



GREAT OCEAN ROAD  
COAST & PARKS AUTHORITY

# Nature mandalas

Spending time with nature is great for our health and wellbeing. Mandalas represent the 'circle of life' in Sanskrit. Making a mandala with natural materials is a very meaningful mindfulness activity that helps us connect with nature by reminding us of nature's cycles and seasons. It is also a chance to use our senses to observe nature's colours, patterns and shapes, to feel the rough and smooth materials, and smell the fresh, perfumed or petrichor scent of nature.

## Activity 1: Garden mandalas for mindfulness

Find a quiet space in your school or backyard and work through the following steps. If you do not have room outside or the weather is poor, this can be completed indoors.

### THINK

- **Think** about what you enjoy in nature e.g., leaves, flowers, grass, seeds or feathers
- **Think** about circle patterns in nature that make you happy e.g., a flower head
- **Think** about the colours that make you feel good e.g., yellow sunshine
- **Think** about one piece of nature which brings you joy for the centre of your mandala.

### COLLECT

*Please be mindful not to damage nature and try to use items which have naturally fallen.*

- **Collect** a variety of natural materials from around your garden. This could include flowers, leaves, petals, seeds, blades of grass, feathers, pebbles or other items.
- **Collect** things that are already on the ground, have fallen off, or are in plenty of supply
- **Collect** things that make you happy when you feel, smell or look at them
- **Collect** five or six pieces of each natural material
- **Collect** one large centrepiece.

## PREPARE YOUR MANDALA

Nature mandalas are usually temporary – this means they only last a short while. When we make a nature mandala it is done outside so the natural items can blow away in the wind or wash away in the rain. They are part of the circle of life.

- Sit in the garden if possible to do this activity.
- Make a clearing of soil for your mandala on the ground.
- Lay out all your pieces of nature so you can see what you have collected.

### INDOOR MANDALA

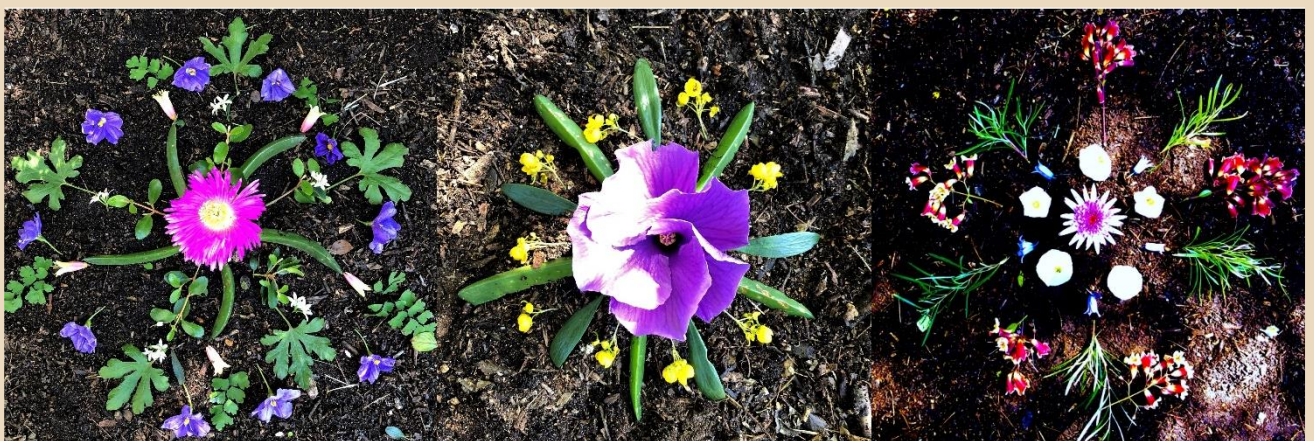
If you need to bring your items indoors, use paper, the floor, a desk or any other flat surface you are comfortable to sit at.

## COMPILE YOUR MANDALA

- Place the large centre piece in the middle.
- Place five pieces of nature evenly around the centre piece.
- Continue placing items around the outside of the circle lining up with the five.
- Make many circles around the first circle. Sometimes you can make patterns by placing items between the five main lines, making 10 pieces. Use the image below and on page one for guidance.

## BE MINDFUL

Each time you place a piece around the circle, appreciate how beautiful it is. Feel the item, smell the item and see how beautiful the creation is that you are making. Making a mandala is a flowing experience. Nothing is right or wrong. Each piece is placed where it makes you feel happy.



## Activity 2: Sand mandalas for mindfulness

At the beach, sand pit or other sandy place, mandalas can be drawn with ideas from nature around you.

### HOW TO MAKE A SAND MANDALA

- Begin with a flat firm area of sand. If near the sea, the low tide mark is the best place to find this sand. You can also simply press and smooth sand down whether at the beach, in a sand pit or using a sand tray.
- With a stick or your finger, make a shape in the middle of the mandala.
- Using this as your centrepiece, add other shapes around the edge to form circles of repeating patterns. The larger the area of sand, the more patterns you can add. See the examples below for guidance.
- Enjoy the shapes. Enjoy the movement of your hand in the sand. Enjoy the creation you are making. Watch the design expand and flow. Feel the sand on your hand or feet. Stand back and smile at your creation.



## Online resources

### Nature mandalas and sand art

Sprouting wild ones: making mandalas in nature

[www.sproutingwildones.com/creating-a-nature-mandala/#:~:text=Similar%20to%20a%20mandala%20symbol,organic%20materials%20found%20in%20nature](http://www.sproutingwildones.com/creating-a-nature-mandala/#:~:text=Similar%20to%20a%20mandala%20symbol,organic%20materials%20found%20in%20nature)

Run wild my child: making mandalas in nature

[www.runwildmychild.com/making-mandalas/](http://www.runwildmychild.com/making-mandalas/)

Growing kind: mindful in nature

[growingkind.com.au/nature-and-mindfulness/](http://growingkind.com.au/nature-and-mindfulness/)

Colouring mandalas for meditation

[www.verywellmind.com/coloring-mandalas-as-a-meditation-technique-4161160](http://www.verywellmind.com/coloring-mandalas-as-a-meditation-technique-4161160)

Tibetan sand mandalas history

[www.ancient.eu/article/1052/tibetan-sand-mandalas/](http://www.ancient.eu/article/1052/tibetan-sand-mandalas/)

Beach mandalas

[www.thisisradelaide.com.au/rad-life/2016/12/5/magical-mandalas-at-brighton-beach](http://www.thisisradelaide.com.au/rad-life/2016/12/5/magical-mandalas-at-brighton-beach)

Barwon heads sand art

[www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-22/koala-beach-artwork-by-edward-the-banksy-of-barwon-heads/11881726](http://www.abc.net.au/news/2020-01-22/koala-beach-artwork-by-edward-the-banksy-of-barwon-heads/11881726)

### Well-being in nature

Parks Victoria

[www.parks.vic.gov.au/healthy-parks-healthy-people](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au/healthy-parks-healthy-people)

Nature Play

[www.natureplay.org.au/](http://www.natureplay.org.au/)