

# Nurture Nature - Week 3

## Experimenting with printmaking



This week our technique is printmaking. You are going to make a stamp for block printing and cut some stencils and look at different ways of using them. You can also experiment with printing natural materials.

The image on the left is called 'Bird Garden' it's a fabric printed from an original linocut by Mark Heard. There is so much detail in this print to inspire our project. Beautiful textured birds surrounded by swirling, trailing plants.

### This week you will need

Sketchbook

Small pieces of thick cardboard, for example from a cardboard box, you have some in your kit

Funky foam, there's some in your kit

(if you don't have a kit or any funky foam you can just use the cardboard again)

Scissors

PVA glue

Acrylic paints - Remember the acrylic paint can stain your clothes so cover up!

Paper plate or piece of card to use as a paint palette

Sponges

Thin card to make stencils (you have some pieces of coloured card in your kit for this)

Pencil, sharpener, eraser

Masking tape

Newspaper or something to cover your work surface

You might also like to try printing with natural materials so you could collect a few leaves

## How to make a stamp and print with it

To make a printing block or stamp you will cut shapes out of the funky foam and stick them onto the thick cardboard. You can cut shapes freely or draw them onto the foam first using a pencil. Start with simple shapes and think about easy ways to cut them without wasting too much foam.

To fix together use the PVA glue, spread it thinly over the foam shape and press firmly onto the cardboard.

If you want to add a bit of extra detail to your stamp you can use a cocktail stick to etch lines and dots into the foam. Make sure the glue is completely dry before printing. You could add a handle to the back of your stamp using masking tape.

When you print your stamp your image will be in reverse.

### There are some examples on page 3.

To apply the paint use one of your sponges, do not wet the sponge. Hold the green scratchy bit and dip the soft spongy bit into the paint. **BEFORE YOU PUT IT ON YOUR TILE** you must dap the sponge around the palette to spread the paint out evenly across the surface, too much paint will spoil the print.

Next gently dab the paint all over your printing block, you should cover all the foam shapes evenly with paint, try to avoid getting paint on the cardboard, some will get on there and that's OK but the less the better.

As soon as you have covered the foam evenly turn it upside down and press it onto a clean flat page in your sketchbook.

Press it down firmly with the palm of your hand, make sure you press all over but don't thump it or poke it or it will smudge. Then carefully lift up your stamp and you should have a lovely print.

If it's blotchy and smudgy you have used too much paint, carefully clean your tile and try again.

If you can hardly see it at all you haven't used enough paint or worked too slowly so the paint dried before you printed so add some more paint and try again.

You can use your stamp as many times as you like but you will need to add extra paint for each print. If you have etched extra detail in with the cocktail stick you might need to clean it after a few prints, you can use a clean damp sponge.

If you want to print something else on top of your print make sure the paint is completely dry first.

You can also print with found objects and natural materials such as leaves, try corrugated card or textured fabric to create backgrounds, milk bottle lids for circles. If you're printing leaves dab the paint on the back where the veins are more prominent.



Below are some printing experiments from my sketchbook. I have used plants as a theme, especially dandelions. Try to go for a walk in your area and see what inspires you or take a close look at Mark Heard's bird garden on page 1.

Start with a simple image and then you can build up a more complicated design if you like. When you have finished printing wipe your stamps over with a damp sponge and keep them in your art kit, you might want to use them again later.

Print with textured paper, card or fabric -

I've printed a light colour flower onto a dark colour background.

here I have used corrugated card to print a dark background.

you can sponge different colours on different parts of your stamp.

Try printing a dark flower on a light background.

I've printed the card twice - once horizontally and once vertically. Make sure the 1st layer is dry before printing the second one.

Be economical with the foam. Plan ways to make cutting out easier

Here - the paint has sunk into the detail but it still be seen

On this print you can clearly see how the lines drawn with the cocktail stick haven't picked up the paint and can be seen clearly.

Leaf stamp with details drawn on using a cocktail stick.

Try cleaning your stamp.

To Make this flower ->  
Cut 3 strips of foam - See above  
Strip 1 - cut 8 petals  
Strip 2 - makes the stalk  
Strip 3 - cut 2 leaves and the flower centre.

Trim the cardboard around the edge of the stamp.

When you stick your foam onto the board you can push together the edges where you have cut the shapes out.

Stamp

PRINT EXPERIMENTS.

print

## **How to make a stencil**

To make a stencil you will need some thin card, a pair of scissors and a pencil. It's best to begin with a simple shape such as a leaf.

You need to cut a shape from the middle of a piece of card, you can do this by folding the card in half then draw half your shape against the fold of the card, then cut out through both thicknesses of card and open out to reveal your stencil.

Or you can draw your shape onto the middle of your card, make a straight cut from the edge of the card to your shape and cut round the shape, then repair the cut you made at the beginning with a piece of tape.

Always leave a good size border 2-3cm/1inch around your design so you can sponge paint into your stencil without it going all over your background.

**On page 5 there is a page from my sketchbook, the pink shapes are my stencils and should help to explain.**

When you cut out your stencils if you can keep the shape you are cutting out all in one piece you can also use this to create some 'negative space' prints that will make some great collage papers to use later on.

To print your stencil you need the acrylic paint, sponge and paper plate palette. The stencils work best with hardly any paint and the sponge must be dry. Dab a small amount of paint onto your sponge and dab it around your palette to spread it thinly and evenly over the surface.

Place your stencil onto your paper, you can either hold it in place with your fingers or use a piece of tape that you have stuck to your clothes first so that most of the sticky has come off and it won't rip your paper and just apply the tape very lightly.

Apply the paint by dabbing lightly all over the hole in your stencil, keep dabbing until you have built up a layer of colour, it should have a stippled effect, then carefully remove your stencil. Once the paint is dry you can build up layers of stencils. You can also fill your stencil by making patterns with felt tip pens.

You can create negative space prints by using the part cut out of your stencil, place it on your paper and dab paint around the edge.

You can experiment on pages in your sketchbook, you can print randomly or make a picture or pattern. Try making some interesting printed pages that you can use in your collage projects over the next few weeks.

Make notes about what you do and keep your stencils safe to use again.



• EXPERIMENT WITH STENCILS.

Use the cut out to make negative space prints.

Place your cut out shape on the paper and sponge paint around the edge

• Negative space.

You only need a tiny amount of paint. Dab the sponge around the palette to remove excess paint

layer the stencil on top.

Always make sure the first paint is dry before adding another layer.

• stencil a background.

• Make some collage papers.

you can make a stencil from a piece of card - draw your shape then cut into the card and around the shape. Join card with tape. fill with felt tip or sponge over with paint.

cut around the shape

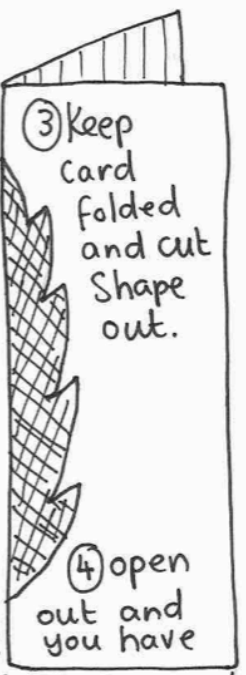
repair with tape.

Patterns to make

use felt tip pens in your stencil! or use felt tip pens to make

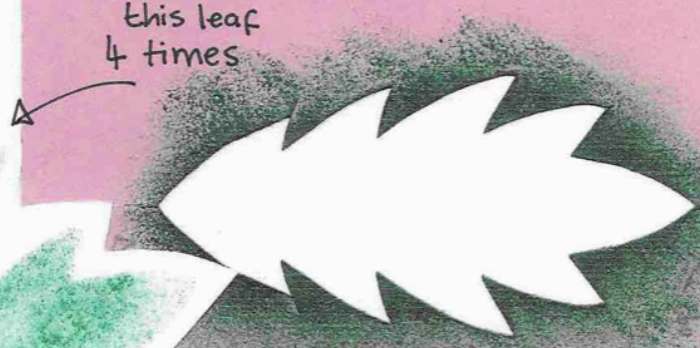
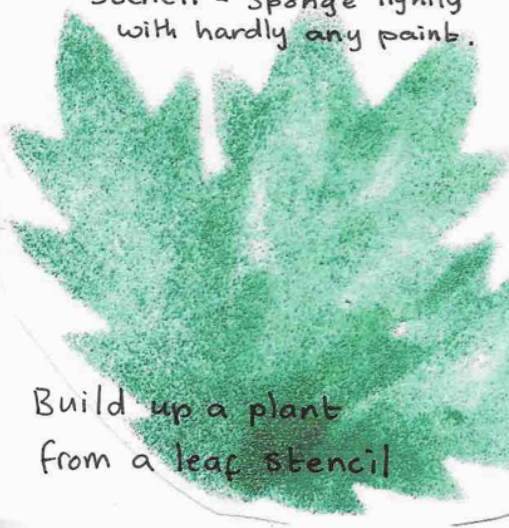
① fold a piece of thin card in half

② Draw half a shape eg: a leaf against the fold



Sponge paint into your stencil - sponge lightly with hardly any paint.

Here I have stencilled this leaf 4 times



Build up a plant from a leaf stencil