

# Nature Journaling in the Fall & Winter!

Submitted by Karen Houlding

When tree leaves change color and flower petals fade and flutter to the ground, you might think it will be hard to find nature objects to observe and record in your journal. Actually, the bareness of the branches high & low reveal treasures that otherwise were hidden behind the greenery!

What can you find on a fall or winter neighborhood walk? Looking down at the sidewalks and through the forest trails you can find colorful leaves, acorns, maple keys, mushrooms and fungus! These are all easy, fun objects to sketch with 3 techniques: watercolor paint, graphite pencil and colored pencil. You can use just one of these techniques for your sketchbook page, or combine all three!

**Watercolor:** Leaves are fun to watercolor paint using the “wet-on-wet” technique, blending the deep reds, yellows, oranges and brown spots. Sketch the basic shape

of the leaf lightly in pencil (or trace it), fill in with the lightest color (usually light yellow or green) using a small paintbrush (round 6) and watercolor paint. While the paint is still wet, “drop in” the other colors you see in the leaf using short strokes or dots. The paint will feather its way into the base layer, blending and blooming which is interesting to observe! Let it dry and then using a fine tip brush, paint thin, faint lines for the veins. Done!

Watercolor and colored pencils: Acorns and maple keys can be painted using the same technique. Start with a pencil sketch of the basic shape, paint in the base color with watercolor paint. After the paint is dry, add in the details of the seeds, veins and patterns with colored pencil lines or shading.

**Pencil or colored pencil:** Mushrooms and fungus sprout in the wet fall and winter months and can be found on logs decaying in the forest and probably in your lawn or mulch! Sketching mushrooms and fungus with just pencil or colored pencil creates an interesting monotone drawing that highlights the shadows, spots and patterns. For mushrooms,

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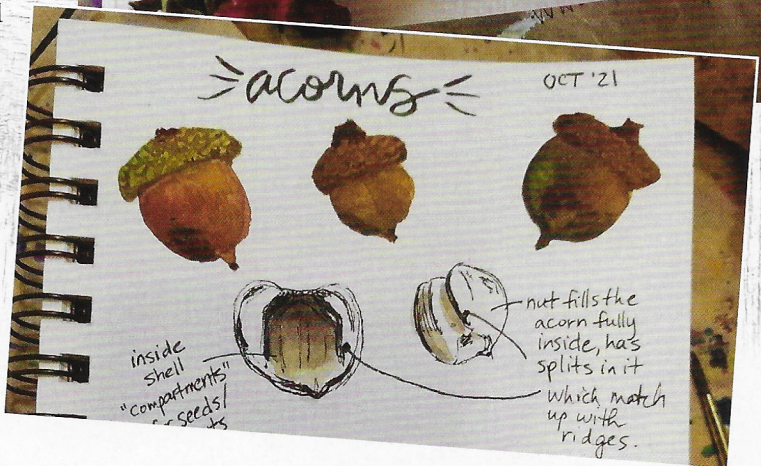


sketch a basic dome for the cap, a cylinder for the stem, shade the areas where you see darker shadows or spots. Maybe you see the gills underneath, which are just straight lines radiating from a central point on the cap where the stem attaches.

Whenever I sketch nature objects from my walks, I like to learn more about them by taking a photo and using the Google Lens button to help identify and read facts. I also like to see what's inside some objects, like the acorn -- I cracked it open and discovered the nut inside completely filled the shell and it had splits in it which matched up perfectly with the ridges inside the shell! You never know what you will find!

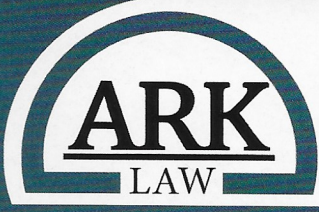
Contact me if you'd like help getting started with nature journaling!

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