



“In nature, nothing is perfect, and everything is perfect. Trees can be contorted, bend in weird ways, and they’re still beautiful.”

—Alice Walker



Outdoor Art Apprenticeship

Being outside in nature is a great way to spark your creativity. Some of our greatest works of art are inspired by nature—from early on, cave people drew pictures of sunsets, the sky, animals, and trees. Get ready to observe and collect things outdoors that will drive your art and creativity—from colors and patterns to landscapes and wildlife.

Steps

1. Explore art outdoors
2. Make something!
3. Get to know—and create—sounds of nature
4. Be a nature photographer
5. Design with nature

Purpose

When I’ve earned this badge, I will have been inspired outdoors and created nature-themed art.





Tips Before Takeoff

Staying safe will make earning this badge more fun, so before you step outside, check out this list:

- ▶ **Don't go alone.** Make sure an adult you know joins you on your outdoor adventure.
- ▶ **Dress the part.** Sunny out? Don't forget the sunscreen! Cold out? Zip up! Wear protective clothing—like a jacket, a hat, and gloves. Hiking a trail? Wear hiking shoes.
- ▶ **Pack for safety.** Bring a backpack with a reusable bottle of water. Optional: a first aid kit with bandages and antibiotic cream, a whistle, a flashlight with batteries, and a camera.
- ▶ **Stay connected.** Bring a cell phone in case you need to contact someone for help. Make sure you have good reception.
- ▶ **Be aware of your surroundings.** Pay attention to where you walk. Keep an eye out for signs, especially if you're hiking a trail that goes in different directions.

STEP

1 Explore art outdoors

Art can be found everywhere, not just inside the four walls of a museum. Put on your artist's cap and head outside to gather ideas that will spark your creativity.

Every step has three choices. Do ONE choice to complete each step. Inspired? Do more!

CHOICES—DO ONE:

Attend a performance held indoors and one outside to compare each. Find an event inside and one outside—compare the experience of seeing each. This could be an outdoor movie, concert, or play. Record your responses to each experience. How did they differ? Which setting did you prefer? How did being inside or out change your experience?

OR

Record how things change outdoors. Head outside and find a scene—it might be a lake, a tree, the ocean, a trail, or a plant in your backyard. Write about it or sketch it in color. Record everything you observe. What season is it? What time of day? What colors do you see? What do you like about your scene? Then go out and record this same setting again at another time of day or even a different season. You might see the same tree reflected in a pond during the summer and in ice during the winter. Is the lighting different? Did weather make a difference in the scene? In what ways do your two impressions of the same scene differ?

OR

Leave No Trace

Remember to practice "Leave No Trace" as you create your outdoor art!

- 🔥 Know Before You Go
- 🔥 Stick to Trails
- 🔥 Trash Your Trash
- 🔥 Leave It As You Find It
- 🔥 Keep Wildlife Wild
- 🔥 Respect Others

- **Dig into an artist who is inspired by nature.** Look for an artist who uses nature in her work. She might be someone living or dead that you research online or whose work you admire in a museum. She might be an art teacher, family friend, older girl, or person you meet at a craft fair or gallery. Find out what moves her when she's outdoors. What materials does she use? Why does she choose nature for her art? Then use her as inspiration to create something on your own.

More to Explore

Explore Art in a National Park

For years, the landscapes, preserves, and monuments of our National Parks have inspired artists. Some artists can sign up to live and work in the parks—imagine taking nature photographs while living in a remote cabin at Alaska's Denali National Park or writing a song about the crocodiles

in Florida's Everglades National Park! To see some artists' work, go to www.nps.gov and check out Arts in the Parks. Click on "collections" to browse through some digital exhibitions. Or better yet, see art in person at the Kolb Studio, in Grand Canyon National Park, or the sculpture gardens at Saint-Gaudens, in New Hampshire.



Courtesy of Kathy Hodge



Kathy Hodge (left), who painted the picture above, has worked as the artist-in-residence in many national parks, from Acadia National Park in Maine, to Petrified Forest National Park, in Arizona.

Prepare Your Fabric for Dyeing

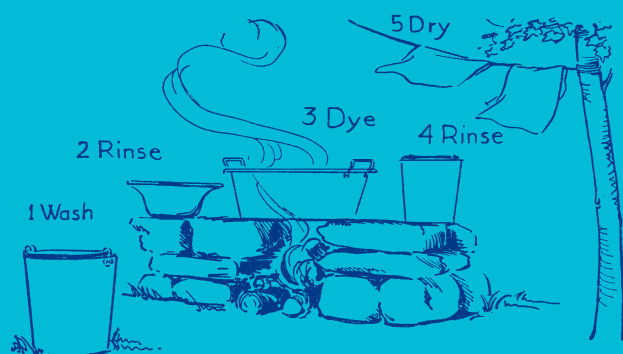
Blueberries, blackberries, and red cabbage create lovely blues. Raspberries and beets create red shades. Orange and lemon peels make light yellow or ochre dye. Spinach creates a nice green, and onion skins simmer into orange.

To make sure the dye sets into your fabric, first soak your fabric for at least one hour in one of these combinations:

- ▶ **For berry dyes:**
Dissolve ½ cup salt in 8 cups cold water.
- ▶ **For plant dyes:** Mix 4 parts cold water to 1 cup white vinegar. Make sure to use rubber gloves!

Here are a few common things that can be used and the colors they make:

Onion skins	— Light brown, yellow, orange
Spinach	— Green
Beets	— Rose
Goldenrod flowers	— Gold
Coffee	— Brown
Red sumac (leaves)	— Black
Red sumac (berries)	— Red
Carrots	— Yellow



Steps in dyeing

Girl Scout Handbook, 1951

STEP 2 Make something!

It's always fun to make something you can wear or give away! Just make sure not to disturb growing things—only use fallen leaves, pine cones, plants, or flowers. Ready to get started?

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- Dye something you can wear.** Find natural dye materials—beets, berries, roots, nuts, carrots, tea leaves, or flowers—to dye a shirt, tote, scarf, or whatever you want! Look for natural dyeing materials in your backyard and experiment. Use a color fixative to help your dye set (see Prepare Your Fabric for Dyeing on this page for instructions). The best fabrics to dye are cotton, silk, wool, and linen. Synthetic fabrics, like polyester, might work, too, but with lighter results.

OR

- Make nature art out of clay.** Clay is one of the most versatile materials you can use to create whatever you want—like something decorative (a pendant) or functional (a pencil holder). Head outside for inspiration—find a flower or animal to use as a model—then draw it and re-create it as a clay sculpture. Or put on a puppet show by creating clay shapes of the sun, moon, a cloud, star, and rainbow—add eyes and a mouth to each. Glue the shapes on craft sticks and perform your nature show for a younger girl. Find out how to make clay online or get clay at a craft store.

OR

- Make paper that grows.** Make a paper item that's embedded with seeds so the person you give it to can plant it in a garden or pot and watch it grow! See the directions on the next page. You can create things like bookmarks, gift tags, and greeting cards. Use colored markers to write a message on your seed paper. Make sure to include planting directions with your gift. Tip: Use seeds that are small, flat, and native to your area.

Fun Fact

To Dye-For Jeans: Denim blue jeans were originally made using dye from the indigo bush in India. Today's jeans are dyed using a synthetic (human-made) version.

HOW TO MAKE SEED PAPER

You Will Need:

- Thumbtacks
- Wooden frame
- Hammer
- Construction paper
- Blender or electric mixer
- Large baking pan (to dip your frame in)
- Seeds
- Paper towels or reusable cleaning cloths
- Old bath towel



▲ **1.** Thumbtack a mesh screen tightly across a frame (it could be an old picture frame). Use a hammer if necessary.



2. Soak shredded paper overnight in bowl of water.

◀ **3.** The next day, add soaked paper to a blender and mix (make sure to use the lid!) or beat carefully with an electric mixer to make a smooth pulp. If the mixture isn't smooth, add water.

4. Put pulp mixture in a baking pan, then add more water as needed.

5. Stir in seeds.

6. Stir up the mix with your hands (to keep things from settling at the bottom).

7. Hold the screen frame parallel to the tabletop and dip it into the pulp-and-seed mixture. Gently move it from side to side to remove excess water and distribute the pulp evenly on the screen.



▲ **8.** Lift the screen frame out of the water, keeping it parallel to the tabletop.

9. Place the screen frame with the pulp and seed mixture on top of an old bath towel and let it drain. Press a paper towel or cleaning cloth to absorb and lift the water from the paper.

10. Place the frame, pulp side down, onto another dry paper towel or cleaning cloth.

11. Slowly lift the screen and peel the edge of the paper away so the seed paper drops onto the cloth. ▶



12. Let the paper dry overnight or place outside in the sun to dry.

13. Cut your paper into shapes and decorate it!

⚙ **Tip:** If the paper is not flat after drying, place a heavy book over it for a few hours.

Directions for planting: Lay paper on top of soil and sprinkle ¼-inch layer of soil over it. Water soil lightly and keep seeds wet until they sprout.





STEP

3 Get to know—and create—sounds of nature.

The sounds you hear outdoors are a powerful connection to nature. Think about how you feel when you hear rolling thunder, water flowing in a stream, or a bird chirping. Take your cues outdoors as you absorb the natural sounds of wind, water, wildlife, weather, plants, and trees, and make music!

CHOICES—DO ONE:

Produce outdoor sounds. Go outdoors and listen for sounds. It can be at a park, on a trail, or in your backyard. Then go indoors to re-create the sounds vocally or by using objects to mimic the sound. For example: Blow a whistle to sound like a cricket. Drop dried beans to sound like hail. If you can, record your nature sounds. Play or perform your sounds for a friend to see if she can guess what it is.

OR

Create a nature playlist. Create a playlist out of at least five songs to listen to when you're doing something fun outdoors. Choose your theme: Slow music for relaxing outdoors? Uplifting, steady rhythms for a hike? Or fast, upbeat tunes for a run? Then create nature-themed cover art for your playlist.

FOR MORE FUN: Create a playlist of songs that have lyrics about nature in them. Share it with friends and family.

OR

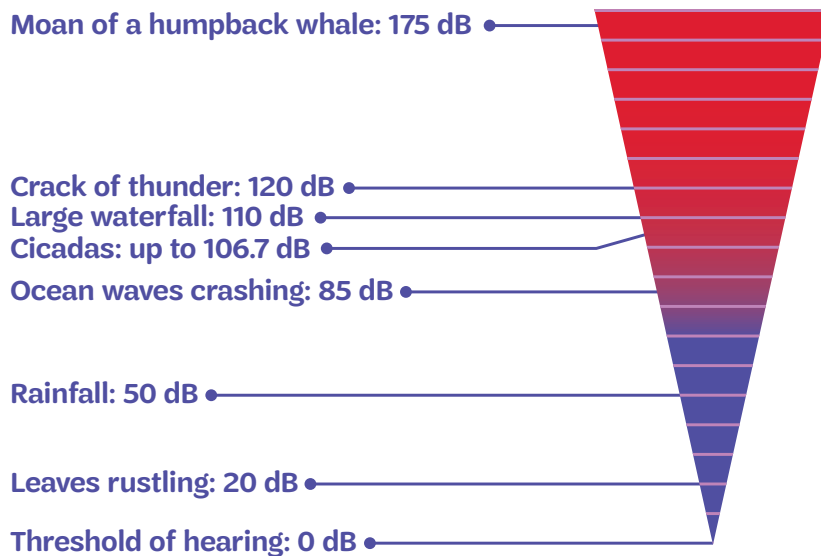
Write a rap or poem inspired by nature. Write about something in nature that moves you, like saving an endangered species, preserving a trail, or your experience on a whitewater rafting or a ski trip. Share your rap or poem with friends and family in an outdoor setting.

FOR MORE FUN: Have a friend add music or beats to your rap or poem.



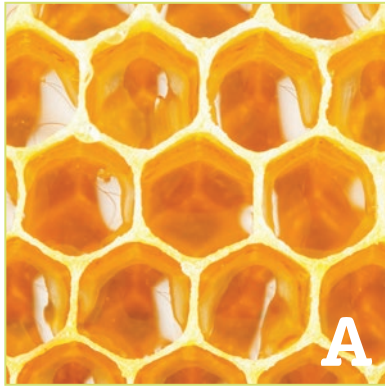
NATURAL SOUNDS

People often associate nature with peace and quiet—but the outdoors can get pretty noisy, even without human-made sounds in the mix! A decibel is the unit used to measure sound, from absolute quiet beginning at 0 dB. Anything above 85dB can cause hearing loss. Compare that level with a soft whisper at 40 dB, a car horn at 110 dB, and a jet engine at 120 dB. Here are some of the sounds you could hear outdoors:

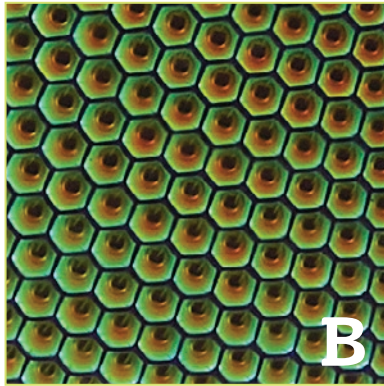


NATURE'S ARTISTRY

Test your knowledge of natural design by identifying the patterns below.



A



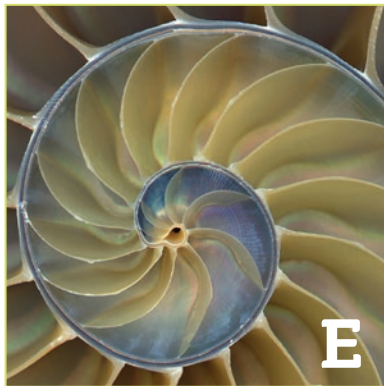
B



C



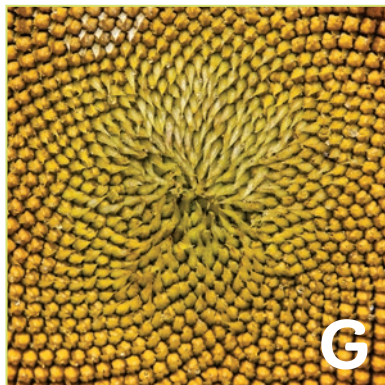
D



E



F



G



H



I

ANSWERS: A: Honeycomb B: Fly's eye C: Dandelion D: Butterfly wing
E: Inside of a nautilus shell F: Peacock feathers G: Center of a sunflower
H: Snake's skin I: Center of an orange

STEP

4 Be a nature photographer

Nature photographers take pictures not only because their subjects are beautiful but also to remind people to appreciate and respect the environment. When you portray nature through a different perspective, it opens up a new way of thinking. Explore nature and create your art through the lens of a camera.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

Photograph patterns and textures in nature. Find ones that appeal to you, such as the swirls on a butterfly wing, the shape of a petal, the veins on a leaf, the pattern of a snowflake, or the spines of a cactus. Then create a showcase of your work. It could be a digital album you can share, or make prints of your photos to put in a collage. Be creative!

OR

Create an outdoor photo journal. Take a walk or hike with a friend and take picture breaks along the way: Shoot photos of wildlife, landscapes, flowers, trees, pathways, signs—whatever you see. Then print your photos to paste in a journal, or upload them to your computer for a digital journal. Write fun and descriptive captions to go with each photo and share them with friends or family.

OR

Photograph camouflage. Animals and insects use colors and patterns from their surroundings to hide and protect themselves. Find and photograph things that have blended into their surroundings. It might be an owl in a tree. A garden lizard. A frog. A grasshopper. If you can't find something in nature, draw or use fabric swatches of camouflage patterns, then photograph them outdoors in similar surroundings. Make a presentation of your camouflage project to share for your troop, family, or friends.

FOR MORE FUN: Have a friend wear something with a camouflage pattern, then take pictures in outdoor places where she blends in.

Tips from nature photographers:

- ▶ **Keep it sharp:** Be sure you're in a stable position. Hold the camera steady with two hands, bring your elbows to the sides of your chest, and gently squeeze.
- ▶ **Capture a scene:** Move until your subject is off center in your viewfinder to make the photo more interesting.
- ▶ **Turn on your flash:** On a cloudy day, it can fill in shadows and brighten your subject.
- ▶ **Get down to nature's level:** For flowers and insects, shoot low to get the detail.
- ▶ **Be alert:** To find small critters to photograph, listen for soft sounds, and look carefully behind rocks and under logs.
- ▶ **Respect nature:** Don't trample flowers, disturb nests, or bother insects.
- ▶ **Take lots of photos:** Experiment with different angles and have fun!

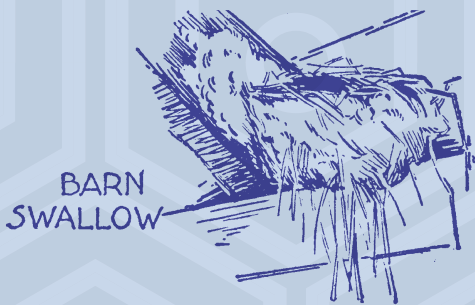
▲ Source: National Wildlife Federation



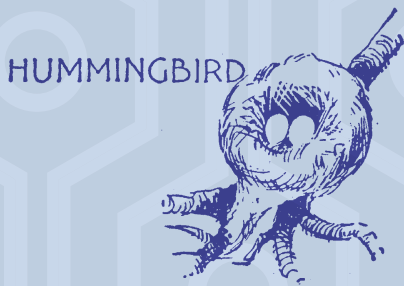
Nature's Architects



RED WINGED
BLACKBIRD



BARN
SWALLOW



HUMMINGBIRD



BALTIMORE
ORIOLE

REDSTART

Girl Scout Handbook, 1940

STEP 5 Design with nature

Bees create honeycomb—one of nature's most modern-looking and functional designs—by depositing wax into hexagon shapes to help store their honey. Nature's shapes and patterns have inspired architects for centuries, like the ancient Greeks and Romans who built columns fashioned after trees. Explore ideas for design by taking a close-up look at nature.

CHOICES—DO ONE:

- Make something that interacts with weather.** Create something that works with the weather, then put it outside to watch it in action. This could be a suncatcher that catches the sun's light, a sundial to tell the sun's position, a pinwheel that spins outside in the wind, or a windsock to hang outside to show wind direction. See the next page for examples of things you can make.

OR

- Be a nature architect.** Observe your natural surroundings and design something you can live in or that provides shelter. You can draw your design on paper, or if you can, make your structure! For example, if you're in the snow, build an igloo, snow fort, or snow cave. (Tip: Use a loaf pan to shape bricks for an igloo.) In a backyard, forest, or desert setting, collect fallen twigs and leaves to build a hut or yurt. Or take a walk around your neighborhood and sketch all the geometric designs you can find on plants, flowers, trees, and structures.

FOR MORE FUN: Design a miniature golf course in the snow. Smooth the snow in an area that will be your golf range. Bury empty aluminum cans under the snow's surface for golf holes. Tee off! Just don't forget to collect the cans when you're finished playing.

OR

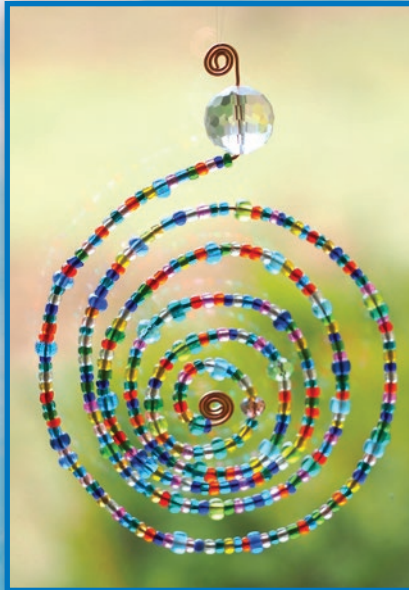
- Design—and grow—a square-foot garden.** Design a garden to plant a bunch of different types of herbs, plants or vegetables in one square-foot area! One way is to plant seeds in a raised planter box or plastic bin divided into 12-inch squares rather than straight into the soil. Then design your grid for what to plant in each square: herbs in one section and vegetables in the other? Or plant by color—red on one side, green on the other?



ART POWERED BY SUN & WIND

► Suncatcher

Thread glass beads on to copper wire, form a coil shape (or any other shape you like!), and hang in a sunny spot to see how it catches the light.



▼ Sundial

Decorate a round piece of wood, hammer a stick in the center, then let it sit under the sun and watch the stick's shadow shift.



▲ Windsock

Cut the top and bottom from a 2-liter plastic bottle to make a tube that's open on both ends. Add strips of plastic—a large garbage bag works well—hang outside, and watch to see which direction the wind is blowing.



▲ Pinwheel

Make one from plastic, wood, or metal to plant in a garden.



Going on a Journey? Do some badge work along the way.

On the *Breathe* Journey, you learn how to focus your senses outdoors to hear, smell, and feel everything around you. You'll read about artists inspired by air, like a playwright who wrote a science-fiction play or a Girl Scout who created an illustrated guide to local birds. You'll also make a playlist of songs that inspire you to care about air—a great way to do Step 3 of this badge. On your airy journey, you'll find lots of ways to create outdoor art for this badge!

Now that I've earned this badge, I can give service by:

- Working with younger girls on an outdoor art project
- Creating a presentation about art at national parks to share with others
- Making something outdoors that has a message about the environment

I'm inspired to:



Special thanks to our council and volunteer badge co-creation team:

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