



LEAF DISCOVERY BOX

Materials you need:

All you really need for this activity is a collection of different leaves that can be found in your local area – perhaps ask families to help you collect some leaves and bring them in to. I've made some suggestions for you below to help build your collection and turn it into a learning and discovery resource.

- Scented leaves – basil, parsley, mint, lavender, rosemary
- Leaves with stripes and patterns
- Leaves that are different colours, shapes and sizes
- Leaves with different textures – succulent leaves are fantastic choices as they are often slightly furry and quite squishy.
- Pens and paper for older children to make labels and name the types of leaves.
- Magnifying glasses if you have them

Setup for play:

- Set up a sorting space for the children to lay out the different leaves to explore, discuss and categorise together.
- Talk with the children about the different features of the leaves in the discovery box collection – use magnifying glasses for a closer look!
- Help them to observe and sort the leaves into groups by shape, size, texture, colour, smell and pattern
- See if the group can identify or tell you the name of the tree or plant the leaves come from. Draw or write labels for the different groups and leaf types.
- Count the number of leaves in each group and record the answers

What are they learning with this activity?

As the children sort the leaves and work together they are learning to:

- Use hand/eye coordination skills
- Classify, sort by category and group items together by similarities, patterns and differences
- Develop new vocabulary and descriptive language skills
- Recognise symbols and how things can represent other things
- Negotiate roles, responsibilities and relationships
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control
- Use language and sound to communicate their thinking
- Observe and describe characteristics of living things
- Explore and manipulate the various textures of different leaves
- Use observational skills to look closely and notice details
- Compare textures, smells, and colours
- Become aware of connections, similarities and differences
- Classify objects and count the number of objects in each category
- Measure and compare length

Extending the play:

- Make prints of the leaves by painting onto the leaf then pressing firmly onto paper. Older children can label the leaf correctly.
- Take turns one by one in a group circle to step forward, choose a leaf from the discovery box and decide which category they feel it belongs too. They can then say 'I think this leaf belongs in the group because.....!'

