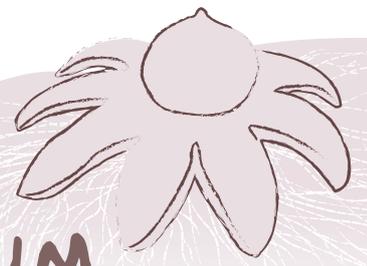


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ZEMESZVAIGZNE

GEASTRUM



A different sort of paper
A different sort of ink

Diāna Meiere, mycologist

STEP BY STEP- Paper making

An alternative to wood-based paper is fungi paper – a simple and fun way to create beautiful and interesting paper.



1. Crush bracket fungi with a hammer (10-20 good strokes) to make them softer.
2. Soak the bracket fungi in water for several hours or even a day.
3. While soaking the fungi, create a paper-forming cast. A mesh-like cloth should be attached to one side of a small wooden frame. Leave the second frame of the same size without the fabric.
4. Take out the fungi and cut into small pieces.
5. Put the pieces in a blender with water and blend. Do this until a homogeneous, puree-like slurry is formed. Remember, don't ruin the blender motor! High-powered blenders work better.
6. Put the pulp into a shallow container, add water and mix thoroughly. The more water you add, the more watery the mixture will be, and the thinner the paper will be.
7. Prepare the paper-forming cast. Place the second empty frame on top of the frame with the fabric so that the fabric is between the two frames.
8. Immerse the form in a container with the mixture. Then slowly lift and allow excess water to drain.
9. Lay the form on a flat surface and carefully remove the upper empty frame. Cover the bottom frame with the precipitated pulp with a well-absorbent cloth or paper.
10. Carefully turn the form upside down and remove the frame. To make the paper dry faster and more smoothly, create a press with a heavy weight or gently roll over it with a dough roll or other cylindrical object.
11. Continue drying until the paper is dry. Although the resulting material may not be very practical, it is obtained by hand, is completely natural and has a certain artistic value.

STEP BY STEP- Ink making

It is not so long ago that fungi were used to make ink. These are ink cap mushrooms from which a black, ink-like liquid can be obtained. Some say that it was once added to ink for signing important documents, and such stories come from both the Americas and Europe. Nowadays, artists sometimes use it to create various unusual works, and no one prevents you from experimenting with it as well!

The ink can be obtained from different ink cap fungi. These fungi are characterized by the fact that, as they gradually decompose, they turn into a black liquid. They can be found in meadows, forests and even on lawns. Ink cap fungi grow from April to October.

1. Collect 5-10 mushroom caps and place them in a glass or plastic container. If you want more "ink", you need to collect more mushroom caps.
2. Wait 10-12 hours until the black-brown ink is ready. It must be said that it deteriorates quickly and starts smelling bad quite quickly. To prevent this, it is recommended to add a few drops of clove oil to the ink. Thyme and oregano oil are also suitable.
3. And that's it! You can start writing or drawing.



Photo: Andris Soms

Drawings: Diāna Meiere