



Save Trees by Making Your Own Recycled Paper

Objectives:

- Increase awareness of forest products and uses.
- Discover how important it is to recycle and how easy it is to make recycled paper.



Everyday we use something that is made from trees. One of the things we use most often — especially in school — is paper. Although paper can be made from a variety of natural materials including cotton, hemp, grass, banana plants, tobacco and even elephant dung in some parts of the world, paper is most often made from pulp that is produced by grinding up trees.

DID YOU KNOW... It takes about 20,000 trees to make the Saturday edition of a big-city newspaper? That's more than a million trees a year!

Because paper is so important to us and because we use so much of it, we need to make sure we don't waste it. It only takes a second to use a paper napkin or tissue, but decades for a tree to grow.

Fortunately, we can save trees by using less paper and by recycling paper. Here's how you can make your own homemade paper.

What You Need

- scrap paper &/or newspaper
- a blender or wire whisk
- water
- a bucket
- a big square pan that's at least 8 cm deep
- a piece of window screen that fits inside the pan
- an iron or rolling pin
- a measuring cup
- tea towels
- vegetable scraps or dye for colour

What You Do

1. Tear the scrap paper into tiny pieces and soak them in a bucket of hot water for about 30 minutes. Put a handful of the soaked paper into the blender and mix until mush. Or if using a whisk, beat the mixture until it is a creamy pulp. Add a small amount of vegetable scraps or dye for colour (or even leaves for added texture).
2. Pour the blended pulp into a measuring cup. Pour roughly 3 cm of water into the pan. Put the screen into the pan and pour one cup of the paper pulp onto the screen.
3. Spread the pulp evenly in the water with your fingers. It should feel kind of mushy. Lift the screen and let the water drain.
4. Lay the pulp-covered screen face down on a cloth (tea towel) or in between some newspaper. Lift the screen away, leaving the paper pulp on the cloth. Cover with another cloth and iron with a hot iron, or use a rolling pin to flatten and press out excess moisture. Let the pulp dry for at least 24 hours.
5. Once it's dry, use the newly made paper to create greeting cards for your friends and family, or use it to write a letter to your member of parliament encouraging more recycling in your community.

