

For adults and children in the garden

Autumn pictures and magic carpets

Natural England wants to give a million children the chance to discover the outdoors. The natural world is a fascinating place to explore and our natural habitats together with the creatures and plants that live there can provide endless sources of fun. From your own back yard to the wilds of our national nature reserves, now is the time to make the most of the outdoors and go wild!

Together with Fiona Danks and Jo Schofield (www.goingwild.net), authors of Nature's Playground, Go Wild and Make it Wild (www.franceslincoln.com), we've produced these fantastic activity sheets to give you plenty of ideas of what you can get up to, what are you waiting for?



Autumn is the perfect time to collect fallen leaves and seeds, but what can you do with all these treasures? Try using them to make pictures on the ground, or perhaps weave them into your very own outdoor magic carpet. This is ephemeral art – it won't last for long so try to capture it with a photograph.

What you need

- A collection of loose natural materials such as leaves, seeds and fruits,
- Straight sticks to make picture frames and carpet shapes.

Making pictures

- Choose a clear open space on the ground, somewhere away from a path.
- Use the loose natural materials to create a picture – perhaps a face, a bird, a sun or a pattern. Let the materials inspire the children, but if they need a few ideas try to draw upon the natural world for inspiration.
- It may help to make picture frames and then suggest that the children fill the frames with a picture or pattern. »



Magic carpets

Children with lively imaginations might dream of flying off on a magic carpet to some distant land. Try having a go at making your own magic carpets from sticks and leaves then conjuring up some imaginary adventures.

- Look at pictures of Afghan and Persian rugs; woven from rich shades of red, gold, yellow and brown these probably echo the autumn shades found in nature and might inspire the children to make their own magic carpets.
- Use straight sticks to make large rectangular carpet shaped frames on the grass, and split them into sections.
- Encourage each child to fill a section with a pattern using gathered autumn materials.
- Can everyone stand on the carpet and imagine where it might take them? Perhaps this could be the start of some creative writing or illustration.



Safety tips

- Make sure children don't collect any poisonous materials.



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