

**DRAWING FROM NATURE**  
**Science and Art Lessons for Kids**  
Los Angeles Times Kids' Reading Room Page



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'Tis said, "April showers bring May flowers." For California, this means that the rain we get in winter and early spring usually results in an explosion of flowers later on.

Lauren, 6, and Nikolai, 8, learned that our wildflower displays could be quite spectacular this year due to recent wildfires. They also learned there's a special group of plants called "fire-followers" that only appear during the first year after a fire. They decided to illustrate a landscape immediately following a fire and then later as it recovered in spring. Their technique is called "mixed media" because they used a variety of materials to make their illustration.

Lauren and Nikolai learned that plants have two ways of recovering after a fire. Shrubs either re-sprout from underground root crowns, or

the heat of the fire stimulates seeds buried in the soil to start growing.

Dividing a large piece of foam board between them, Nikolai used gray, black and brown pencils to color his "post-fire" side, on the left. Lauren used tan and green colored pencils on her "regrowth" side, on the right.

For texture and dimension, Nikolai smeared glue on his hillside then sprinkled it with cold ash that his parents helped him collect from the fireplace. He also glued charred twigs and crushed leaves to the ash-covered hillside. He added red paper flames to show the spot fires that break out after a firestorm has passed. He colored the sky gray.

Lauren glued and placed green pipe cleaners on her mountainside to represent trees and shrubs. She glued crushed leaves on her trees, made construction paper flowers and colored her sky blue.

Good job, Lauren and Nikolai!