



# Kusaki-zome Art with Nature





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*Kusaki-Zome which means “an art piece amalgamating with some of the diverse blessings of nature. The natural dyes are made from whatever is growing seasonally in the garden and then the live flowers are pressed on to the papers. In an attempt to capture permanency out of the impermanence of each season. Distilled with natural dyes of indigo, coprosma, marigold, tanekaha, blackberry, raurekau, eucalyptus, cochineal, rosemary and rose, to extracting the full colour spectrum. In an experiment with hapa-zome a ancient Japense technique that transfers the natural pigment of flowers, taught to me by natural dye sensai Deb Donnelly.*

## Art Work Development

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Driven by sustainability and the desire to bring much needed awareness to the natural beauty around us. This technique has been derived from the natural world solely. When children experiment with these ‘materials’ they dabble in science. Most importantly allowing them to feel good while they are creating as art helps boost self-confidence. Which leads to inventing new ways of thinking, which extends well beyond the craft room.



This process aims to explore process. Working through different steps with no fixed outcomes towards the right and wrongs of art making. This tactile immersive process enables connections and respect with nature and the ability for a experimental visual art experience to help children develop skills such as critical thinking, self-expression, problem-solving, communication and collaboration with the world around them.



## Benefits of Working With Nature

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Natural resources encourage children to observe closely and use all their senses. Providing an interesting and ever-changing environment for children to explore is an ideal way to develop their curiosity, provide opportunities for them to ask questions, and to talk about things they have discovered. Building up a collection of natural resources can begin with a selection of resources found in your immediate environment. Natural resources are gifts from Papa-tū-ā-nuku (Mother Earth) and are fundamental learning experiences that bring attention to the role that nature plays in our lives and the impact we have on nature.





## Education Outreach

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The history of the process dates back to fabrics dyed with plant juices extracted from flowers, leaves, stems and roots. The dyeing method of kusaki-zome was practiced in Japan until around 1925. The people of Japan have long revered the four seasons out of a deep affection for nature. It has long been a custom to celebrate the plants and flowers that are unique to each season. "Kusaki-zome", which literally translates to "plant dyeing", draws its colors from the plants, flowers, and fruit that represent the very essence of Japan.

Many colours can be produced that are completely distinct from the original plant color. The appeal of Kusaki-zome comes from the interaction with nature that is inherent to this technique, and from the wonderful tapestry of color taken from nature itself.

Students will need to collect specimens. You can have the children bring in leaves, flowers, and plants or you can collect them on a 'field trip'. Be sure to discuss guidelines for sampling with your children so they aren't disrupting gardens or other "off-limits" sources.



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## Objectives & Outcomes for Kusaki-zome

- Develop an appreciation and understanding of the natural world
- Develop a sense of curiosity
- Move from passive observation to active participation
- Position themselves, imaginatively and actually within the continuum of nature and culture particular to that place
- Foster intuited, sensual, experimental knowledge
- Instill a notion of environmentalism
- Encourage the idea of caring for and nurturing living things.

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## Values of Kusaki-zome

- Develop working theories for making sense of the natural and physical world.
- Learn about the features of their natural environment, and develop a sense of respect and responsibility for natural resources.
- learn about the important qualities of their environment that are significant to their family and wider community.
- Foster an ecological identity in children

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## Aims for Kusaki-zome

- Hands-on experiences with natural materials offer children opportunities to develop theories about how things work in the living, physical and material worlds.
- Share in the collection of materials for play
- Develop a desire to experiment
- Develop skills for observation, discussion and appreciation
- Connect Art, Science and the natural world
- Learn about the field of botany and sampling practices
- Develop environmental design, action research, education and dissemination of information.
- Enhance their health and well-being, and to develop responsible long-term relationships with nature
- Promote natural environments as providers of both an enjoyable places and objects for play and learning

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# MY ART COLLECTION #9

## *Kusaki-zome* – art with nature by Tiffany Singh

Tiffany says that to make your own flower artwork, you will need some freshly picked flowers, an old saucepan, a sieve, jars or containers, a pad of watercolour paper and a hammer.



1. Pick some brightly coloured flowers from your garden.



2. Boil the flowers, keeping similar colours together, in a saucepan of water until you see colour in the water.



3. Sieve the contents of the saucepan over jars or containers to collect the coloured water. Once cooled, splash or brush the coloured water onto your watercolour paper, then wait until dry.



4. Place fresh flowers face down on your dyed paper, cover with a sheet of clean paper and gently hit with a hammer to leave colourful flower impressions.

