

Arts and Crafts Projects To the Teacher:



If planning to do one of the following projects, be sure to gather the needed tree materials ahead of time:

- Birch bark is best peeled from the tree during the hot days of June.
- Tree leaves are more colorful in the fall, but care must be taken that the leaves do not have holes or other blemishes, and that they have been carefully pressed.

Some suggestions follow; many more can be added to your list of projects!

Leaves

- Leaf Rubbings – green leaves, chalk, suitable paper
- Leaf Mobile – laminated leaves
- Leaf Animal or Bird – pressed leaves, glue, laminating materials
- Leaves for the Window – pressed leaves, wax paper, iron, construction paper for frame

Roots/Wood

- Carve a spoon, bowl
- Weave a bowl or tray with roots of willow or spruce
- Roots are also needed for birch baskets and other artifacts.

Bark

- Make a basket or other artifact from birch bark (see BIRCH unit)
- Carve item from cottonwood bark – See following page, “Carving”
- Spruce – carve a bowl or spoon from spruce wood

Painting and Drawing

- Many of the usual types of painting and drawing activities can be focused on trees.

Build a Tree

- Collect samples of leaves and small pieces bark from a tree of choice and “build” a tree by arranging them and gluing on paper.

Make a Model

- Make a model canoe, fish wheel or fish trap.

Detailed instructions for several projects are included on the following pages. Many more can be found in reference books listed for the TREE Unit, and on the Internet.

Working With Wood

from 4-H arts and crafts Nature Craft

Carving

The best way to learn to know wood is to whittle. The basic tool for this is a pocketknife. When you start to whittle, you will probably want your own pocketknife or jackknife. Choose it with care. Try size, shape, and weight in your hand until you find a knife that fits you. You will enjoy working with it more.

Only a sharp knife is really safe to use. The new knife that you buy from a store will need sharpening because it will have a slight chisel edge to it. This must be taken off with a whetstone or oilstone. A whetstone that will fit in your pocket is handiest. You should have a sharpening stone of your own and learn how to use it.

A whetstone is moistened with water, an oilstone with oil. Two or three drops on the surface of the stone when you are grinding your blade will keep the grit and pieces of steel from clogging the cutting surface of the stone.

To avoid cutting your fingers when you use a sharpening stone, hold the stone so that your fingers and thumb will be below the sharpening surface of the stone. Stroke the stone with knife-edge facing in the direction of the stroke. Turn the knife over and repeat the stroking motion on the other side of the blade. Bear down on the cutting edge as you do this and keep the blade flat on the whetstone. Continue this much longer than you feel is necessary. When you get a wire edge to the blade (when its sharpness feels rough and jagged), do some honing strokes on leather. A razor strop is fine for this. The honing stroke is done with the blade flat on the leather with the cutting edge following in the direction of the stroke. This is opposite from the way you should sharpen the blade on the whetstone.

Practice whittling and test your knife at the same time by sharpening a pencil, making a fuzz stick with which to start a fire, or whittling a stake with which to tether a dog or pony. Notice how the grain of wood controls you. The soft areas in the wood alternate with hard areas running the length of the piece. Experiment with your knife to see how it cuts across these areas and decide on the best angle for cutting the wood. Make notches and stopcuts that will prevent splits.

Each kind of wood has its own character. With a sharp knife, the harder woods are really easier to carve but you will feel the differing hardness of both hard and soft woods. As you begin to whittle a piece of wood, you will probably begin to see the shape of some object such as a letter opener, a

spoon, or an animal. Only you and your pocketknife can fashion this object that is waiting to be released from the wood.

Driftwood

Weathered and worn bits and pieces of tree roots and branches carried by streams, rivers, oceans, and lakes are called driftwood. Use driftwood in its natural state, just as you find it. Scrub or clean the wood if you need to, but leave it unfinished. Driftwood can seldom be improved with paint or varnish, although hardwoods maybe rubbed sparingly with wax.

Driftwood can be used as jewelry, lamp bases, centerpieces, mobiles, or in flower arrangements and wall plaques. Some driftwood centerpieces may be enhanced by adding stones or rocks that by their shape suggest owls, frogs, or other animals.



Clipart from: artist-3d.com

Dried and Pressed Leaves

The following is taken from 4-H arts and crafts Nature Craft:

Dried or pressed leaves can be used to make interesting pictures and arrangements or to decorate other articles.

Making Leaf Designs With Paper, Plastic, and Wood

You can make these decorations using any kind of leaves. They will be easier to work with if you first press them in stacks of newspapers or in a heavy book without glossy pages, like a phonebook.

To make your decorations you will need some notepaper, construction paper, rice paper, cloth, wood, contact plastic sheets or laminate (obtainable at art supply stores) scissors, tweezers, crayons, watercolors, white glue, and a soft brush, and cups for making glue water.

Notecards, Placemats and Other Non-Transparent Items

When using clear plastic (clear contact or no-heat laminate) cut the plastic to the desired shape before you peel off the nonstick backing. Then proceed as follows.

- Put plastic sticky side up, on a flat surface.
- Then place your leaves face down on the sticky surface.
- After you have placed your leaves, press the paper or cloth that you want to use on the backing over the specimens.
- Smooth the plastic down from the center to the edges to remove any air bubbles.

Bookmarks, Placemats, and Other Items That You Want Transparent

These can be made using sheet acetate together with clear plastic. Make item as follows.

- Arrange your specimens on the acetate cut to the size you wish. (1-1/2 inches by 3 inches for a book mark perhaps.)
- Then cover them with a piece of clear plastic with the sticky side down.
- Rub out any air bubbles.

If you want to use rice paper, you will get a different but equally attractive effect. You can always use a single facial tissue; separate it if it is in two layers. Make your design using rice paper and face tissue as follows:

- On heavier paper, prepare a background using watercolor wash or crayons.
- Lay leaves flat on this background.
- Cover them with rice paper or tissue and brush the rice paper or tissue carefully and completely with glue water. Use a soft brush. Mixing some white glue with an equal amount of water can make glue water.
- Let your design dry before trimming the edges. The edges may be carefully torn to produce an interesting border. Scissor-trimmed edges tend to look somewhat harsh...

Leaf Arrangements for the Window

Leaf arrangements for the window can be made by placing leaves between two sheets of wax paper and ironing with a warm iron. Then cut out two pieces of construction paper as a frame and place the wax paper between them. Glue the pieces of construction paper together with the wax paper arrangement in the center. This kind of arrangement looks nice in a sunny window.

After you have tried some of these projects you might want to try something on your own. Such a project could be the arrangement of leaves and other objects on velvet, which could then be displayed under glass in an antique frame.

There is no end to the projects you can do with dried and pressed leaves!

Mobiles

The following is taken from 4-H arts and crafts Nature Craft

Mobiles can be made from various tree items. For example you can use the cones from different trees – white spruce, black spruce, tamarack and alder – in different groupings. Colorful pressed leaves encased in laminate or wax paper also make an attractive mobile. You could also use shapes cut out of different kinds of bark. What other parts of a tree can you think of to use in a mobile?

To make a mobile from some of these items, you will need the following:

1. Three tree branches or pieces of driftwood, one about 15 inches long and about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch in diameters for the bottom arm, another about 10 inches long and $\frac{5}{8}$ inch in diameter for the second arm, and the third one about 20 inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ in diameter for top arm.
2. About 3 to 5 yards of nylon thread or fishline to fasten the various parts of mobiles to one another.
3. Whatever tree items you have selected to have in your mobile.

Here is one way to put your mobile together:

1. Begin with the bottom arm. Cut a 6-inch piece of nylon thread and tie one end to one item. Then tie the other end near the tip of the branch that you want as the top arm. The item should hang at least 3 inches from the arm to which it is tied.
2. Attach your second item to the other end of the bottom arm using a 5-inch long piece of nylon thread.
3. Find the center of balance of the bottom arm of your mobile. Tie one end of a 25-inch long piece of nylon thread at this point. Tie the other end to one end of the branch that you want to use for the top arm.

4. Use the shortest arm or piece of driftwood for the middle part of the mobile. On one end of this piece hang a third item on a 7-inch long nylon thread. Attach another item with a 7-inch long nylon thread to the other end of the branch.
5. Find the balance point on the middle arm. Tie a 15-inch long nylon thread at this point, and tie the other end to the top arm.

When your mobile is all together, find the balance point of the completed mobile on the top arm, tie nylon thread at this point and hang the mobile from the ceiling, a doorway or any other place where it will look attractive.