

[Back to reD_Fox's
Blender Tutorials](#)

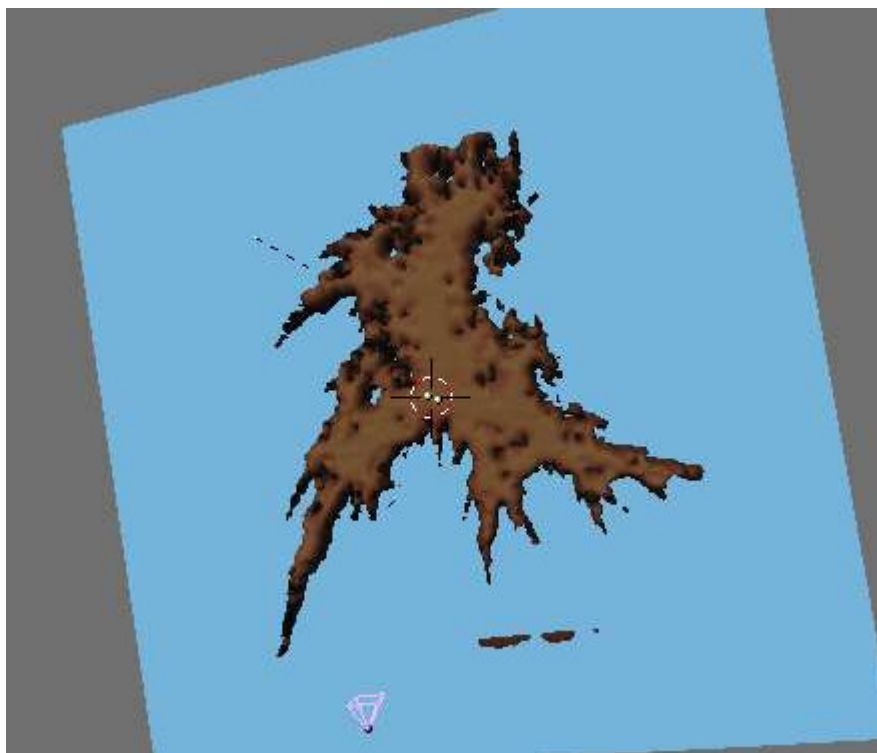


Creating landscapes with the Gimp: Part 1

by [Vincent Stoessel](#)

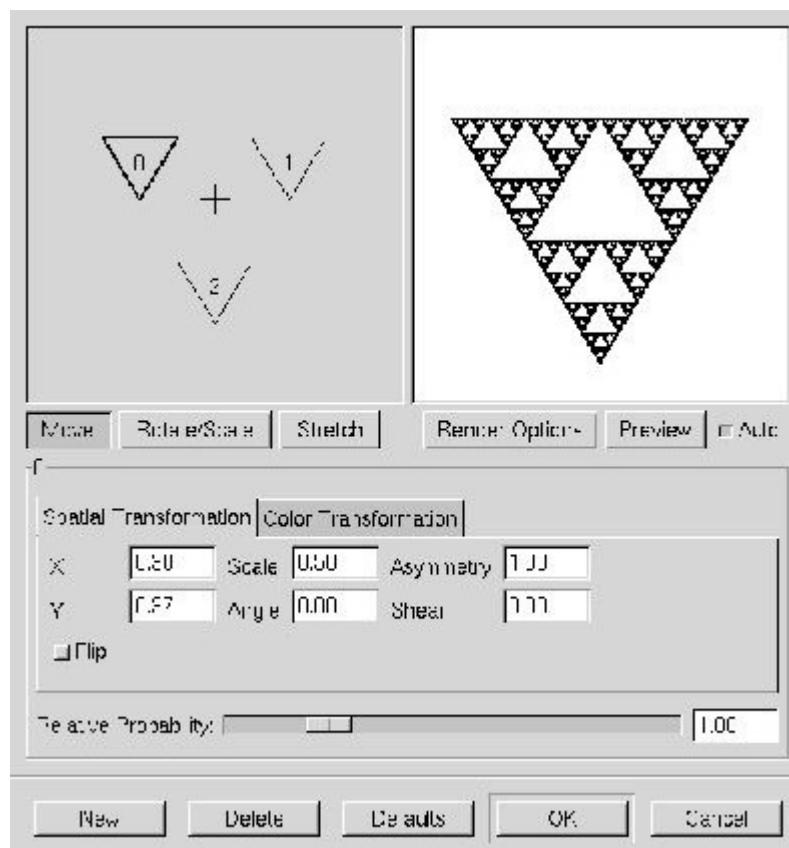
This tutorial demonstrates how to use the Gimp's ifCompose plugin to create height maps that can be imported into Blender to make great landscapes. This tutorial does not require a C-key. It does however, require the GIMP. The GIMP is a great and free image manipulation program which runs on most unixes.

You can download a copy from www.gimp.org



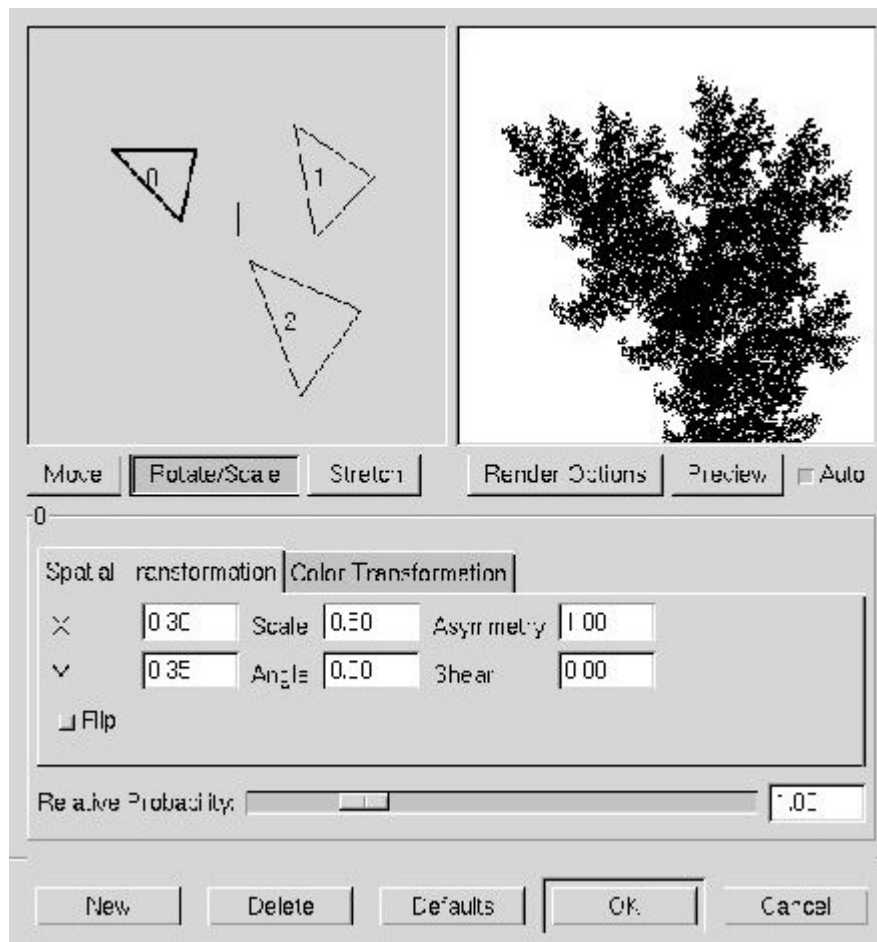
The first thing you want to do with the gimp is open a new document. The default 256x256 blank image is cool. With the cursor over the image press the right mouse button

to get the pop-up menu. Select Filter->Render->Ifcompose you should get the ifcompose window. There is a screenshot of the window below. ifcompose works by adjusting the positions of the 3 triangles on the left to change the image on the right. There are also numeric inputs for more precise control.



The basic idea is to create a goo height map. A height map is a grayscale/color image that can be used build an elevated 3d mesh. When a height map is applied to a flat plane the

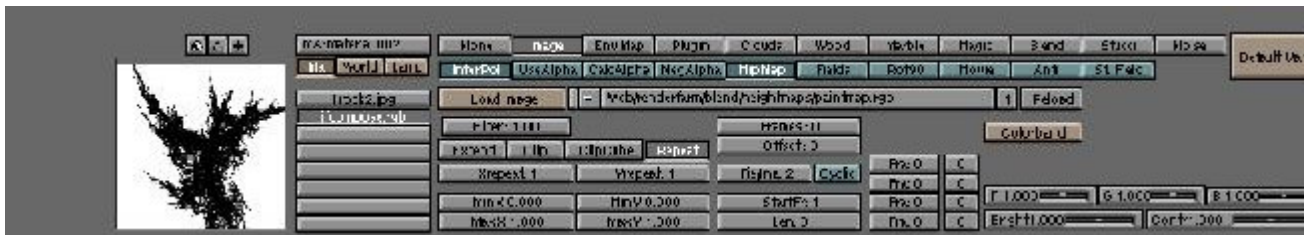
colors will raise the points of the mesh while the darker colors will keep vertices close to the floor. White will cause the highest elevation of course while black will be the lowest. I got this with a little bit of tweaking the rotate/scaling triangles.



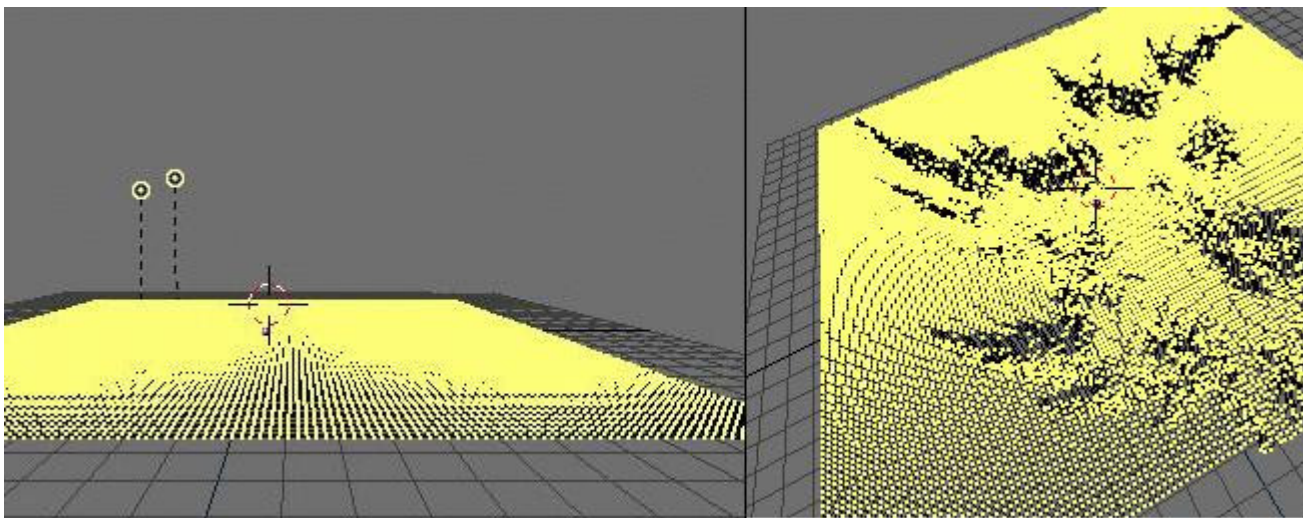
I created a bunch of cool height map but let me talk about the one I have below. When I open blender I have a simple mesh and some lamps as my default. Cntrl-U saves your default settings by the way. Select your plane, go to the material buttons (F5) and create a new material for the plane. Give it a name or hit the "auto" icon to have blender generate a unique name for it. Next go to the texture buttons (F6) and create a new texture. Choose an image texture and use the image selector to load the image you saved in Gimp's ifcompose.



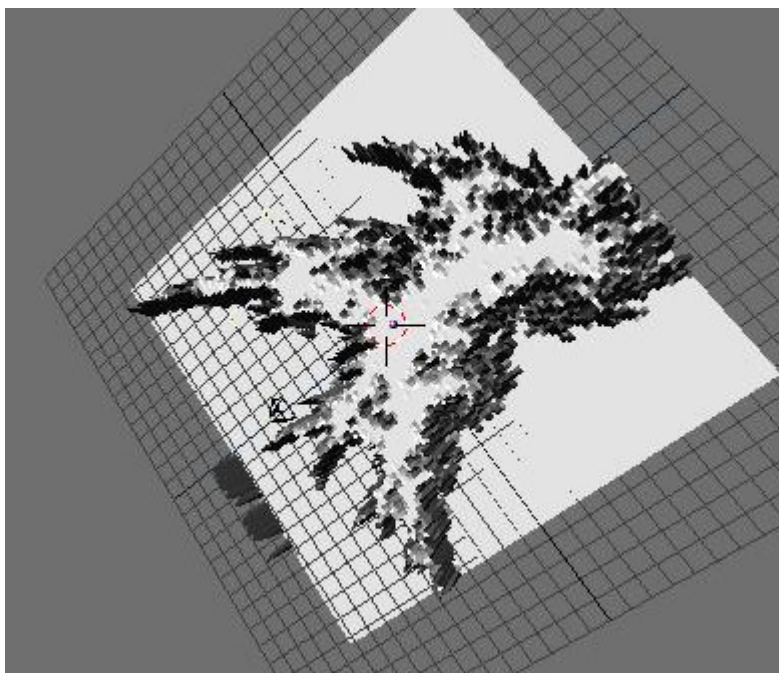
It should look something like this in the texture window.



Now go to the editbuttons. Hit tab to get into the plane's edit mode. Hit "a" to select all vertices in the plane.
Hit subdivide about 7 times to make the plane more granular.
Now while the vertices still select hit the noise button 2 or three times. Do you see how the distorted plane is now in the shape of the heightmap? Hit the noise button 2 or 3 more times to make the elevation more pronounced.

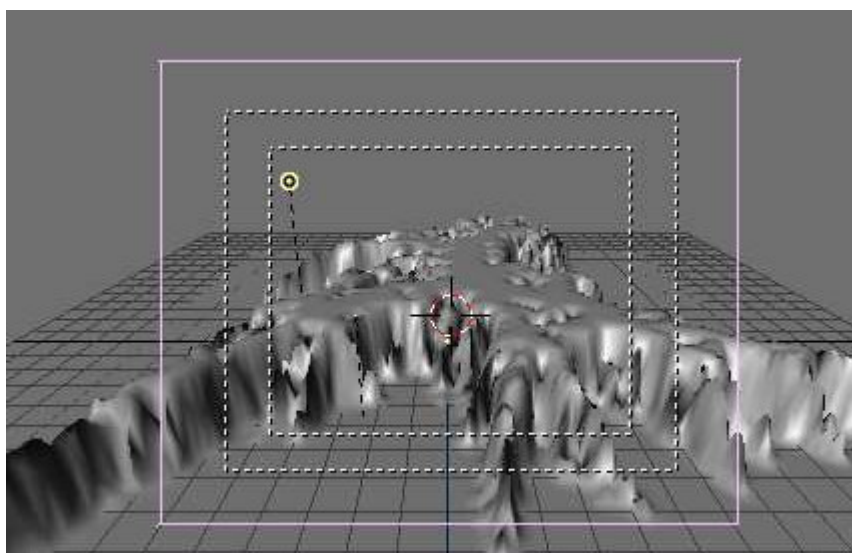


Get out of editmode by hitting the TAB key.
flip/rotate the mesh over so that the bottom is on top.
To smooth out the jagged edges, hit the smooth button in the edit window when all the vertices are selected in edit mode.

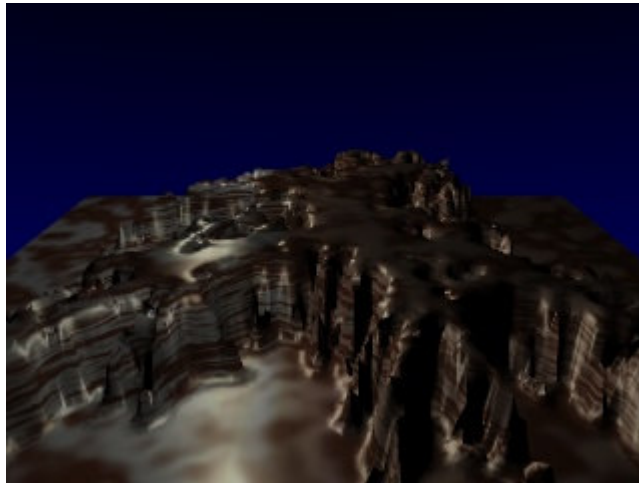


Hit the z or shift-z to get an idea what the mesh looks like. With the mesh still selected hit the "set smooth" button. You should have a mesh that looks something like this. Now all you have to do is add a rocky or grainy texture and add a water layer (see my ocean view tutorial). DON'T FORGET TO GET RID OF the original heightmap texture,

you don't need it any more and it will have an influence on the color of your mesh if you leave it there. For mountains I usually use a noisy marble or wood texture combined with an image texture.



Here it is with some textures I slapped together but I'm sure can do much better.



Just add water and that's it.

