

MAKE AN EASY SUN PRINT

This is a fun activity that uses the power of sunlight to turn leaves and flowers into art.

YOU WILL NEED:

- Coloured construction paper (sugar paper)
- Clear tape
- Leaves and flowers
- A window



1 Visit your local park or green space and collect a selection of leaves and flowers. Always respect the plants and try not to damage them or pick too many.



2 Carefully stick your plants down. The flatter you can make the edges of the plants against the paper, the sharper your images will be.



3 Use thin strips of tape to secure your plants onto the paper.



4 Tape your paper onto a window, with the plants facing outwards.



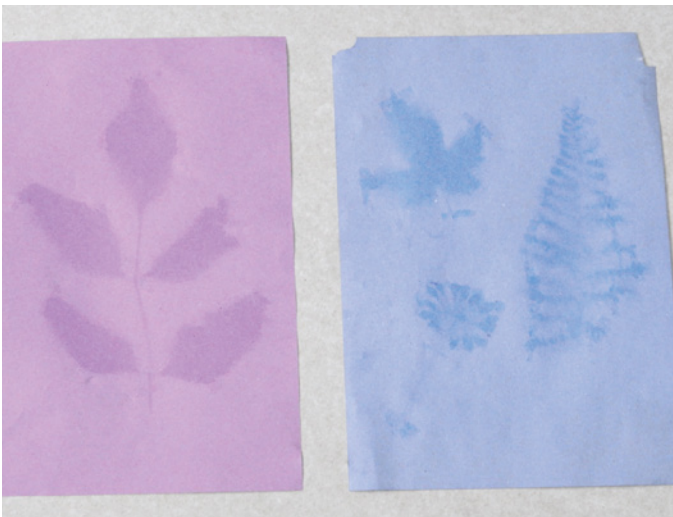
5 Leave the paper in the sun for a few hours. If it is cloudy or your window is north-facing, leave it for two days.



6 When ready, carefully remove the tape and plants to reveal the sun prints.



7 If you like, add some comments to describe which plants these prints are from and where you found them.



TIPS AND IDEAS

- Try experimenting with plants of different shapes, or how long you leave the paper in the sun.
- If you haven't got a south-facing window but do have some outside space, you could lay your paper outside in the sun. Make sure you pin it down with some stones so it doesn't fly away!
- Flat shapes, such as leaves, will give more finely detailed images than bulky objects such as twigs.
- Dark paper will give the best results.
- You can try making prints with other objects that you find in nature, such as feathers or shells.

See more from the 'how to' series at nhm.ac.uk

BOTANICAL PHOTOGRAMS AND ANNA ATKINS

A sun print is a type of photogram, an image made by placing an object directly onto a light-sensitive surface.

The dyes used in construction paper give strong colours but are unstable in ultraviolet (UV) light. The paper will quickly fade if exposed to a strong source of UV light, such as the sun.

Plants are good specimens to capture with the photogram process, as they can be pressed flat but still keep many of their important details.

Anna Atkins (1799-1871) was a botanist and early photographer who pioneered the use of photograms to capture images of algae, ferns and other plants.

