



**Baltimore Woods
Nature Center**
Nature in your hands

Leaf Chromatography

The yellow, red, orange, and brown pigments you see in fall leaves have always been there, they were just covered up by all that green chlorophyll! You can see all of the colors within a leaf by doing this leaf chromatography experiment! Choose many types of leaf colors to see all the different pigments.

You will need:

Rubbing alcohol

Coffee filters

Small jars or containers

A variety of leaves

Pencils

Tape

Scissors

Step 1: Collect 3-5 yellow leaves, 3-5 red leaves, and 3-5 green leaves (or colors of choice). Tear the leaves into small pieces, keeping the different colored leaves separate (ex. 1 pile of yellow, 1 pile of red, and 1 pile of green).



Step 2: Put the ripped up leaves into small containers or jars (keeping the different colors separate). Add just enough rubbing alcohol to cover the leaves. Let sit for 1-2 hours (to speed up the process you can put the jars in a container of hot water and wait ~30 mins).



Step 3: Cut strips of coffee filter long enough so one side of the strip just touches the rubbing alcohol and the other end sticks out of the top of the container or jar. Attach that side to a pencil and rest over the opening of the jar (again, the bottom of the coffee filter should just touch the rubbing alcohol). Wait another 1-2 hours or overnight for the pigments to separate along the coffee filters. Remove and dry to observe the different bands of color!

