

# Nature Mandala

Discipline: Visual Arts

Mess-level: Minimal 



## OVERVIEW

Pattern, symmetry, color: all of these art concepts can be explored using found objects and making simple arrangements. For this activity a mandala is simply a circular diagram. Encourage participants to begin with making a collection: acorns, blades of grass, clovers. From this collection, children place a center then make a pattern that extends outward by alternating objects in a way that feels pleasing. This activity can be done alone, in small groups, or even in a large group. You can even mix it up by starting as a group, then encouraging children to take pieces to make their own.

## MATERIALS

- ✓ All that you need is materials you find in nature, from pebbles to leaves of grass.

### Step 1



Tell children that they are going to make a circular pattern from natural objects. You might ask if anyone can tell the group what a pattern is. Then it is time to start collecting items for their pattern!

### Step 2



Encourage collecting whatever treasures are available at your site. Small gravels, twigs, leaves, and grass work well. But remember, patterns are repeated items, so be sure to get more than one if possible.

### Step 3



Now it is time to lay out the design. Begin in the center and work your way outward. Make as many changes as you want. Leave your designs for others to find and brighten their day.





## Keep It Going!

Identification guides are a fun way to turn any nature walk into a learning opportunity. Bring along a guide to trees or flowers, and encourage children to figure out species. An especially easy entry point is using leaves to identify tree species.



## Keep It Going!

Here is a perfect excuse to play with your food: make a fruit and vegetable mandala. Begin with clean hands and then encourage children to lay out grapes, celery, cherry tomatoes, blueberries or whatever else you find into a colorful, circular pattern. This helps children appreciate the colors and textures of fresh foods. The best part is that the final results are edible and healthy. Yummy!