

FRAGRANCE AMONG THE TREES



Wake up your nose

Goal: The children will focus on the smells in a trees' vicinity while spending time among the trees. They will make their own perfumes from natural materials. They will also think about what trees "smell" around themselves. The children playing this game will not only become aware of the many scents around trees, but they will also exercise their creativity by composing their own perfumes as well as begin to empathise with the life of trees.

How long: 15–30 minutes

Who: 7 to 99

Where: A place with trees or shrubs

When: All year round (best when trees and shrubs are in bloom or are bearing fruit)

You need: Papers, pencils, pads, cushions, fragrant mixtures

1. PREDICTIONS

To start you can have the children try to guess what kinds of scents we might find among the trees and shrubs. Ideally they should write down the guesses or draw them on some paper with crayons, on the sidewalk with chalk, or just talk about their favourite recipes.

2. TREE FRAGRANCES

Have you ever tried to smell a tree? It's unbelievable how many different scents there are around trees. The children should select a place among the trees and then lie down there for a while (1–5 minutes depending on age) and try to pick out the different smells that are all around them. Then let them walk around the tree and try to find the various smells – of bark, branches, soil between roots, leaves, flowers or fruits (if there are any). What scents are pleasant? Which ones are sort of disturbing?

3. FOREST FRAGRANCE

Distribute square sheets of paper to the children and advise them how to make a drinking cup with it. Now children can, alone or in pairs, make up their own unique fragrance, using natural items they find around the tree, and put them into the cup. All you need is a piece of bark, soil, clay, leaf, twig, polypore from the tree trunk, etc.

TIP: It is often useful to remind children of the rule of careful collection. There is no need to tear off big parts to make a small amount of perfume, etc.

4. PRESENTATION OF PERFUMES

When everyone has their perfumes ready they can meet, compare other's scents and present their scents. What were they made of? What memories do they evoke? Do they smell nice to everyone?

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TIP: Do you know that some trees and shrubs are actually used in perfumes or medicines? Can you think of a few? (Rose hips, pine, cedar, citrus, etc.) Other trees repel insects (e.g. elderberries used to be planted near stables and houses because they drive away insects).

TIP: If we have the time, children can come up with a name for their perfume (e.g. Tree Refreshment, Green Breeze, Elderberry Repellent, etc.)

TIP: If you have some available, you can do a demonstration of perfume formulations or essential oils for the children.

5. WHAT TREES FEEL

Finally, think again with the children about what trees can sense in their surroundings. What is pleasant? What is not? You can talk to the children about how time spent among trees heals because we breathe air full of healing natural essential oils from trees and shrubs. Dense forests or gardens are ideal places to do this. You may also mention that scientists believe that trees are able to emit fragrant chemicals that spread through the air, which is the way trees communicate with each other (e.g. there is an attack by insects or diseases and a tree warns the others to prepare).

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY OBJECTIVE (EVIDENCE OF LEARNING)

The children focused on the smells and various scents around trees / shrubs.

The children created their own natural perfume.

The children became a tree for a while and imagined what the tree might smell.

