



B.C. First Nations Head Start

A Tree For All Seasons

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TREES ARE BEAUTIFUL REMINDERS OF THE CYCLE OF THE SEASONS. In the spring we see buds and flowers, summer brings leaves, in the fall come brilliant colors and sometimes fruit, and in the winter we see the outlines of the branches.

What better a way to talk about the seasons than to build your own tree? This can be a month-long project which can involve parents as well. The idea is to build a fairly life-sized tree for your classroom area. It could be propped in a corner or placed as a central attraction. This project sounds complicated but it really isn't once you get started.

Materials

one large plastic tarp
one roll of chicken wire
flour
water
large container for mixing paper mache
pail or other large container filled with rocks (to support tree trunk)
newspaper (lots of it)

Directions

Cover the floor area with the tarp.
Very important!

Make the tree trunk

1. Cut a piece of chicken wire about 6 feet long and 3 feet wide.
2. Form it into a long tube shape to represent the tree trunk.
3. Tie it together with string. The children can help with this part.
4. Stuff the center of the chicken wire roll with rolled-up newspaper to strengthen it.
5. Stand it upright on something like a pail full of rocks to keep it stable.

Cover the tree trunk with bark

You are going to cover the wire with the paper mache. This is where it gets messy and the

children have the most fun!

1. Mix water and flour into a large pan, until you have a soupy paste.
2. Have the children rip up pieces of newspaper and soak them in the paste.
3. Apply the paper (which has been soaked in paste) onto the chicken wire. It doesn't have to be smooth but it needs to cover the wire completely. You will have to wait for layers to dry before applying the next layer. Applying the paper to the trunk could be a two-or three-day project.
4. Once you have covered it as much as you want, let it dry.

Make the branches

While you are waiting for the trunk to dry, make the branches.

1. Roll four or five pieces of chicken wire into long tubes about the diameter of an adult's arm.
(The chicken wire tubes can also be bent to look more like branches.)
2. You can add small branches at the ends if you feel creative.
3. Tape newspaper over the branches.
4. Cover the newspaper with wet paper mache (like you did for the trunk) and let it dry.

Put on finishing touches

In about a week, when the tree is completely dry, use rollers and large paint brushes to paint the trunk and branches. Once everything is painted, attach the branches. Then depending on the season, add blossoms, leaves, fruit or autumn-colored leaves, and in winter—cotton for snow. A squirrel could live in your tree, an eagle could have a nest there. The possibilities are endless!

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