

Berry Ink Painting

Having students create their own watercolor paints from berries is an excellent activity that allows them to explore using all of their senses.

If using different types of berries or other plant-derived colors, students can experiment with ratios and pigments! You could allow students to freely experiment with the mixing on their own or, as a class, decide on a color they would like to create and decide how it could be made using the colors available to them.

Supplies Needed:

- 2/3 cup ripe fresh or frozen berries (blueberries, strawberries, etc)
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp vinegar
- Paint brushes
- Small cups
- Watercolor paper

Procedure for Making Berry Ink

Source: Cooking Up U.S. History: Recipes and Research to Share with Children, by Suzanne Barchers and Patricia Marden

1. Fill a strainer with berries and place it over a bowl
2. Use a large spoon and crush the berries, letting the juice strain into the bowl.
3. Keep adding berries to the strainer until all the berries have been crushed.
4. Dispose of or compost the berry pulp.
5. Add salt and vinegar to the juice and stir.
6. Store berry ink in a jar with a lid until ready to use.

Painting with Berry Juice

1. After making the berry ink, pour paint out into containers for students to use.
2. Remind students that the berry ink is for making art and should not be ingested!
3. Distribute watercolor paper, paint brushes, and paint
4. If you are allowing students to mix different types of berry juices to make their own, new shades of paint, you will need to provide extra cups for students to create their new colors.
5. Allow students to use their paints to create artwork.
 - a. For a cool effect, have students draw on their paper before applying paint. Be sure to use color pencil, color pencils, or crayons. Water-based inks found in markers or ink pens will run once the water-color paint is added.