

Nature Prints

Nature is full of different designs, colors, textures, and shapes. In this activity you will use your observation skills to find shapes and textures in nature to inspire a piece of art.

Have you ever noticed the veins of a leaf? How about how different leaves have different patterns of veins? Some have a large central vein, with smaller veins branching off, similar to a large stream with many small tributaries.

To begin this activity you need to find a small to large outdoor area that has at least a few different types of plants. A small backyard, nearby park, or planted sidewalk edges can work great. Next, walk through this area focusing on all of the different plants, and especially zoning in on their leaves. Even in winter or early spring months you can find some old leaves hanging on, or the very young beginnings of new leaves. Use your fingers to examine the texture of the leaves and explore the veins. Collect 1-10 different leaves that have either already fallen, or are surrounded by many more on the plant, so as not to harm the plant.

Materials Needed:

- Leaves, flowers, feathers, fruit, bark and other natural materials
- Paint, markers, or a stamp pad
- Paintbrush
- Newspaper or cardboard
- Construction paper or other lightweight paper

Step One: Cover the area you'll be working on with newspaper or cardboard in case of spills.

Step Two: Collect the natural materials that you'll use for your prints. Flat objects (like leaves, cut pieces of fruit, bark or feathers) will work best.

Step Three: Next, decide how you'll make your print. You can choose between markers, stamp pad, or paint.

Step Four: Experiment with different printing techniques. You can apply markers, ink or paint to your item and use it as a stamp, pressing it onto your paper and

then carefully pulling it back. You can also paint several leaves or objects at once and arrange them in a pattern, and then press a large piece of paper on top.

Step Five: Let your print dry and either use that as your finished piece, add sharpie lines for definition, use it as a background to write a poem on, design your name across it for a fun name placard, or any other creative use!

- What different designs and textures were you able to find in the leaves? Can any of these help you figure out what type of plant it is? (i.e. pine needles, wide branching maple leaves, toothed rose bush leaves, ect).
- Which (if any) of the plants you found do you think grow natively here in Central Oregon and why?
- How do these plants help their surrounding environment?