



# LEARNING ABOUT NATURE ART AT THE CONSERVATORY

The Nature Art Studio in the Scotts Miracle-Gro Foundation Children's Garden inspires kids to create works of art using natural materials.

Art involving nature goes beyond traditional drawing and painting.

It connects us to plants, animals, and the earth. Furthermore, using the natural elements as our artist's pallet provides us the opportunity to explore the beauty in nature, use scientific observation, and enhance creativity.

So let's head outside and use our imaginations!



Franklin Park Conservatory  
and Botanical Gardens

1777 East Broad Street | Columbus, Ohio | [fpconservatory.org](http://fpconservatory.org) |   

# ROCK & STICK SCULPTURE

How about using natural materials at hand to explore engineering concepts? Making sculptures out of rocks or twigs is all about balance. Simply grab some rocks, sticks, and any treasures you find in your backyard, and see what develops!



- 🌿 Find smooth, flat stones of various sizes.
- 🌿 Simply try stacking them to make sculptures.
- 🌿 Add ramps made from sticks to your sculpture and roll acorns and pebbles down.
- 🌿 Decorate your sculpture with leaves, acorns, flowers, shells, or other natural materials.
- 🌿 Use mud as “glue” or plant vines and plant stems to tie on your sculpture if needed!

## NEXT CHALLENGE: STONE STACKING

**Up for the next challenge?**

Try balancing stones like artist Jonna Jinton:

*THE ART OF BALANCING STONES*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UqU19dR0bFE>

# SOIL (AKA DIRT) PAINTING

“A rainbow of soil is under our feet; red as a barn and black as a peat.  
It’s yellow as lemon and white as the snow; bluish-gray. So many colors below.  
Hidden in darkness as thick as the night; The only rainbow that can form without light.”

– A Rainbow of Soil Words by F.D. Hole, 1985



Farmers, horticulturists, and scientists use the word “soil” instead of “dirt.” Soil is made of non-living particles, such as sand and tiny rocks, and living particles like decayed plants and animals.

Dirt is a term we use when we get our hands messy. So in this activity, we will do both – explore soil and get a little dirty; all in good fun!



## PAINTING WITH SOIL

- ✿ Find two to three different spots to dig up ½ cup of soil, keep each in a separate container.
- ✿ Place a tablespoon of soil on a plate and slowly add drops of water and mix till it looks like paint. Notice as you make paint from the different spots that you dug up, are the colors the same?
- ✿ Use paintbrushes or your fingers to paint on a piece of paper.
- ✿ For extra fun, add a little food coloring to your soil paints to see what happens!



### Curious to learn more?

Check out The Dirt on Dirt | Sid the Science Kid:

<https://cet.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/f6341f76-e155-4320-897f-2efe9a04481c>

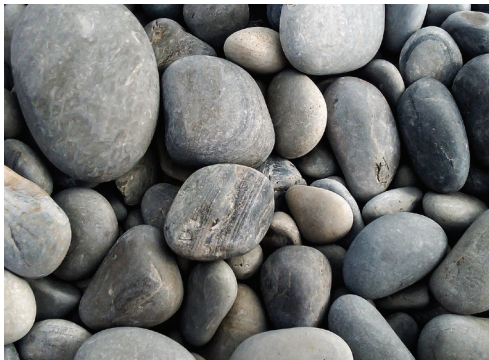
# NATURE MANDALA

The word Mandala (pronunciation mon- dah- lah) means “circle.” A mandala is a circular structure with radial symmetry, meaning that the design radiates out symmetrically from the center. You can see this shape in nature when you look at tree rings, spider webs, snowflakes, and even our own eyes. Let’s gather what we can find outside to make our own very special mandala!



## MAKE A MANDALA

- 🌿 Collect pebbles, seeds, leaves, flowers, and anything else you want for your artwork.
- 🌿 Take one thing or object you collected and place it on the ground.
- 🌿 This object is your center point.
- 🌿 From your center point, arrange your objects around it.
- 🌿 For example, it can be a spiral or lines shooting out like arrows, whatever captures your imagination!



How many animals or plants have a swirl shape? Check out the book Swirl by Swirl Spirals in Nature

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_xwkUvtxobU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_xwkUvtxobU)  
to find out!

# FRACTAL HUNT

Fractal patterns are all around us; you can see them in trees, some flowers, even in things we eat like broccoli and cauliflower. A fractal is a pattern that repeats itself. We call shapes like this “self-similar” because a little piece of the shape looks similar to itself. For example, a small leaf of a fern has the same shape to the entire fern.

Take a walk through your neighborhood to hunt for fractals.



## GO ON A HUNT!

- 🌿 Take a notebook and pencil or digital camera and draw or photograph as many fractals as you can find.
- 🌿 Create a work of art from your fractal hunt.
- 🌿 Make a collage out of the images you drew or photographed.
- 🌿 For photos use a free online Collage Maker - <https://www.fotor.com/> or <https://www.befunky.com/features/collage-maker/>



# FLOWER POUNDING

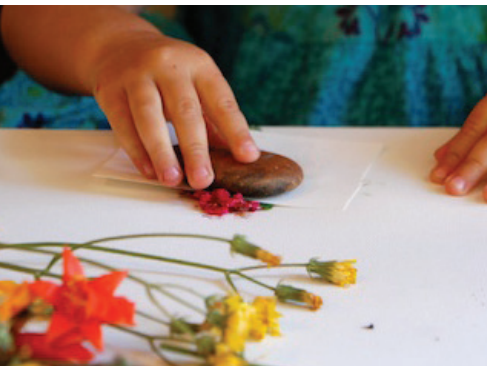
Look at your arm. What color do you see? Is it one color or many? Do you have freckles? What you are seeing is pigment. In flowers and leaves, pigment creates the beautiful yellow, purple, red, blue, orange, and green we see.

Let's experiment with pigment in plants and see what nature reveals!



## PIGMENT ART

- ✿ Pick fresh flowers and leaves.
- ✿ Pull the flowers and petals apart and arrange on watercolor paper, paper bag, or white cotton cloth. You can use whole flowers if they are flat.
- ✿ Notice that your flower petals and leaves may be more colorful or bright on one side—experiment placing the colorful side up or down and see what happens.
- ✿ Cover with a paper towel or wax paper.
- ✿ With a hammer or flat rock, pound the flowers and petals into the paper or cloth. Then gently pull back the towel or wax paper.
- ✿ What do you see? Is the pigment the same as the color of the flower petals or leaves?
- ✿ Experiment with how gentle or hard you pound to see how it affects the color or shape.



Ready to take your art to the next level? Check out this cool video and make a bookmark:

The Fine Art of Flower Pounding

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4F400ISeuA>