

TRANSPERSONAL ARTS IN THERAPY TRAINING

PLANT DIARY GUIDELINES 2020

CHERRY TREE MODULAR STUDENTS

TO BE PRESENTED AT MODULE 4

The plant diary is an opportunity to:

- Find out more about the plant world simply by observing and re-creating the plant and aspects of it through the seasons (or other rhythms of change).
- Learn to register your response to natural cycles, and the effects this work has on your developing therapeutic sensitivity.

Task No 1: Please choose a tree in a place you can easily reach – at school, in a garden you can easily visit or near your home. It is important that you can see it often in order to find the right moment to make another sketch. If you chose an ornamental tree it is not advisable to cut off branches; if you chose a common one – birch, beech, oak, maple, sycamore, ash, etc you can more easily take a branch home to see, for instance, the buds unfolding in the spring.

Please try to follow the development and changes in this tree. Draw and/or paint details of leaves and seeds through the autumn; do at least one image of the whole tree when the leaves have fallen, then pick up the sketchbook/paints again when you notice changes in the buds. Don't miss the phase of opening; it is quick and spectacular. Draw details of bark, branch, bud, leaf, flower, fruit to scale.

Task No 2: Observe and draw at least one sequence of a flower from the fresh bud through to the wilting petals. This can be done in a short span with a flower in a vase or, again, with a living flower. Snow drops and Daffodils are magnificent and abundant subjects for this, but tulips in a vase are great too. I would ask you specifically to practise the shaded drawing technique for this sequence. If you feel inspired, do another sequence in a medium of your choice. Black and white is well worth trying. (For some inspiration for black and white work see Margaret Colquhoun

and A Ewald, *New Eyes for Plants*, Stroud, 1996 – although many drawings are outline drawings it is a fine book.)

Task No 3: Find an opportunity to study the tree roots, also hard and dry bits of plant, cones, seed pods, etc. How does it feel to draw those?

Use a good sized sketch book to draw in directly – or to paste in painting/drawings that you do on other paper.

If you feel moved to work larger, you can keep a separate folder with those plant images. (Or a combination of sketch book and larger work).

Please try the shading technique and building up images in light and darkness rather than through outline, building up images from the general to the particular – in short – use the plant diary as an opportunity to cultivate a contemplative style.

Please keep some brief written notes (can be on the pages of the sketchbook) keeping the guiding questions in mind:

- What is the characteristic of plant forms
- How do I relate to them
- How can the plant motif be used in transpersonal arts in therapy

This plant diary is a developmental assignment. Enjoy your discoveries!