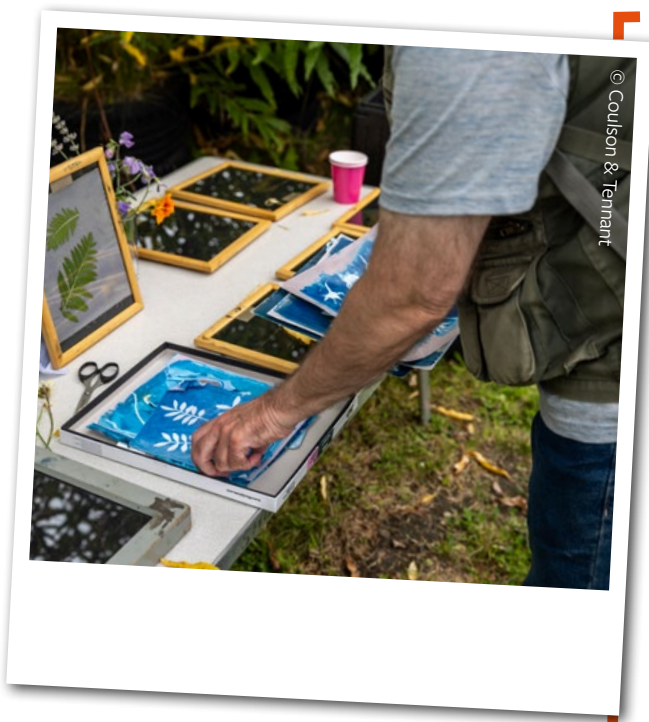


Printing with plants

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

Top tip! Prepare your arrangement of objects on a normal piece of paper (the same size as your cyanotype paper) so you can decide on a layout you are happy with first



1

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.

Top tip! Try to keep your objects as flat as possible on the paper to keep the image sharp - photo frames are a great piece of equipment for this!

2

Then leave the paper exposed to sunlight or under a UV lamp. The exposure time will depend on how bright the light is, so you may need to do some test runs. On a cloudy day, prints will take longer to develop and may not be as high contrast.

3

The paper will begin to change colour during exposure. The exposed part of the paper will turn a dark grey - this is when you know the print is ready to be rinsed.



4

Rinse the paper in water for 2 minutes and you will see the colours reverse. This will also fix your exposed image and make it safe to view in daylight. Be careful when handling, as the paper will be more fragile when wet. If you do not have water to hand, place your exposed paper back in a box to wash later.

5

Leave your print to dry on a flat surface, or hang it up on a line. You will notice the blue get even darker as it dries!

Top tip! If your prints have curled when drying, they can be placed under a heavy object, such as a book, to flatten them

Created with

**OPEN
EYE
GALLERY**



Socially Engaged
Photography Network