Painting Nature

Materials
Objects from the outdoors such as evergreen branches, leaves, pinecones, berries, acorns
Paper
Paint and paintbrushes
Paint trays

What to do
1. Before class, arrange the objects from the outdoors on a table in an attractive way.
2. Invite the children to choose one or two of the objects to be the subject of their painting.
3. Provide the children with paint, brushes, and paper. Encourage them to create a painting, emphasizing that it need not look exactly like the subject.

More to do
Field trip: Go for a walk and collect objects from nature to paint. Paint outdoors on a pleasant day.
Math: Sort the objects into groups; arrange them in patterns.

Related books
Incredible Ned by Bill Maynard
A Tree in the Wood: An Old Nursery Song by Christopher Manson
A Tree Is Nice by Janice May Udry

Melissa J. Browning, Milwaukee, WI

Pine Needle Paintbrushes

Materials
Pine needles
Twigs
Yarn or twine
Paint and paper

What to do
1. Bring the children outdoors to gather pine needles and straight, sturdy twigs.
2. Help the children gather a bunch of pine needles around one end of their twig.
3. Wrap the needles and twig securely with yarn or twine and tie in a knot.
4. Put out some paint and paper, and encourage the children to paint a picture using their new paintbrushes.

More to do
Dramatic play: Use the brushes as miniature brooms and dusters.
Math: Count the pine needles in a cluster.
More art: Show the children an example of a Native American pine needle basket. Create some of your own with clay and pine needles.
Science: Examine and compare pinecones, evergreen boughs, and an assortment of branches from deciduous trees.

Related books
Apple Pie Tree by Zoe Hall
Have You Seen Trees? by Joanne Oppenheim
A Tree Is Nice by Janice May Udry

Sharon Dempsey, Mays Landing, NJ