

ACTIVITY GUIDE

- NATURAL PIGMENT EARTH PAINTS ON WOOD



Connecting creatively to the
landscape of the Wye Valley AONB and Forest of Dean

NATURAL PIGMENT EARTH PAINTS ON WOOD



The landscape floor around us in the Forest of Dean and Wye Valley consists of a multitude of colours. Red and yellow ochres, grey and brown can all be achieved by grinding small samples of earth in a pestle and mortar. Similarly, black and white can be made from charcoal and chalk. These harmonious natural colours look amazing when painted upon pieces of found wood or boards to produce stunning pieces of artwork or rustic signs.

Activity rating

Suitable for all abilities but some earth samples may be harder to grind in the pestle and mortars than others.

Preparation time

Approx. 15 minutes to prepare the table with the different earth samples and kit. You will need to have collected different colours of earth beforehand and it is best to have let it dry out over a few days if possible. A walk in the woods gives you the chance to see a surprising variety of colours once you begin to look.

Time required for activity

1 hour +

Shopping list

- o Earth pigments – red, yellow, grey, brown etc.
- o Charcoal for black.
- o Chalk for white (purchased if needs be).
- o Pestle and mortar. More than one allows others to mix different colours at the same time.
- o PVA glue to act as a binder for the earth pigments.
- o Pot to mix earth paint in.
- o Pot of water.
- o Some suitable brushes.
- o Selected pieces of wood – either found wood such as driftwood, an old fence panel or even a branch that has had its bark removed. All would benefit from being washed beforehand and allowed to dry.

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Step by Step Instructions

1. Take a small sample of earth and begin to grind it down with the pestle and mortar until you have achieved the consistency of powdered hot chocolate. Don't overload the amount as it will be harder to process.

2. Once you have created a fine powder, pour it into a pot and add a teaspoon of PVA glue and water. Mix this up until you get a flow similar to single cream. You may need to add small amounts of water gradually to attain this.

3. When you have created your colours, take your driftwood, board or stick and start to paint simple patterns and designs. Good marks to use would be simple dots and lines similar to aboriginal art as this produces a strong visual effect.

4. It is best to paint using short strokes or dabs as the paint works better when applied thickly. When dry the colours become brighter and the finished item can be placed either inside or outside such as a garden wall or sign for a cabin door etc.

Top tip!

- The pestle and mortars can be used for the natural berry ink activity.