

For adults and children in the garden or outdoor space - supervision essential

Making petal perfume and mystery potions

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?



Mixing and mashing colourful petals with water to produce their very own sweet-scented petal perfume is a favourite game of many young children. The natural world is full of scents, both pleasant and unpleasant. There's the sweetness of honeysuckle, rose and elderflower, the fragrance of herbs such as mint and marjoram, the rotting-flesh odour of the stinkhorn fungus and hawthorn blossom, the pungency of wild garlic and the sharpness of pine resin. Summer is the best time for scents, when the flowering plants are working hard to attract pollinating insects.

What you need

- Clear plastic cups/plastic glasses/a jug
- Water
- Pestle and mortar

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Making perfumed potions

- Each child needs cup with a little water in the bottom; perhaps the water could be the magic ingredient that will release the scents!
- Suggest they each find a special mixing stick.
- Ask them to look for leaves, fallen petals or fruits to use in their potion. They should choose things that look nice and smell interesting.
- The children can mix their finds straight into the water in the container or mash them first with the pestle and mortar.
- When they have finished mixing, gather the children together and ask them to make up a special name for their potion. Pass the potions round so everyone can have a good sniff.
- For some added mystery, blindfold the children and see if they can recognise their own concoction or identify the ingredients in the others. Be warned; somebody usually puts something unpleasant in his or her potion!
- Perhaps they could pretend these are magic potions, and dab a little on to their foreheads to transform themselves into magical creatures!



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Safety tips

- Remind the children that the potions must never be tasted: they are strictly for looking at and smelling only.
- Make sure they do not collect any poisonous or rare plants.