

Nature palettes

Colourful flowers and shiny leaves, soft grass and gravel paths, spiky seeds and soft wool tangled in hedgerows. All of these sensory features are a part of how we experience outdoor places and can stimulate memories of places we've been and people we've spent time with. Outdoor-related activities and interests that make hands-on use of natural materials can make stronger emotional connections and associations than simply looking and talking. They have proved to be effective in making connections to past memories associated with the outdoors as well as helping to create memorable new experiences. When used with young children you can set specific tasks for example how many different colours can you find?

These activities help us as a friend, carer and/or relative, to reconnect with an individual and discover what they find attractive outdoors. Nature Palettes is one such activity. It has been used by environmental educators for many years, reconnecting people with their surroundings and providing hours of fun for people of all ages and abilities. It has proved unbelievably popular with professional and home carers we have worked with because of its simplicity and low-cost.



Materials:

All you need is:

- a strong, thick piece of cardboard in whatever size you wish
- double-sided sticky tape
- an outside space

Instructions:

Take your blank Nature Palette (s) and find a lovely

Note: if you're out in the countryside or on someone else's property only select items that are lying around – don't pull leaves from trees or petals from flowers.



outdoor location to spend time wandering around.

Fill as much or as little of the palette as is desired. You may want to record memories on the back of the palette so that you can use it later in conversation. Mark the date or time of year on the card, it will help build a picture of what an individual enjoys about each season. As this activity can be done any time of the year it's a lovely idea to hang the palettes up at home and change them to reflect the different seasons. This will help people to identify with the changing time of year. If you have several palettes why not join them together to create a hanging mobile using coloured string or ribbon with garden canes or twigs collected while you were out.



Sensory Trust promotes and supports the creation and management of outdoor spaces that can be used and enjoyed by everyone, regardless of age or ability.

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