



Mass Audubon

# April Vacation Virtual Camp

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## Wednesday: Speak for the Trees Grades K to 2

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### PAINT WITH TREE BUD BRUSHES

#### What you Need

Access to low tree branches or shrubs.

Optional: A magnifying lens and/or a zoom option in a camera.

Elastic band or string

Paper

Paint or mud

Clippers or sturdy scissors (if you will be cutting twigs)

#### Staying Safe

An adult should look carefully at plants first to make sure there are no thorns or poison ivy.

An adult should supervise the twig cutting for the paintbrush activity.

#### Jump Start the Exploration

What do you know about trees?

Can you name different parts of a tree?

What part of the tree do the leaves come from?

At the very end of tree branches, if you look closely you will see a tree bud. Each type of tree has its own distinctive tree bud; you can identify a tree just from the shape of its buds. Within that bud is a leaf and sometimes a flower as well. Throughout the spring the bud grows larger until the leaf bursts out.

#### DIRECTIONS

Budding Investigators

1. Go to a safe area to explore where you can find trees and shrubs that have branches that have been bare all winter.

2. Describe what the tree bud looks like to you. What color is it? Is it big or small? Is it rounded or thin? Do they look like crowns or hearts? Are there one or more buds at the end?
3. Gently feel different parts of the branch, being careful to touch lightly so you don't damage the plant (plants are alive!). Describe how it feels – are some parts hard? Soft? Smooth? Rough? Bumpy? What other words can you use to describe how the branch feels?
4. Optional: If you have a magnifying lens, a smartphone magnifying app, or a camera with a magnifying ability, take a close-up look at a few parts of the branch. Share out loud what you notice.
5. Find another tree and examine its bud. Is it the same or different? Can you find three different trees with their three different buds?

### Natural Artists

1. Gather some thin, strong twigs and a selection of leaves, branches, tree buds, or flowers with stalks.
2. If you are cutting fresh stems, leaves, etc., only cut as many as you need – all those parts are important to the plants.
3. Carefully secure your leaves or flowers to the end of a twig by wrapping an elastic band or string around them. Different flowers and leaves will give you different textures and make different marks when they are used as paintbrushes.
4. Have fun trying out your brushes. If you do not have paint available you can also try using mud as paint.
5. See what textures, lines, and patterns your “brushes” make when you paint with them on paper. You can dab to make prints, brush to make lines, and even swirl the brushes around to see what effects you can make on the paper.

## Talk About Your Learning

What do you notice about tree buds?

What do you wonder about trees?

What do tree buds remind you of?

## Additional Resources

Look online at some different tree buds: [Red Maple Buds](#), [Forsythia Buds](#), and [Beech Tree Buds](#)

[iNaturalist](#), a free online app that identifies plants and animals.

Project Learning Tree: [Every Tree for Itself](#)

[The Tiny Seed](#) by Eric Carle

[We Planted a Tree](#) by Diane Muldrow

[The Giving Tree](#) by Shel Silverstein