

Nature Mandala

The word “mandala” is Sanskrit for circle. Mandalas have different meanings in different cultures and religions, and usually represent how things are connected to each other. Mandalas use patterns to create repetition and symmetry in their designs. In this project, you will be an Earth artist and create a nature mandala from natural, found materials from your yard or neighborhood!

This project is inspired by the Earth artist, Andy Goldsworthy. A British artist, Goldsworthy uses nature to make his art, both as a material and as a location. He has used flowers, leaves, mud, pinecones, stone, twigs, thorns, and even icicles in his work!

Adapted from an idea submitted by Shana Pearlmutter, Artist/Educator, Bell School.

Materials needed

- Natural materials – this could include sticks, fallen flowers, pine cones, mud, pebbles, rocks, etc.
- A safe place to build your mandala. We recommend outside, but you could find a place in your house if you get the okay to bring your materials inside

Step 1: Go on a walk (or two or three) and collect your materials.

Think about how you might use them in a mandala, and how their natural textures, shapes and colors interact. Think about how you will use these materials to create a pattern.

Step 2: Decide where you will create your mandala.

We recommend picking a quiet location where your art will remain undisturbed, at least for a little while.

Step 3: Select a meaningful object to be the center.

Step 4: Build out the “rings” of your mandala around this center object.

Remember, you are trying to create a pattern in each ring. How could you do this – with color? Texture? Type of object? Something else? Also, your materials don't need to be organized in actual circles, they could also be arranged as “rays,” like a sun. Add as many layers as you'd like!

When you're done with your project, take a picture and share it with us too! You can tag us on social media (@[designmuseumchi](#) on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) or email us at info@designchicago.org. We're looking forward to seeing your work!