



# Nature Activity

## Leaf Rubbing

### Supplies:

- A leaf of your choice
- Crayons and paper

### How to:

- Find a leaf! Be kind and find one unattached from a plant.
- Place the leaf on a table, bottom side up.
- Place the paper over the leaf.
- Rub the crayon gently over the area until you see the leaf's pattern.

### My Leaf Rubbing:



# Why Leaves Change Color

Fall is one of the most colorful times of the year for the trees and leaves. Most of the colors of autumn stay “asleep” in the leaves during the summer while they are covered up by the **chlorophyll**, which is also what makes the leaves green. When it breaks down the other colors start to show! This doesn’t start happening until the days get shorter and the nights get cold.

Chlorophyll is what makes sunlight into food for the plants, leaves, and trees. It starts to fade before winter and many trees use the food they’ve stored up to last until the next spring.



Xanthophyll is found in a lot of different fall plant, like oak, birch trees, squash, and corn. It is even found in egg yolks! Yellow is only of the first colors to show up in fall because of how many living things it’s found in.

Anthocyanin is the only color that doesn’t always exist in leaves. It only starts to show up when the leaf has started breaking down and making more sugar to prepare for winter. When the sun and sugar are both working together in the tree the color is created before the leaves fall.



Carotene is most found in different kinds of maple trees. When the leaves begin to lose their green, the process of losing their carotene starts too – it’s just a lot slower. That is why maple leaves that have fallen can still change a little; they can still have carotene even after they fall. It is what makes carrots orange.