



TREE PATTERNS

Become a tree designer

Goal: To discover how many shapes and textures nature offers through short creative sessions around a tree. The children will make rubbings and stamps and discover shapes, details and diversity in nature. They will produce unconventional patterns using their hands and a few simple techniques.

How long: 15–30 minutes

Who: 6–99

Where: Place with trees

When: All year round

You need: Papers, wax crayons, pencils / chalks / charcoal, cloth, containers for soil, pads

1. GET TO KNOW BY TOUCH

Recall the introductory games with trees (specifically “My Neighbour, The Tree”). What was it like to explore a tree with just your hands, by feel? Try again to see what it is like to touch the bark, branches, leaves, buds, roots, etc., of different tree species.

2. BARK MAPS

You probably all know the technique called rubbing. (You place a sheet of paper on the bark of the tree and gently run over it with charcoal, chalk or pencil until a transferred pattern of tree bark is formed on the paper). It is worth trying on different trunks and different bark patterns. When the children have several rubbings done they can show them to the others. Suggest a short game in which the bark rubbings turn into maps of various landscapes and the children try to describe the landscape (where there are large valleys, dense forests, rocks, etc.).

3. LEAF PATTERNS

Children can also try making rubbings of leaves. Just place a leaf on a pad, cover it with paper and again gently run over it with chalk, pencil or charcoal. Beautiful regular leaf shapes and details like the veins will appear on the paper. Encourage the children to try rubbings on both sides of the leaf. Discover which side creates a more pronounced image and guess why that might be so.

4. LEAF STAMPS

Making stamps with leaves is for children who enjoy working with leaves. Put paint or a thin layer of wet soil on the leaves and try leaf stamping. It's a quick and creative game that shows children the fascinating world of leaf shapes.

5. GALLERY OF EXPERIENCES

Finally, settle around the trees together and have the children present what they have succeeded in creating. How did they work? What surprised them? What technique was best for their creations?

TIP: The resulting designs are great for making invitations to entice others to experience the out-of-doors. The children simply write who they are inviting, when, and where (among some trees obviously) to their designs.

EVALUATION OF THE ACTIVITY'S GOAL (EVIDENCE OF LEARNING)

- The children made patterns using rubbings and stamping.
- The children got to realise how varied the structure of the bark of different trees can be.

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