

## Printing from natural materials

### Step 1: Collect Your Natural Materials

Before you can begin printing from nature, you'll need to go on a little adventure to gather your materials!

#### What to do:

- Head outside to a garden, park, or woodland area with a basket or bag.
- Look for interesting **leaves**, **ferns**, **flowers**, or even **grasses**—anything flat and textured works well.
- Try to choose items that aren't too dry or too thick. Fresh but not soggy works best!
- Be respectful of nature—only pick things that are abundant, and never take from protected areas.

**Tip:** Look for leaves with raised veins or rough textures—they make beautiful prints!



### Step 2: Prepare Your Printing Area and Materials

Now that you've collected your natural items, it's time to get your space ready for printing!

#### What to do:

1. **Find a clean, flat surface** like a table or desk. Cover it with newspaper or scrap paper to protect it.
2. **Gather your materials:**
  - Your collected leaves, flowers, or grasses
  - A rolling pin or brayer
  - Printing inks (water-based block printing ink works well) or acrylic paint

- A paintbrush or roller
  - Printing paper (thicker paper works best)
  - A tray or palette to roll out the ink
3. Put on an apron or old shirt—you might get a bit messy!

**Tip:** Have some spare paper nearby to test your prints as you go.

### **Step 3: Ink Your Natural Object**

Now it's time to prepare your leaf or flower for printing!

#### **What to do:**

1. Choose one of your natural objects—start with a leaf for easier practice.
2. Squeeze a small amount of printing ink or paint onto your palette or tray.
3. Use a roller or paintbrush to apply a thin, even layer of ink to the **back** (veiny side) of the leaf. This side has more texture and will show better detail in your print.
4. Be gentle so you don't tear the leaf or overload it with paint.

**Tip:** Make sure the ink covers the entire surface evenly, but not so much that it's dripping.



### **Step 4: Press and Reveal Your Print**

Now it's time to make your nature print!

#### **What to do:**

1. Place your inked leaf **ink-side down** onto your piece of paper.

2. Gently lay a clean sheet of scrap paper or tissue on top to protect your fingers.
3. Press down evenly using your fingers, a clean roller, or the back of a spoon. Make sure you press over every part of the leaf.
4. Carefully lift the leaf off the paper to reveal your nature print!

**Tip:** You can experiment by repeating the print in different colours or combining different leaves to make patterns.

