

Ash Tree Stream: Making Art With Ash Trees



Why Art?

When we make art with Ash trees, we use our senses to learn about them as living beings. We use our bodies to touch, look at and listen to their bodies. We notice their shape, colour and texture, whilst imagining what the tree might be feeling.

Art helps us to connect with the tree, to understand it and to learn about why trees are important to us and other animals or plants.

Rubbings



You can make rubbings of tree bark or leaves. Use paper that isn't too thick, so that the textures can still be felt through it.

Hold the paper over the area of the tree bark, or over a leaf on a flat surface. Use the side of a wax crayon (darker colours work best) to rub onto the paper, pressing firmly.

If you're using a leaf, place the leaf upside down so that the underside of the leaf with its raised veins is facing upwards under the paper. If you are making a rubbing of bark, choose an area that feels rough and has an interesting shape or pattern.

Art with Found Materials

If it's safe for you to spend a little longer with your tree, you could collect materials that you find nearby (sticks, leaves, stones etc) and make a temporary artwork on, around or even in the tree.

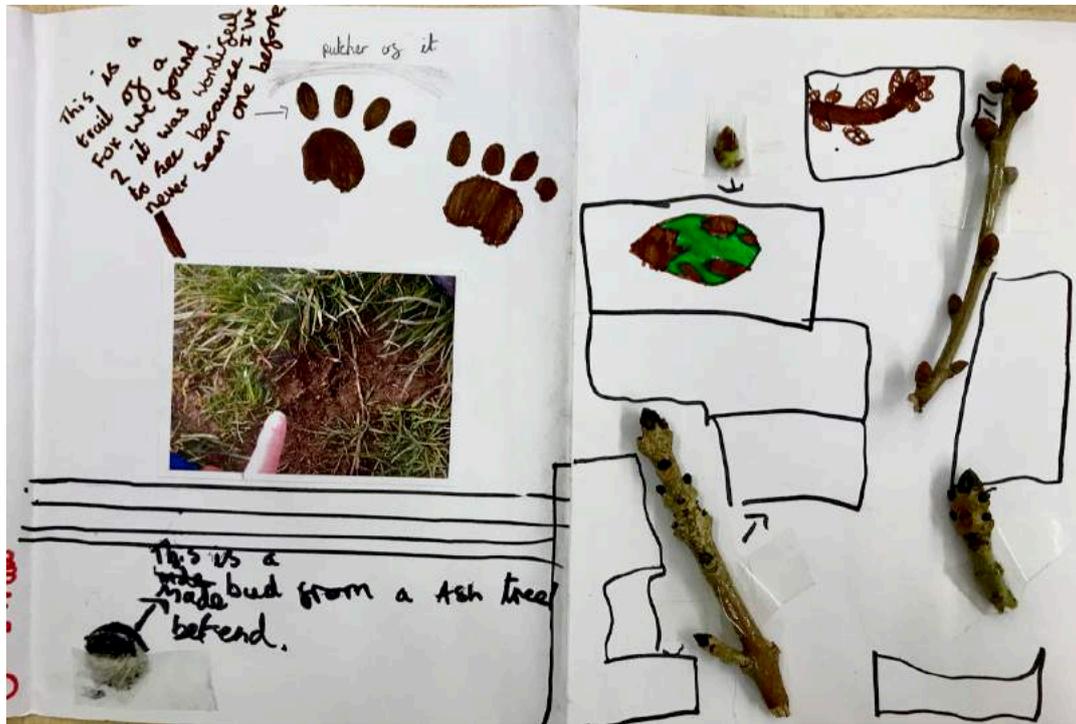


Your artwork can help draw attention to the tree so that more people notice it and learn about Ash trees. If you can't stay long you could collect materials to take home and use there.

Mapping Your Walk

How far is your Ash tree from your house? Is it in the street? The park? Your garden? What sounds or smells did you notice as you walked to your tree? What other plants, animals or birds are nearby?

Use drawing and writing to create a map of your tree and where it is. It doesn't have to be a map that others can follow, it is to record your own experiences.



Writing a Poem

When you stand or sit near your Ash tree, what can you hear and how do you feel? Can you use words to describe what you notice? Your poem could rhyme but doesn't have to.



Drawing Your Ash Tree

There is no right or wrong way to draw, we all draw differently. Decide whether you want to draw the whole tree or part of it. If you aren't able to stay long at the tree, maybe you could collect a fallen branch or a leaf and bring it home to draw later.



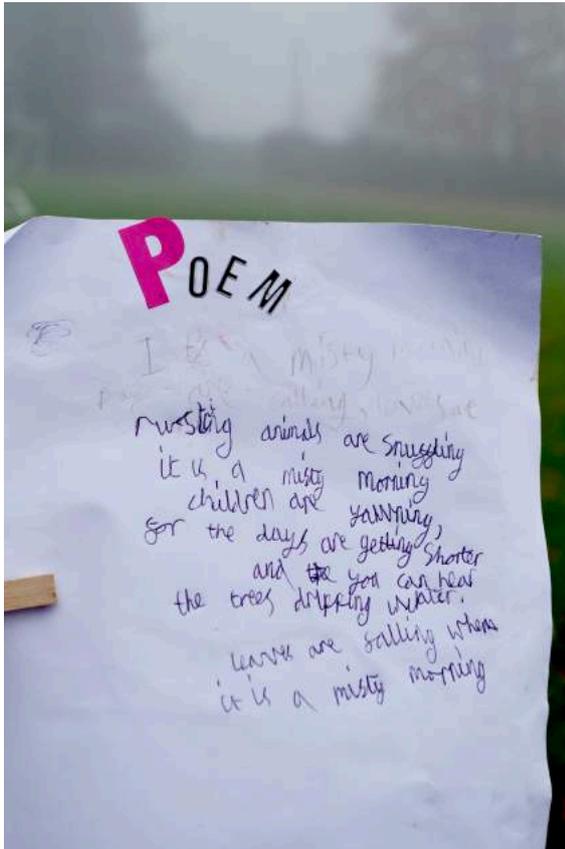
Look carefully and draw what you see. What shapes can you see in the bark? Are the branches straight or do they curve? All trees are different and your Ash tree may not look the way you would imagine it to. Drawing can help us to look more closely.

Other ideas

We've given you a few ideas of ways to make art with Ash trees. You can also print with leaves, press clay or play-dough onto the bark to make impressions, take photographs, make a video, write a story, create a collage or paint a picture. You could keep a sketchbook or journal and try out all of these different ideas.



If you can't get out, perhaps you could create a tree from your imagination, or from memory, or draw one from your window. We are particularly interested in Ash trees, but all the suggested activities can be used with other trees if you don't have an Ash tree growing near you.



Sharing your Artwork

When you have identified an Ash tree (see our *Identifying Ash Trees* guide on the Ash Tree Stream blog), and made art with it, we would love to see it. Please share a photograph with us using the #AshTreeStream hashtag on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, or return to the blog to email it to us using the link provided in the *Making Art With Ash Trees* post.

Ash Tree Stream

The Ash Tree Stream project is an art and learning project, with artist James Aldridge, Andover Trees United, CAS (Chapel Arts Studios) and five Andover Schools. The project is funded by Arts Council England and CAS.

You can visit the Ash Tree Stream website at www.ashtreestream.com



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