

Paint with Veggies!



SCIENCE
ALIVE

We all know that fruits and vegetables are good for us – but what if we told you they can also be used to make paint? Especially the bright ones like beetroot, which contain natural compounds called pigments that can create beautiful colours. **In this activity, you'll use heat and water to turn leftover food scraps into your very own watercolour paints and make masterpieces!**

Reducing food waste and making the most of everything we use is a great way to be kind to the planet. Follow these instructions to be part scientist, part artist and full-time eco-warrior!

What you will need:

- **Food scraps** – *Parakai*
(separated out by food type)
- **Saucepan** – *Hōpane*
- **Wooden spoon** – *Koko rākau*
- **Measuring jug** – *Ipu ine-kītanga*
- **Water** – *Wai*
- **Sieve** – *Hītari*
- **Ice cube tray / egg carton**
(to make individual paint colours)
- **Art supplies**
(paint brushes and some paper)

Instructions:

1. For each individual vegetable, pop the scraps into a saucepan and add water – enough so that at least half of the scraps are covered.
2. Boil for about 5-10 minutes, using a wooden spoon to squish and mash the vegetables.
3. Using the sieve, carefully strain each vegetable mix into a measuring cup and leave to cool.
4. Once cool, pour your vegetable paint into your ice cube tray/egg carton.

Reflect:

- What did you smell when you were boiling the food scraps?
- Did the colours look different when it was first made compared to after it had dried on the page?

Extra for Experts!

- Try making paint using colourful spices like turmeric, paprika, or even cocoa powder!
- Compare your vegetable paints with store bought watercolour paints. Which ones are brighter?

The Science of Pigments:

A pigment is a natural colour found in the cells of plants, animals, and even people. Pigments are what give us different eye colours, make leaves green, and turn flowers all sorts of amazing colours.

But how do they do this? Pigments work by absorbing (soak in) some colours of light and reflecting (bounce off) others – and the colours we see are the ones that bounce back to our eyes!

A long time ago, people discovered they could use pigments from nature to make paint, dye clothes, and decorate objects – and we're still doing it today!

These days, we can also make pigments in labs or factories, but we can still find colour all around us in nature (like in colourful food scraps!)