

Liking Lichen!! How to responsibly create your own Lichen prints!

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Note:

Before beginning, please consider the following sites that offer sustainable, non-toxic, earth safe paints:

<https://www.beampaints.com/>

<https://naturalearthpaint.com/>

You can also make your own homemade paint in a variety of ways. However, fruits like blueberries and cherries as well as vegetables like red beets and root plant turmeric work well. Just mix with a little water to the consistency you wish. Store in the refrigerator for a few days. These “paints” will fade easily, so if you display art made with them, avoid hanging prints in sunny area to prolong the life of the color.

There is a wealth of information on the internet and books all about making your own paint. Enjoy the search for what suits your needs best!!

After you have found some lichen (you don't need much, one piece lasts many prints) on the ground (reminder: do not pull off of trees), here's some important preparations/considerations:

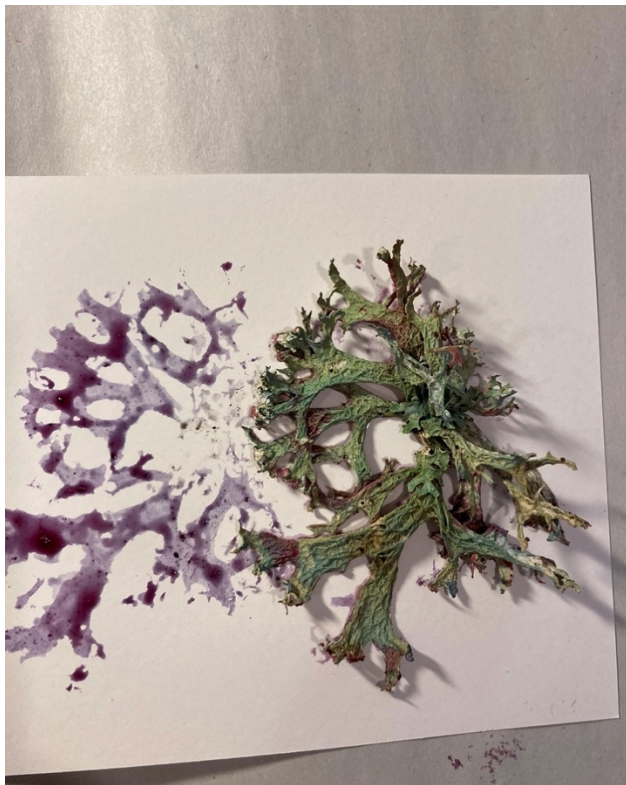
- 1) Be sure to shake off dirt or insects outside before bringing in your home. Lichen is liked by small insects that birds love to eat!
- 2) It's important to make your prints before the lichen dries out, so plan to do the printing the day you collect it.
- 3) Have ready: paints mixed and ready to go, paper for prints, cloth or paper towels, a place to dry the prints.
- 4) When finished printing, rinse off the lichen carefully and return to where you found it. The plant may not perish, but at the very least, it will do no harm to the soil and decompose safely.

Steps for Printing:

- 1) Place the lichen on a paper towel or another piece of paper on the table. I suggest using the back of already used paper.
- 2) Gently paint the lichen piece, trying to get the paint on all the strands of leaf. Gently pressing the lichen to flatten it a bit helps.
- 3) Use a clean sheet of paper (thicker paper is best, like watercolor paper or mix-media paper or cut up paper bag, or any kind of paper) and place the paper over the painted lichen, rubbing gently so that you sense all the paint from the plant is transferred to your paper. You might want to experiment a little with the different results of different papers.
- 4) Carefully pull back the top paper. If there's dripping, then your paint is too thin. Experiment, have fun discovering the many amazing textures of the lichen!

- 5) You can also do this another way: Place the painted lichen, paint side down, onto a sheet of paper, and place another paper on top and then rub so that the print comes out under the lichen instead of the top. Try which way works best for you.
- 6) Have a place ready to dry your prints.
- 7) You can use another color to go in and paint around the print if you like for embellishment, but the prints alone are great.
- 8) Make into art to display, as cards, or as decoration on stationary.
- 9) As mentioned already, when done with the process, please rinse off the lichen and return to where you found it.

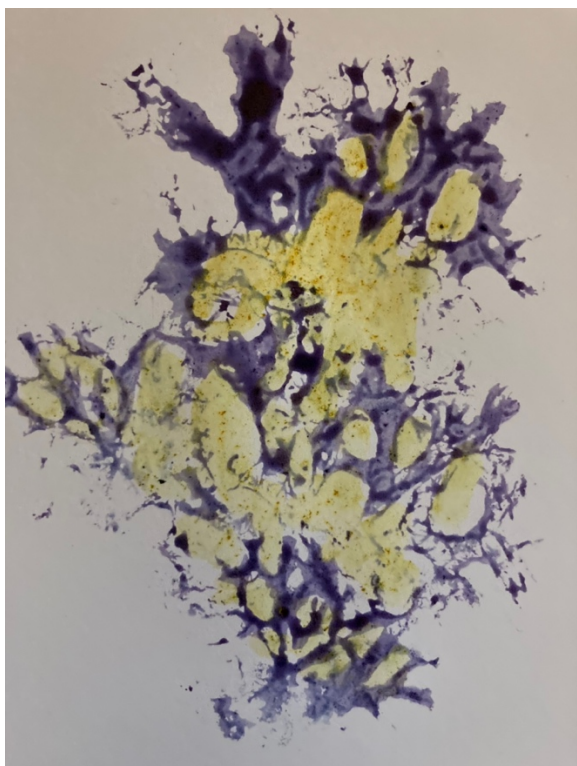
Here's some photos:



Reindeer lichen using blueberry "paint".



You can use the same lichen piece or other pieces to make multiple prints on the same paper.



I used just two small pieces of lichen to make these prints. The turmeric "paint" was added after the print to give it a bit more interest. Enjoy the process!! Thank you!!

Lichen Resources

<https://www.thebiologyzone.com/reindeer-lichen.html>

<https://blogs.oregonstate.edu/treetopics/2019/04/04/lovely-lichens-lurk-in-your-woodlands/>

<https://lichens.twinferntech.net/pnw/characteristics.shtml>

<https://nwnature.net/lichens/index.htm>

<https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/beauty/lichens/identification.shtml#>