

Twig Tracery

In winter time the deciduous trees have lost their leaves, and the shapes of trees can be seen in all their glory. Trunks, branches, twigs, buds, catkins, all make great shapes against the sky.

Who said winter was dull and boring? The best days for looking up at twig shapes are cloudy grey days !

Making a twig frame:

Cut out a hole in a piece of stiff card or cardboard. Look at tree shapes through your window. Go for a walk with it, and find the best views.

(You can also use a cardboard or plastic tube to look at the tree shapes above you.)

Zooming in and out

Stand right next to some low twigs, so they are next to your face, in a place where there are more twigs in the distance. Hold your frame up by your face. Close one eye. Look through it. You can focus on the near then the middle, then the far, then back to the near.

(Don't look straight at the sun. This is better on cloudy days, especially at dusk)



Oak



Dawn Redwood

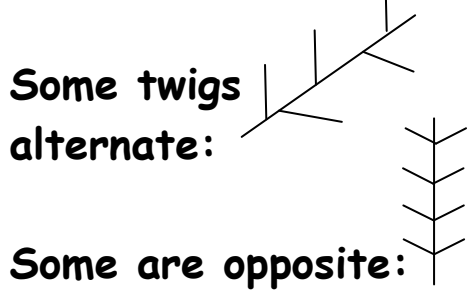


Branching patterns



Notice the different twig shapes of different sorts of tree.

Some trees have thin twigs close together, such as the beech. Some have thick twigs with more space between them such as the sweet chestnut. Trees with bigger leaves need more space between the twigs.



Some twigs droop down and curve up again at the end like delicate fingers.....!
(for example the ash tree and the plane tree)

Find shapes and patterns in the trees.
Look for :

- - a wiggly snake-shape.....
- - a square,
- - a 4-sided shape,
- - an S-shape,
- - a 'W'
- - a triangle
- - a 'Y'



Oak



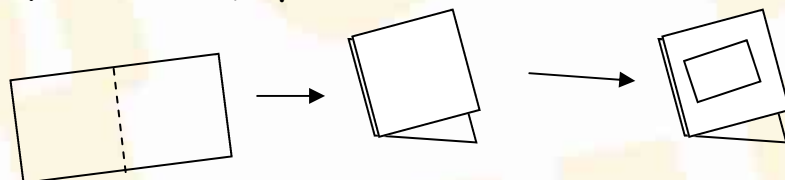
In winter time the deciduous trees have lost their leaves, and the shapes of trees can be seen in all their glory. When you go for a walk in the winter, enjoy all these shapes, and why not bring some twigs back with you, and:



Make a Twig Window

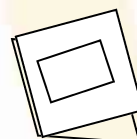
1. Get a piece of stiff card or cardboard 30 cm by 15 cm

2. Fold it in half

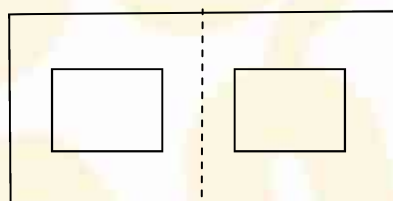


3. Draw the shape of your window on the front, leaving a wide (2cm or more) margin

4. Cut out this shape, with a craft knife. You may need to ask an adult to do this. Cut through both sides so they are exactly the same.



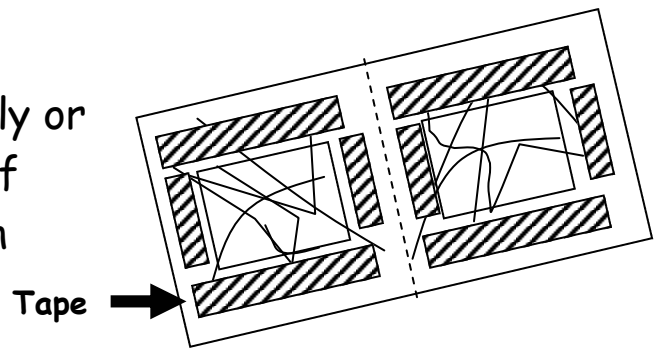
5. Open it out again



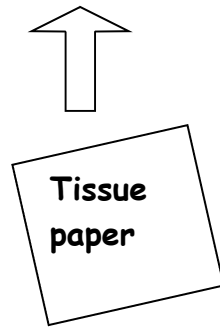
Continued on
next sheet



6. Collect twigs.: thin, fat, knobbly or fine...Design your arrangement of twigs and place them across both windows, and tape them around the edges.



7. Cut a piece of coloured tissue paper to fit over one of the windows. Tape this down on all four sides.



8. Fold up the whole thing, and tape or staple it together. Hang it in a window so the light comes through it. Some of the twigs are behind the tissue paper, and that is what twigs look like on a misty day, with clear ones nearby by and misty ones in the distance!



The pattern of twigs and branches against the sky is called tracery, and this is also what we call the pattern in windows of churches and mosques. These designs are inspired by the shapes of trees. One is called the Jesse tree!

