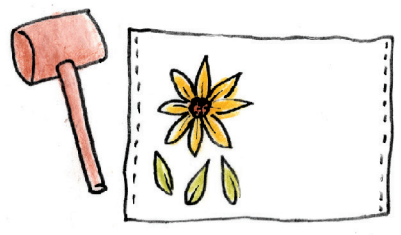
PLANT POUNDING

Supplies

-Plants! The more colors, the better.
-A mallet, wood block, anything you can do some pounding with
-Fabric, plain white bandanas work great but anything light colored and made from a natural fiber will work.

Steps

1. On a sturdy surface lay out a piece of fabric, and arrange your plants on the fabric. You can do a single leaf or flower, or create a design out of many different pieces.

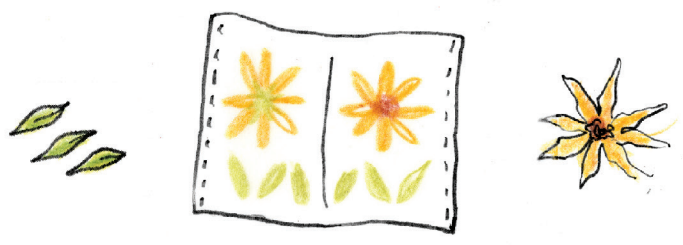


2. Cover with another piece of fabric, or fold one piece of fabric in half to make a symmetrical design.

3. Start pounding! Whatever you're using, work from the outer edges of the plant towards the center. It will get darker as the pigment is released.



4. Remove the top piece of cloth, and see how it came out!



POWDER POWER!

Did you know that your spice cabinet is secretly a stash of art supplies? Many common spices like turmeric, paprika, clove, and cinnamon can be turned into paints! You can also use other powdered foods, like spinach or beetroot!

Supplies

-Water, and a grownup to operate a stove/kettle
- Spice/powdered food of your choice
- Glass jars
- Something to stir your paint
- Paintbrushes
- Paper
- (Optional additives) Vinegar, salt, alum



Steps

1. Have your adult start heating up some water.
2. Add 2 tablespoons of powder to your jar.
3. Slowly add hot water to your powder, stirring as you go.
4. You want just the right amount of water, too much and your paint will be pale and diluted, not enough and your paint will be thick and hard to work with. When you like the consistency put the lid on and give it a good shake.
5. (Optional)If you want your paint to last longer you can add a teaspoon of alum, a hefty pinch of salt, and a splash of vinegar.
5. Paint!!! A great way to start is to make a test sheet of all the colors you made.

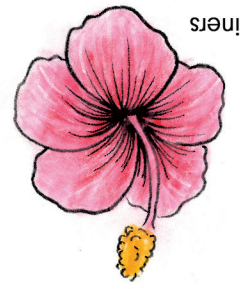


Roses are Red,
Cornflowers are Blue...

..But they get their color from the same chemical, how does that work? Well, both of these flowers get their colors from anthocyanins. These chemicals help the plants in many ways including attracting pollinators, protecting them from the sun and extreme temperatures. Anthocyanins are also found in many of the foods we eat like blueberries, raspberries, cherries, beets, and more! They are extremely sensitive to light, temperature, and pH. Pigments like this are called fugitive pigments. These pigments are not permanent, and may change color over time, even while you're working with them!

Supplies

- Dried hibiscus
- Water, and a grownup to operate a stove/kettle
- A glass jar
- Vinegar
- Baking Soda
- Paper
- Brushes
- Small containers
- Eyedroppers
- Strainer and coffee filters



Steps

1. Have your adult start heating up some water.
2. Put your hibiscus in your heat safe container, add hot water until everything is just covered, stir, and see what happens! While you're observing you can take note of the colors you see
3. Let the water cool, then pour the mixture through a strainer lined with a coffee filter. You should have a vibrant pink liquid, this is a natural dye!
4. Use your eye dropper to transfer some of your hibiscus dye into the small containers. Use clean eye droppers to add vinegar to one of the containers, and sprinkle some baking soda in another and see how the color changes!
5. Paint with the colors you've made. Experiment! See how many colors you can make,
6. Leave your tests to dry, you can try leaving some in different places, in a sunny window, somewhere dark and cool, and observe how the color changes over time in different conditions!





Scan this code to learn more about plant pigments!

Made for the Garfield Park Conservatory and Gardens
in 2026 by Ari Mulch





PIGMENTS!

PLAYING WITH PLANT

You finished this zine, ***Congratulations!***
Your journey with natural pigments is just beginning. It's going to involve a lot of trial and error, making some messes and cleaning them up...



The colors you see might suprise you...



They might
confuse you!



They might
frustrate you!



They might
delight you!



And I guarantee
they'll also
AMAZE you!



So get ready to
explore, experiment,
create, and have fun!
Good Luck!