

## SENSE OF SMELL

The aim here is to encourage the Accessible Forest Practitioners to explore and deepen their experience with the sense of smell so as to be able to confidently guide their participants in invitations that include the sense of smell.

Smell is a deeply primal and emotional sense. Scents bypass the rational brain and go directly to the limbic system—home to memory, emotion, and safety responses. For those with trauma, sensory overwhelm, or cognitive challenges, smell can reawaken calming memories, trigger deep emotions positive or painful, anchor the body in the present moment, gently interrupt digital overstimulation and reintroduce curiosity.

There is a strong association between smell and memory. What memories are invoked for you with certain smells? How might that influence how you explore smell with your participants?

### IMPORTANT CRITERIA TO REFLECT ON

- How do you engage and experience your sense of smell?
- When you walk in the forest what are the smells that you are aware of?
- How do you become aware of them?
- What happens when you spend some time with your sense of smell?

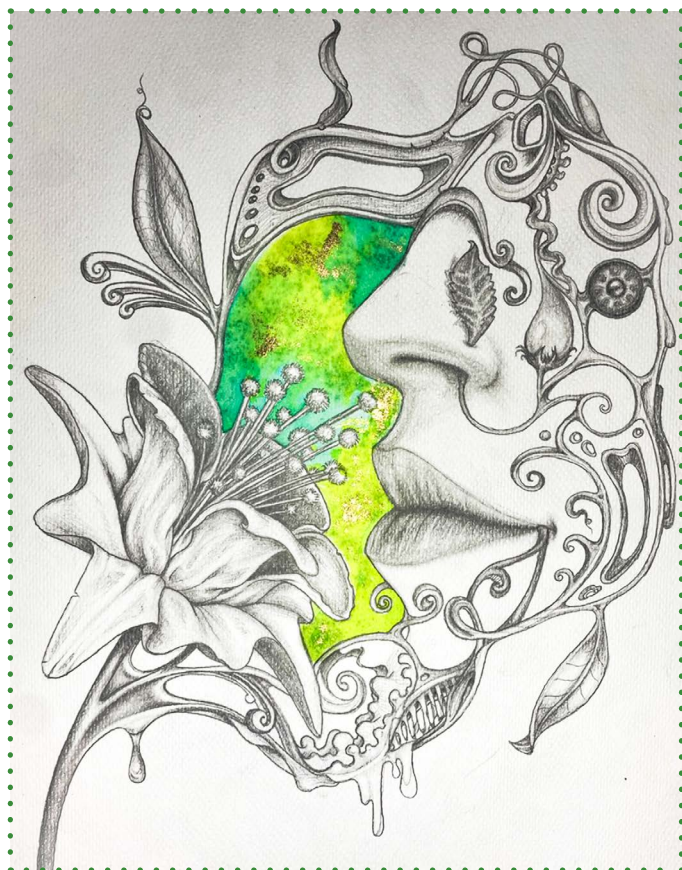
### TIPS

**When you are out in the forest, what can you smell?**

1. Earth
2. Moss
3. Flowers
4. ....?
5. ....?
6. ....?
7. ....?
8. ....?

**Offer gentle prompts:** Invite participants to crush a pine needle or smell a piece of bark only if they choose

**Collect a “scent basket”:** with different forest elements like dried leaves, herbs, cedar, moss and any other beings in the forest that call to you.



### REFLECT

- Reflect on different ways you can explore the sense of smell, beyond the obvious.

### EXPLORE

- Explore different ways and with different language and elements on how to guide participants to explore the sense of smell.
- Follow your nose and see where it will take you?
- What smells are you noticing in this place?
- Find a smell and share it with your partner.
- Because of extensive air pollution and because of urbanisation, our survival does not rely so much on the sense of smell as we have in previous times in our evolution.
- What adaptations can you create if someone let's you know that they don't have a good sense of smell or maybe they are sick and have a blocked nose?