' layer to generate a selection of your shape.

8. Open the Channels palette. On the bottom of the palette, click the 'Create a new channel' icon.

9. Go to Edit > Fill. In the Field dialog box, use white as the fill color. Set the opacity of the fill to 100%. Click OK.

10. Go to Select > Deselect (CTRL/Cmd+D).

11. Go to Filter > Blur > Gaussian Blur. Enter a blur radius of 10 pixels. Click OK.