



## Leaf Print T-shirts

When my children were small, I found this activity in a Family Fun Magazine. We did it while camping and since then, I have used this activity with many camp kids. Even adults love this activity. This is one of the few activities that will require supplies and a bit of preparation; **Leave No Trace (LNT) Principle - Plan Ahead and Prepare**, but it is always a favorite.

**Parent Notes:** Supplies needed for this activity; small spray bottle, a tiny amount of bleach, a 100% cotton t-shirt, a clothes line and clothes pins: After many years of doing this, I have found that Navy Blue, Black or Dark Purple work best. Other colors do not take to the bleach as well.

**Considerations:** Eye protection is a good idea and some type of protective gloves, especially for sensitive skin. Wear old clothes in case you get the bleach/water mix on you. **Remember LNT Principles - Plan Ahead and Prepare, Respect Wildlife, Dispose of Waste Properly.** Be sure to be able to identify and avoid poison ivy before starting this activity. This activity should be done OUTDOORS at the campsite, cabin, lodge or at home.

### Let's Begin

Each person creating a nature t-shirt collects several leaves that have fallen to the ground (5 - 7 leaves are usually plenty). **DO NOT** pick leaves from a tree or shrub. **LNT Principle; Leave What You Find.**

- Lay your 100% cotton t-shirt on gravel or hard surface where it can lay flat. Use a tarp, plastic covering or large piece of cardboard to protect surfaces like wood decks. If you do not want the back of the t-shirt to get bleach on it, use a piece of cardboard or poster board in between the front and back to keep it from running through. (NOTE: A t-shirt made of mixed fibers may not fade, stick to 100% cotton)
- Arrange the leaves on the front of the shirt. You can create a design, pattern or it can be random.
- Fill a small spray bottle with approximately 2/3 water and 1/3 bleach, hold the bottle 12" - 18" away from the shirt and **lightly** mist. Use a rock to hold the leaves down and in place.
- Start with a very light mist. It doesn't take much. Wait a few minutes and watch as the t-shirt begins to fade around the leaves. If it is not fading after a few minutes, lightly mist a little more of the solution. The mist may pool on the leaves. Use a paper towel to dab the leaves dry to prevent bleach dripping on the t-shirt when you remove them. Use the clothesline and clothes pins to hang it up. Let it dry. Bleached leaves should be rinsed thoroughly before returning to nature or thrown in trashcan.
- Dispose of the leftover water/bleach solution down a sink, not in the grass. (**LNT Principles: Dispose of Waste Properly & Respect Wildlife**)
- Wash your t-shirt creation before wearing. Then take a hike on one of "Natures Runways" (designated trail) to show it off.

You are sure to get a lot of compliments on your new shirt and have a pretty cool keepsake of your trip to the Hocking Hills.