

Faces on trees with clay

Today you can:

- Learn to handle 'natural' clay and form it into a face of an animal or person – or any other flat-backed object that will stick to a tree trunk. Or take it home to add to your own tree.

About natural clay:

- It is just made of clay from the earth. It is a suspension of fine clay particles in a little water. It is safe to handle when it is wet – but don't inhale the dust from dried clay. And don't eat it – it won't taste good.
- To make it hard, it needs to be fired (cooked) at high temperature in a kiln.
- The sculptures you will make won't last long. When we get rain, they should melt away and not harm the tree. Or they will just get brittle and drop off the tree and join the earth.
- We used clay leftover from another local public art project, but you can buy it online from Potclay. Or use air-dry clay, which is very easily available in local art and craft shops (or online); it has extra chemicals to make it go hard without firing.



In the garden:

1. Wet clay is a bit messy and you will get it on your hands.
2. If you are a bit messy, it is best to roll up any sleeves and take your best watch or jewels off. But you can wash it off your hands and clothes in any water.
3. Find a space on the table and let us know you are ready. We can give you one or more balls of clay to work with.
4. You can either make your face or other object at the table and then move it and fix it on the tree or you can put a ball of it on the tree and then make the face. We made our try-out faces on the tree.
5. Will you make a happy, sad, bored or scary face?
6. You can make eyes, noses and ears with clay – we have some clay tools but pencils and blunt knives work well too.
7. We have gathered a few feathers and seed heads but you can also hunt around the garden for small sticks or stones or other things to add interest to your face. We used feathers for our scary bird and a lime seed for the dog's nose.

Later...

1. If you'd like to try this at home – or in the park - ask us for some clay to take home.
2. Keep it in the plastic bag to stop it drying out. If it does, you can add water again to it to make it soft again (look up how online).
3. If you don't want it any longer, you could put it in a compost heap or bury it in the garden – or make seed bombs with some earth and flower seeds (look that one up online too).