

Hello Trees Resource Sheet

What to do outdoors in Summer

Nature paint and paintbrush: Kate

My 11-year-old great-niece, who lives in Sweden, sent me an email describing how she, with her friend Tova, had made a paintbrush out of leaves, paints out of berries, and painted on paper.

See [Jo's nature painting](#).

I had a go following Jo's instructions.



I collected rowan berries (orange and orange-red), a sloe (purple), a plum (purple) blackberries (purple, red and green), hawthorn (scarlet), some dried-up cherries (black) left on the tree by the birds, a field-maple winged seed (pink and green), some hornbeam seeds (green) and a yellow leaf.



I collected lots of different leaves to make a paintbrush: field maple, beech, alder, oak, birch, conifer, cherry and ash. Most of them I didn't use so it was mean of me to take them from the trees.



I found some broken-off ash sticks to make the brush handle and a blade of grass and a long stalk of grass to tie the leaves to the stick handle. I also found a piece of white paper.



I chose 2 cherry-tree leaves and wrapped them twice around an ash stick. I tried using the stalk of grass to tie the leaves onto the stick but it bent and broke. I found it surprisingly easy to tie the blade of grass into a knot.



I found some stones and a roasting tin.



In the corner of the roasting tin, I crushed the rowan berries.



The juice that came out of the rowan berries was very watery – I had hoped for thick, bright-red juice. I dipped my brush into the liquid and swished it around on the paper but there was no colour in it at all!



Next I squashed a sloe. Now the liquid was not liquid at all but a solid gel. I picked up a blob of gel on the other end of my brush and smeared it onto the paper. I was not impressed.



Would hawthorn haws be any better?

Again, there was only pulp.

Or was there? As I picked the pulp up on the stick end of the brush, I happened to pick up pieces of haw skin. A big bit was bright red. A day later that piece of skin had flaked off, but the forked yellow piece of skin with a tiny bit of stalk stayed and looked interesting, I thought.



There was also a grey swirl, and tiny flecks of black added texture.

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Cherries were all stone and no juice, but the plum pulp looked just right. I picked up the **plum** pulp on the leaf-end of the brush and stroked it over the paper.

A double glob of yellow glistened back at me.

Someone could turn those into the eyes of a tiger gleaming out of the forest, I thought.

Spurred on, I grasped the plum in my fingers and twirled it around over the paper. A vague grey trail appeared and the stalk added interest but next day the glistening would-be tiger's eyes had gone dull!



I used a stone to distribute the innards of an unripe blackberry. The tiny blobs of fruit gave texture to the result. Not thrilling!



The juice from my one single black blackberry gave far and away the best results:

on the leaf-end of my paintbrush, between my thumb and forefinger or under my forefinger.

Next day the colours were as strong. I say 'colours' because there was both purple and red-purple.



I was so enjoying painting with my fingers that I took a bunch of rowan berries and painted with them under my thumb. The bits of bright red skin still stuck to the paper next day even when I held the paper upside down, but the attractive stalk came away.



I was pleased that a tree fruit had made a decent painting. I had been disappointed that only the blackberry had resulted in anything worth keeping.

The fun for me was in the collecting and experimenting as well as in creating interesting patterns.

What does it for you? Have a go yourself and [let us know how you get on.](#)



For loads of outdoor things to find out and do, explore the [Hello Trees website.](#)