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Leaf Mandalas

Materials

Watercolor Paper	Watercolors	Water Cup
Variety of Leaves and Flowers	*Markers	Paper Towels
Scissors	Brushes	*optional



Background Information

Mandala is the Sanskrit word for “circle,” and is representative of the Universe. It plays prominently in the Buddhist and Hindu religions and can be traced to the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic religions as well. The mandala, or circle, can represent wholeness, unity, nature, or God and is typically used in meditation or spiritual matters.

Symmetry: The quality of being made up of exactly similar parts facing each other or around an axis. One side matches the opposite side.

This is essential in designing a mandala: **ALWAYS BALANCE.**

Your art may not be in the exact shape of a circle, as it is difficult to accomplish with leaves. The important thing is that you have symmetry and a creation that is pleasing and peaceful for you.

Procedure

1. Go for a walk and gather different types of leaves, plants, flowers, and pine cones.
2. Cut or trim your collection so that you have individual leaves and flowers.
3. Choose your leaves and position them where they will be stamped onto the paper.
 - a. To keep your mandala symmetrical, you only need one or two leaves per pattern side – 1 leaf for the top and bottom, a 2nd leaf for the left and right.
4. Add water droplets to the watercolor palette to prepare it
 - a. Do not make it too watery, that will dilute the colors.
5. Place the first leaf on top of a paper towel.
6. Paint the leaf entirely with watercolors on the side with the most texture.
 - a. Do not take too long, as the watercolors will dry.
 - b. Try using more than one color on the leaf.
7. Press the leaf onto the watercolor paper and press firmly on the entire leaf with your palm and fingers.
8. Repeat steps 5–7 with the same leaf so that you have symmetry.
9. Choose another leaf/plant and repeat steps 5–8, adding to the mandala.
10. Use smaller leaves and flowers to expand outward.
 - a. Flowers will be harder to print- press gently on the flower so as not to smooch it into the paper.
11. Add a border using long leaves or stems.
12. Optional: Use markers to outline the plants and to add details.



Tips

- Not all plants and leaves will provide a good print- practice on a separate sheet before deciding on the final plants.
- The same goes for the watercolors- not all brands are the same and some colors will be better than others. Practice and familiarize yourself with your paint.

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Agua de Jamaica

Pronounced: hah-my-kah

Ingredients

2 cups Jamaica flowers (dried hibiscus flowers). May be purchased in Mexican grocery stores or ordered online.	10 cups water	½ cup sugar or your choice of non-caloric sweetener or stevia to the sweetness desired.
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Background Information

Fruit juices, smoothies, (*licuados*) and fruit salads were popular and enjoyed in Mexico long before they were popular in the U.S. Mexico's bounty of delicious fruits contributed greatly to its world renown cuisine. With its warm and tropical weather, the Mexican state of Guerrero became the home of *agua de jamaica*, a refreshing drink made from the dried calyxes of the *flor de jamaica*, better known to us as the hibiscus flower. This drink is not only very refreshing, but it also has health benefits as well. Studies at several Mexican Universities have shown hibiscus blossoms to have properties that are antioxidant, antibacterial and beneficial to liver function, lowering blood pressure and bad cholesterol.

Enjoy making this refreshing and healthful beverage as is or add it to your favorite sangria recipe.

Procedure

1. Rinse the flowers to clean of impurities and drain.
2. Place flowers in a saucepan with 6 cups of water and bring to a boil, lower the heat to medium and simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Remove the pan from burner and let stand for 15 minutes.
4. Strain the liquid into a glass pitcher, do not use plastic or ceramic. Juice is acidic and keeps its flavor best when stored in a glass container.
5. Add the sugar to 4 four cups of water and add to Jamaica water. Stir well and serve chilled or over ice.



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