

Printing with plants

This activity sheet, created with the **Socially Engaged Photography Network**, will show you how to create cyanotype prints using natural materials and objects from your garden.

What are cyanotypes?

Cyanotype is a camera-less photography technique that involves laying objects on paper coated with a solution of iron salts before exposing it to UV light. Once the paper has been left in the light for around 10-15 minutes and then rinsed, you are left with an inverted print of your objects in vibrant white and blue.



If you are making your prints outside, you will need a clear or bright day - if not, you will need a UV lamp to expose your images

What will I need?

- **Pre-coated cyanotype paper** (this is sometimes called 'sun print' paper in craft stores)
- **Regular plain paper**, for testing out your designs first
- **Sheets of clear glass, perspex or clip photo frames** for holding your print in place as it exposes
- **Natural materials, plant cuttings or objects from your garden**
- **Trays of clean water**, or access to running water for rinsing your prints
- **A clear space to dry your prints**, or a washing line and pegs

Your cyanotype paper will be in a black bag to ensure no light has exposed it before you design your cyanotype. Once you are ready, take one piece of paper out of your black bag and lay this under a UV light (or direct sunlight), placing your objects on top of the paper in the design you'd like to print.



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