

## Let's Get Crafty! Nature Crafts and Projects

We invite learners young and old to release their inner muse with these nature crafts and projects compiled by our *museum* staff! For each craft or project, we have listed any materials that you might need to complete it. If using plants for any of these activities, remember to be respectful to them by not taking more than you need.

- **Leaf Rubbings:**

- Collect leaves of various shapes and sizes. Place your leaf on a flat, hard surface, with the stem side facing up.
- Put a sheet of paper on top of the leaf and gently rub a crayon over the leaf hidden beneath. Continue until you can see the entire leaf. Repeat as desired with other leaves.
- *Materials needed:* Leaves (can be fresh leaves or fallen leaves), thin piece of a paper, and crayons.



- **Nature Mosaics:**

- Choose an animal, plant, or other item from nature that you want to feature.
- Create your mosaic by cutting up different colored paper or cardboard into tiny pieces. Glue them onto a piece of paper to create your work of art.
- Note: you might want to draw your design in pencil before you start your actual mosaic. Also, you could substitute natural materials, such as leaves, grass, and bark for pieces of paper.
- *Materials needed:* Construction paper, different colored pieces of paper or cardboard, scissors and glue. Optional: pencils and natural materials.



- **Shadow Art:**

- Collect an assortment of items found in nature.
- Put a piece of paper on a hard surface with sunlight shining on it.
- Place the natural items down next to the paper so that they cast a shadow. Trace their shadows.
- Note: you could try tracing the same items at different times of day, or at different angles, and seeing how the shadow changes.
- *Materials needed:* Paper, pencils, items from nature, and sunlight (can use artificial light, if needed).



- **Creature Features:**

- Use natural materials and items to create a creature sculpture. It could be a creature that exists, or an imaginary creature.
- In either case, have children discuss the creature's adaptations, which are features that help the creature to survive. Example: a beaver's rear feet are webbed, which help it to swim.
- Your creature can be "2-D" (lying down) or "3-D" (standing up).
- *Materials needed:* natural items, such as leaves, twigs, evergreen needles, pebbles, or acorns. Glue is optional depending on how permanent you want the sculpture to be.



- **Terrariums:**

- A terrarium is a mini garden housed in a glass jar or container.
- When choosing plants, make sure that they are ones that like the same environment and soil. For example, don't put a cactus in a terrarium with moss. One likes to be dry, the other likes to be wet.
- Select an appropriate glass container, which will also be based on the type of plants. Some plants like open containers with lots of air to keep things dry, while others like closed containers because they trap humidity.
- Once you have assembled all materials (see below), layer rocks at the bottom of the container.
- You may want to add a thin layer of charcoal on top of the rocks because it can help to filter water as it seeps down through the soil and prevents the growth of fungus.
- Next, place a healthy layer of soil that is deep enough to cover the roots of all the plants.
- Then, you are ready to put the plants in your terrarium. Along with the plants themselves you can put small items in your terrarium to decorate it.
- Don't forget to water the plants (but not too much!) and to place them in indirect light and in a location where any pets or very young children can't get at them.
- *Materials needed:* A glass jar or container, soil, small rocks, plants that live well together (whether bought from a store or found in the forest), decorative items, and charcoal.
- This site provides some additional useful tips:  
<https://climatekids.nasa.gov/mini-garden/>.

