Nature Inspired Arts and Crafts

Schools Tree Day

Planet Ark • Toyota
Every year thousands of schools and pre-schools get involved in Planet Ark’s Schools Tree Day. They plant new trees, look after established gardens, learn about the environment and get in contact with nature.

All of this lovely natureness is made possible through the support of: the teachers and students at schools and preschools across the country; staff and volunteers at councils and landcare groups; wonderful celebrity ambassadors including Costa Giordianis, Adam Goodes and dirtgirl; category sponsor Bunnings Warehouse; and, long-time major sponsor, Toyota Australia.

Nature Inspired Art and Craft

For Schools Tree Day 2015 we asked for tree-mendous nature based art and craft ideas to inspire kids and teachers. We’re happy to say we were swamped with amazing suggestions of how to combine imagination with leaves, rocks and sticks to make wonderful artwork.

All the entries showed the inspirational power of contact with nature. The entries were judged on a combination of creativity, photo quality, clear instructions and use of natural materials. It was too much of a challenge to narrow it down to the top ten, so we included sixteen winners in this book and have uploaded all eligible entries to TreeDay.PlanetArk.org

Congratulations and thank you to all the teachers and students who went outside to get inspired.
The students were asked to start collecting things they found in the environment that could be used for craft.

Over the holidays, four bags of 'goodies' were collected, including sticks, pine cones and seed pods.

Students were shown examples of craft made from nature. They were then given free choice of which creature to create.

With the help of our SLSO, a hot glue gun was used to stick the creatures together. We are all sooo excited with the results!
Students went on a nature hunt in the front yard, collecting bark, flowers, gum nuts, leaves, plant cuttings, observing as they went the textures and colours of the items and also noticing the sounds of nature around them— the birds in the trees, the wind blowing the leaves.

Back inside the children arranged the natural items on a piece of recycled cardboard. They explained that they were making a picture of the yard where they collected the items.

The teacher helped to glue them in to place using a hot glue gun.
Keiraville Community Preschool
Leaf Bookmarks

We collected leaves from the ground that the trees had dropped and left them to dry for two weeks.

We decorated the leaves with patterns and drawings. We then made them stronger by laminating them and adding a ribbon tail.

We are going to give these to some visitors who are coming to our preschool.

We are also taking one home to use when we read stories with our families.

Ngukurr School
Leaf People

Step 1. Go on a walk and collect lots of different leaves, sticks and flowers.

Step 2. Use your collected leaves, sticks and flowers to make a leaf person.

Step 3. Place your leaf person carefully inside a laminating sheet (be careful to only use thin leaves, sticks and flowers) and glue on googly eyes (you can skip this and use leaves for eyes instead if you prefer).

Step 4. Laminate the leaf person (a teacher or adult needs to do this because laminators get very hot!)

Step 5. Cut out leaf person and put on display for everyone to enjoy.
Materials: Paper plates, contact paper, scissors, glue, hole punch, string, assortment of flowers and leaves from our garden.

Cut a hole in the middle of the plate and contact paper to stick to the plate.

Allow children to choose their flowers and leaves and place them onto the sticky part of the contact. When they are finished, cover over with another piece of contact and glue another plate ring to finish off framing.

Punch a hole and tie string to it and hang outside for the children to see.
1. Head outdoors! We walked down to our local river.

2. Collect bits and pieces to make your artwork. We collected sticks, leaves, flowers, bark, stones. You will need some thin twigs or sticks to create a frame.

3. Make a frame out of sticks, then create a picture inside with the bits and pieces you have collected.

4. Take a photo of your artwork

Mooroopna Primary School
Bush Artwork


Korowal School
Majestic Magical Mandalas

Flowers; Mulch; Acorns; Leaves; Banksia Flowers

Teacher: Kirrily Boyd. Written by Year 5 students.

1. Choose your desired amount and colours of materials. Then think of your pattern.

2. Make a circle shape out of the mulch and fill it in with the mulch.

3. Gently and delicately pop a flower down in the middle of the circle. Then build out from the middle using whatever else you have, until you reach the end of the circle.

4. Carefully get up and look at your Majestic, Magical Mandala!

Warning! Stay away from flowers if you don’t like bees or if you have allergies.
Winters Flat Primary School - Seed Pod Animals

1. Go outside and search for a Casuarina seed pod that has opened up and still has a small twig for the nose.

2. Find a rock or a piece of bark for the echidna to sit on.

3. Collect some very thin sticks or pine needles (you can use matchsticks if you prefer).

4. Go inside and find a hot glue gun (you might need an adult to help with this as the glue is very hot). Glue on two googly eyes or very small gum nuts for eyes.

5. Stick small sticks or pine needles into the seed pod over the back to represent quills.

6. Glue echidna onto rock or bark.

7. Have fun with your echidna!

by Alina Graeve Grade 6 Winters Flat PS. Teacher: Fiona Johnston.

You can make a range of animals from different seed pods and sticks as our photos show. Just be creative!
Bowen & District Child Care Centre
Nature Photo Frame

Children helped collect a variety of leaves from the yard.

Earthy coloured glue paint was offered. Brown/ green.

A cardboard border cut into a frame shape.

You will need: Leaves and flowers collected from trees and plants in the garden; Coloured paper; Laminating sheets; Paper towels; 3-ring folder.

1. Have children collect fallen leaves and flowers from the garden.

2. Help the children to press the leaves and flowers between sheets of paper towel and press between the pages of a heavy book and leave for a couple of weeks.

3. Fold coloured paper into thirds.

4. Help children place leaves and flowers in each section to form eyes, a nose and mouth. Make sure to leave a 3cm margin on left-hand side.

5. Laminate each face and cut them into thirds, so that you end up with a collection of eye, nose and mouth cards.

6. Punch holes in each card, and place in the three-ring folder, with their cards at the top, nose in the middle and mouth cards at the bottom.

7. Children flip and turn the cards to make Tree-mendous Funny Faces.


Lyndhurst Early Learning Centre
Nature Face Mix up

You will need: Leaves and flowers collected from trees and plants in the garden; Coloured paper; Laminating sheets; Paper towels; 3-ring folder.

1. Have children collect fallen leaves and flowers from the garden.

2. Help the children to press the leaves and flowers between sheets of paper towel and press between the pages of a heavy book and leave for a couple of weeks.

3. Fold coloured paper into thirds.

4. Help children place leaves and flowers in each section to form eyes, a nose and mouth. Make sure to leave a 3cm margin on left-hand side.

5. Laminate each face and cut them into thirds, so that you end up with a collection of eye, nose and mouth cards.

7. Punch holes in each card, and place in the three-ring folder, with their cards at the top, nose in the middle and mouth cards at the bottom.

8. Children flip and turn the cards to make Tree-mendous Funny Faces.

1. Collect an assortment of natural materials like sticks, leaves and seed pods.

2. Measure a space in between your wings that is big enough for a person to lie between.

3. Lay out the natural materials to create beautiful wing shapes. Don't forget to also add some antennas.

4. The children then become part of the artwork as they take turns lying between the wing shapes.

5. Take a photo to remember the fantastic artwork.

6. Return the natural materials to the bush where you found them.

The children loved collaborating to create this amazing ephemeral artwork. We created a butterfly, but birds, dragonflies or even bats would work too!

Teacher: Elizabeth Arrabalde.
Step 1: We went outside and collected leaves that we thought were interesting colours or shapes.

Step 2: As it had been raining we let them dry in the classroom for a few days.

Step 3: Once they were dry we sorted them into those we wanted to paint and those we did not.

Step 4: We painted some of the plain brown leaves in bright colours to make them more interesting and left them to dry.

Step 5: We used the unpainted leaves to create imagination pictures by asking the question what could this leaf be? Some of the ideas people came up with were a racing car, an umbrella and a crazy hair style.

Step 6: We stuck the leaves to a page and used black Textas to create the pictures we could see in our minds.

Step 7: When the painted leaves were dry we stuck them onto strips of recycled paper and decorated them with pictures.

Step 8: We used staplers to turn our decorated strips into beautiful crowns for us to wear.

Teacher: Aoife McCabe.
Group: PP2.
Telarah Public School - Painted Leaf Animals

1. Find a branch or two of gum leaves

2. Get some nice quality acrylic paint and some cotton buds and paint the leaves with colours, dots and stripes

3. Draw the outline of an animal on a piece of cardboard. We used an echidna so that the leaves could be the quills

4. Stick the leaves on with sticky tape

5. Give it a spray with hairspray to help stick it all together and make it a bit shiny

Teacher: Anne Kelly.
1. Students collected various pieces of bark and a variety of leaves from around the school yard.

2. On an A3 sheet the students coloured with windup crayons the tree bark as they had seen outside on different trees.

3. The students then used PVA glue to put different pieces of bark on to cover the trunk, branches and attached the leaves to the branches.

6. Once the glue was dry students wrote the names of family members, which they had previously researched.

7. The FAMILY TREE Nature craft is now complete and ready to display.

Port Macquarie Community Preschool
Planting a Small World

Step 1; Clean a large tub

Step 2; Wash small gravel rocks and place on the bottom of dish.

Step 3; Place clean soil on top of rocks to layer, this is for the plants to grow in.

Step 4; Walk around the centre's backyard and pick the small plants. Some of the plants came from Kathy's garden - you can ask the children to bring in small plants from their homes.

We placed the plants in gently and covered the roots over with soil. We talked about how plants need water to grow and the roots drink up like straws.

Step 5; Each child was able to gently place the roots and plants into the soil.

Step 6; Give the plants some water. We used a water spray - great for muscle building for the children.

Step 7; We already had red rocks. The children placed them down the middle like a path or track.

Step 8 Discuss and find the toys the children want to play with. We decided forest animals first and dinosaurs in a week or so. Our tub was put near the door so the garden still gets indirect light, as it will be indoors for a few weeks.
Skipton Primary School - Nature Creatures

Materials: You will need the materials you have collected, a table covering, some craft glue and an adult with a hot glue-gun.

Step 1: Find a beautiful natural environment to collect materials. We chose our local lake park. It is important not to collect materials from botanical gardens or National Parks.

Step 2: Collect materials such as pinecones, banksia seed pods, conifers, leaves, gum blossoms, gumnuts, twigs, acorns, bark and pine needles. It is important not to tear materials off plants or trees, collect them from the ground instead. Optional extra, you could also collect any rubbish and bring it back to school.

Step 3: If materials are damp leave them to dry.

Step 4: Choose bigger items like pinecones and banksia seed pods for your creature's body, smaller items for features and things such as bark for its base.

Step 5: Using the craft glue attach your creature's smaller features to the body. You will need to hold them in place for 30 seconds or so until the glue is dry. You will need to use the hot glue to attach the bigger features.

Step 6: Leave to dry, pack up and return any left-over materials where you found them.

Step 7: Name your creature and enjoy their company.

Teacher: Georgie Green. Group: Grade Two.