

Pergolas are a traditional garden feature that can have a new and practical purpose for school grounds, giving structure, interest and focus to pathways and areas of paving. Although normally a support for plants, an interactive pergola is different, displaying colourful fixed and mobile decorations which last all year round, stimulating the senses of sight, sound and touch, complementing the plants growing below and helping shade children from too much sunshine.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Art & design

KS1 – 1ab, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

KS2 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

KS3 – 1abc, 2abc, 3ab, 4abc, 5abcd

Design & Technology

KS1 – 1abcde, 2abcdef, 3ab, 4ab, 5abc

KS2 – 1abcd, 2abcdef, 3abc, 4ab, 5abc

KS3 – 1abcdefgh, 2abcde, 3abc, 4bcd, 6ab, 7b

Music

KS1 – 1abc, 2ab, 3ab, 4abcd, 5abcd

KS2 – 1abc, 2ab, 3abc, 4abcd, 5abcde

KS3 – 1abc, 2ab, 3abc, 4abcd, 5abcde

HOW TO CREATE an Interactive Pergola

A pergola can be any length or shape. The interactive pergola in the Growing Schools Garden was created by Palatine Special School, West Sussex, and their design is for a straight pergola up to 4m long and up to 1.8m wide. For this you will need ten treated round posts (0.1m x 2.4m), about 40m of untreated wood 25mm - 50mm diameter; 75mm & 50mm galvanised nails, some small tacks, offcuts of acrylic sheet eg Perspex; and strong fishing line.

Work out a design for the ten main poles. The bottom 450mm of each one can remain undecorated. For the upper part, try wrapping some of the poles with strings and materials of different textures and colours, glued or tacked on, or mask off shapes using paper and Bluetack, and spray paint over the whole pole.

Having decided how far apart to put the poles, (eg. 1m), you can make the hanging panels that will fit in between. Allow for these to be up to 200mm narrower (ie 800mm - 850mm wide). Make between eight and sixteen panels, using untreated coppice poles for the frames or, if this is hard to locate, cut up round untreated poles 25mm - 50mm diameter. Join the pieces together by drilling holes near the ends and bolting them together. The panels can be decorated by hanging any number of interesting objects from them, either fixed at both ends or swivelling free like a mobile. Try using:

- beads, buttons, shells, stones, plastic bottles cut into different shapes (some can act as hanging plant pots)
- strings, ribbons, cans and shapes cut from cans and decorated with different patterns
- spoons, forks, and anything else that makes an interesting sound
- bits of wood, feathers, corks, woven elements.

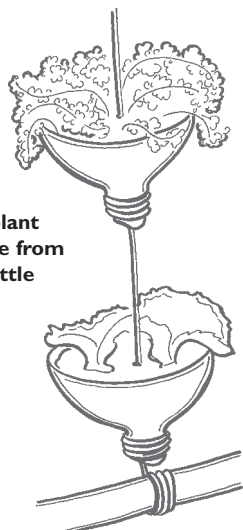
To construct the pergola, dig the decorated poles into the ground to form two straight lines. Check the vertical with a spirit level. Take lengths of decorated poles of a smaller diameter, or natural coppice poles, and nail these horizontally at three different heights (about 25cm and 100cm from the ground, and at the top of the main poles)

Hang the decorated panels between these horizontal poles.

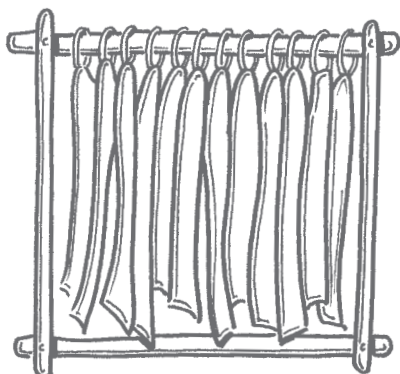
The roof can also be decorated in a variety of ways. Transparent shapes can be cut out from acrylic sheet offcut, painted, and suspended from the pergola.

Another useful technique is to tie in some reinforced wire mesh to form a frame from which to hang objects. Alternatively, leaf shapes can be cut out of plywood and fastened with clear fishing line to create a novel roof casting fascinating shadows.

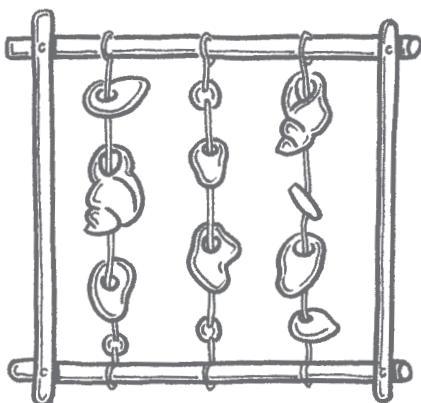
1 Hang plant pots made from plastic bottle sections



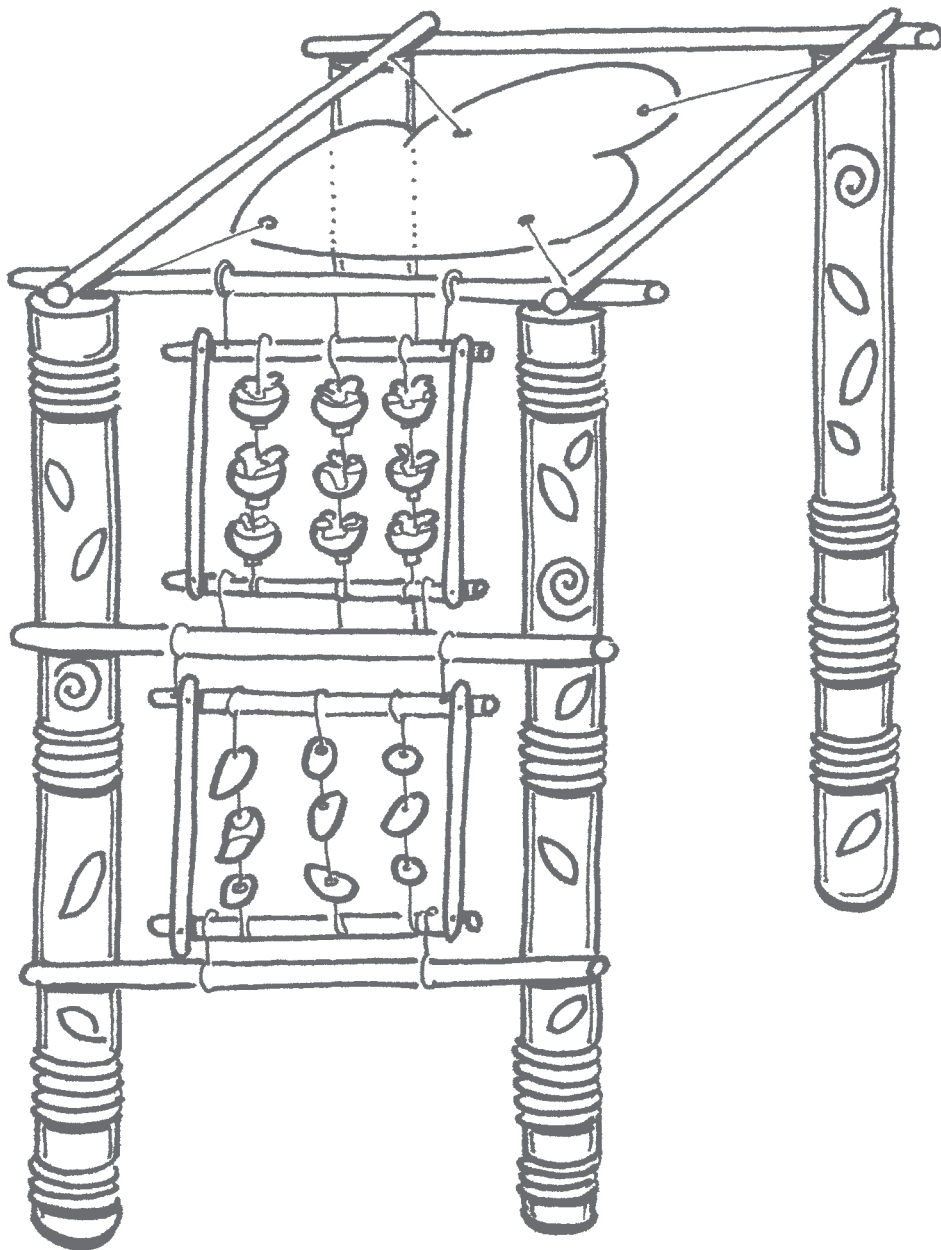
2 Tie ribbons on curtain rings



3 Thread shells and beads on fishing lines



4 Decorated panels, poles and roof section



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For more inspirational ideas: **GARDEN DECORATION FROM JUNK** by Leeann Mackenzie published by Collins & Brow, ISBN 1-85585-761-8 To locate local suppliers of coppiced wood visit: WWW.ALLOTMENTFORESTRY.COM