

Art at home!

Stamping with Nature

Printmaking is the art making process where an artist applies ink to a surface they have designed (it can be wood, stone, metal or a screen). They then transfer the design or image (print) to another surface, usually a piece of paper.

In this activity, the design you will be printing has already been created by nature! You just need to find a leaf that you enjoy and you too can become a printmaker!



Materials:

- Collected leaves.
- Pencil.
- Paintbrush.
- Paper or canvas.
- Paint.

Safety:

Be careful when picking your leaves as some can have nasty thorns, sticky sap and some are even poisonous!

How to:

Step 1: picking your leaves.

When using nature as a part of your artistic vision, you want to decide the size and shape of a leaf you like. For example, citrus leaves, which are plentiful in Arizona, allow for large, smooth simple shapes.



Step 2: prepare your supplies and decide your methods.

After you have decided the size and shape of the leaf you want, now it's time to prepare all your art supplies. There are multiple ways you can utilize leaves depending on your available supplies. Allow for large, smooth simple shapes.



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Method 1

You can place the leaf onto the paper/canvas and then paint on top of the leaf making sure to address the space around the leaf as well. This will leave you with an outline of the shape of the leaf. With this outline, you can play with layering colors. For example, you could paint something onto the page first, and then place your leaf/leaves on top of that image and cover the entire thing in another layer of paint. Once you remove the leaves, a secret image underneath is revealed.



Method 2

Another method is to paint the leaf itself and use it almost as a stamp, this works best with leaves that have a lot of texture, such as visible raised veins. To do this method, place your leaf on a piece of scrap paper (this helps reduce mess). Then, with the color of your choosing, paint all over the leaf (it is best to choose the part that has the most texture, which is usually the bottom of the leaf). After you have painted the leaf, place it down on a clean piece of paper and press down hard making sure not to move the leaf or paper. Then, lift the leaf and admire your new stamp!



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Method 3

Another possibility, which is good if you do not currently have access to paint, is to place paper on top of your leaf and make a rubbing. This allows you to use crayons or colored pencils to capture all the small textural details of any leaf. To do this method, you will place a leaf on a flat surface underneath a piece of paper. Take a crayon or pencil of your choosing and rub it across the page right above where the leaf is.



Step 3: have fun and be creative!

Regardless of if you have every art supply at home or simply a five pack of crayons and some washable paint, utilizing plants found around your home allows you to expand your creativity. Now go explore your yard and make your artistic ideas a reality!