

Recommended Resources

Bibliography

Castaldo, Nancy F. Winter Day Play! Chicago Review Press; Chicago, IL: 2001.

Cerullo, Mary M. Reading the Environment: Children's Literature in the Science Classroom, Heinemann; Portsmouth, NH: 1997.

Prince, Eileen. Art is Every Day: Activities for the Home, Park, Museum, and City, Zephyr Press; Chicago, IL: 2012.

Shedd, Warner. The Kids' Wildlife Book, Williamson Publishing; Charlotte, VT: 1994.

Smith, Keri. How to Be an Explorer of the World, Perigee Book; New York, NY: 2008.

Online Resources

Tree, Leaf, and Seed Identification Posters from International Paper:

<http://www.internationalpaper.com/US/EN/Company/LearningCenter/Posters.html>

Neighborhood Detectives: A Class Case Study:

<http://www.good.is/posts/exploratory-learning-a-toolkit-to-turn-elementary-school-kids-into-neighborhood-detectives>

Recommended Read-Alouds

- One Small Place in a Tree by Barbara Brenner
- Dory Story by Jerry Pallotta
- Traces by Paula Fox
- Going Lobstering by Jerry Pallotta
- Time to Sleep by Denise Fleming
- Not a Stick! By Antoinette Portis
- Planting a Rainbow by Lois Ehlert
- Over in the Meadow by Ezra Jack Keats

Trash Walk

Materials

Disposable gloves for all trash-pickers
Plastic bags (reused grocery bags are great)
Trash sticks (long handled claws, or nails on dowels) – optional
Chart of what's recyclable in town and not
Scale (optional)

General Directions:

1. Pick a route in the neighborhood that's an easy distance and reasonable space to cover for however many kids you are taking with you.
2. Pair everyone up into trash-spotters and trash-pickers. They can switch halfway through the walk.
3. Talk over what is 'trash' and what is natural leaf litter, etc. Be sure to remind everyone to keep their gloves on at all times, and not to touch their faces until they've washed their hands at the end of the walk.
4. Give each pair a bag for recycling and a bag for trash.
5. After the walk, collect all the trash you've found and weigh it on a scale.
6. Wrap up with a recycling art project! (Make sure to clean any items you choose to use!)

Seed-bombing

What is a seed bomb?

A seed bomb, or seed ball, is a mixture of clay and seeds which are native to a particular area. They are designed to help repopulate native plants in areas like barren lots, abandoned corners of play grounds, or even patchy backyards.

Materials:

Red clay or Crayola air-dry clay
Spray bottle
Water
Native seeds (at least 3 varieties)
Compost or worm castings
Large flat surface for rolling (and something to cover or clean it)
Spoon, knife, or popsicle stick



Directions:

1. Mix 5 parts red clay with 1 part compost and 1 part seeds (a teaspoon is a good measure).
2. Dampen the mixture with the spray bottle. Do not get it very wet, just enough to stick together.
3. Knead the mixture together with your hands. Use a popsicle stick, knife, or spoon to divide the mixture into small balls, roll, and set in the sun to dry.
4. If using air-dry clay, roll out the clay into a flat layer. Cut to desired size. Drizzle the seed and compost evenly over the surface of the clay.
5. Dampen the mixture with the spray bottle, and then roll up the clay into a ball, set in the sun to dry.
6. When your seed bombs are dry, find bare places in need of plants, and let them free. You may either water the seed bombs, or wait to put them out until shortly before rain is predicted.

Resources:

Wildflowers Native to Massachusetts:

http://www.wildflowerfarm.com/index.php?p=page&page_id=MA

Recommended Plants for Massachusetts:

<http://www.wildflower.org/collections/collection.php?collection=MA>

Echo Ceramics, Red Clay Supplier:

<http://www.echoceramics.com/html/tools.htm>

Seed-Bombing How-To Video:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/video/2008/apr/25/seedbombing>

Rock Gardens

Materials:

Tray with 4 sides at least ½" deep
Sand or small pebbles
Larger rocks or shells
Sturdy sticks or chopsticks for raking and drawing
Plant elements (optional)
Animal toys (optional)



Ways to Use a Rock Garden with Pre-school Students:

- Practice drawing letters in the gravel.
- Draw linear, spiraling, and geometric shapes in the gravel.
- Add plants and animal toys for small-world imaginative play.
- Make alphabet pebbles with paint or permanent marker and use the tray for letter recognition, spelling, and sight words.
- Practice balancing stones of different sizes on top of each other.
- Sort garden stones by color, shape, or size. Create patterns to replicate.
- Collect elements to add to your rock garden when on a nature walk.
- Add water to create a different sensory environment.



Sketchbook and Journal Prompts for Young Artists, Pre-Writers, & Early Writers

Natural Materials

- Draw what you see (not what you think it should look like).
- Look at an object under a magnifying glass or through a loupe. How does the texture/shape/detail look now?
- Trace a leaf, shell, or other solid natural object.
- Trace it multiple times to create a linear or mandala pattern.
- Make a rubbing of a leaf, bark, or other flat-ish natural object.

While Outside

- Draw a picture from an ant's point of view.
- Draw a picture from a bird's point of view.
- Make an abstract picture using only colors you can see around you.
- Make cloud observations. What shapes and colors are they? How fast are they moving? Sketch them and then look them up in a cloud identification book.
- Make a sun-print of an object you find outside (flatter is better) and glue or tape it into your journal.

On an 'Inside' Day

- Draw a picture of today's weather.
- Sketch your dream tree-house.
- Imagine you are a leaf being blown around by the wind. What kinds of shapes do you make? Draw the path of your leaf's travels in your journal.
- Create a creature: take body parts from several of your favorite animals to draw a new animal. Does it fly, swim, or walk? Does it have feathers, fur, or scales? Does it moo or bark or whistle?
- Color sketches: pick a color and draw as many things as you can think of that are that color.
- Sound sketches: pick a starting sound and draw as many things as you can think of whose names start with that sound.
- Draw something from your classroom's nature corner or something you can see outside the window.