

Leaf Printing

Whether we are 9 or 90, the natural world awakens our artistic side and inspires us to create, build, and innovate. In nature, we can imagine, take risks, overcome fears, make new friends, and challenge ourselves. Art and nature are closely tied and many artists through history, from Claude Monet to Andy Goldsworthy, have used nature to inform and inspire their work. Art helps us to express ourselves and can make us think, dream, and stop and look at the world in a way we may not have seen it before. Unleash your creative side and learn how art and nature collide by using leaves to make your own beautiful nature prints.

Nature printing is a simple activity you can do with children of any age. To begin, head outside, collect some leaves of varying shapes and sizes, and get crafting! Challenge yourself by searching for leaves of different shapes, sizes, or even from different species of trees. Bring along a field guide to identify some of your favorite finds.

You will need:

- Leaves, fresh or dried
- Tempera, craft, or poster paint
- Paint brush or **foam roller** (https://smile.amazon.com/Jack-Richeson-699063-12-Plain-Brayer/dp/B01DUBK0GY/ref=sr_1_4?keywords=foam+roller+brush&qid=1585255796&sr=8-4)
- Paper or card stock
- **Craft foam** (https://smile.amazon.com/Handicraft-Assorted-Colorful-Crafting-Classroom/dp/B07QVXPJS5/ref=sr_1_2?keywords=craft+foam&qid=1585255722&sr=8-2)
- Metal or plastic tray
- Masking tape or painter's tape
- Newspaper, paper bag or scrap paper



Once you have gathered your supplies, follow the simple steps below to create your masterpieces.

Before you start, be sure to prepare your workspace. Lay down newspaper or a paper bag to minimize the mess. Use painter's or masking tape to secure to your workspace. Next, tape the craft foam to the paper bag to keep it in place as you paint and pour some paint into the tray.



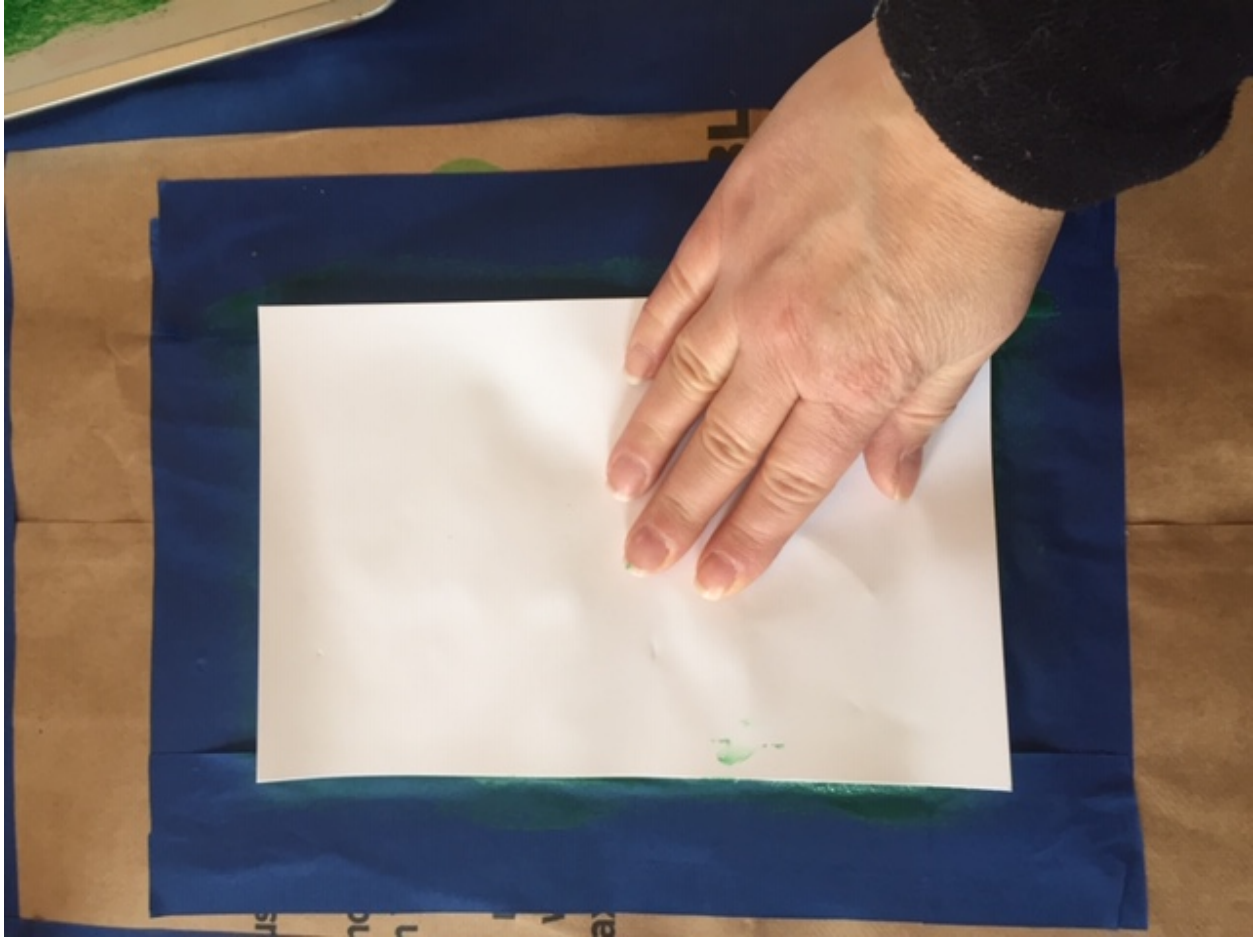
Use the foam roller to spread paint over your craft foam. If you don't have a roller, a regular paintbrush will work just fine.



Lay your leaf or leaves on top of the craft foam.



Carefully place your paper on top of the leaf. Cardstock is thicker and sturdier so it will work best, but if you do not have any handy, regular computer paper will work as well. Next use your hands to carefully rub the back of the paper. You will need a bit of force to get the paint to transfer, but do not press too firmly.



Remove the paper and see your first print!



To try another method, remove the leaf from the craft foam. **Do not add more paint.** This time print the craft foam without using the leaf. Lay your paper on top of the craft foam and carefully rub the back of the paper. Remove the paper and see your second print!



Repeat the process with a different leaf, maple acer seeds, or other interesting, flat shapes you find in nature. Try using different colors or multiple colors for one print.

Frame and hang some of your favorite pieces!

