



Underpainting with watercolor

Under painting refers to the practice of laying down a layer or watercolor or pan pastel before adding colored pencil.

This can be helpful for flowers or leaves that have a translucent quality or to establish a base of a very light color (like yellow) but avoid waxy build up. Watercolor pencils are perhaps the easiest tool for pencil-people to use. All the brands of colored pencil have a watercolor alternative.

- ❖ They can be used directly, like regular colored pencil and then diluted with water or
- ❖ They can be used on a textured surface like the Caran d'Ache palette or just a piece of Drafting vellum. Scribble on the palette and then add water. This allows you to blend colors ahead of time and see what the results will be.
- ❖ You can take paint directly from the tip of a watercolor pencil with a wet brush for more intense color

I have lately been having great fun with the simple pan watercolors. I like the 12 set from Faber-Castell. (item# 125012 I got mine from Village Art, \$7.) You can mix the colors on the inside cover or a simple dish. Regular watercolors in a tube are of course great too if you have them.

Any paper that will take water will do. Any brush you have it fine. Lay down the base color you want, **let it dry completely** and then add your colored pencil as you normally would. Decide where you want the watercolor to show through for luminance or translucency. Make a chart of your colors as they often produce different effect than you expected.

Wendy Hollender covers this topic in depth in her new book, [The Joy of Botanical Drawing](#). Andie Thrans is doing short, free watercolor demos on Instagram.

Whichever method you use, allow yourself to play. This is a time when you get to experiment and try out new things. Make a mess. No one is looking. It is really fun.

"O June, O June that we desired so,

Wilt thou not make us happy on this day? ...

...Calm is the sky with harmless clouds beset.

No thought of storm the morning vexes yet." ... William Morris, "Earthly Paradise"

