



## *Fractals: Patterns in Nature* – Guided Nature Walk Series On-Demand Land Art Activity

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### *Collecting and using natural materials to create art!*

In this activity, you are invited to go on a nature walk – in your backyard or in a nearby green space. As you walk outside, you'll be asked to get in touch with the natural environment and gather materials to create a land art sculpture. We hope this activity inspires you to explore the beauty of nature, and that it provides you with a greater sense of well-being after your time spent outdoors creating. Let's begin!

1. Find a collection bag – this could be a recycled plastic bag, paper bag or box. You will be carrying this on your walk and placing the natural materials you find inside this bag.
2. With your bag in hand, start exploring nature – this could be at a nearby park, your own backyard or closest green space. It's up to you!
3. Look for a diversity in color, shape, texture, pattern, and size among the natural elements.
4. As you walk, gather natural materials along the way. This might include: sticks, twigs, leaves, flowers, petals, pebbles, nuts, seeds, pinecones. Place these objects into the collection bag. As you collect, keep in mind the health of the plants. Try to collect items that have already fallen onto the ground, or that are small and moveable. Remember to gather multiples of the same elements, such as 10 small pebbles or 20 leaves of the same variety. This will help with the layering of materials later.
5. Continue exploring for 10-15 minutes.
6. Once you've completed your walk and gathered a good number of natural materials, find an open spot on the ground or a flat surface. Remove your collected materials from the bag, and place them on this spot. Take a closer look at each object and ask yourself these questions:
  - a. Do you see any patterns?



- b. Do any patterns repeat themselves? If so, they might be fractal patterns – or never-ending patterns that repeat themselves at smaller and larger scales. Nature is full of fractal patterns like the ones pictured below:



Many natural fractals appear disorderly or complex when you first see them... but when looking at them more closely an underlying simplicity or logic can be found. They are very calming to look at.

7. Now that we've observed and gathered natural materials, next we'll be making a land art installation, which is the creation of outdoor sculptures using found natural materials (like soil, rock, vegetation). Begin by marking out a square on your flat surface.
8. Next, arrange your found materials within your square to create a geometric pattern. A few examples are below:



9. When you're satisfied with the design, take a picture of it. Can you give it a title? How was using natural materials different from using traditional arts supplies? How long do you think your artwork will last in the environment? How will people react when they stumble upon it?

You'll all done - thank you! We hope this gentle walk exploring the beauty of nature has provided you with time to connect to the natural world and your creativity.

For more information about Dublin Arts Council's Fractals: Patterns in Nature project, please visit: <https://www.dublinarts.org/featured-items/fractals-patterns-in-nature/>