



by Cindy Steele

Welcome back to Puddles' Craft Corner. Spring is bursting out all over the refuge and we're here to share a fun nature activity that your kids can do with mostly things found around the house and outside in nature. This project is guaranteed to get the kids excited about being outside!

Let's join Puddles, the mascot of the National Wildlife Refuge System, to learn a little bit about how seeds are spread while creating a beautiful picture. A sure sign of spring and summer is those little yellow bursts of color in everyone's yard...dandelions! Though they might be the bane of many landscapers existence, dandelions are really amazing. Most people consider dandelions to be pesky weeds, while other nature-lovers think of them as beautiful wildflowers. Dandelions are an important early spring food source for pollinators like bees and butterflies. One of the neatest things about dandelions is their lifecycle. Much like a butterfly or a frog, dandelions go through an amazing transformation, changing their beautiful yellow flowers into poofy seed heads. Each dandelion flower can produce a poof containing from one to two hundred seed heads that float on the breeze to sprout a new dandelion plant wherever it lands. Because of this amazing method of spreading seeds, dandelions are found anywhere and everywhere.



Let's gather a few simple materials to create a beautiful dandelion picture!

Dandelion Poof Painting



Materials

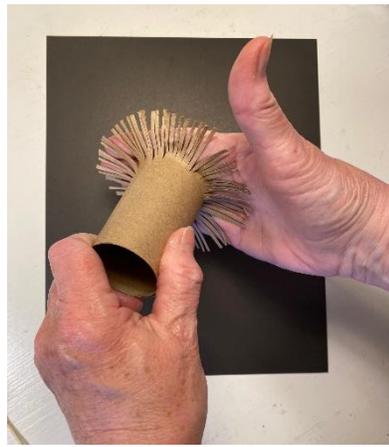
1. Black Cardstock or Construction Paper
2. One Toilet Paper Roll
3. White Paint (acrylic, poster, or tempera paint)
4. One Paper Plate
5. Q-tips
6. Rubber Bands
7. A Cotton Ball
8. Scissors

Instructions

1. Gather all of your supplies.



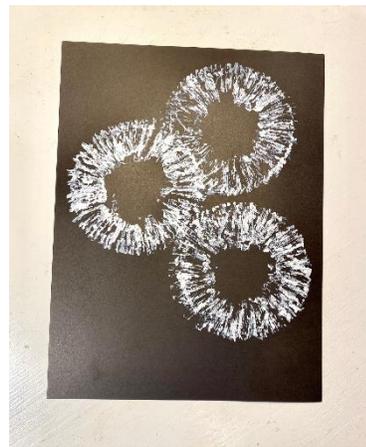
2. Cut about 1" to 1½" of fringe at one end of the toilet paper roll and flatten out the fringe.



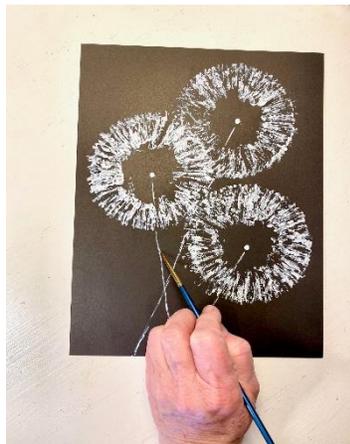
3. Squeeze out a large dollop of white paint on a paper plate and press the fringed toilet paper roll down in the paint to cover the fringe. *You may need to dab some of the paint off on a paper towel.



4. Stamp three dandelions on the black paper by pressing the fringe on the paper and turning it round and round as you stamp each dandelion 2-3 times.



5. Use a paintbrush or a Q-tip to make a dot in the center of each dandelion and to draw stems down from each dandelion. Gather 4 or 5 Q-tips together into a bundle with a rubber band, dab them in the white paint and add dots to the centers of each dandelion.



6. Next, use the Q-tip bundle to add dots all around the outside edges of the dandelions. Then, use the single Q-tip to add dots in places outside the dandelions to show seeds blowing off the plants in the wind.



7. Finally, dip the cotton ball in the paint and dab some of it off. Lightly dab the cotton ball on the dots that represent the flying seeds to add a dusting of white. Your dandelion painting is finished. Let it dry and display it for all to see!



Join us next month for a Magnificent May Craft!