



12 Months
of
Wonder
Wednesday
Activities!

Keeping Humans & Nature Connected, Creatively

by Kelly Johnson
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Welcome to a year of Wonder filled Wednesdays!!

Thank you so much for subscribing to the Wings, Worms, and Wonder newsletter! Get ready to get excited, because you are about to receive tons of nature connection resource, tips, tricks, ideas, and future Wonder Wednesday lessons straight to your inbox twice a month!
(& sometimes more if I find or make you something too great to wait!)

In this eBook, you'll find 12 of my favorite Wonder Wednesday activity lesson plans compiled for your convenience! Here you have enough activities to keep every month of the year sparked with natural wonder! Consider making every Wednesday a Wonder Wednesday in your home or classroom!

These 12 activities are compiled from my Wonder Wednesday blog posts, so pictures and videos can be found in the actual posts on my website or on my [Wonder Wednesday Pinterest board](#), but seeking out the posts isn't necessary. You have everything you need right here in this eBook!

Jump in, get started, and get ready to have lots of fun creatively connecting with nature with Wings, Worms, and Wonder!

Be sure to check the [Freebies page on my site](#) for lots more printables and fun nature connection resources. & if that's still not enough, [get a copy of my book Wings, Worms, and Wonder](#) for 40 more creative nature connection & children's gardening activities, tons of tricks for gardening with children at home or school + 100s of resources!

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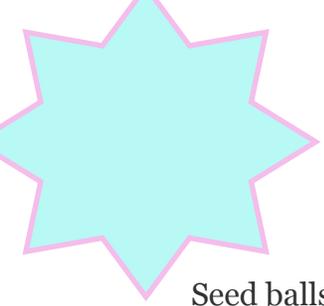
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Wonder Wednesday #1: How to make Seed Balls

Seed balls are an easy way to spread seeds in tough areas. By tough I mean areas that are hard to tend or even don't belong to you. They are great fun for kids ages 3-103 and require few supplies. Before beginning, you will need to decide what type of seeds you would like to spread. Research native wildflower varieties or even hardy veggies like peas and beans that are appropriate for your zone. Choosing the right seeds for the right place is key for the seed balls to be successful. Consider the areas where you want to spread them, how much water those areas get, the time of year you will be spreading, and variables like foot traffic and public mowing.

Materials

A few packets of seeds

Self hardening clay, this can be bought at a craft store (red or gray, not the brightly colored modeling clay) or, if you are in an area with a lot of clay, dug up from the ground for free!

Potting soil

Procedure

Get a hunk of clay the size of a handful or more

Flatten the clay out into a pancake, about 1/4 inch or so thick (These are not an exact science, so the circumference of the pancake can be up to you or dependent on the developmental level of the people making it)

Firmly press a handful of potting soil into the top of the clay pancake

Flip the clay and soil pancake over

Sprinkle a mixture of the seeds you chose onto the clay pancake

Press them into the surface so they do not fall off when the clay pancake is picked up

Fold the clay, soil, and seed pancake in half and then in half again

Knead the clay, soil, and seeds together so they are fairly well blended

Roll the mixture into a ball

Pull off chunks and roll into smaller gum ball sized seed balls

Place all the seed balls on a tray to dry for a few days

Head out on the town and spread your seeds! For best long term results, spread the seed balls in areas that are not mowed regularly – don't be shy, spread lots of them!

Follow-up

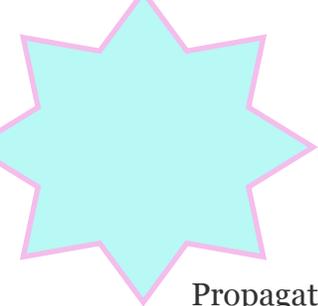
Have the children research what kind of wildlife will be attracted to the seeds they are spreading

Plant a couple seed balls in pots so the children will be able to identify the sprouts and plants coming from the seeds they spread

After a couple months, retrace your route and see if any seeds have sprouted up yet (It can take longer in the "wild" because of environmental factors such as rainfall)

Make extra seed balls and sell them at a fundraiser

Check out this great downloadable [seed balls poster](#) created by Urban Habitat Chicago



Wonder Wednesday # 2: Plant Propagation

Propagation is a big word for making new plants from cuttings of an original plant. Depending on the variety, many plants can be propagated simply in water or a common medium such as perlite or gravel. Propagation is a great way to introduce children to the joys of plant sharing and giving living gifts, as well as ways to grow plants other than by seed. The varieties I am recommending for this lesson are pothos, geranium (I like rose geranium because it smells so good), coleus, begonia, and mint because each are easy to find in garden centers, at garden clubs, or at community garden plant sales and can be propagated in either water or medium.

Materials

Plastic cups of water: each child should have 2 cups for each variety of cutting

Small pots with soil for each cutting made

Perlite or other common potting material such as gravel

A variety of the plants mentioned above for cuttings. The size of and quantity of the original plants will depend on the number of children you are working with and the number of cuttings you will be making from each plant. These plants will regenerate also and can be cut from many times once they regrow.

Scissors

Optional: powdered rooting hormone

Procedure

Discuss with the children that there are many ways a plant can grow, not only from a seed. Explain that today they will be learning a method of propagation (or breeding of plants) where you actually cut parts off one plant that will grow roots and create a new plant.

Explain that they will be experimenting with regrowing these plants in both water and medium to see which does better.

Show the children the plants they will be making cuttings from and allow them to explore these plants observing any characteristics or scents they may have.

Show the children how to make cuttings by cutting each stalk with the scissors about 6 inches long or having approximately 3 leaves and enough stem to immerse in the water or medium.

Each child should take 2 cuttings of each plant. Have them place one in a cup of water and one in a cup of medium and water.

Place the cuttings in a sunny window or outdoors in warm weather. Check the cups each day for root growth and to be sure the cups do not dry out or water level get below the cuttings stem.

Once the plants have grown a few roots a couple inches long, plant them into the small pots with soil and water.

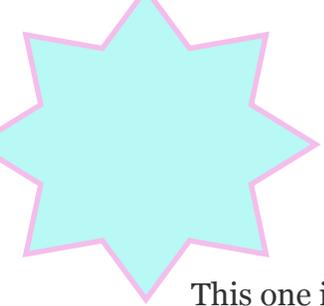
After new growth is witnessed on the potted plants they can be transplanted into larger more decorative pots, into a garden or given as gifts.

The rate at which each cutting will sprout new roots will depend on temperature and the particular variety, but generally they should have roots in a couple weeks at most.

Optional:

If you are working with older children, try dipping the end of the cutting into powdered rooting hormone before placing it in the medium. Observe whether the plant without hormone in water or the one in medium with the hormone grows roots more quickly or vigorously. **Follow all manufacturer instructions and warnings on the rooting hormone bottle and remind children that it is important to wash their hands well after use and not to touch their faces until their hands are washed.

Repot the cuttings into terra cotta pots that the children have painted. Then, give these plants as gifts.



Wonder Wednesday # 10: From Kitchen Scraps to Sprouts

This one is an oldie but goodie and can be done any time of year indoors or out. Don't let its simplicity fool you, it never fails to impress when a kitchen scrap sprouts up into a new plant! It can also be an experiential initial lesson for discussions on plant physiology, sprouting, and anatomy.

Materials

Glass jars, one for each sprout

Toothpicks

Water

Avocado seed

Top end of a carrot

Sweet or white potato

Procedure

Fill the jars with water

Insert 3-4 toothpicks into the sides of the vegetables. (Sometimes the girth of the potato is larger than that of the jar's mouth so toothpicks are not necessary. You will have to see about your particular potato)

Carrots can be done with toothpicks or simple set into a saucer.

Place the toothpicks so they rest on the mouth of the jar suspend the vegetable a little into the water. You may need to add more water, or remove some at this stage.

Place jars on a tray in a sunny window and watch them sprout!

Be sure the plants stay touching the water so they will not dry out.

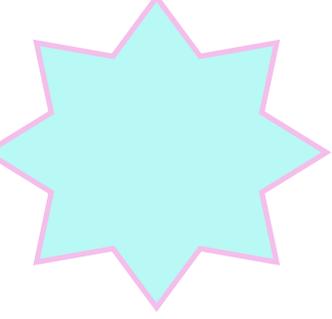
What you can expect

They can take anywhere from 1 to 2 weeks to begin sprouting so be patient.

The carrot will begin to sprout green from the top! This will grow in the dish for a little while, but will not grow a new carrot. If you use the dish, rather than the toothpick method, once the greens grow the carrot can become top heavy and tip out of the water.

The avocado seed may crack open partially or completely and will sprout roots and a shoot and leaves. This sprouted seed can then be planted into the ground or pot depending on where you live and will grow into a large or small tree.

The potatoes will sprout leaves and roots and can either be planted into a small pot to become a house plant (sweet potatoes are especially nice for this as they grow into long vines I once grew one in college that was 7 feet long) or they can be planted into the garden to grow more potatoes.



Wonder Wednesday # 12:

Place-based Scavenger Hunt Research Project

This isn't your average scavenger hunt. It is for teams, so divide the group or class appropriately into groups of 4 or so.

Materials

Paper

Clipboards

Pencils, colored and/or regular

Crayons for rubbing

Field bags (including but not limited to: tape measures, magnifying glasses, & bug boxes)

Optional: Digital camera

Field guides

Local history and natural history resources

Presentation materials such as posters, markers, rulers, glue, print offs

Preparation

Create these simple scavenger lists that will be assigned 1 to each team. You may need to chose the list topics depending on the what is available in your environment, the age of the children, and skill level so use them as a jumping off point and customize.

Depending on how many students you have and the age of the children, you may choose to assign each group 2.

Scavenger group hunt topics:

Insects

Fish

Amphibians

Reptiles

Birds

Mammals

Fungi

Flowering Plants

Trees

Procedure

Part 1: Explain that they will be going out into a designated environment (schoolyard?) to discover what type of life lives in the area. While scavenger hunting, they will need to try to discover 3-5 different types of plants or animals from their topic. When they find them they should document as much information as possible including size, color, what is it doing, where did you find it, what was the surrounding habitat like, was it alone? Then as appropriate, take photos, rubbings, and make drawings of the discoveries. Remind them of safety precautions when dealing with wild animals and that the regular rules apply such as no picking.

Part 2: After they have collected enough data. Provide local field guides and resource materials for the groups to compile a research presentation of the species they discovered in the area. Explain that they will be presenting their findings and that the presentations should include the common and latin names of the species they found, habits, habitat, food sources, needs, is the species native to the area, predators, is it migratory, if it's a plant is it: annual, perennial, deciduous, poisonous, does it have a use for humans, and any other history or culturally relevant information that may be interesting about their species.

Have them create a visual aid to accompany their presentation including pictures, drawings, rubbings, a quick fact chart, or whatever is appropriate.

Part 3: Have each group present their findings on their place-based discoveries to the group. After every group has presented, go back outside for a nature walk and see if the group can identify each other's discoveries. After the walk, create space for an outdoor circle time where everyone can share what they observed, discovered, and noticed new based on their peers' presentations

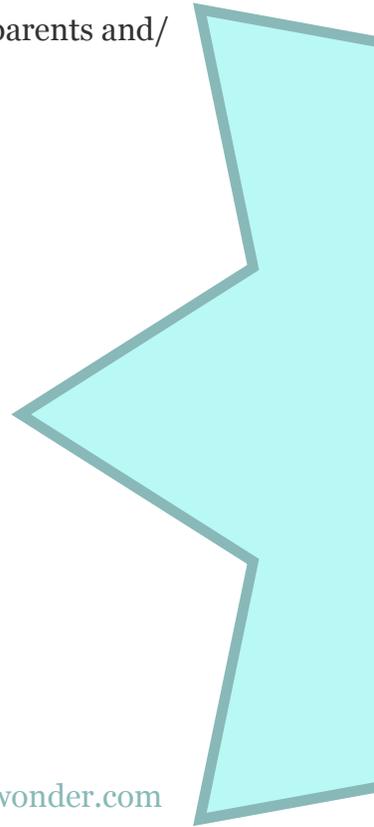
Extension Activities

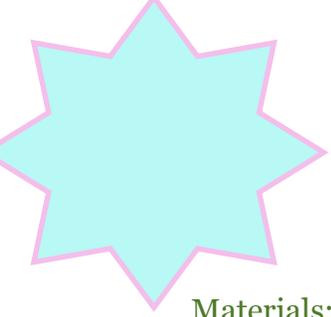
During Part 2, take a field trip to a local natural history museum to speak with experts, discover more about species and topics, and spark enthusiasm during the research phase.

Have the students continue to nature journal during this entire project on anything they choose so they don't feel trapped in their own topic.

Have the students present their findings to other classes or to parents in a special "get to know your backyard" type of event.

After the presentations, create a local field guide that can be distributed to parents and/or the community.





Wonder Wednesday #19: Suet Tea Cup Bird Feeders

Materials:

Teacups, these can be vintage, chipped, cracked, thrifted, salvaged, whatever! It is a great way to up-cycle tea cups you may not want to use for drinking anymore

Ribbon, raffia, twine, or string

4 inch straw or wooden dowel (I used the large boba tea style straw)

Recipe Ingredients:

(makes enough for about 6 teacups)

1c shortening

1c peanut butter

1/2c non GMO cornmeal

1/2 c flour, I used coconut flour because I had it on hand, but you can use any kind of non GMO flour.

Bird seed of your choice. I used a combo of black oil sunflower seeds and regular backyard bird seed bag from the hardware store. I start with a 1/2 cup of each. I always end up adding more after mixing it all up.

Procedure

Measure out your peanut butter and shortening, 1 cup each, and then your cornmeal and flour 1/2 cup each.

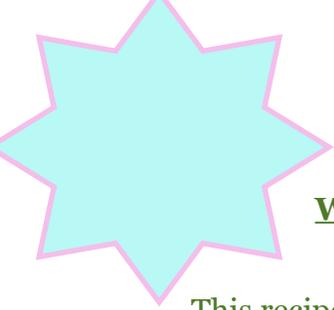
Mix them all together well. It will be like a thick batter.

Then measure out your birdseed blend and black oil sunflower seeds. Mix them into the thick batter mix.

I start with 1/2 cup of each seed type and add more into the mix if it seems like it needs it. I think I go more on aesthetics with this than anything!

Finally, fill up the tea cups with the suet mix and add the straws for little perches if you would like. I like to sprinkle some sunflower seeds to top as visual accents. Tie the ribbon around the tea cup's handle.

Hang the tea cups outside in a visible spot. Keep your nature journal nearby and you can track what species are visiting your feeder! If you are making these with students, hang the suet tea cups outside a classroom window, if possible, and hang a large chart on the wall nearby where the students can track the birds they are seeing and what time of day the birds feed. Then, the students can research the birds visiting the feeder and make school yard field guide booklets to share on the different varieties of local and migrating winged visitors.



Wonder Wednesday 21: Homemade Natural Insect Repellent

This recipe is super easy and very sensorially fun to make. It is light and refreshing to wear and the witch hazel / apple cider vinegar combo is a great skin toner! The essential oil aromatherapy alone is enough to make you thank the mosquitoes for trying to bite so you can wear this insect repellent---Almost!

Materials

Spray bottle (These can be bought inexpensively at dollar or drug stores or you can get the pretty and fancy blue glass ones from most natural food stores or ordered online.)

Raw Apple Cider Vinegar (Braggs is a reputable brand found at natural foods stores, and be sure to get raw so you don't smell like you're dying easter eggs.)

Witch hazel

Citronella essential oil

Eucalyptus essential oil

Lavender essential oil

Optional essential oils to add to your blend: geranium, lemongrass, cedar

Optional: organic coconut oil

Optional: ribbon and gift tag

Preparation

The main prep for this activity is collecting the supplies and figuring out your ratios for how many bottles you want to make. This will depend on what ounce size bottle you choose (I like 4-6 ounces) and how many bottles you intend to make. The repellent can be made up in a big batch and poured in to the individual bottles, can be made in batches with small groups of students, or can be made individually at a work station. Whatever fits your needs and age group fits this project. It is very flexible!

When you buy essential oils, this is one product where quality is really reflected in price. If possible, don't skimp on high quality oils. Low quality oils will not work effectively. Some reputable brands you will find at natural food stores are Aura Cacia, Frontier, and Now. If you prefer to order online, Mountain Rose Herbs is an excellent source. Recently the Young Living oils have gotten popular and are sold through a distributor like Tupperware or Avon type products.

Procedure

These ratios are for a 4-6 ounce bottle. For larger batches add up to 25 drops each of the essential oils. The final batch should smell fresh and clean with distinct aromas of the oils not overpowered by the vinegar. Add more oils as needed or preferred.

Some people recommend using lighter dilutions of the oils for toddlers and babies with sensitive skin.

Mix equal parts raw apple cider vinegar and witch hazel in your spray bottle (2-3 ounces each)

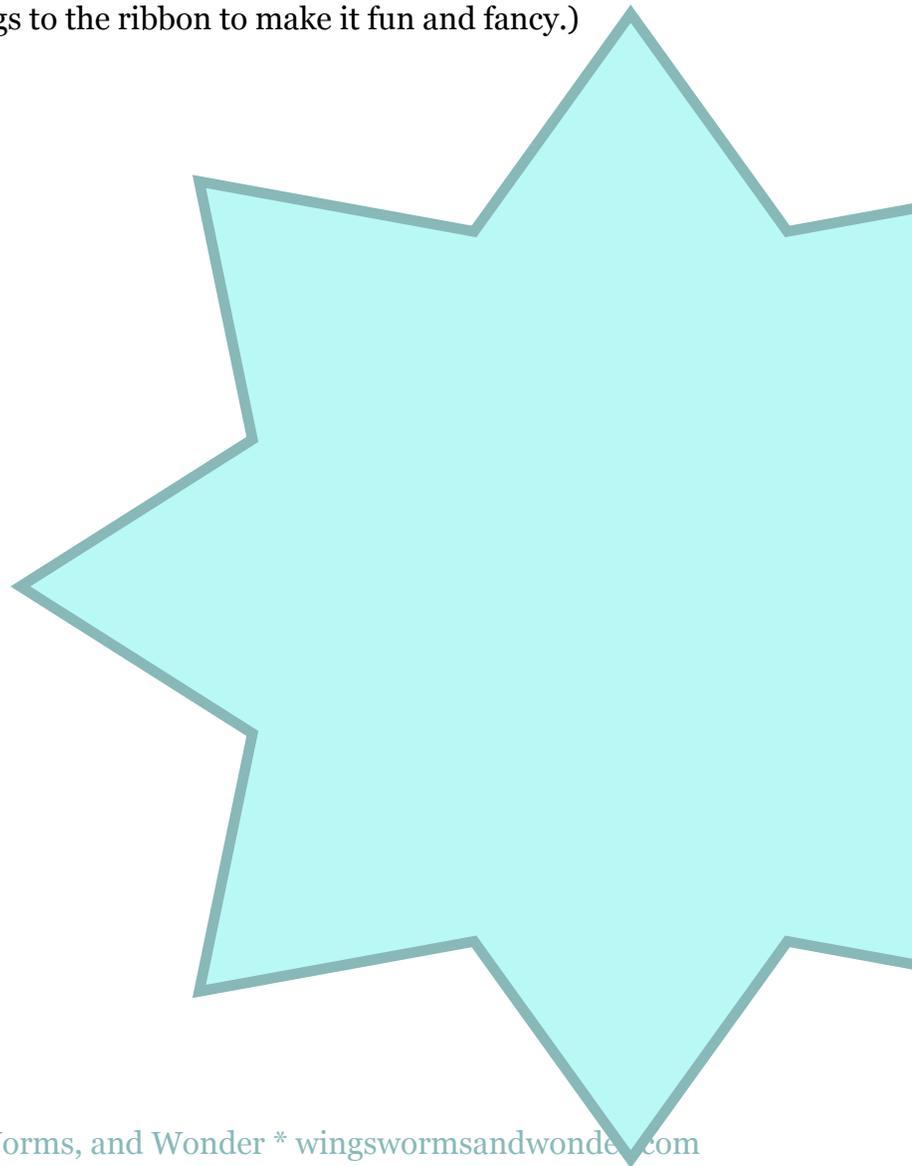
Add 5-10 drops of citronella, eucalyptus, and lavender essential oils each to the witch hazel and raw apple cider vinegar combo

Optional: Add 5-10 drops of any combination of geranium, lemongrass, and cedar oils. I especially love the geranium. Try playing with the ratios of these like: 10 geranium, 5 lemongrass, and 3 cedar for a more floral smell or 5 lemongrass and 10 cedar for a spray for Dad.

Optional: Add 1 teaspoon of liquid coconut oil. This helps it stick a little more and is a nice skin conditioner too, but does make it heavier than the original recipe.

Screw the spray top on tightly and give it a good shake. (Shake before each use.)

Optional: Tie on a ribbon and homemade gift tag if it is a gift. You can even come up with a clever name for your No-Bug Blend. (I also like to add nature-y sticker to the bottle and a couple dry lavender sprigs to the ribbon to make it fun and fancy.)





Wonder Wednesday #23: Easy Summer Figgy Fun

I think figs are a funny fruit. They are kinda fancy in recipes, but they are also kinda down home when you go picking and eating from the trees. These super tasty summer treats are native to the middle east and western Asia, have been cultivated since ancient times, and make for a great sensorial extension to ancient culture lessons.

Botanically, figs are also interesting because the flower is actually blooming inside what we refer to as the fruit, but is actually considered a false fruit. Have you ever noticed the little hole at the base of the fig? This hole allows the specialized fig wasp to enter and pollinate the flower inside to produce seeds grown from the "fruit." Weird right?

Do you have a fig tree or farm nearby where you can pick figs? If so that is great, but don't worry, to serve 4 this recipe only takes 8 figs, so if you don't you can just buy some at your farmers market or grocery store. All you need is honey, figs, water, nutmeg, and allspice. Balsamic vinegar is optional. (If you are making this with children I'd leave it out. I tried it both ways and the vinegar makes it taste sweet and sour, like harvard beets).

First, cut the stems off the figs. Use about 8-10 depending on how big they are.

Then, add 1 1/2 cups water and 1/4 cup honey to a saucepan on medium

Next, add in 1 tsp nutmeg and 1 tsp allspice.

And add the 8-10 figs. Stir regularly and let reduce for 15 minutes. I kinda mashed the figs a little to get the sauce inside as they softened, but I don't think you are really supposed to do that so they will look prettier when you serve them.

After 15 minutes, remove the figs from the sauce and set aside. (See a little mashed and less pretty.)

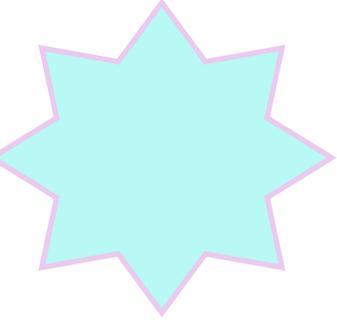
Reduce the liquid 5-15 minutes more or until syrupy.

Meanwhile, you may want to get started making your vanilla ice cream if you aren't using store bought. I made a coconut milk based vanilla.

But in all your ice cream making, don't forget about your reduction! Once it is syrupy (about 10 minutes), add the cooked figs back in and either remove from heat or let reduce no more than 5 more minutes, depending on how thick you want the syrup. I like mine nice and glazey thick.

And finally serve your honey fig glaze over your ice cream!! I couldn't wait for my ice cream to chill all the way, so I ate it a little soft right out the maker. It was soooooo good!! (PS do you love that little bowl? Well check out my friend tracy's work at Tracy McEvilly Ceramics. She has the most beautiful nature inspired dishes!!)

See how easy this is! It's a one pot stop to tasty summer figgy fun! Children can help with every step from picking the figs and taking off the stems to stirring the reduction and making sure it doesn't burn to pouring in the ice cream ingredients and topping the ice cream with the fig glaze sauce! (All carefully with adult direction if using a knife and around the hot stove top of course.)



Wonder Wednesday #24: UpCycled Seed Starter Pots

Skills: measuring, recycling/upcycling, motor skills, practical life

Subjects: math, botany, art, gardening, ecology

Materials

Toilet paper (TP from here on out) or paper towel rolls

A tray with sides to set the roll starter pots in, like a lunch tray or flat plastic container

Potting soil

Seeds

Rulers

Pencils

Optional: tape

Preparation

Collect the desired number of rolls. You can save them yourself, or if you are doing this with your class, have the children bring them in starting a month ahead of time.

If you have rules against using TP rolls at your school, collect paper towel rolls and cut them down into 4 inch lengths.

Choose what seeds you will be sprouting and for what purpose. Will you be starting vegetable seeds in the winter for the spring garden? Are they flower seeds to be transplanted to a decorative pot for Mother's Day? This will help determine how many pots you will need to make.

Procedure

Measure and make $\frac{1}{2}$ inch marks around one end of the tube. It is okay if the measurements aren't super exact.

Then at each $\frac{1}{2}$ inch mark, draw a line 1 inch down. The more exact these lengths are the flatter the finished pot will sit.

Cut down each 1 inch line making strips kinda like stiff fringe.

Fold each strip inward. As you fold around, the strips will overlap.

Optional: Secure with a little piece of tape if you would like.

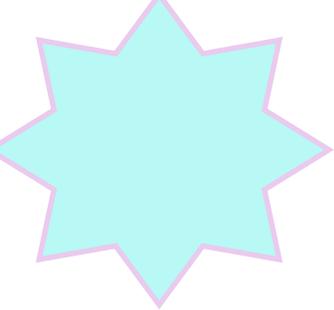
Fill the TP pot with potting soil about $\frac{3}{4}$ full. You may need to tap the soil down and then add a little more. If your soil is very dry, pre-moisten it by putting it in a bucket, water the soil the way you would if there was a plant in it, and then stir the soil to distribute the moisture evenly.

Plant your seeds according to packet directions.

Place the upcycled pots in the tray in a sunny spot.

Water the pots. Water regularly to keep soil damp and your seeds and sprouts healthy.

Transplant into the garden or larger pots according to seed packet or once sprouts are about 2 inches high with a set or 2 of true leaves.



Wonder Wednesday #25: Nature's Color Wheel

Adapted from the book [*Wings, Worms, and Wonder: A Guide for Creatively Integrating Gardening and Outdoor Learning Into Children's Lives*](#) by Kelly Johnson

Recommended children's story: *I am an Artist* by Pat Lowery Collins

Materials

Access to a garden with a variety of colored plants that may be picked

24x24 inch heavy paper or an untreated plywood board (I created my color wheel on plywood because it is very durable and won't blow in the wind.)

Acrylic paint: red, yellow, blue, orange, green, purple, brown

Paint brushes

Write "Colors of Nature" at the top if you would like.

Colored pencils

Preparation

Class Wheel: Using the acrylic paint, paint a large primary and secondary (red, purple, blue, green, yellow, orange) color wheel on the board. Outline the wheel in brown.

Procedure

Explain in this lesson we will be using our senses to practice our powers of observation.

Explain what observation means and how it will help them discover nature's colors on this scavenger hunt.

Center the children in the space. Invite them to close their eyes, begin with two deep breaths, then slowly, lead them through the senses asking them to notice what they see, smell, hear, feel. When calling on each new sense, recenter with two deep breaths and say, “Send the mind into the...nose, ears, skin, etc.” This helps the child bring awareness to the sense. Offer a couple suggestions of what may be sensed, but leave room for personal discovery also. Remind them to answer the questions in their minds and that there will be time for sharing at the end.

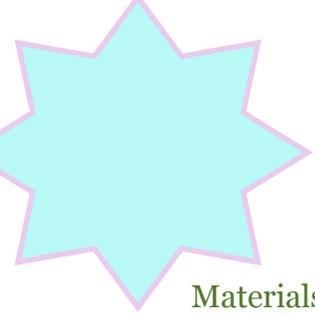
Once everyone appears to be relaxed and connected to the space, invite them to open their eyes. Present the color wheel and ask if anyone knows what this is. If the children are very young, they can name the colors. If you are using individual color wheels, pass them out and go over the colors.

Explain that they will be seeking out items in the garden that represent each of the colors on the wheel. Clarify that they have permission to gently pick any items for this activity. The goal is to try to fill the colored triangles so that nature’s colors make up the wheel.

Release them to forage for colors.

When time is up, or the wheels are full, re-invite the group to join together. Engage in a discussion about what colors were easy to find (green) and what colors were more difficult (blue). Why were some colors difficult to find and others not? Was it because of the season or perhaps the type of garden? If actual blue is impossible, ask children where the largest blue item in nature is, the sky, and playfully invite them to pretend to grab a piece of sky and place it on the wheel. Allow time for the children to share their observations, discoveries, and creative thoughts. Sharing is crucial for assimilation of the experience and nature connections being made.

If the group is still engaged, discuss the names of the items picked, if the items have a specific job in the garden, what plants are edible to humans and which are not, if they will change colors when they ripen, and any other unique characteristics or musings the colors of nature present!



Wonder Wednesday #28: No Wax Solstice Candles

Materials:

Vegetable shortening

Glass canning jars I use the jelly size. You could use any size you like, even baby food! And they don't have to be new! Just wash them out and remove the labels so they look nice.

Cotton yarn cut to lengths of 9 inches

Pencil per jar

A penny per jar

A pot or skillet to heat on the stove

A funnel

Optional:

Essential oils or food grade extracts (I use peppermint, but almond would be nice.)

Food coloring

Printer stickers, name tag size enough for each jar

Preparation:

Wash the jars and remove the labels.

Cut lengths of all cotton yarn 9 inches long. This can be approximate, but I wouldn't go any shorter than 9 inches.

Tie one end around the pencil

Tie the other around the penny. You can also use a washer for this, but a penny is cheaper!

Set aside.

Procedure:

Set your jars out on the counter where you are heating the shortening.

Place the funnel in the top of the first one.

Melt the shortening. The amount of shortening you use will depend on how many candles you are making and what size. About 4 heaping serving size scoops of shortening per jelly jar is about the right amount. I heated in a skillet because mine needed a little seasoning, but a saucepan would work perfectly too, especially one with a pouring spout.

Heat the shortening on the stove. BE VERY CAREFUL. Heat only until melted, NO FURTHER. We do not want a grease fire on our hands!!!!!! I had my electric oven on 5 and then lowered it to 3 once the big chunks were melted.

Once the shortening has just liquified, VERY CAREFULLY pour it through the funnel into the first jar. Fill about 3/4 full about up to the lid ridge looks nice.

If you want to add essential oil, extract, or food coloring, do it at this point. I added 3 tbs of organic natural peppermint extract per jar. I chose extract instead of the more pricey

oils because I had it on hand and the size of my jars would take to much essential oil. I chose to not add color so the candles would be snowy white.

Stir the liquid shortening and oil or extract to integrate.

Slowly submerge the cotton yarn wick into the jar of liquid shortening.

Roll up the extra yarn around the pencil and balance the pencil across the top of the jar. Try to adjust it so the wick hangs straight down to get a good burning wick.

Let cool.

Repeat for the rest of the jars, heating up more shortening as needed.

While the candle jars are cooling, decorate the name tag stickers!

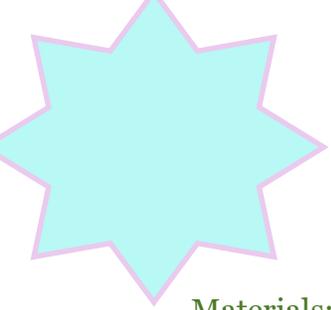
Once the candles have cooled:

Cut the wicks to no higher than the height of the jar

Attach the label stickers

Clean up is easy because there is no messy melted wax to deal with! Just wash the shortening as you normally would wash a dish!

Light up the winter (or summer) solstice night with your homemade candles, grab some friends, and celebrate!!



Wonder Wednesday #29: Ice Catchers

Materials:

Natural items like leaves, sticks, pebbles, buds, etc.

Ribbon, yarn, or string - 1 for each child - about 8-12 inches long

Flat bottom containers like sandwich size tupperware - 1 for each child

Water in a pitcher

Freezing temperatures or a freezer

Optional:

suction cup

bird seed

Everything you need for this activity can be found around the house or classroom!

Preparation:

Tie the ends of your string together to make a circle. This will be the loop to hang the catcher.

Depending on whether you are tying this activity to a science lesson, art lesson, or just doing it for fun, you will start off the project with a conversation that explains how this project will illustrate and give them a chance to explore the concepts being studied, whether they are science, art, or both.

If you are just doing this for fun you may want to remind the children what sun catchers are and explain that you are going to make one from nature. Or if you are doing this with very young children just get outside, no over explaining needed!!

Procedure:

Have the children go out into nature and collect items in their containers.

Once they have their natural items, they can arrange them in the container. If you are adding bird seed add it at this stage.

Next pour some water into the container. You will want about 1/4 of water. We discovered less will cause the catcher to crack when you remove it after freezing.

Explain to the children, before they pour the water in, that the lighter items will move around when the water pours in, but they can rearrange them. This step is where the Law of Attraction is illustrated and Archimede's principle can be explored with older children.

Add in the string loop. Be sure part of it is submerged in the water so it will freeze into the catcher. Also, be sure a good part of the loop is not in the water so there will be a loop from which it hang the ice catcher later.

Place the container outside on a flat surface and let it freeze overnight. If it is really cold where you are it may not take that long! If you are somewhere warm, at this point put in the freezer and freeze overnight.

To remove the catcher from the container once fully frozen, run it under the faucet to loosen the ice from the container, like you would ice trays.

Gently pop the catcher out of the container and hang outside where you can admire it from a tree, bush, porch or in the window using a suction cup! They are even pretty as they melt!



Wonder Wednesday #34: Nature Bracelets

This activity keeps children of all ages engaged with nature while on walks or hikes and also meets the fundamental human need for aestheticism, art, and adornment. It's a great extension for Montessori classrooms.

Materials

1.5-2 inch wide masking tape, color of your choice.

For indoor bracelet making: a bowl or sorted bowls of nature items such as seeds, seed pods, flowers, herbs, leaves, grass, and any other interesting items in your area.

Preparation

If you would like you can cut the tape ahead of time into 4 inch for toddlers and 6 inch for 4 years and up, although depending on the size of the child this could vary. These lengths give ample overlap room.

Decide on your nature walk route.

For indoor bracelet making, set up the work at a table and if desired, sort the different types of items into separate bowls or baskets from which the children can choose.

Procedure

Explain to the children that they will each get a sticky bracelet that they can press found nature items onto to make a nature bracelet and piece of art.

Explain the parameters of your specific walk, environment, and situation. Also explain what type of items are appropriate to stick, and what are not, if necessary.

With elementary children, you can reference the Montessori Fundamental Human Needs work and how people have collected items and found inspiration from nature for their art and physical adornment for ages. You could even show some art nouveau nature inspired jewelry if you like.

Wrap a length of tape – sticky side out – around each child's wrist.

Head out on your walk and collect and create beautiful nature bracelets!

Once you return, the children can continue to wear the bracelets home, or cut them off and they become a little nature art piece. Mount onto card stock if you'd like to formalize the work.

Indoor bracelet making – model making the bracelets and offer the lesson at a table independently for children to create during the work cycle.

Extension

Have older children do field guide research on the items they collected or have them to history research and presentations on the ways different groups of humans have used nature to adorn themselves over time.





About Wings, Worms, and Wonder

Wings Worms, and Wonder is a garden of nature connection advice and inspiration, all created by me, Kelly Johnson! I seek to keep humans and nature connected through the arts, gardening, and our unshakeable senses of wonder by creating inspiring resource including:

The Book

The Blog

Children's Gardening Workshops

eCourses

Home & School Garden Consultations

Teacher inservice Workshops

International Conference Presentations

Magazine Publications

Nature Journaling Resources

& an Online Community!

When I'm not helping inspire creative nature connection, you'll find me making art, surfing, snowboarding, and eating vegan sweets! For advice, inspiration, and more nature connection freebies, check out my blog [Wings, Worms, and Wonder](#). Then, give me a shout out on Instagram. [Let's Connect @wingwormsandwonder](#) !