



Wild Ways Well and Natural Art

Today's Wild Ways Well task is to go for a walk in your local greenspace and think about the artistic possibilities to be found in nature!

You'll **Be Active** by carefully walking outdoors (observing social distancing) keeping your mind busy and occupying your time looking for our artistic inspiration. There are all sorts of possibilities, some of the best art in the world comes from nature.

We can **Connect** with art by creating it – or simply appreciating it when we find it. Not all art has to be made by people, the colours on a butterfly, the shape of a tree, the sound of bird song, all of these could be considered art. You can also join online groups or comment on social media pages to let others know how you got on with these activities.

We can **Keep Learning**, there are hundreds of web pages devoted to the art form nature and an equal number of books and television programmes. This week we are looking at the art that is in our neighbourhood, why not look online and find out more once you're back indoors?

Art is all around us and beauty is in the eye of the beholder. **Take Notice** and try to look at the world in a different way, immerse yourself in the sight, sounds, colours and shapes of the natural world.

We can **Give** by giving ourselves a break from the drama of the current events and focusing on the little things around us that give us pleasure and by sharing these with others, in person or online. You can also give back by appreciating other people's artwork or by creating and sharing our own.





Wild Ways Well



BE ACTIVE – Take part in health walks and practical outdoor activities. Explore your local paths, woods and greenspaces.

CONNECT – Meet new people. Connect with the people, the wildlife and the nature that's all around us.



GIVE – Your time to be in nature. Give something back by sharing experiences and undertaking conservation tasks.

TAKE NOTICE – Note the changing cycles of life. Use your senses. Listen to birds, smell the flowers, live in the moment.



LEARN – Identify plants and wildlife, try new crafts, learn new skills. Discover things about nature and about yourself.

Spending time outdoors, amongst nature, makes people feel better about their lives.

The Wild Ways Well project encourages people suffering from, or at risk of, poor mental health to get outside for some daily exercise and experience nature.

Remember to observe Social Distancing, stay 2m apart and only walk in your local area.

Whilst out amongst the trees, parks and reserves you have a chance to slow down, relax and take your attention away from current events.

This guide will help you to try out some environmental and conservation related activities designed to fit in with the internationally recognised Five Ways to Wellbeing mental health framework.





Art and Mental Health

There's an artist inside everyone, but sometimes it takes a lot of courage to let that artistic side out. Taking part in creative activities can be very good for our mental health. Expressing yourself can be relaxing and inspiring and can allow you to express emotions and process complex feelings. Studies show that taking part in artistic activities can be very valuable in treating issues like depression and anxiety.

We needn't be afraid of art, there really is no such thing as 'good' or bad' it's all down to the interpretation—in fact some would say the more weird and outlandish an artwork is, then the more deep its significance must be! Whatever your feelings on this, or whatever your feelings about yourself as an artist, it is undeniable that the process and experience of creating something unique and beautiful can be very good for us.

It can even just be for yourself, there is no need to show anyone else what you create—and a Wild Ways Well session will always respect this. But if you want to share then that's great too and we can all benefit from seeing or hearing what you have created. Every artist began as an amateur.

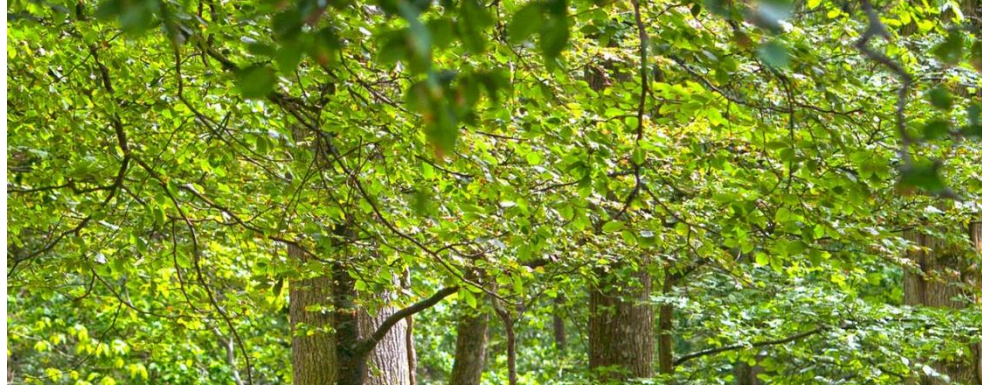
There are so many forms your art could take, and most of these can be facilitated by being outdoors. Think how many landscape paintings or photographs you've seen. How many artists have used wildlife or plants as their inspiration? You can aim for the fantastical and the artistic—or you can make detailed, meticulous copies of what's in front of you. Some of the best wildlife art is to be found in ID guides.

You can write about how you feel, what you see, or what you can imagine, each is just as valid. You could try some classical poetry, come up with a haiku or a limerick!

You can sculpt using clay or the natural materials you find around you. You could follow your ancestors and paint on rocks, or use natural flower dyes. You can draw, or let technology do the work and use a camera.

The choices are endless and they're yours to make.





Make Some Rock Art

People have been making art by painting on rock for thousands of years – some of the oldest cave art found might be 60,000 years old! In fact some people think that the ability and skill required to make these early efforts might be one of the first signs that marked the difference between humans and other primates

Most people don't have access to caves anymore but we can still have a go at rock art, the first thing you'll need to do is collect some rocks!

Flat smooth pebbles are best, keep an eye out for them while you walk, but any rock will do.



Now use pens, paint, or even chalk, to make your designs.

Once it is finished some people like to leave their art in public places where other people might find them.





Story Stones

It can sometimes be hard to come up with inspiration to write your own story. One option might be to make your own set of story stones.

Collect some stones and (using the same techniques as for rock art) draw some pictures on them that could be used to build up a story. Good ideas are things like weather symbols, emojis or animals. You could also draw simple pictures that represent concepts like music, the sea, family or home.

Collect together 6-8 of these (if you can't find enough rocks then you could cut out pictures from magazines or use household objects) and put them in a bag – an old hat or a sock would work.

Draw a stone out at random and use the picture on it to inspire the first line of your story. Then draw another stone and write your next line – and so on. You can do this on your own or as part of a group, each person making up a line to follow on from the person before.





A Story Stone Tale

I used this story stone arrangement (beginning at the sun picture and going clockwise) to make up the story below...



"It was a beautiful sunny day so we went for a walk along the riverbank. As we walked in the sunshine we saw a bumblebee buzzing along the beside the water. The bee stopped us and asked for help. It said that nearby was high tree with beautiful red flowers growing in it. The bee wanted to visit the flowers but they were too high. We agreed to help the bee by climbing the tree and carrying it up to the flowers.

We climbed and climbed until we were so high we could almost touch the sky. In fact we were so high we weren't sure how we would get down! Suddenly we heard some beautiful music, it was a bird singing, we listened to the song and realised it was a message, the bird told us we were sitting on its nest and endangering its eggs! We immediately apologised and the bird agreed to fly us back down to the ground where we could enjoy telling all our friends the story around the fire."



Nature Photo Challenge

There's no reason why nature art or photography can only take place outdoors... have a look around your home what items could you repurpose, what could be seen in a different way?



Without leaving your home photograph...

- Something Wild
- A Forest
- A Winter Scene
- A Flower Meadow
- Spring
- A Cloud

Once you've made your creations why not post them to our social media pages to let others see? We're on twitter as **@WildCumbernauld** and Facebook as **Cumbernauld Living Landscape**



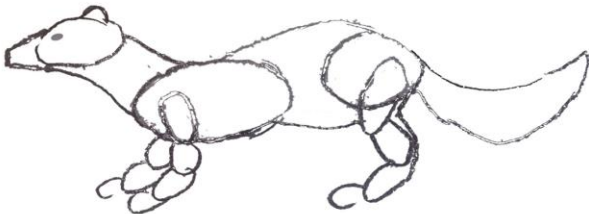
Draw A Pine Marten



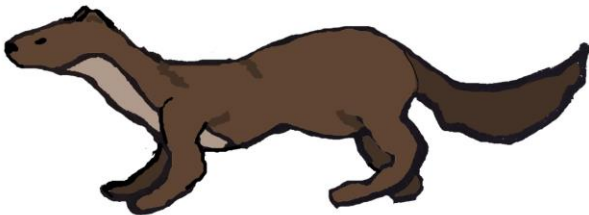
Art can be really therapeutic – and you don't have to be a brilliant artist to have a go at drawing! Why not try this simple Pine Marten. All you need to do to start is draw three circles with a pencil



Add a few more ovals to make up the legs, feet and snout.

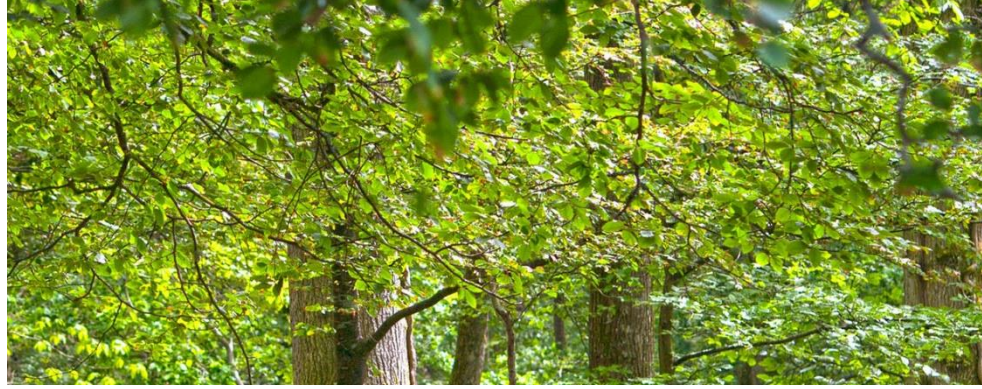


Now draw some curved lines to join the circles together. Add eyes, ears and nose – and of course a big bushy tail!



You're almost done... Rub out the parts of the circles that you no longer need and go over the rest in pen or heavy pencil. Shade the body in with chestnut brown. Don't forget its creamy white bib.





Make a Green Man

The Green Man is an ancient symbol found all over the world from the jungles of South America and Asia to the pyramids of Egypt and the forests and towns of Europe. People have been making them for hundreds of years and their original roots and purpose are lost in the mists of time.

The Green man is often thought to be a symbol of growth, rebirth and the coming of Spring. They are also frequently referred to as guardians of nature and natural spaces.



Most follow a similar pattern, a face, surrounded by or made up of leaves and vines, peering out of the undergrowth. Sometimes they are completely covered in leaves, other types have vines or branches emerging from the mouth, nose and eyes.

You can make yours out of clay, mud, leaves and natural materials – or you could draw, paint or even crochet one!

No one really knows what Green Men— and Green Women or Green Animals—were meant to represent, it's up to you what you think yours means – make it as friendly or as scary as you like!





Flower Dye

For thousands of years people in Scotland, and all over the world, have used natural plant dyes to colour their clothes and to create art.

First you'll need some plants, go for a walk in nature, or into your garden, and carefully (without causing damage) collect leaves, plants and flowers – as many different colours as you can! You'll also need some pebbles (about the size of your hand); some cloth (muslin works best but you could also use an old white sheet or a t-shirt); And a hard surface – the ground works best!



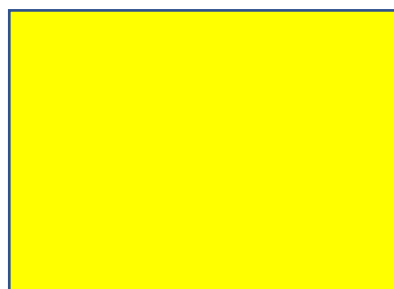
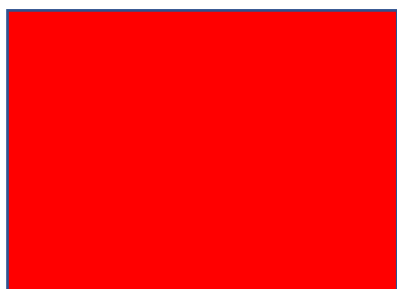
Once you collected your plants sandwich them inside your piece of cloth and use the pebble to carefully tap and crush the plant material between the material to release their natural dyes.

What plants and flowers work best? Some of the colours might surprise you!



Find a Rainbow

Go for a walk and use these colour squares to collect natural objects to make up a rainbow of natural colour – try to find the exact shades...



You can carefully collect the objects and put them together as a rainbow if you can do so without causing harm, but you could also take photographs and make a natural collage.





Nature Art

One way to make your artwork stand out is to make it really big!

Head to your garden or local greenspace and as you walk collect up some natural materials, things like leaves, stones and sticks – remember not to damage anything living and only use natural objects that are safe for you to touch.

You could start by getting 4 large sticks to make a frame. Next arrange all your natural material to make your piece of art inside. You could make abstract patterns of shapes, textures and colours, or maybe you could create a woodland scene or a representation of an animal?

As long as you have only used natural materials that you found on the site you could leave your art behind for others to enjoy –and for nature to claim back.





Poetry

Haiku

A haiku is a Japanese poem of seventeen syllables, in lines of three, seven and five.

Take this Haiku by Matsuo Basho as an example

"No one travels / 3 syllables

Along this way but I / 7 syllables

This Autumn evening" 5 syllables

"An old silent pond.../A frog jumps into the pond/splash! Silence again"

Matsuo Basho

"Toward those short trees/We saw a hawk descending/On a day in spring"

Masaoka Shiki

Try writing your own Haiku





Links

Go further with your Wild Ways Well activity by trying these links once you come home

Cumbernauld Living Landscape www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk

Wild Ways Well www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/project/wild-ways-well

Activities www.cumbernauldlivinglandscape.org.uk/get-involved/activities/

Facebook www.facebook.com/CumbernauldLivingLandscape

Twitter www.twitter.com/wildcumbernauld

The Conservation Volunteers www.tcv.org.uk/scotland

The Scottish Wildlife Trust www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk

SamH www.samh.org.uk

NHS Five Ways Well www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/mental-wellbeing/five-steps-to-mental-wellbeing

MIND coronavirus and your wellbeing www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing

Lanarkshire Green Health Partnership www.elament.org.uk/media/2229/19-ways-to-stay-connected-2.pdf

Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival www.mhfestival.com

Nature photography www.nhm.ac.uk/visit/wpy.html

Nature in art www.artuk.org/discover/topics/type/natural-world

Environmental art www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/e/environmental-art



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