Adders are Amazing! Gwiberod Gwych!

21. CLAY ADDER HABITAT TILES

INTRODUCTION

This is a great activity for older children, teenagers or adults. The activity could be built into a longer session, including a reptile ramble where the group could collect the plant materials (with landowners’ permission) from adder habitat to bring back to decorate the tiles. You could also give a presentation on adder ecology whilst you wait for the tiles to air dry.

Although, the tiles are very striking, this is a relatively inexpensive activity (only costs around 70p per tile) and gives participants something beautiful to help them remember their special day!

MATERIALS:

- A small toy rubber snake
- Air drying clay – we use DAS modelling clay in 1kg packets
- Large sharp knife and board
- Plants from adder habitat (e.g. grasses, gorse, heather, bracken, hedgerow plants)
- Water colour paints, brushes and water pot
- Finger bowl of water
- Baking tray/s and lining paper to dry the tiles on (or bake on)
- Pictures of adders
- Oven (optional) – don’t preheat

MAKE IT!

1 Start by cutting the clay into suitably sized tiles (a 1kg DAS block cuts neatly into six 9cm tiles, as shown below) – with a thickness of approx. 1cm

2 Using the bowl of water, dabble your fingers and use a small amount of water to smooth the clay’s surface and edges
MAKE IT!

3. Turn the toy snake upside down and press it firmly into the clay in the final position. Lift off carefully and smooth any untidy edges.

4. Next, choose a small selection of plants from the adder habitat and lay them onto the tile in a way that looks appealing.

5. One by one, press the plants into the clay, firmly pushing them in and rubbing the surface to emphasize veins and markings.

6. Either leave the tiles to air dry in a warm spot for an hour or so, or put in an oven at its lowest setting (approx. 100°C) for 15-20 mins, then turn off to cool slowly. (Note: do not pre-heat the oven – put the tiles in, then turn on so they heat up gently).

7. Once cooled (if using oven), add colours to the tile. Start with the adder. Provide participants with pictures to help with markings.

8. Tiles can be covered in PVA glue for a shiny finish or left matt. Hang on a wall using a plate hanging disk, if desired or use as coasters (omit PVA for coasters).