



NATUREKIDS NB

Autumn Leaves

As October arrives so does the peak of fall foliage. New Brunswick has truly spectacular colours of autumn leaves to enjoy, from the deep reds and maroons, to the warm oranges and yellows. Dive into the activities below to learn more about these quintessential symbols of the season!

FALLEN LEAF COLLECTION

Have you ever wondered why trees change colours during the fall? Their leaves have a special pigment called chlorophyll which absorbs sunlight to give the trees energy and their green colouring. When the hours of sunlight shrink during the autumn chlorophyll becomes dormant, which allows other pigments to shine through and turn the trees red, orange, and yellow!

Take a walk outside with your NB autumn leaf ID sheet and see how many different kinds of fallen leaves you can collect. Try sorting them in a variety of ways, by species, colour, shape, size, and anything other ways you can imagine. Are the same coloured leaves also the same shapes? Do some trees' leaves change into multiple colours? Can you create a colour gradient with different hues of red, orange, and yellow?

Try a memory game with the leaves you collected. Place them all on a surface and have participants observe them for 5 minutes. Then, briefly send the participants away while the group leader removes one of the leaves. When the participants return, have them silently try to figure out which leaf was removed. Once everyone has had a chance to make a guess in their heads (or on a sheet of paper), see if anyone can accurately describe the missing leaf.

Save the leaves you collect for this month's craft activity. Remember not to take too many and return the ones you don't use, fallen leaves can give healthy nutrients to the soil and provide important winter habitats for the insects we learned about in September!

FIND YOUR TREE GAME

Have participants take turns being blindfolded or closing their eyes. One at a time, send them away from the group and have the rest of the group decide on a mystery tree for them to find. Once decided, have the participant return to the group and lead them through the woods to the mystery tree. The object of the game is to have them identify the tree once their blindfold is off. With some assistance, have the participant run their fingers over the tree bark and smell it. If the tree has big roots or lots of fallen leaves surrounding it, make sure they touch them too (be cautious of poison ivy/oak during this exercise). When they feel familiar enough with the tree, walk them back to the starting point, remove the blindfold, and see if they can locate the mystery tree by using sensory clues





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CRAFTING WITH LEAVES

Here is a variety of inspiration for crafting with your collected leaves!

- Lay the leaves on a sheet of paper and trace their outlines over and over to create rippling silhouettes.
- Cut some of the leaves in half and glue them to a piece of paper, then try drawing the other half. Pay attention to the overall shape of the leaf, the veins, the edges, and of course the colours!
- Cover the leaves in paint or marker ink and press them hard onto paper to make prints.
- Arrange or cut up the leaves to create unique fall collages.
- Place the leaves under a thin sheet of paper and colour over them to form leaf rubbings.
- Glue the leaves on to circles of paper to make autumn wreaths.
- Document your scientific observations from the leaf collection!



Autumn Leaves of NB



Aspen



Oak



Alder



Willow



Birch



Ash



Beech



Maple



Tamarack

This tree is unique because it has needles instead of leaves, but instead of staying green year-round they turn yellow in the fall!