

Biodiversity print

Biodiversity is the variety of living things. This includes not only animals but also plants and other organisms. Biological diversity is all around us and we only need to open our eyes to discover the wonders of flowers, trees, butterflies, birds and other animals. We can also bring biodiversity inside: have a couple of plants on your balcony or your window sills for example. And we can create beautiful art based on biodiversity – and learn from it!



Here is a way to enjoy biodiversity, get out into nature (spending time in nature also has a very positive effect on your wellbeing), become creative (also good for your wellbeing) and bring a little bit of biodiversity back into your living room.



What you need

- Leaves
- Flowers
- Sheet of paper
- Water colours or paint
- Paint brush or sponge
- Scissors
- Picture frame
- Markers

What to do

1. Take a leaf or flower that you want to use for your print. If you're working with a leaf, turn it so that the side with the more pronounced structure is facing upwards. If you have a flower, try to flatten it as much as possible without damaging the petals.
2. Use a paint brush, or better even a sponge, to cover the upwards facing side of your leaf or flower with paint.
3. Carefully pick it up on the sides, flip it over and press it with the painted side onto your sheet of paper.

4. Gently press the leaf or flower down onto the paper so that all parts of the leaf or flower touch the paper. This helps to transfer the watercolour from the whole painted area onto the sheet of paper.
5. Leave the leaf or flower there for a few minutes before carefully pulling it away from the paper. If you don't damage it, you can use it again with the same colour or another.
6. You should now see a clear print of your leaf or flower on the paper. If your leaf has a distinctive structure on the side that you painted on, you should be able to see the same structure replicated on the paper. If not, try using more or less colour next time and also change the amount of water you use to dilute the paint.
7. Continue with as many leaves and flowers as you like.
8. If you like, cut the printed paper and frame it, you have created a lovely decoration for your living room!
9. Can you label all the leaves and flowers that you printed on your sheet of paper? See how many you can get on your own or look them up on one of the many guides by the National Parks and Wildlife Service on www.livingearth.ie



Use some paint or watercolours to paint to colour one side of your leaf or flower. Then press the painted side onto a sheet of paper. Repeat with the same or different leaves and flowers and create a picture.



Once you're happy with your art, label the prints if you want or just cut the paper so that it fits into a frame. There is your new living room decoration!