

Sprouts Monthly

A family education program at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens

Colors in Nature

Can you find them? What do they mean?



Take a set of **color cards** with you into the Gardens and try to match each **color**



to something natural like a flower, feather, mushroom, tree, insect, or rock.



Photos by MCBG Volunteer Jill Surdzial

Where did you find the colors and what do they mean?

Colors are a part of a language that nature uses to communicate without words.

What is the object you found trying to say?

“You can’t see me.”

An organism can use color as camouflage to fool its predator or its prey.

For example, a mushroom uses the colors **brown** or **black** to hide on the forest floor so that it **won’t** be eaten and a praying mantis uses the color **green** to hide on a plant so that it can sneak up on the insects it **will** eat.

Can you find something camouflaged that matches your color card?

Why would it want to hide? What could it be hiding from or trying to surprise?

Where could you hide and be camouflaged?

“Hey, I’m here - look at me!”

Many plants make colorful flowers to attract pollinators like bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Have you ever noticed that bees love **blue** flowers and hummingbirds love **red** flowers? Other plants make colorful berries or fruits for birds and animals to eat and spread their seeds.

Can you find something that wants to be seen that matches your color card?

What do you think it is trying to attract? Why?

How do humans use color to communicate?

“Danger! Stay Away!”

The colors **red** and **orange** are often warning signs to say “Stay away” or “Don’t eat me, I’m poisonous!”.

Can you find something that is using color as a warning that matches your color card?

What would it be trying to warn?

Why would it be sending a warning?

Hope to see you again soon

Join us for the next Sprouts Monthly activity — Bird Watching!