

Lavender Leonardos

BOTANICAL FLOWERS | MAKING YOUR OWN WATERCOLOUR

This week we will be showing you how to extract dye from flowers and plants, to create your very own watercolour artwork.

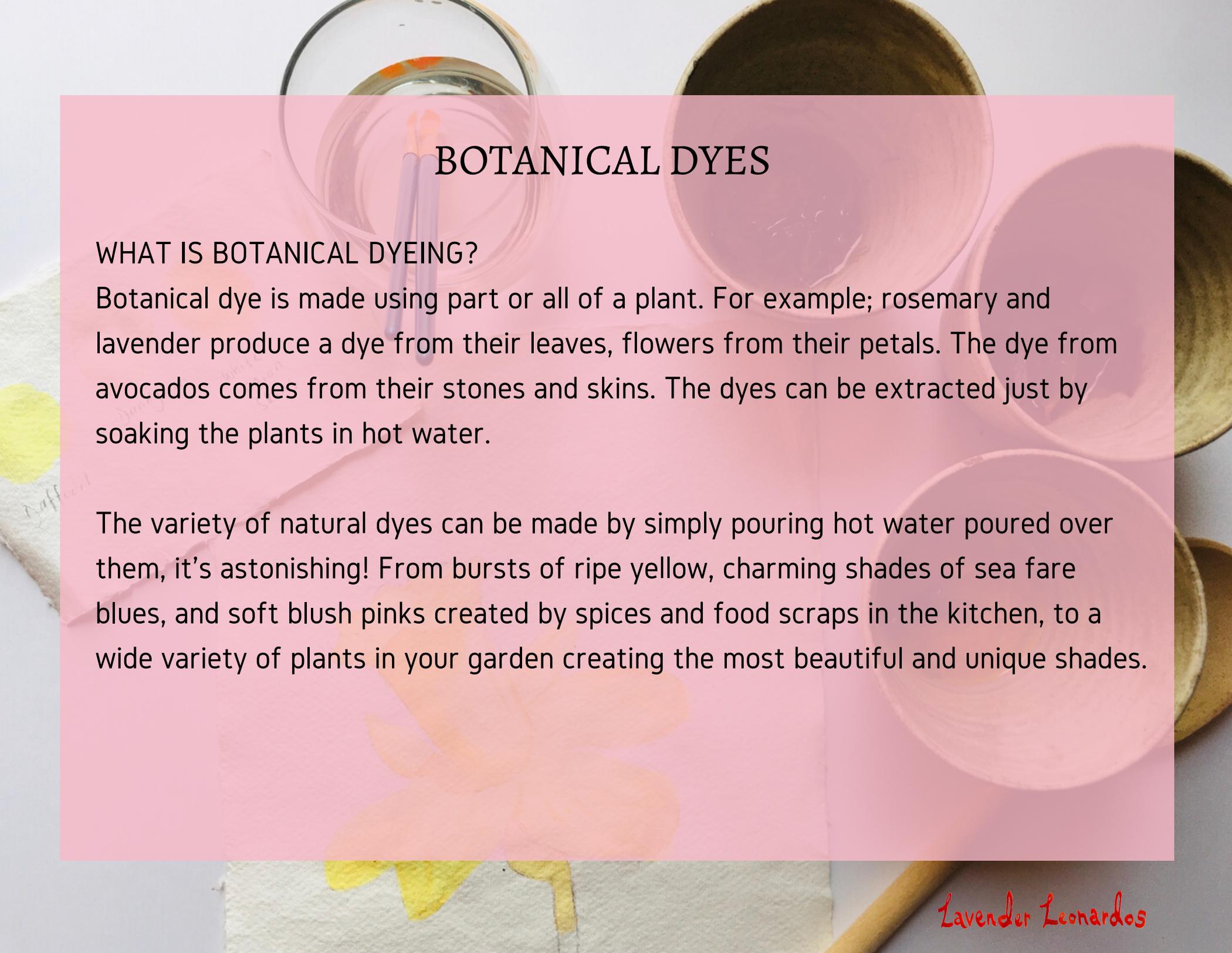
The flower that we will be using is the beautiful daffodil, which produces vibrant yellow dye - perfect for a watercolour study.

Important: Ask permission from your parents first, before picking flowers.

YOU WILL NEED

- HB Pencil
- Rubber
- Paint brush
- x2 A4 & x1 A5 paper
(watercolour, cartridge or sketchbook paper)
- x 2 Daffodil
- x3 Dandelion
- Handful of spinach or grass
- x1 Yellow onion skin
- x4 jars/small bowls/containers
- Kettle to boil water
- Baking soda (optional)

• Duration:
1hr 30mins -
2hrs



BOTANICAL DYES

WHAT IS BOTANICAL DYEING?

Botanical dye is made using part or all of a plant. For example; rosemary and lavender produce a dye from their leaves, flowers from their petals. The dye from avocados comes from their stones and skins. The dyes can be extracted just by soaking the plants in hot water.

The variety of natural dyes can be made by simply pouring hot water poured over them, it's astonishing! From bursts of ripe yellow, charming shades of sea fare blues, and soft blush pinks created by spices and food scraps in the kitchen, to a wide variety of plants in your garden creating the most beautiful and unique shades.

SAFETY

- Ensure the equipment you use, won't be used in the kitchen afterwards.
- These flowers are not edible!!
- Wash your hands after touching flowers and plants.

Plants and flowers can be toxic.

STEP 1: PICKING YOUR FLOWERS

Spring is here, which means daffodils are too! You will find them in your garden, parks or the shops. As we are producing a daffodil study we need at least 3 different tones for the flower and a green dye for the stem. We can get this from onion skin, dandelions and leaves.



Remember:

Carefully allow any bugs to escape from the flowers, before taking inside.

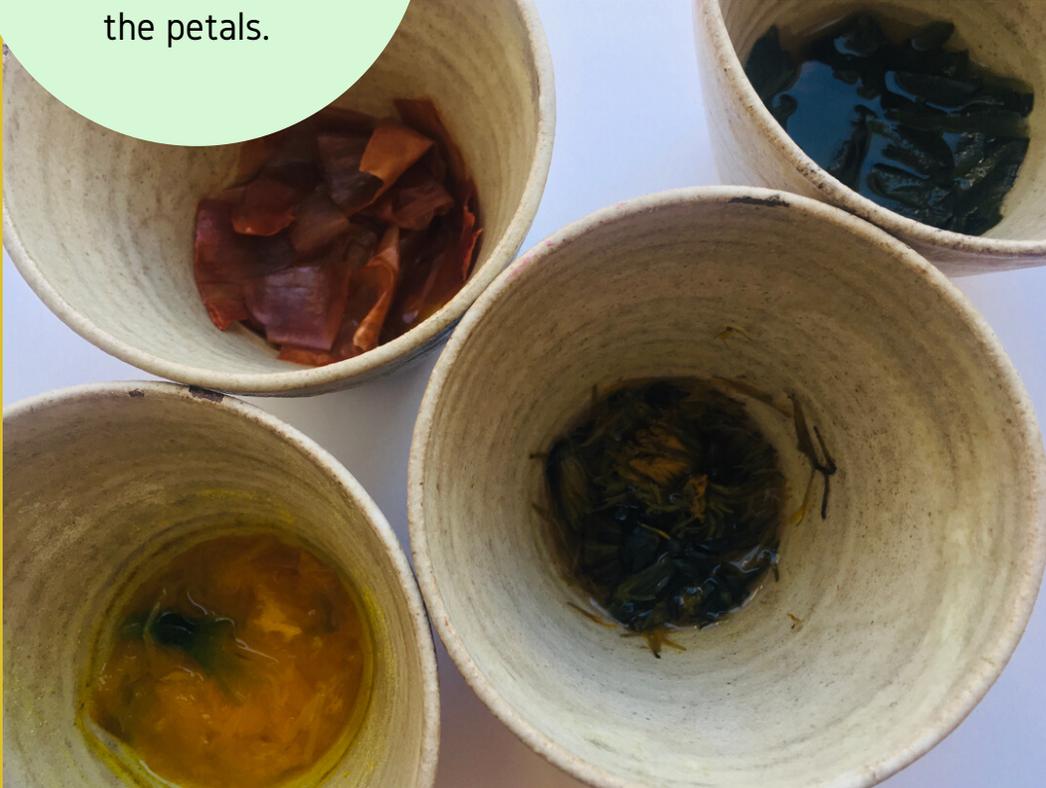
- x2 Daffodils | One to draw and one for dyeing.
- x3 Dandelion heads | This produces a light brown.
- x1 yellow onion skin | This produces an orange.
- Handful of green leaves | This could be from spinach or grass.

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STEP 2 : MAKING YOUR WATERCOLOUR

Top Tip:

Add a sprinkle of baking soda to help bring the colour out in the petals.



1. Take the petals off the flower heads and drop them into separate bowls, as well as your onion skins and green leaves (Remember to leave one daffodil as it is)
2. Ask an adult to help boil the kettle and pour the boiling water over your dyestuff - just enough water so they are covered.
3. Using the end of the paintbrush, start to mix the dyestuff with the water.

This now has to be left for minimum of an hour. The longer you leave it the stronger the colour will be. We shall now move onto drawing our daffodil.

STEP 3: DRAWING YOUR DAFFODIL

Remember:
Light pencil
line.

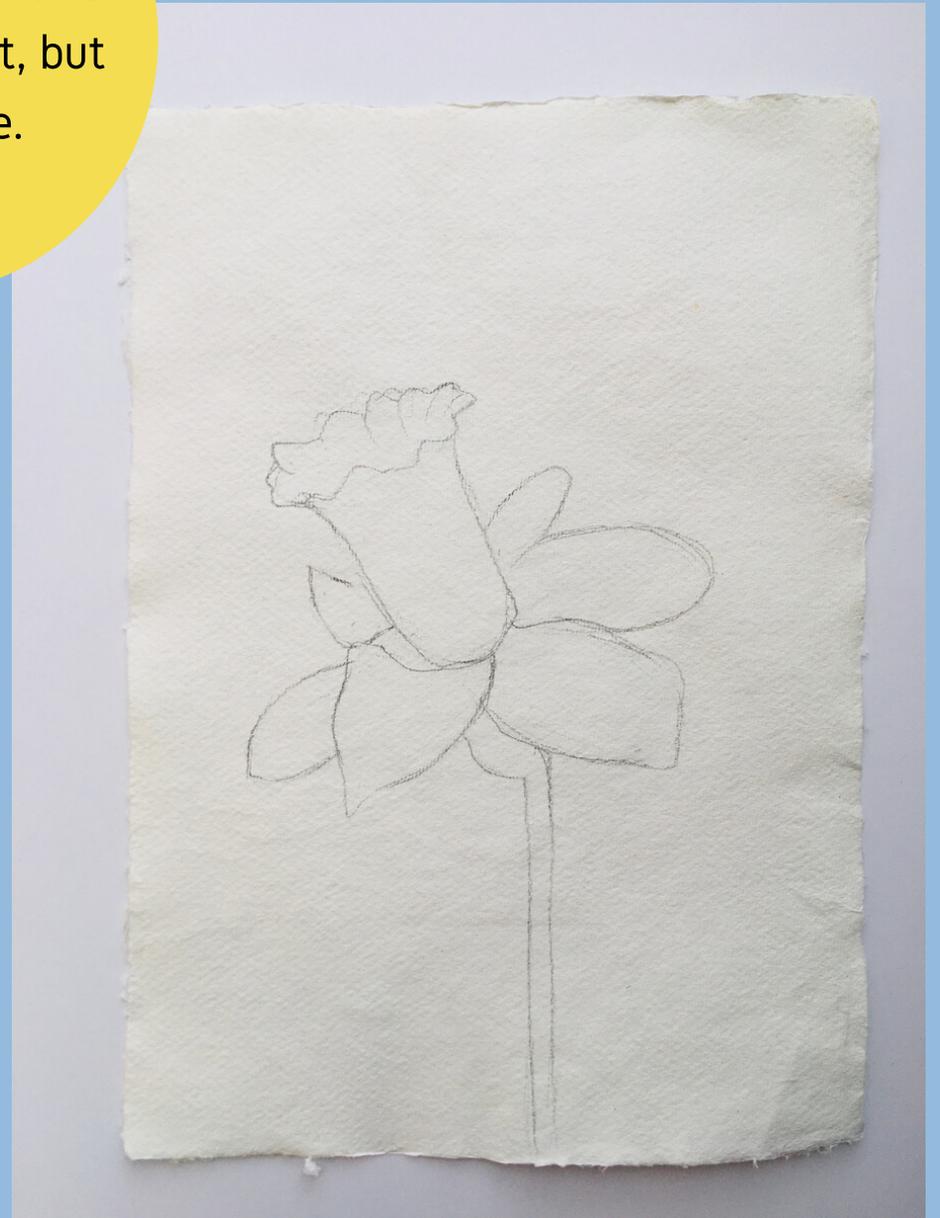
1. Place your daffodil in a position you're happy with.
2. Look at the shapes in front of you and try to break them up.
3. Draw those shapes onto your paper. (Don't worry about getting all the detail, we are just looking at simple shapes)



NOTE:

Rub your pencil line out so it's faint, but still visible.

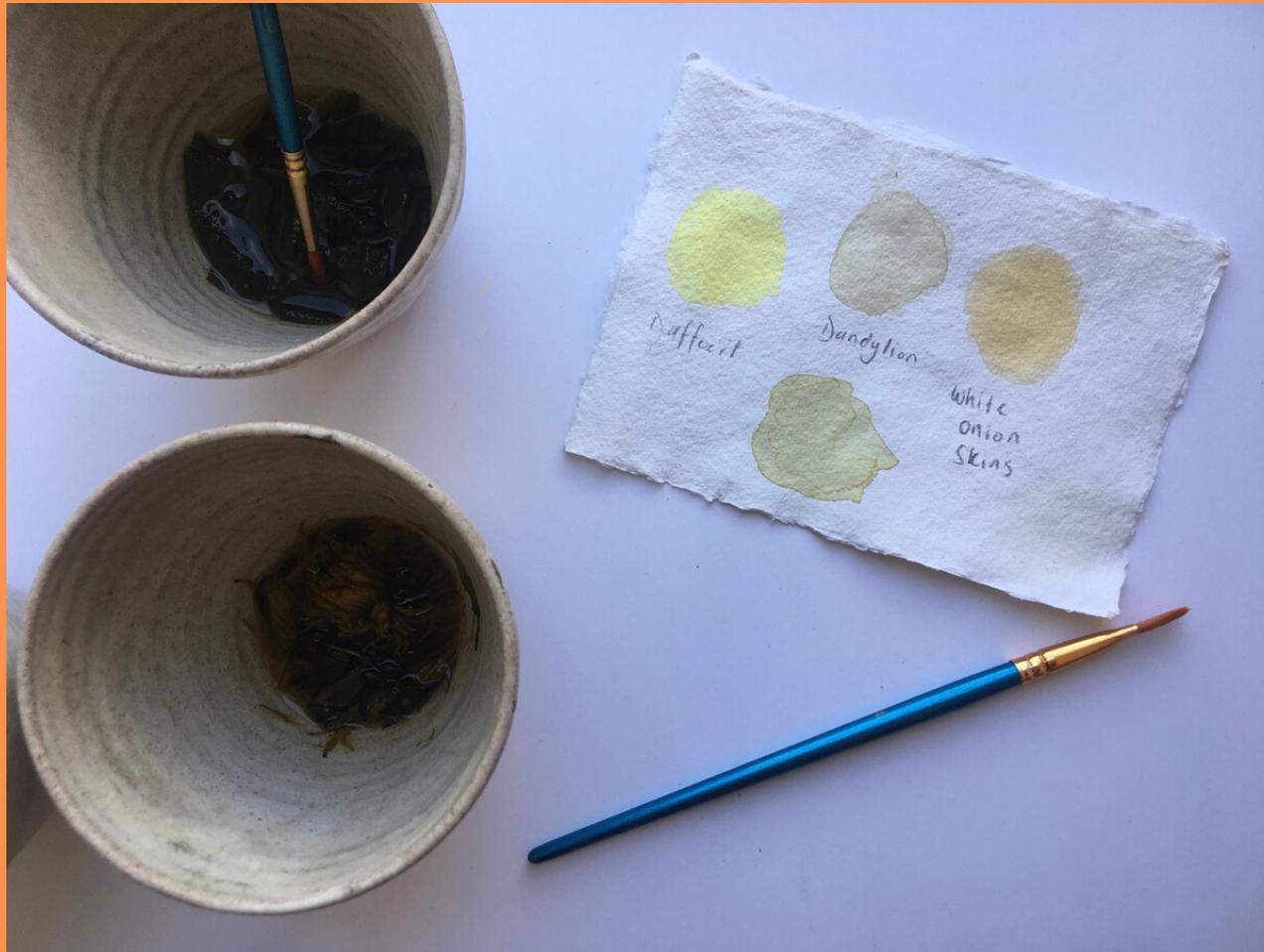
4. Use those shapes to now help you add more detail to your daffodil - reshaping it to better represent the flower.



STEP 4: PAINTING

This step does involve a little patience. When you first apply the watercolour onto your piece of paper, there may be no colour! The colour comes when it dries, it may also need a few layers. Try it out on a separate piece of paper first.

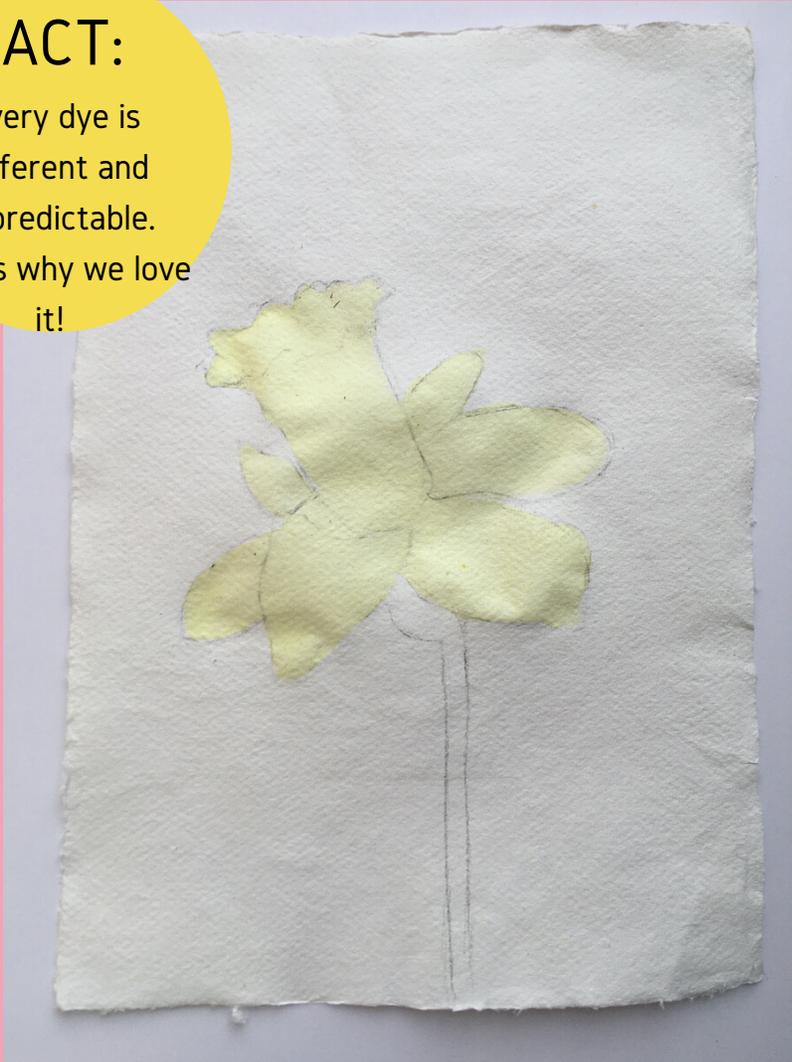
We're going to draw a second daffodil in a different position. It's a great way to fill up the waiting time between layers - there's an extra step at the end if you do two drawings.



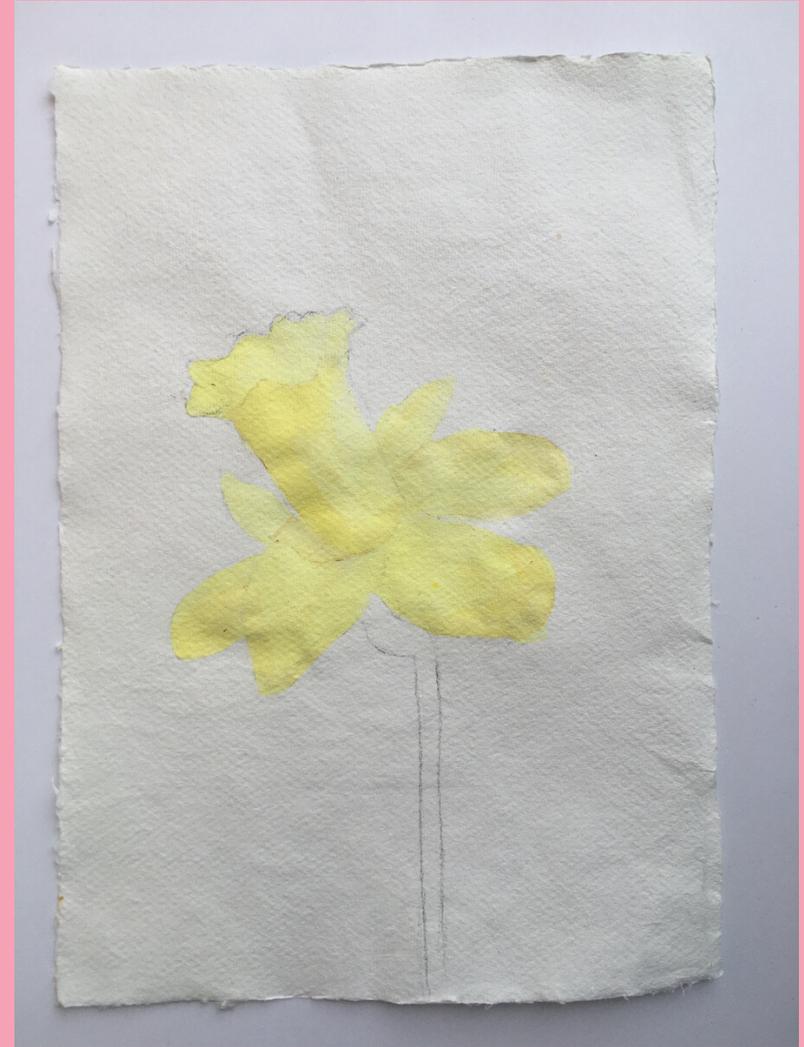
FACT:

Every dye is different and unpredictable.

That's why we love it!



1. Paint the whole surface of your flower, making sure you're putting a thick layer on. Let it dry for about 5 minutes.



2. Layer for a second and third time, but on layer three, only paint in areas you want darker. Remember to leave time between each layer, it will always come out transparent to start with, darkening as it dries.

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3. Now add the onion skin dye and the dandelion dye to the darker shades you see. The more you layer with all these different dyes, the stronger the colours will be.

4. Repeat the same process with the stalk, use your green, but also try the onion and dandelion to slightly darken one edge of your stalk.



We love it! I hope you do too. It's so simple and fun to do, and now you know how to make your own watercolour paint. You can try many different types of flowers, to see which colours they produce.

Keep the dyes for a few days and experiment - remember the longer you leave it, the stronger the colour. I wouldn't leave it more than 4 days in warm weather as they can start to smell :\

I've added an extra step on the next page for those that would like to add pen detail to their artwork.

OPTIONAL STEP: PEN

For this part you need a fine liner or biro pen. Our aim is not to have perfect lines, but instead lines that are sketchy and free. I'm using my second flower that I have been working on.



- Let's start by adding pen in the middle to give the impression of the flowers structure. Can you see my lines aren't finished, and consist of different lengths and thicknesses. Try not to think too much and let your hand move across the page freely. It's important to remember that we're not outlining our flower.
- Next, I'm going to use the different tones on my daffodil as a guide to where I should put the pen detail. You can even start to bring in a little bit of hatching and cross hatching in the darker areas.
- Take one last look at it, put it along side your other artwork, and admire the beautiful piece you've just created :)

We would love to see all your work :)

Please send to lavenderleonardos@gmail.com. We now have a gallery page on our website with all your work that you send in, plus a few to be chosen to go onto our social media.

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