

Crafty Ideas: Paper and Plastic Trees

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Pupils with the paper and plastic tree that they have made



This public sculpture project invites children to look to natural forms for inspiration, and to design and create outdoor artworks using largely recycled materials.

You will need:

- Long carpet tubes
- Newspapers
- Coloured plastic bags
- Large umbrella
- Masking tape
- PVA glue
- Plastic-coated garden wire
- Acrylic paint
- Varnish
- A post

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Adapted from:



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Use

Challenge children to make a new tree – or a grove – for your school grounds. You might want to do this as part of work on trees and the environment or as a stand-alone design and technology project.

Make

- Start children thinking about the design by looking at different shapes of trees. You could do this as an outdoor investigation in school grounds or a local park. Ask children to make sketches and describe how the wind sounds when rustling the leaves.
- As children are doing their research, ask them to also think about the scale of trees, and consider how they are going to create a sense of shape, sound and scale in their artworks.
- Ask children to draw and label a model of their design.
- When children are ready to start making their trees, begin by creating a sturdy trunk. To do this, tape three carpet tubes together with masking tape.
- Next, twist sheets of newspaper into paper 'ropes'. Using PVA, glue these all over the tree trunk to create a textured bark. Tape the ends of the ropes to the carpet tubes to hold them in position whilst the glue dries, otherwise they tend to unwind.
- When the glue is dry, paint the trunk with acrylic paint. Add several coats of varnish if desired.
- To make the tree canopy, first make a hoop of plastic coated garden wire the same circumference as the umbrella. Carefully remove the fabric from the umbrella. The ribs of the umbrella will now swing about. To prevent this, use thin wire or tape to fasten the tips of the ribs to the hoop.
- Cut brightly coloured plastic bags into long narrow strips and tie or tape them along the ribs of the umbrella and around the circumference. Slot the handle of the umbrella into the space at the top of the tree trunk and tape securely into position.

Display

Hammer a post into the ground outside and slot the construction over this in order to ensure a stable structure, or secure your tree on a stand designed to support similar structures such as garden parasols. Make sure that it is stable enough to withstand the wind and knocks and bumps that it might inadvertently receive from children.

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