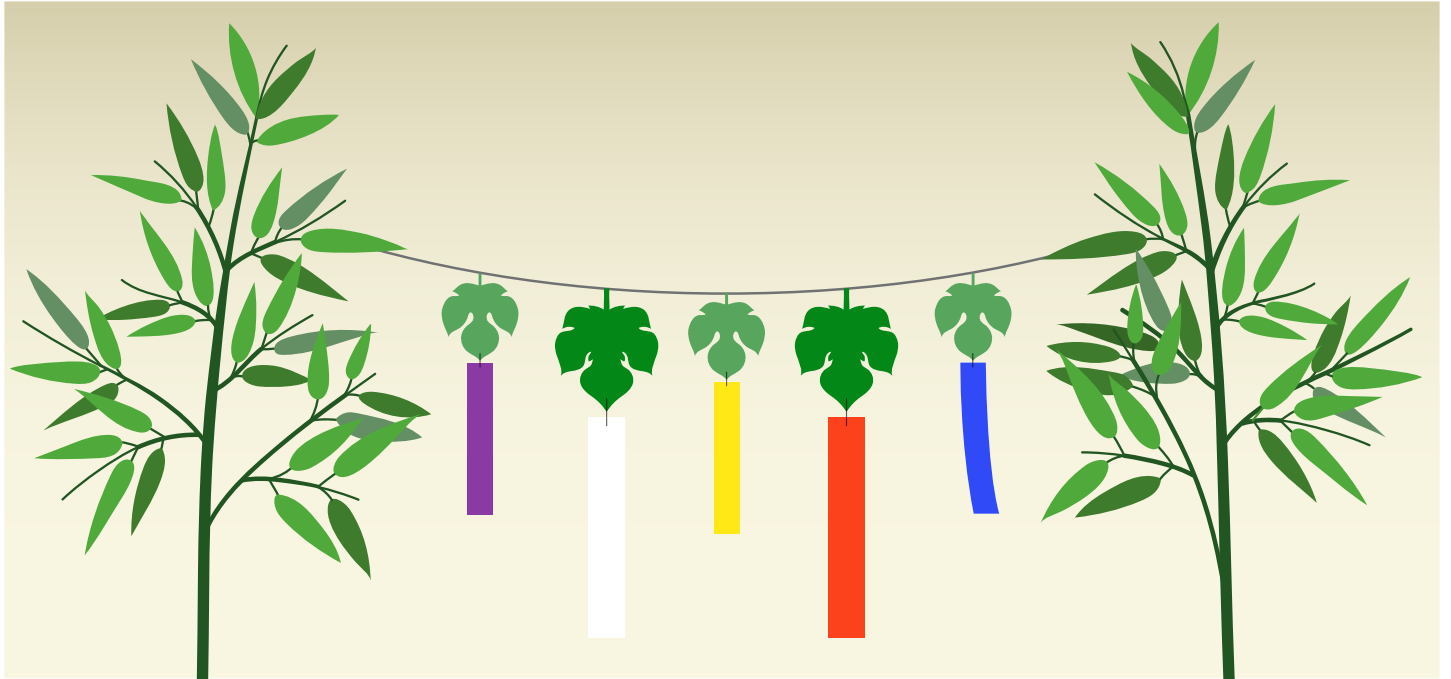


自分で作る七夕飾り・梶の葉

Make your own *Tanabata* Decorations

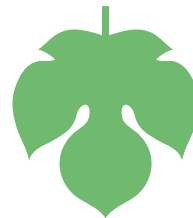


About *Tanabata*

Tanabata is a summer festival held on the seventh day of the seventh month which is a combination of both imported traditions from China and indigenous Japanese customs. It celebrates the legendary meeting of two stars, Orihime, a weaver, and Hikoboshi, a cowherder. Separated by the Milky Way, the stars are allowed to meet only once a year on the seventh day of the seventh month. Decorations are hung on branches of bamboo and wishes written on coloured strips of paper called *tanzaku*.

Tanabata developed from an older festival *Kikkōden* held at court when people would wish specifically for improvement in a variety of artistic skills, such as sewing, calligraphy or poetry. These wishes were originally written on broad mulberry leaves.

The five colours often seen in *Tanabata* decorations originally represented the five elements: blue or green for wood, red for fire, white for metal, black for water, and yellow for earth. Over time, purple has replaced black in the decorations.



Interesting facts

In Japanese, the words for 'mulberry' and a ship's 'rudder' are both pronounced in the same way, *kaji*. This play on words refers to the leaf on which *Tanabata* wishes were once written and the rudder of the boat that steers the star-crossed lovers across the Milky Way, *Ama no gawa* (lit. 'Heavenly River').

Make your own *Tanabata* Decorations

Using the templates overleaf, cut out a paper mulberry leaf. Complete your decoration by attaching a coloured *tanzaku* strip in one of the five colours used in the *Tanabata* festival and write your wish on it. This can be a wish for happiness or good health, or, keeping to the original spirit of *Kikkōden*, a wish for improvement in an artistic field of your choice. You can hang your decorations on a plant or tree.

You will need:

- Paper
- Printer
- Coloured paper
green, purple, white,
yellow, red and blue
- Pen or pencil
- Thread or string
- Tape

Instructions

- 1** Print the worksheet and cut out the templates.
- 2** Fold a piece of green paper in half.
- 3** Align the dotted edge of your chosen leaf template with the folded edge of the coloured paper.
- 4** Draw round the leaf template and cut it out.
- 5** Unfold the leaf.
- 6** Cut out a strip of coloured paper (purple, white, yellow, red, green or blue) using the rectangular template matching the size of your leaf and write your wish using a pen or pencil.
- 7** Attach the string or thread to the bottom of the leaf and the top of the paper strip with tape, connecting the two together.
- 8** Attach another piece of string or thread to the top of the leaf.
- 9** Tie your completed decoration to a plant or tree; you could also hang it on the wall.

