

## WORKSHOP: "PINECONE GARDENS"



**Summary:** Participant use pinecones and other natural materials to create a garden on a salvaged piece of wood. They can paint their backgrounds and then add pinecones upright and upside down with hot glue to create their flower shapes. The gardens can then be embellished with acrylic paint and pinecone fragments for leaves.

### Materials and Equipment:

pencil, eraser, sharpener  
plastic lids for palettes  
salvaged wood boards  
masking tape  
ruler  
pinecones  
sandpaper  
pliers/cutters  
d-ring hangers and screws  
picture frame wire  
safety glasses  
instructions/ideas sheet

paint brushes assorted sizes  
plastic container for water  
sludge primer  
acrylic paints assorted colours  
glue gun and glue  
cardboard for under glue gun  
coated gloves for working with hot glue  
twigs  
matching screw driver  
optional: gloss gel medium or gloss varnish  
sample artwork

### Class Plan:

1. Cut or find a piece of wood about 5" x 10" to work on. Sand the cut edges of your board.
2. Prime the wood board first if you plan to paint your board and it isn't already painted. Sludge primer from TriArt is ideal because it is made from paint leftovers that allow the paint wastewater to be reused.
3. Paint your board if you'd like a background colour. You can leave it plain raw wood if you prefer.



4. Shape your pinecones by removing pieces from the top with sturdy pliers. Twist each piece and wiggle it back and forth to remove one piece at a time. Just cutting the pinecone in half is harder and doesn't leave the centre piece available to use as the centre of a flower.



5. Trim the centre part way down on the pinecones that will be the right way up. Wear safety glasses when cutting pinecones up.



6. Trim the centre all the way down on the pinecones that will be upside-down.



7. Save some of the removed pinecone pieces that are still whole to use as flower leaves.
8. You can paint your pinecones before attaching them if you prefer. We painted ours afterward to make it easier to see how the garden colours were evolving in our creation.
9. Arrange your pinecones on your board, with some right side up and others upside-down.



10. Cut lengths of reeds sizes to match the distance from the bottom of your board, up to each pinecone flower using wire cutters.



11. Place your reeds under your pinecones to plan your composition.



12. Mark each position with a small pencil mark in case your pieces shift while working.



13. Use hot glue to assemble the pinecone garden:
  - a. Wear protective leather or work gloves when working with hot glue and stand your glue gun on a scrap piece of cardboard to catch any drips.
  - b. Attach your pinecone flowers, applying a lot of glue to either the bottom or top of each and pressing it in place on the board one at a time.



- c. Attach your reeds to your board, fitting one end under the edge of each pinecone flower. We applied the hot glue to the reed and picked it up and pressed it in place on the board with pliers. You could lay your reed on your board instead, draw a line of glue beside it the right shape and then slide the reed over into the glue with pliers.



- d. Apply a small dot of hot glue on the board where you want each leaf and press a pinecone piece onto it with pliers. It is best to do one at a time, so the glue doesn't dry before the pinecone piece is pressed in place.
14. When the glue is dry, check to see that your pinecone flowers are firmly attached. If any are loose, add more hot glue under the edges and press in place (wearing gloves).



15. When the glue is dry, remove any glue threads with a piece of masking tape.



16. Paint your pinecone flowers and leaves.
- a. Paint the upside-down pinecone flowers red.





- b. Paint some of the right-side up pinecone flowers pink and some blue.



- c. Paint the upside-down pinecone flower centres black to look like poppy flower centres.



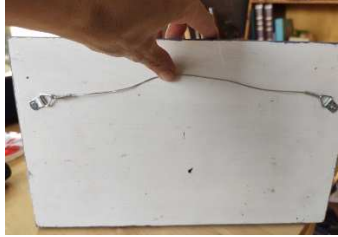
- d. Paint the right-side up pinecone flower centres yellow to look like hibiscus flower stamens.
- e. Touch up the edges of some of your pinecones with a contrasting colour. We used white as highlights.



- f. Put a hint of green paint on the pinecone piece leaves. We used a light green and dark green unmixed together on the same brush to get a multi shade green leaf effect.



17. Dry brush green paint on the background board around the reed stems and leaves to add to the garden-like appearance. This is a tiny amount of green paint on a frayed brush with no water, lightly dusted on.
18. Dry brush some white paint in horizontal strokes in the sky to give the appearance of soft dusty clouds.
19. Add a hanger to the back with two d-ring hangers, screws and picture frame or scrap wire.



20. If you feel comfortable doing so, please share photos of your creations with us. Happy creating!

#### **Useful Information/Adaptions/Variations:**

- Turn the board to a portrait orientation and try making a bunch of flowers with longer stems grouped together at the bottom.
- The pinecones could also be applied to the board sideways and shaped to look like creatures going through a forest with reed trunks in the background.
- Varnish your finished artwork if desired. A spray varnish done outdoors would be ideal for getting in all the grooves.
- Gather pinecones in late spring to plan for projects like this at any time of the year.

#### **Trouble Shooting:**

- If you don't like part of your garden design, wait for it to dry and then use the pliers to pull that piece of the design off of your board. Attach something else to that area to cover any marks.
- Remember that you are working with pinecones. If they get a lot of water on them, they will close up. They will reopen again when they are dry, so just waiting is a good solution.