



Making Natural Clay

Clay is composed of very fine particles of soil which are suspended in water. It is found in natural deposits under the ground. Clay is found under layers of grass or topsoil. Clay is yellow, brown, red or gray. It can be found along stream beds, in fields and hillsides. Clay can be gathered and shaped into a variety of sizes, forms, and objects.

Objectives:

- Teacher will gather clay from the environment
- Pupils will gain experience in using clay from the local environment

Materials:

- clay
- plastic container with tight fitting lid
- plastic bag
- container for gathering clay
- shovel, panga, or trowel or other digging tool

Directions:

1. Gather clay.
2. Keep clay in a plastic container with a lid.
3. Press and push the moist clay to make it pliable and remove the air bubbles.
4. Shape the clay into desired shapes.
5. Let the clay shapes dry.
6. Let clay shapes dry for 3-4 days.
7. Paint if desired.
8. Varnish or shellac if desired.
9. Put extra clay into plastic container with a lid for later use.

Variations:

- Use the plastic bag to cover the extra clay while making the shape. The plastic bag will keep the clay from drying out.
- Make a clay pinch pot by forming a ball; pushing one thumb into the center of the clay but not through it; cupping one hand underneath the clay; pinching with thumb and forefinger; opening of the pot will get larger and larger until a pinch pot is formed.
- Try scratching designs into the sides of the shape with a stick, fingers or a twig.
- Try making a pot using coils or strings of clay.
- Try making a free form sculpture of an animal, sculpture or clay design.
- Try making a flat circle and pressing finger prints or handprints; paint and varnish.

