

Let's Make a William Morris Bird from Leaves!



We Need:

- A handful of leaves
- Glue (PVA if possible).
- String
- Pencil
- Pens (TOP TIP: Gel pens give the most detail.)
- A sheet of paper (Plain or scrap)
- Tape
- William Morris Inspiration Sheet (attached to end of document).



Pattern 'Bird' by William



Pattern 'Strawberry Thief' by William

William Morris was a Victorian artist and designer over 150 years ago. He believed in making beautiful and useful things by hand and was inspired by nature.

In 1877 Morris wrote "I am studying birds now to see if I can't get some of them into my next design. A year later William Morris had created one of his most famous designs, simply named 'Bird'. It was a design for woven fabric which he hung on the walls of his own home, Kelmscott House.

William Morris included birds in many of his other designs such as 'Strawberry Thief', which was inspired by watching thrushes eating the strawberries in his garden.

We are going to create our own William Morris inspired bird using natural materials.

Let's make a William Morris inspired bird from leaves!

Let's Start:

1. Collect some leaves from your garden or a local park. Remember to collect leaves of different sizes and shapes, including some that are oval shaped. **TOP TIP:** Fresh leaves are easier to work with so collect your leaves the same day or the day before you are going to make your bird.



2. Plan your design. Use the oval shaped leaves as the body of the bird, with the stem of the leaf acting as a beak. Layer leaves on top to make wings or tails. Look at the William Morris Inspiration Sheet below.



3. Stick down your design. Remove your design. Now stick it to paper, building your design back up layer by layer. Once finished and the glue dried, you can draw legs onto your design and then cut out your bird shape with scissors.

4. Draw on your bird. Now it is time to put your own creative twist on your creation! Use a pen to draw an eye for your bird. You can also use dots and curved lines to decorate your bird, like William Morris in his designs. Use his images for inspiration.



5. Add a loop to hang your bird.
Place the thread or ribbon in a loop on the back of your bird design with one end closely next to the other. Tape into place.
TOP TIP: The ribbon that comes inside of clothes for putting them on hangers would be a good choice of ribbon.



6. Find a place for your leaf bird.
 - a) You could enjoy watching bird bobbing along on a plant or perhaps you'd like to hang your bird in the park and inspire others to create their own design.

b) Alternatively, make a simple bird mobile. Gather a small stick and thread or tie the birds onto it at different lengths. Then tie string to each end of the stick, cut to the same length and tie together forming a triangular shape. You can secure the birds in place with glue.



Well done, you have finished creating your bird made from leaves! How many different types of birds, inspired by William Morris, can you create? Can you think of another creative way to display your bird?

Don't forget to show your creations off! Tag us on Twitter using #WMSCreate or send us an email at: learning@williammorrissociety.org

William Morris Inspiration Sheet



Bird by William Morris



Bird by William Morris



Bird and Anemone by William
Morris



Strawberry Thief by William Morris