

Botanical Forest Creatures

Nature Printing Activity for summer camp students at Awbury Arboretum.

Approximate Timeframe: 3 hours

Ages 6–8

Note: This activity plans for large and small group participation with instructor support.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will practice skills in printing plants with a brayer, barren, and rolling pin.
- Students will observe parts of plants and talk about their shapes, forms, and textures.
- Students will invent a ‘forest creature’ by composing various parts of plants found at Awbury Arboretum.

ELEMENTS OF ACTIVITY (Timeframe: 3 hours total)

1. A hike to collect plant specimens as a group (1 hour). Ask each child to look for a variety of shapes, forms, and textures in plants.
 - Botanical descriptors to guide students:
 - Herb, vine, shrub, tree
 - Leaf forms: simple, compound, different arrangements
 - Flowers (inflorescence): umbrella (umbel), multi-branched (panicle), unbranched (raceme)
 - As a group, after the hike, we could work with the children to place their collections into groups of likeness. (20 minutes)
2. Each student selects from collection of plants to create a new ‘forest creature’ of their own imagination. (30 min) (While children are composing with actual plant parts, I will make up ink and prepare the table for printing)
 - Give each child an 11 x 17 piece of paper to begin to compose this creature with actual parts of plants. (encourage them to cut pieces and parts from their plants to compose their ‘forest creature’).
3. I will demonstrate process for printing plants to the entire group (15 min) and then work with groups of 2-3 at a time. (30 min each group)
 - Steps in order: inking plants, placing plants on paper, printing plants
 - I expect students will ‘print’ multiple times (repeat this process) as I will encourage them to print their forest creature one piece at a time.
4. End of day: Have each child stand up and tell a story about their forest creature to the group.
5. A great follow up at home would be that they write directly on their prints the story that they imagined.