

Plant Watercolor Paint 9-12

By: April Krebs

Lesson

We have been making paint pretty much as long as we have been making art. Archaeologists have found evidence of art making from around 40,000 year ago. Early man used earth pigments on the cave walls such as yellow earth (Ochre), red earth (Ochre) & white chalk. Ochres are colored clays that are found as soft deposits within the earth. Carbon (Lamp) black was also used, collected from the soot of burning animal fats. Probably the best known early paintings can be seen at Lascaux in France. Many techniques used by Ancient Egyptians to make paint, we still use today.



Questions for students

What kind of things can you think of that have great color to use as paint pigment?
Can stuff we eat be made into paint?
How do you think people figured out how to make paint pigment?

Please use the [Other Resources Page](#) before you start the art project



Materials

- Baking Soda
- Lemon
- Several small jars or bowls for mixing (things not used for food)
- Colored flowers or leaves, Plants we used:

Purple = Common ground orchid = *Spathoglottis plicata*

Pink = Princess plant = *Tibouchina*

Pink = Rose buds = *Rosa* sp.

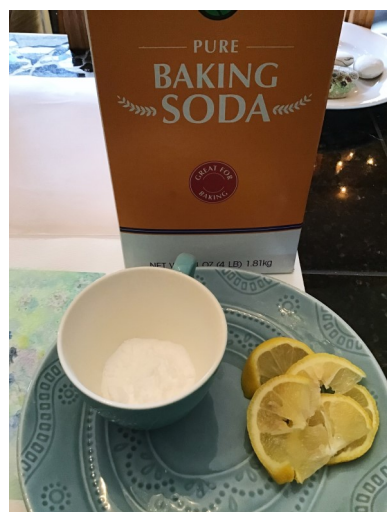
Yellow = *Calendula officinalis*

Yellow = *Thyris*

Green = Texas Sage = *Leucophyllum frutescens*

Red = Glory Bower = *Clerodendrum Speciosissimum*

- Spoon or popsicle stick
- Tea kettle & water
- Paint brush
- Paper



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Other Learning Resources

More Information About The History of Paint

<https://www.earthdate.org/colorful-history-of-paint>

<https://www.winsornewton.com/na/discover/articles-and-inspiration/history-of-pigments>

Videos About History of Paints & Painting

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZJi8ZZOjfXY>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu70lO1oqXw>

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6k8JEEP0QNg>

Help To Identify Plants

<https://www.plantsnap.com/>

<http://www.gardenanswers.com/>



Instructions



1. Go out for a walk around where you live & collect colorful flowers or leaves you can find. (Do be aware that some plants are toxic, make sure you wash your hands & do not use bowls or spoons that will be eaten on or later. Do not use the finished product with small children unless you know the plants you used are safe for them to ingest, you can make paint from fruit & vegetables.)



2. Gather the rest of your materials.
3. Place your collected flowers or leaves in different containers.
4. Boil some water & pour boiling water over the petals until covered, crush petals with a popsicle stick or the back of a spoon. Let sit five minutes to half an hour. The pigments should have come out of the petals & into the water. Do this for each plant you are testing.



5. Spoon some pigmented from each sample water into two different containers & add some lemon juice to one & some baking soda to another. Note the color changes! (Note you want to use different brushes or stirring sticks for each so not to contaminate them.)



6. With a brush paint all the colors onto a watercolor paper & let dry. Now you can use them to make a water color painting or to test pH!
7. You can also paint your original sample on paper & while it is still wet add the backing soda or lemon juice & watch the color change on your artwork.
8. Experiment with different plants, but always be careful.
9. Remember these paints are not archival & will fade or discolor.



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