



WFSI INFORMATION SHEET NO 2 DECEMBER 2005

Using Natural Materials at Forest School

Many people have asked about using natural materials at Forest School. If you are using a small site on your grounds and not a woodland area, supplying children with sticks, cones, leaves, acorns and conkers etc. can provide children with a wealth of opportunities to be creative. Christmas is a good time to ask children to bring in cones and things that have been used for decorations and also baskets that have contained pot plants to be used as containers for your collections. Check the soil in your area—is it clay? Often there can be pockets of natural clay that can be used for modelling or just sticking things into.



Bunyips or tree guardians originate from the Aboriginal culture. They are easy and fun for children to make. Press a lump of clay or mud onto the tree and let the children dress the figures using bark, feathers, shells, moss or whatever is at hand. The figures do not have to be people but can represent mythical figures.

Many newly qualified Forest School Leaders use a treasure box during their early days of leading groups until they feel comfortable just using the environment. Have you thought of a natural treasure basket? Look for an old wicker picnic basket in charity shops. What could go in to it? Make some small child size mallets and stakes for hammering. Use cane or wooden plates for collecting. Metal buckets (plant pots from Ikea) and trowels. Willow balls and raffia. Pieces of wood with holes in instead of magnifiers. Feathers. The list is endless. Let us know about your finds and successes to share with others.



Want to do a Christmas theme at Forest School?

How about a simple log reindeer? Get the children to cut sticks approximately 3-4 cm in diameter and ten 10 cm long. One end needs to be cut at an angle. On this end draw two eyes and a red nose. Use a couple of twigs as antlers and secure with raffia or an elastic band.

