

NATURE COLLAGE

By Anne Glynis Davies

It's at this time of year that Nature puts on one of her best displays. Look upwards and the skies are filled with a never-ending palette of burnt orange, copper and deepest port.

Yet, it's not only this wonderful splash of colour that makes autumn so special. Get closer to the ground and you'll notice lots of dead and decaying materials that have wonderful shapes, textures and patterns. So why not have a go at collecting some twigs, leaves, seed heads and any other objects that attract you and see if you can turn them into a nature collage. What's more, making nature art is great fun, it helps you to see beauty in the world around you and you'll have something to hang on the door for a seasonal welcome with a difference.

You Will Need:

- A collection of your favourite found objects – seed heads, pressed leaves, dried flowers, twigs, bark, nuts, shells, pebbles, feathers, pine cones, acorns ...
- A cork tile – from craft shops or DIY stores
- Sharp scissors or secateurs
- Non-toxic glue
- A brush
- A large, heavy book for pressing leaves, flowers...
- Blotting paper
- Push pins – suitable for use with cork
- A picture hook
- Heavy duty string
- Elastic Bands

Crafty Tips:

- Always wash your hands after searching through leaf litter and other debris – if possible try to wear gloves and avoid areas contaminated by litter, animal faeces and other toxic materials.
- You can make your nature collage as small, or as big as you like. Glue several cork tiles together to create a really large-scale piece!
- Try incorporating any natural objects you collected during a holiday or other special trip into your collage – it will give a personal touch to your artwork.

1. Collect lots of dead and decaying materials. This could be in your own garden, a nearby park, along a country footpath, a field or even on a coastal walk. Make sure any material you collect is dead or in the process of decay; it is not a good idea to take parts of living plants. Put the objects in a basket or glass jar and try to select something that has an appealing quality for example, you like its delicate patterns or it has a spiky texture.



Did You Know?

- The word autumn comes from the Old French word *autompne* and later evolved into the Latin word, *autumnus*.
- Colour change in leaves occurs wherever deciduous trees are found. This colour change is said to be most spectacular in Eastern Canada and the New England region of the United States, where thousands of tourists or 'tree peepers' visit when the leaves are at their peak.

How To Do It:

2. When you get home, put your found objects onto a table and start to examine the items you have collected. Decide which is the most colourful, the largest and the smallest etc.
3. You will need to press or dry any plant material before attaching it to your nature collage. Air dry your plant material; tie flowers, herbs and grasses in separate bunches with elastic bands and hang the bunches upside down in a garage or airing cupboard until crisp to the touch. Pressing is suitable for leaves, ferns, flat flowers and single petals; simply place between sheets of blotting paper in the lower part of a heavy book and leave for a few days.
4. Begin to arrange the objects on your piece of cork background. It's a good idea to experiment with several different arrangements, before choosing a final design. In general, related and larger items look better grouped together, but it really is up to you. You may need to cut some objects with scissors or secateurs. Note: adult supervision is needed at all times with sharp tools.
5. Glue each object carefully in place and leave to dry for several hours. For a heavier item you can use a push pin to attach it to the cork tile.
6. To finish, glue a picture hook to the back of the cork and then thread string through to make a hanger.