

DESIGN TECHNOLOGY learning springboards



Grow your own craft resources

Dogwood, willow and hazel provide a range of natural resources for use across the curriculum

Aim: Plan and plant a small area of coppice in the school site to provide 'legacy' resources that can be harvested for years to come.

Most school sites will have a small space to grow some or all of these very useful 'crops' that will provide a legacy of harvestable materials for a wide range of art and craft activities, such as those shown in the design technology and Playful Springboards, as well as providing loose parts resources for maths and literacy too.

Dogwood: if you have very limited space this is for you, as it can even grow in large pots or planters, providing a colourful and playful playground feature. It provides great winter stem colour too.

Willow: is a common sight in schools – if you don't have any, it's really easy to grow into tunnel and dome shapes, which are great for den play. They do need annual pruning to keep them in shape but doing so will provide wonderful stems for play and crafts.

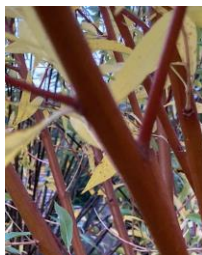
Hazel: is great if you have a little more space. Planting 12 or more hazels as small, bare root 'whips' in autumn is a very cost effective way of creating a hazel coppice – include rabbit guards if your grounds are susceptible to rabbit or deer. Hazel is generally coppiced (harvested) by cutting it right to the ground on a 7 year cycle but you can harvest more or less frequently for slimmer or thicker rods. Hazel should be planted 2 -3 meters apart to encourage growth of long, straight poles. The coppice is a great play space too.

Observation ID

There is an important distinction between dogwood and willow stems, that can otherwise look very similar.

- Dogwood has 'opposite' buds on the stem, willow is 'alternate'. Give pupils a stem of each as ask them to spot the key difference.

See *Pappus* Any Leaf Playful Springboards "parachute test" for a fun task with dogwood leaves.



Willow: alternate stem growth



Dogwood: opposite stem growth



Small scale hazel coppice (pic: [London Permaculture, creative commons](#))

Resources:

- Cuttings of willow and dogwood: cut in early spring, stems can simply be pushed into the ground, or pots of compost, and they will grow if kept sheltered and sufficiently damp)
- Hazel whips: purchased as bare root plants for planting out in the autumn
- Compost
- Rabbit guards
- Gardening tools, including secateurs

More springboards

- Hazel: Playful Springboard and Plant ID Sheet
- Willow Plant ID Sheet
- Any Leaf Playful Springboards

Key vocabulary:

Coppice

Success Criteria

- ✓ I can work as part of a team
- ✓ I know how to plant trees and shrubs to harvest

