

Summer Series at Acorn Hill

June 2020

A month-long Acorn Hill newsletter of song & finger games, story, activity and crafts.



Dictionary

Summer-Somer- noun

The warmest season of the year, in the northern hemisphere from to June to August and in the southern hemisphere from December to February:

Examples; *The plant flowers in late summer. OR a long hot summer.*

*We're going to Prince Edward Island for the summer,
Summertime, warm season, hot season, dog days.*

Dear Parents,

Welcome Summer! Now that we are finished with our school year, our Acorn Hill teaching community wanted to offer three newsletters for you in June, July, and August, to continue offering ideas that are centered around our curriculum, for the summer. We will also include well-beloved Acorn Hill recipes and traditional summer activities for your families to take up and to keep in mind. Our first newsletter, *June*, will focus on gardening.

In this first series, collaboratively, we will share with you insights of Waldorf early childhood education that meets the developmental ages and stages of our children ranging from two to seven. These newsletters will feature your teachers' contributions over the course of the summer. As the summer months begin and take hold, we offer a chance to also stay in touch. Acorn Hill will update you as well, over the summer, with information regarding next fall's opening, as we are now entering Phase One of the CDC guidelines for Montgomery County, Maryland. Have a wonderful summer and enjoy this fiery season!



The Three R's of Waldorf Education

In Waldorf education, our pedagogy honors the three R's, which are **Rhythm**, **Repetition**, and **Reverence**. These three principles of our pedagogy can help support a distance learning curriculum.

Rhythm provides predictable spaces, or creates expected blocks of time, for your children (and for you) to feel safe and secure and to know what will happen next. It is a predictable recurrence in time that unfolds consistently through the hours of each day and days of each week. We also have seasonal rhythms - four to be exact. In our classes at Acorn Hill, we have three or five day weekly rhythms. And at home, you can create daily rhythms that still are in place for the months of summer. Rhythm does not mean being inflexible, but is a valuable tool to help you support your days.

Repetition supports problem solving. You do not need to recreate an activity or tell a brand new story each and every day. Repetition actively supports your children develop and strengthen their learning minds. In painting, as an example, we can paint the same color often but we do not say, "Today children we are going to paint yellow." Each time your child repeats painting the same color, your children are learning a new aspect of the world. Yellow can be the sun, Suzy's favorite color, or a bowl of lemons.

You know this also when you hear, "*Mommy/Daddy read this again, or tell this again.*" Depending upon your child's developmental stage, you may also hear your child ask, "Why?" Your children want to hear **you** (or teacher), over and over and over, sharing the same material with them, for them to absorb and learn. As your children continue to grow and develop during these young learning years, the amount of repetition at an early age will strongly boost learning through and past the grades.

Reverence is the last of the three R's important in your child's young development. Reverence shapes your children's world. Their smiles, their laughter, and their joys are learned from imitation, which cultivates a reverence for our world. Modeling goodness, kindness, and love supports how we see the world. Your children mirror all. Reverence forms from both large and small gestures. It is how we interact with one another every day. Right now, this currently means our immediate family. Thanking your children for their contributions is very important, as it is with each other. Patience, kindness, and goodness are extremely important in how we interact with one another.

Fingergames & Rhymes

Daisies and Grasses

Daisies so bright, grasses so green,
Tell me I say, how do you keep clean?
Summertime showers, summertime rain,
Wash dusty flowers all clean again.

Foxglove -Betty Jones

Foxglove, foxglove, growing up so tall,
What do you see over the garden wall?
Bumblebees and hummingbirds sipping from each flower,
Caterpillars and slimy snails inching by the hour,
Gurgling brook and croaking frog sing a tender song,
And children skipping down the path of summer days so long!

Sunshine Fairies -Betty Jones

We are the sunshine fairies, and with our sparks of light,
We shimmer and glimmer in the air, hugging flowers with colors so bright.

Dandelion -Betty Jones

Dandelion so white and furry,
When summer breezes blow,
You lose your hair,
Oh where, oh where,
Oh, where does it go?
"I fly upon the wind and drift through the air,
until at last, I come to rest everywhere!"

How to plant and nurture a Monarch butterfly garden



Part One:

Last year, my family decided to plant flowers that would attract Monarch butterflies to our backyard gardens. Our initial reason was solely for enjoyment - just to watch them gently dance and softly land amongst our flowers. Several friends then shared with us, that if Monarchs found your gardens protected and attractive, they would lay eggs, and tiny caterpillars would begin to grow. The butterflies loved our garden (since we planted their favorite flowers); and not too long after, our family did begin to spot the tiniest white eggs at mid-summer underneath the milkweed leaves.

Monarch caterpillars love to eat swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), or any type of milkweed for that matter. There are over twenty-five varieties of milkweed that are grown. However, it is always best to use native milkweed varieties found in your region, and your local nursery can help you with this. Zinnias, salvia, cosmos, verbena, are just a few nectar flowers that attract monarch butterflies. After we researched more about the Monarchs, we sadly discovered that this butterfly species recently is in decline. This made our family want to create an oasis for butterflies even more. So we planted both kinds of plants, milkweed and nectar flower plants for the butterflies' eggs, the caterpillars and the butterflies they will become.

Milkweed seeds can also be sown directly in the ground, as the flowers continue to bloom into the fall. It is not too late to sow seeds if you can't find the plants at your local nursery. Once your flowers are established, about mid to late July, start looking for their tiny white eggs. Monarch butterfly eggs are even smaller than a sewing needle's head, so plan to take your time. As you wait to spot eggs and caterpillars, see if you notice differences between your Monarchs as they begin to show up more in more in your gardens in June, July, and August.

- Leslie Woolverton



Recipes

Acorn Hill Muesli

serves 4-6

15 minutes preparation time

- 5 cups fresh fruit of your choice. In class we chop apples
- 2 cups chopped nuts of your choice
- 5 cups rolled oats
- 1 1/2 cups fruit juice, such as peach, apple, or raspberry
- 1 pint heavy cream or yogurt

Chop the fruit into bite-sized pieces and place into a large bowl. Stir in the chopped nuts, rolled oats, and fruit juice. In a separate bowl, whip the cream, add it to the fruit mixture. Stir or add to the side.

Fruits that work well include; apples, plums, peaches, cherries, berries, pineapple, or mandarin oranges. When choosing a fruit juice, do not choose anything too acidic or it will curdle the cream.

Children can be a great help in making muesli, and, after a few times, they can chop all the fruit on their own. This recipe is not only great for breakfast and brunch, but for summer dinners as well. It is perfect for taking to the pool or a picnic.

- Lynette Mattke, AH alum

Tissue paper butterflies - Andrea Daney



[butterfly video.mp4](#)

[if gte mso 9]></v:textbox></v:rect><![endif]



butterfly video.mp4

A Teepee Trellis for your Backyard - Carol St. John



Teepee Trellis Supplies

6 – 8 poles of bamboo, thin scrap lumber, or thick branches, 6' – 8' long

Roll of twine, thin rope, jute, or wire

Bean or other climbing (twining) plant seeds

Build Your Teepee Trellis

1. Lay all of the poles evenly on the ground.
2. Lash them together using the twine or jute about 1' from the top of the poles.
3. Stand the poles up and spread them out individually and at even intervals — Indian teepee style. The structure should be standing on its own.

If you're making a kid's garden fort: Create a “door” between two of the poles and the trellis becomes an instant fort. Just widen the gap between two of the poles before you plant any seeds at the bottom of the poles. Add some straw on the ground inside the tee-pee for a comfortable sitting area.

4. For added stability, sink the bottom of the poles about 4"-6" deep into the ground. The teepee only has to be lightly secure as you won't be growing heavy vegetables up this structure.
5. Plant four to six of your choice of beans (or other climber) around the base of each pole.
6. To encourage seed sprouting, keep the planted area wet until little plants pop up. The beans will grow up the poles, forming a live cover around all the structure. Other excellent plants to seed around the bottom of the poles are miniature pumpkins, scarlet runner beans (for the lovely blooms), and birdhouse gourds.

A Sunflower House- Carol St. John



With their colorful centers ringed with a crown of petals, sunflowers (*Helianthus annuus*) may be the happiest flowers in the garden. They are guaranteed to brighten up even the gloomiest of days, whether planted in a long row along a fence or massed in a sunny border. If you have space in the yard—and in particular, a spot that gets lots of sunshine—you can grow a sunflower tower that has a small inside room! You can eat the sunflowers kernels, too! They are actually really healthy.

How to Plant a Sunflower House

Sunflowers are so easy to grow! Just plant sunflowers when the temperatures get warm—in the springtime or early summer! It takes between 7 - 12 weeks for your sunflowers to grow up nice and tall.

Materials

All you need are sunflower seeds! Pick a packet or two of sunflower seeds that will grow at least 6 feet tall. You also good spot that's flat and full sun (6-8 hours of direct sun a day) with normal, moist soil that drains well.

Sunflower House Directions

Mark off where you want the sunflower tower to be: Your sunflower house can be any size or shape you want it to be: circular, square, rectangle, even triangular. But make sure it is at least 8 feet across. Use sticks or string to mark the perimeter which makes up the “walls” of the house.

With a shovel, make a trench along the marked perimeter. Clear the weeds and grass in a 6- to 12-inch wide area along this perimeter line to form a planting bed. Dig down about a foot to loosen the soil. Leave an un-dug portion on the perimeter; this will be a doorway. Make sure that it’s wide enough to walk through (about 2-feet wide).

Clear any weeds, grass, and rocks from inside the perimeter. You can always place flattened cardboard inside the marked area, and then cover the cardboard with mulch or seedless straw.

Plant the sunflower seeds 6 inches apart, and 1 inch deep. For thick “walls,” plant two rows of seeds. Leaving about 1 foot between rows, plant the second row of seeds between the seeds in the first row.

Water your seeds every day and keep the soil moist, especially when the seedlings are small and growing. The seeds should start to sprout in about a week, if the weather is warm. If you wish, fertilize the flower as they grow: you can use a blend of liquid kelp and fish emulsion.

Once the sunflowers have a few sets of leaves, gently place mulch around the plants to keep the weeds and grass from growing back and competing with your sunflowers.

Sunflowers usually reach their full height in about 10 weeks.

More ideas:

For a roof, plant morning glory seeds among the sunflower seeds! As the plants grow, the morning glories will climb the sunflower stalks. When the sunflowers start to bud, tie string or twine to the sunflower stems and across the top. The morning glories will follow the string, creating a roof on the tower.

Peace



A plant composition - shared from Caryn Wexler's backyard.

The Little Gnome Who Had to Stay Home

A Healing Story by *Susan Perrow - March, 2020* *Shared by Carol St. John*

This story was written for use with young children (suggested ages 3-5 years) who are required to stay home during the current C-19 pandemic, or who have had their freedom severely modified (e.g., perhaps they can attend school but can't attend special assemblies, festivals, parties or events). The song at the end has been left open for teachers and parents to create more verses with ideas from the children. The story can be changed/edited to suit different situations — e.g. mother tree could be father tree or grandmother or grandfather tree, or you may want to omit the part about 'gnome school'. The main character could also be changed (e.g., instead of using a gnome the story could be about a mouse stuck in his little house, or a bird that must stay and rest in the nest).

Little gnome was confused. Why did he have to stay home? Didn't everyone know how little gnomes love to roam!

He couldn't go to gnome school, he couldn't play with his friends in the forest, and his friends couldn't visit him.

Little gnome was stuck in his tree-root home.

At least he could look out his window through the rocks and the tree roots. He was surprised that there was so much to see. Little ants were scurrying by, brightly colored beetles were climbing up and down the fallen leaves and floppy eared rabbits were hopping in and out their burrows.

But even with all these things to watch, little gnome was growing impatient. Why did he have to keep on staying home? It didn't make sense to him why he could not roam.

Then Mother Tree whispered to him: 'Things are not as they used to be — but trust me — soon you will be free — trust me, trust me.'

Little gnome knew in his heart that he could always trust Mother Tree. Mother Tree carried the wisdom of the whole forest! Mother Tree knew all about everything. The birds and the wind were her friends and messengers. They visited her every day sharing the news of the big wide world.

Little gnome could hear when the birds came by. He could hear them singing high up in the branches of Mother Tree.

Little gnome could see when the wind was visiting. He could see the branches swaying this way and that. He sometimes had to close his window to keep out the leaves and dust stirred up by this busy friend!

Everyday Mother Tree continued to whisper to him:

'Things are not as they used to be - but trust me - soon you will be free — trust me, trust me.'

So little gnome had to trust, and little gnome had to wait. Soon he knew he would be free again, to leave his home amongst the rocks and tree roots. Soon he knew he would be free to roam once again in the beautiful forest. And while he waited, he was surprised how many things he could find to do in his cosy little tree root home.

Little gnome can dance

Little gnome can sing

Little gnome can paint and draw And do somersaults across the floor.

Little gnome can dance

Little gnome can sing

Little gnome can clean and cook And curl up with a picture book.

Little gnome can dance

Little gnome can sing

Little gnome can And

Little gnome can dance

Little gnome can sing

Little gnome can And

Little gnome can dance

Little gnome can sing

Little gnome can And

Note from Susan Perrow: "I have chosen to write this story with a 'mirroring' structure — the story simply reflects the situation and expands upon it with images that help share a message that is too strong to state directly with little children. I haven't promised any timeline because that would be irresponsible as no one knows it at this stage. The story's aim is to encourage acceptance of the current 'social distancing' situation, and to help motivate the children to find and enjoy activities that they can do within the home.

For anyone new to 'story medicine,' stories can help navigate the emotions that come with different kinds of loss and challenging situations. By allowing rather than resisting the truth, and by dressing it with the fabric of the imagination, stories can help the process of weaving the truth into everyday life, especially with young children.

This story will be included in the 'loss of health and well-being' section in my next book, entitled, 'Stories to Light the Night: A Grief and Loss Collection for Children, Families and Communities' (due to be published late 2020 by Hawthorn Press, UK) — the book will have more than 80 stories in different sections stories for the loss of a loved one, loss of place, loss of family connection, loss of a pet, loss of health and well-being, loss of trust, and environmental grief and loss."

The Little Gnome Who Had to Stay Home (Rhyming Version)

Little gnome had to stay home! He couldn't play with his friends, And he couldn't roam.
He was stuck all alone, In his tree roots home.

Didn't everyone know
How little gnomes love to roam! Mother Tree whispered ... 'Listen to me, Things are not as
they used to be -
But trust me — soon you will be free.'

Little gnome knew
He could trust Mother Tree.
Mother Tree was as wise as wise could be. So little gnome had to trust,
And patiently, wait to be free!

Up high in Mother Tree
The birds sang with glee,
And the wind blew round and round, Bringing messages each day,
From very far away.

At the bottom of the tree,
In his knobby tree root home, Little gnome was busy
Finding many things to do..... You may be able to do them too!

Little gnome can dance
Little gnome can sing
Little gnome can paint and draw And do somersaults across the floor.

Little gnome can dance
Little gnome can sing
Little gnome can clean and cook And curl up with a picture book.

Little gnome can dance
Little gnome can sing
Little gnome can And

A Summer Family Tradition - Leslie Woolverton



Many of you know that my son is now twenty. It is incredible to believe! Childhood really does move fast. He has changed so much in height and knowledge, while I have stayed roughly the same, well, maybe just a little grayer. His generous heart, above all, has never floundered. When Matthew first came to Acorn Hill, all of those many years ago, his love, as a three-year old, was for anything and everything to do with the world of insects.

That particular first spring at school, we were experiencing the year of the seventeen-year cicadas - known as Brood X. Matthew felt a need to rescue every cicada he came across, and was sad that the following spring/summer they had gone back to sleep. After turning four, the following spring, my son continued to look for cicadas. He would turn every rock upside down and over in hopes of finding a last cicada that had defied the rest of its brood. No cicada was to be found with the exception of shells every now and then.

When I was a little girl, I loved fireflies (lightning bugs/June bugs) and as a young parent, I recalled from my own childhood a memory with my mother. I decided right then that he and I would stay up the first night we first spotted the glittering lights amongst our grasses. Just as I had as a little girl his age. I would ready him for sleep but I had a surprise in mind. After a warm bath, pajamas, and light snack, we headed outside with a blanket and flash light to wait...



I sang him simple lullabies and we giggled as dusk turned to dark. Just then the sparkles in the bushes and grasses began softly at first, then more intense as night darkened. My son delighted as the fireflies fluttered above, underneath, and side by side. Often he would say, "again mommy, again daddy!" (familiar statements of four year olds) as if his parents were the creators of summer's magical season. While young, it was his only night to stay up just a little longer. Our tradition began. We would call this for years to come, the first night of summer.

Every year since then, even now at twenty, my son eagerly awaits the first sightings of lightning bugs. He now says, "When do you think they will arrive?" I still answer, "We will see..." This first night (of summer) will always be our family tradition. He has never outgrown this tradition; and just like my mother shared this time with me, I know, when years far off come and he too is a parent, he will share this tradition with his very own children.



Activity- Making a Circular Rhythm Calendar

Activity- Making a Circular Weekly Rhythm Calendar

Many families joined us in May for Sandi Zeese's Zoom evening on storytelling and Creating a Rhythm Calendar.

Please feel free to make your own. Here are the written instructions if you did not receive the below instructions earlier.

Making a Weekly Rhythm Circular Calendar

Materials needed:

Regular weight paper or newspaper

Sturdy paper - can be watercolor paper weight, posterboard, some kind of cardboard,
2 plates of slightly different sizes

Scissors

Ruler

Protractor to measure angles - or eyeball it!

Fine tipped markers or pen

Colored Pencils

Process:

- 1) Take newspaper, and put two plates of slightly different diameter, facedown, on it.
- 2) Draw a circle around the edge of each plate with a pencil or pen
- 3) Cut circles out.
- 4) Fold your newspaper circles in half. Then fold them in half the other way. You will have a center point. Take a skewer or sharp skinny object and make a hole at that center point.
- 5) Take your two plates and put them facedown on top of your sturdy paper. Trace around the edge and cut out these two sturdy circles.
- 6) Place the newspaper circles on top of their twin size sturdy circles and mark the center point with a pen or pencil in the newspaper piece onto the study pieces.
- 7) Using a straight edge, or ruler, to the edge of the SMALLER sturdy paper circle.
- 8) Take a protractor and place the flat edge on the radius line you just drew and measure 52 degrees (51.4) and mark the edge of the small disk at that point. Repeat 3 times. Then measure 51 degrees and mark four more sections.
[Circle=360/ (3x52)=156 + (4x51)=204]
If you don't have a protractor you can cut a pie slice from the newspaper small circle that is more than half of one of the four sections on the newspaper and place it on the sturdy paper. Line up the newspaper pie slice on the straight line from center to edge. Mark with a pencil on the edge of the sturdy paper. Do that all around the circle. If you overlap on the last section, then your pie slice was too big. Trim it down a little and try again. If you underestimated the 1/7 th section then cut another one that is a little bigger. Once you have marked your 7 sections draw a line to from the center to the edge point.
- 9) Now you get to be creative. Decide what activity you can confidently assign as a predictable weekly activity. And imagine what picture would represent that.
- 10) Using your colored pencils, draw your chosen image onto the pie section for the 1st day of the week. Then draw the pictures for the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th slices.
- 11) Place your two sturdy circles together and put your butterfly clip or envelope fasten through the center points.
- 12) Lastly draw an arrow on the wider circle that point toward the center.

The site shared below is a favorite weekly gardening newsletter shared by Carol St. John. Please take a look at the many gardening tips and child friendly gardening activities.



Let's Beat the Pests Together

Want a warning when pests are heading towards your garden? Then get involved with the Big Bug Hunt research project! Report any bugs you've seen at: BigBugHunt.com

Other Videos to Help You Get the Most from Your Garden

Learn essential gardening techniques in under 5 minutes with our Gardening How-To video series:



Make Your Garden a Ladybug Paradise

Our top strategies for planning for those leaner times of year:

[Watch the video here >>](#)

Growing Zucchini from Sowing to Harvest

How to care for these generous squashes every step of the way:

[Watch the video here >>](#)

Growing Tomatoes from Sowing to Harvest

Everything you need to know to grow your own irresistible tomatoes:

[Watch the video here >>](#)

Fun Garden Activities for Kids During Lockdown

Ways to keep your little ones amused using your garden:

[Watch the video here >>](#)

Lockdown: Gardening Through the Coronavirus Crisis

Ideas that will help you and your garden shine during lockdown or self-isolation:

[Watch the video here >>](#)

As always, you are welcome to get in touch if you have a question or topic you would like us to cover, we would love to hear from you. Just use our [Contact Form](#) or reply to this email.

Activities for Children

Homemade Play Dough

makes 3 1/2 cups

20-30 minutes preparation and cooking time

2 1/2 cups flour

1 cup salt

1-2 tabs vegetable or canola oil

3 tsps cream of tartar

2 1/2 cups water

food coloring

Add all the ingredients except the food coloring to a saucepan and stir to combine, Cook over low heat until the mixture becomes very stiff. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly. Place on a hard surface and knead until smooth. Separate into smaller batches (one for each color you wish to make) and then work the desired amount of food coloring into the dough until it is completely mixed.

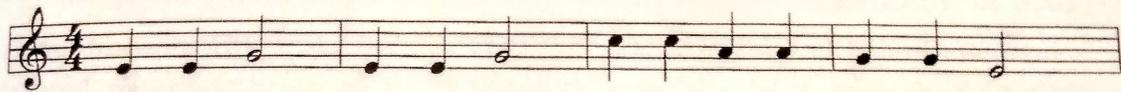
The dough may be stored in a plastic container or airtight for several weeks. Making and playing with dough is a great rainy day activity. The dough smells and feels wonderful in your hands. Children will recall making rolls in the classrooms.

Verse

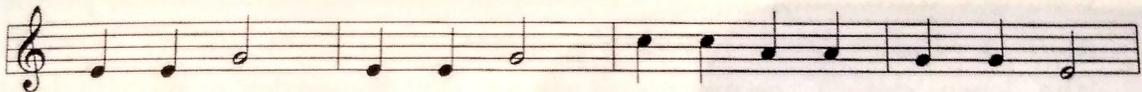
We can also bless the earth with a song like this one:

Mother Earth, Mother Earth, take this seed and give it birth.
Father Sun, gleam and glow, make it warm and let it grow.
Sister Rain, Sister Rain, shed your tears to swell the grain.
Brother Wind, breathe and blow, so that the leaves green may grow.

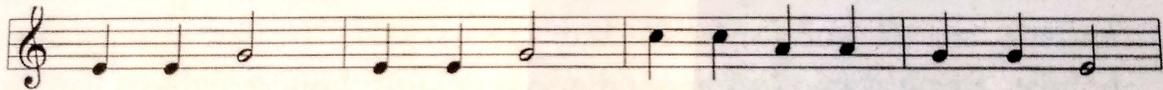
Eileen Hutchins



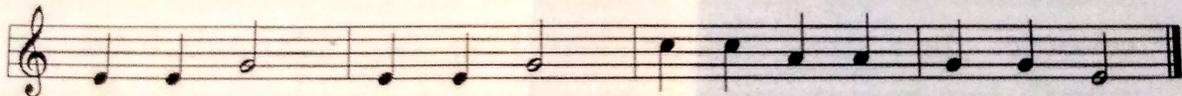
Mo - ther Earth, Mo - ther Earth, take this seed and give it birth.



Fath - er Sun, gleam and glow, make it warm and let it grow.



Sis - ter Rain, Sis - ter Rain, shed your tears to swell the grain.



Broth - er Wind, breathe and blow, so that the leaves green may grow.