

Nature Drawing with Audrey Session 3 - Drawing trees in detail

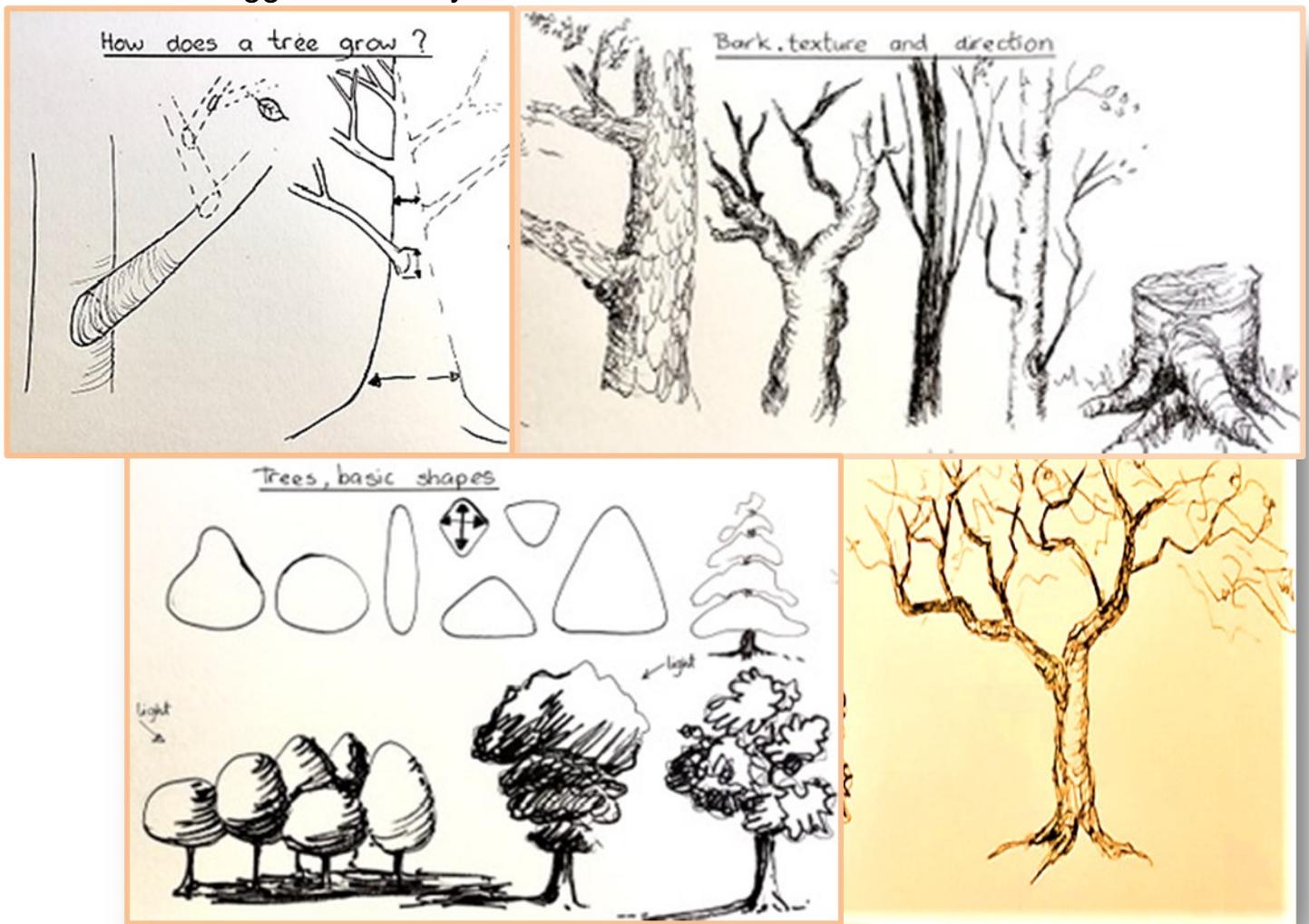
Trees Up Close

Trees can be a bit overwhelming with all the branches and leaves going everywhere. Then there is the texture and all the different leaves and shapes etc.

So simplify, how does a tree grow?

Let's start at the beginning, the trunk, with a branch coming out of it. Continue with another smaller branch, and one even smaller, some leaves, e voila, the start of a tree. Now I'll exaggerate the shape, so it a bit clearer to see. I'll start with the roots, nice and wide. The base wider at the bottom and disappears into nothing at the top. Wherever the branches come out, there is a thickening to keep the branches sturdy even in stormy weather.

Bark, texture and direction; There are so many different types of trees with all different ways of growing, you see some different examples in the photo below. When you go out next for your walk, look, look and look again up-close, at the texture of the bark, how the branches grow. Make some sketches, you can even do some rubbings of the bark. Look at how best to characterise that particular tree. They all have a character, you just need to showcase it, exaggerate what you see.



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Trees, basic shapes: this sounds easy but it's actually really hard to not focus on all the details and simplify the tree shape. There's a pear shape, round or oval, obelisk, triangular shapes and a kite.

When the tree is in the distance you would draw them, very much simplified in shapes, shown in the photo in the left bottom corner. Next to the group of trees you see what happens when they are closer by, the shapes become more like clusters of shapes, forming the complete tree.

Practice, free style

Here is something that, even if you don't do any of the things I've explained above, you really have to try this. It will loosen you up and make you want to draw tree after tree after tree.

A tree can very quickly look like a children's drawing and you get all tensed up about getting it right. The problem is as an adult you overthink things and have become scared to put a line wrong. Solution? Give yourself some type of hindrance, draw with your eyes closed, or with your other hand. These are great ways to not be in control and giving your brain a Holliday.

These are not what I'm showing you on this example, but this is a technique I use all the time, not just with drawing but also with painting.

Hold your pencil very loose almost at the end, this gives you minimum control of your pencil but you can still see what's happening. Roll the tip of your pencil over the paper, try different angles. You can pull, that's what you would normally do, but try and push your pencil. Don't forget to give the branches some angles.



You can use a pencil, 2B,3B, 4B or you can just go for it and use a fine liner like I have in the photo on the left.

I hope you will enjoy this exercise, I always do.

What's coming up next?

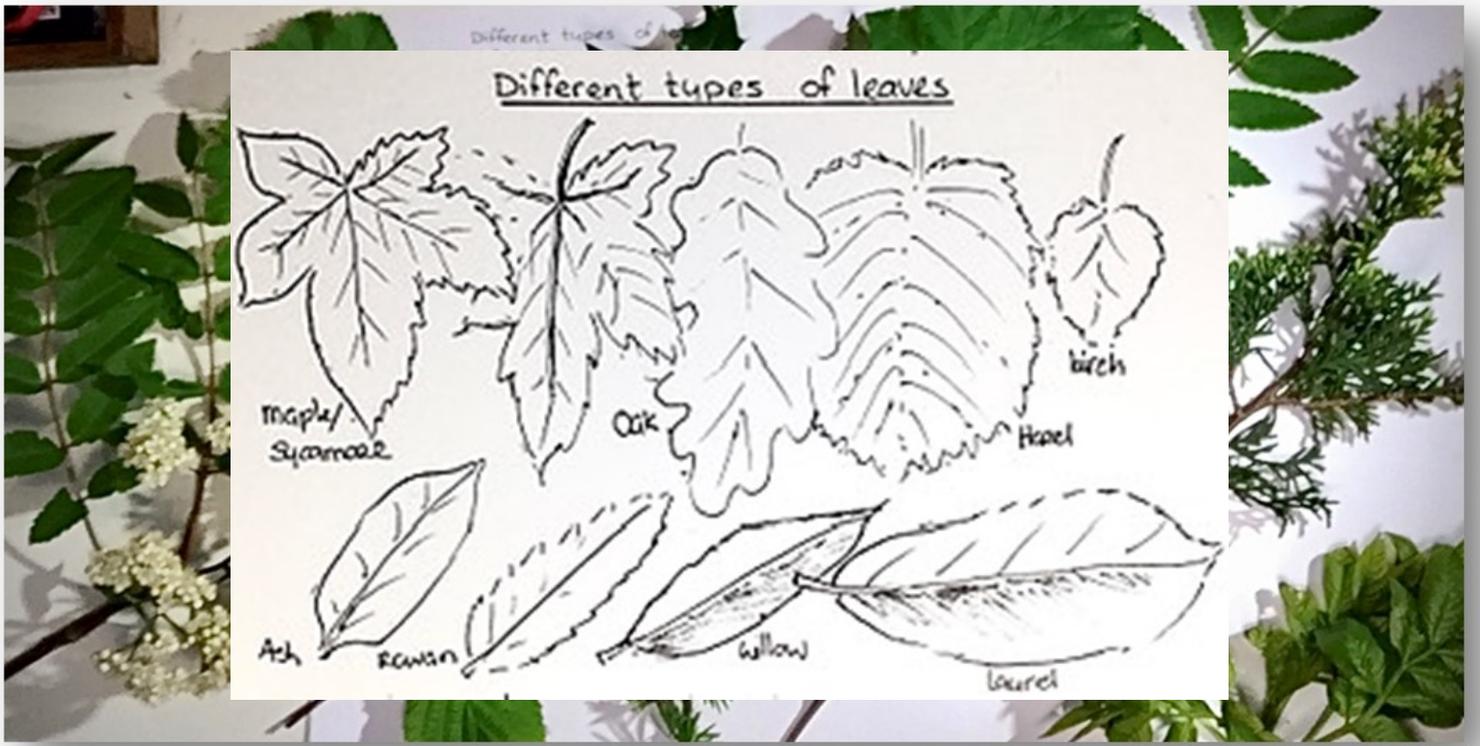
Leaves in all their shapes and forms!

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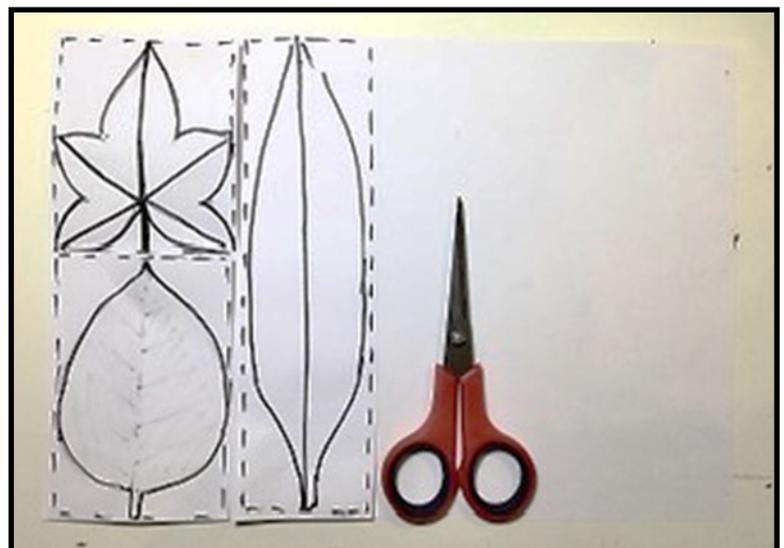
The different types of leaves: Sycamore, Maple, Willow, Hazel, Elm, Oak, Ash, Rowan, Pine, Spruce, Larch, Conifer. I can go on and on, these are all names of trees most of you will be familiar with. I'm not asking you to identify and remember the individual ones, just to properly look at them and their individual character.

As long as you get an idea of the different types of shapes you can get away with just mimicking the shapes. Some leaves are identical, but look at how they grow on the tree, you can definitely see the difference in trees. Look at the Ash and then the Rowan as an example. The indifference parts look the same but seeing them on the tree you wouldn't mistake one from the other.



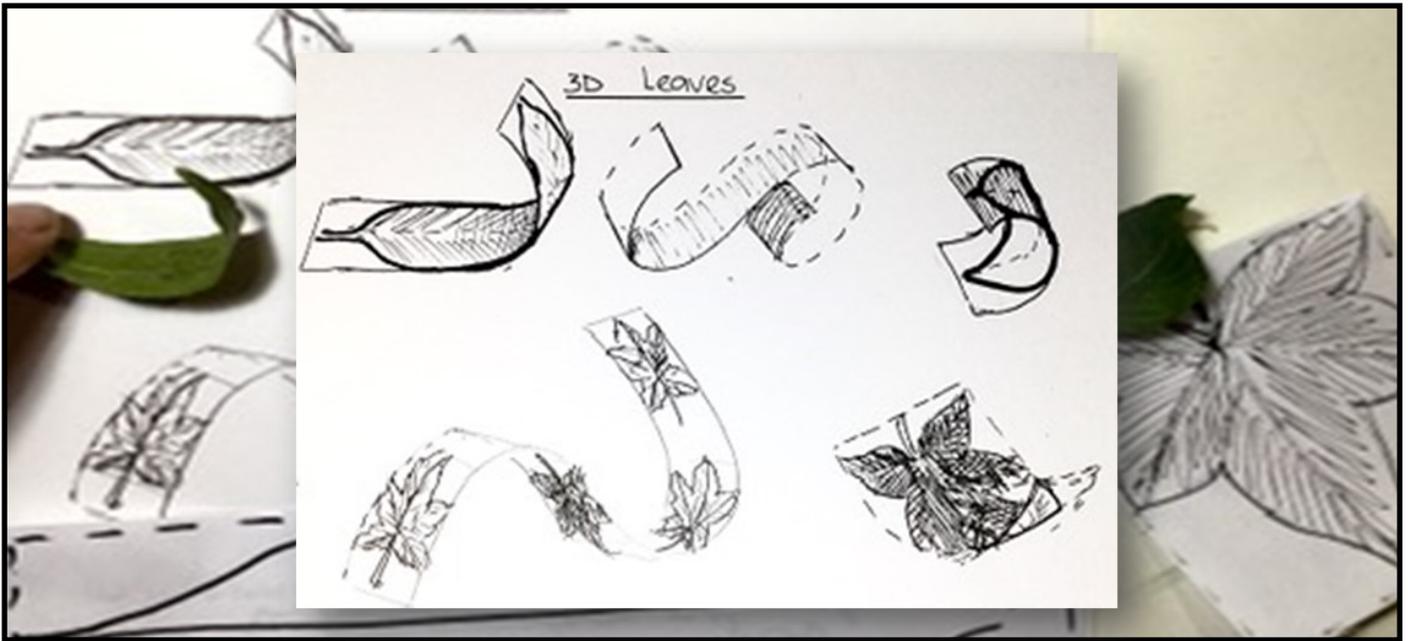
Leaves in 3D

Making leaves three dimensional is not difficult, you just need to understand the principles and practice. Get a bit of A4 paper and cut some strips of it, draw a leaf on it and bend it into different shapes. Observe and draw what you see when you bend it over or curl it up.



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First draw the piece of paper, then the leaf! Give shadow to one side and it becomes even more three dimensional.



Leaves on branches

Some trees have a very visible stem where the leaves grow from, like the Rowan and the Conifer. Some stems are a bit more hidden, like the Beach, Birch and pine. When the stem is obscured by leaves, start with drawing it as a dotted line, then draw the leaves. The final bit is detail to the stem.

Sketching clusters of leaves.

Pay attention to how a particular tree or bush for that matter is build up. Simplifying the overall shape into blocks will give you the general feel.

Big leaves give a completely different look to the shape then a small leaf for instance.

Big leaves = more angular shape.

Small leaves = softer/ cloud like shapes.

Do the branches/ leaves hang down or are they very upright?

