

# Colors in Nature

at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens



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?



## Sprouts

**A family education program at the Mendocino Coast Botanical Gardens**

## **“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?