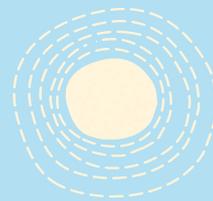


5. Plant Prints

Harvesting natural colours from the local landscape.



Activity description:

Capture the spirit of the downs just like the paintings by artists; Samuel Palmer (1805 - 1881), Thomas Hennell (1937 - 41) and Brian Walters (1935 - 1999) by harvesting natural colours from the landscape and creating plant prints.

Step 1: Here we go, botanical bingo.

ID is key! Before gathering any grasses, flowers or leaves why not play a game of 'botanical bingo' to help identify and/or classify plants within the locality.

Step 2: Using your senses.

Plant prints are most effective when the grasses, flowers or leaves have a high moisture content. Ask the children to use their senses (sight and touch) to describe plant textures. Do they look or feel: wet, dry, crispy, crunchy, smooth etc? Remember the Kent Downs are home to some of the richest chalk grassland plant and animal communities. Only pick plants of which there are plenty and check you are not picking something rare! Encourage the children to think of butterflies and bees and their need for plants for nectar collection.

Step 3: Smooth surfaces

Once the children have identified and selected a plant or small assortment of plants, they should then be placed on a firm flat surface which can withstand hammering. A wooden disc or chopping board are ideal as the surface pattern often comes through onto the fabric.

Step 4: Calico

A piece of cloth (calico) can then be used to cover the plant/s. If investigating symmetry and patterns why not fold the calico in half to create a plant parcel and create a print on both sides of the fabric.

Step 5: Gently, tap, tap, tap....

The next step is to gently pound the fabric with a hammer or mallet. It's often useful for the children to work in pairs to hold the plant/s in place. Good communication and teamwork are essential to avoid finger crushing. The hammering action releases the plants' natural dyes and preserves the colours of flowers, leaves and grasses in the cloth. The pounding of pigments is great as a stand-alone art and design session but also provides endless opportunities for cross-curricular investigations and experiments.

Equipment:

- Botanical bingo activity sheet
- Plant prints idea page
- Wooden discs or chopping boards
- Hammers or mallets
- Fabric - calico or muslin
- Plants - grasses, flowers and/or leaves
- Coloured pens

Curriculum links:

EYFS

ELG 01 Listening and attention:

Children listen attentively in a range of situations.

ELG 02 Understanding:

Children follow instructions involving several ideas or actions.

ELG 04 Moving and Handling:

Handling equipment and tools effectively, including pencils for writing.

ELG 12 Shape, space and measures:

Recognise, create and describe patterns.

ELG 14 The World:

Children talk about features of their own immediate environment and how environments might vary from one another.

Children make observations of animals and plants and explain where some things occur and talk about changes.

ELG 16 Exploring and using media and materials:

Safely use and explore a variety of materials, tools and techniques, experimenting with colour, design, texture, form and function.

ELG 17: Being imaginative:

Children use what they have learnt about media and materials in original ways, thinking about uses and purposes.



KS1 Art and design

Use a range of materials creatively to design and make products.

To develop a wide range of art and design techniques in using colour, pattern, texture, line, shape, form and space.

Learn about the work of a range of artists.

KS1 Geography

Geographical skills and fieldwork -

Use simple fieldwork and observational skills to study the geography of school grounds and human and physical features of the surrounding environment.

KS1 and 2 English

Spoken language -

Give well structured descriptions, explanations and narratives for different purposes including expressing feelings.

KS2 Maths

Geometry - properties of shapes

Identify lines of symmetry in 2-D shapes presented in different orientations.

Complete a simple symmetric figure with respect to a specific line of symmetry.

Draw symmetric patterns.

Extension activities:

Maths and movement! Why not fold the cloth in half and use the plant prints to explore symmetry, patterns, properties, position and direction of shapes, rotation and reflection?

Develop a real 'Sense of Place' by exploring the textures, smells and colour of chalk grassland plants. Which colours can you find? Once hammered, do the plants produce the colour you would expect? Do any of the plants or flowers smell? If yes, can you describe the scent? Can you create a perfumed plant picture? Do the plants you have collected look and/or feel the same? Describe their textures, are they smooth, rough, crispy, crunchy, spikey, soft, bumpy, hairy or prickly?

Living literacy! Combine plant prints with pens and encourage the children to create a chalk downs character or storyboard! Can the storyboard be used to draft a story set in the chalk downs?