

# HOMEMADE PAPER



*Create your own cards with recycled paper, flower petals, leaves, spices, even cologne. You will need a space to get messy, ideally outside. Children will need help with heating water and the use of the blender. After your first success, make this a science experiment and try different types of paper, screens, patterns or methods of drying. Note: Do not let the water from the blended paper or scraps of paper go down the kitchen drain. This could cause pipe blockages.*

**CATEGORY:** Science & Nature

**CREATED BY:** Hidden Oaks Nature Center

## SUPPLIES:

- Paper- ideally without ink which will make your slurry gray
- water
- Electric blender
- a screen in a frame, plastic needlepoint canvas in a frame, a sanitized fly swatter- experiment!
- several dish towels or paper towels
- metal spoon
- sponge
- a container with sides large enough to hold your screen

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Shred or tear your paper into little pieces. Unused napkins, recycled construction paper or computer paper work well. If you recycle cardstock, you will need to quadruple the soaking time.
2. Put two handfuls of paper into a large bowl and add two cups of very warm water.
3. Let soak at least 15 minutes, longer if you used heavy stock.
4. Pull out the paper and put in the blender. Add 2 cups of water. Blend until the slurry is runny, at least 30 seconds. Add more water if the slurry is too thick. Ideal mixture is runny.
5. Place your screen in a pan large enough to catch the runoff.
6. If you wish to put in flower petals you can place some randomly on the screen. You can also add petals, leaves or berries to the slurry. If you want little pieces throughout your



paper, blend the materials in for 10 seconds. This is the time to add a few drops of fragrance or a dash of spice such as cinnamon or cardamom.

7. Gently scoop your half of your slurry onto the screen.
8. Pat down with the back of a spoon to squeeze out the water. A thin spread results in a paper instead of a board consistency when dry.
9. If this tears your paper mixture, gently push with your fingers over the slurry making sure to press around the edges of the frame.
10. Carefully lift the frame from the pan and put on top of a dish cloth or paper towel.
11. Pour the water from the pan in the trash, not down a drain.
12. Again press out moisture from the paper using a spoon or gentle pressure from your fingers.
13. Flip the frame over onto a dry section of the dishcloth or paper towels.
14. Pat the frame with a moist sponge to release the paper. This works better than trying to loosen the wet paper with a butter knife.
15. Move the wet paper on the cloth or paper towels to an area to dry.
16. Check every hour until you can pull up the paper in one piece.
17. Then drape the paper over a surface to continue drying.
18. When completely dry, you can trim the edges or write a message.
19. Repeat with the rest of the slurry.

## ★ EXPLORE MORE!

*Once you're finished, experiment with the other screens or shapes. Make a bookmark or add live seeds such as parsley. Cut out shapes from the dried paper and invite your friends to plant the paper to create an herb garden. If you add milkweed seeds to your paper, you could plant the paper to attract monarch butterflies!*

