



WORDS FROM THE WOOD

Week 4 – 20thth April 2020

Tips and ideas for learning and connecting outdoors during Covid-19...

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Inspiration from Nature...

Why not step out into the outdoor area you can access and then sit down for a few minutes. Look up and see what is above; look down and see what is on the ground; listen; close your eyes and feel the sun, wind or wet on your face and really enjoy some time in nature. Then you may feel inspired to try some of the creative nature ideas from this week's newsletter. There are lots of colours to be found in nature on a walk or in the garden and we can pick a little of something there is a lot of, leaving some for the pollinating insects and other creatures, oh and check with whoever's garden it is too!

There is another foraging recipe too, as I just always love the bright yellows of the dandelions at this time of year. It also links with a beautiful dandelion picture from the Lost Words book that we will share. Another special treat is a video from me on one of the ideas! Please remember you can stay in touch through our Facebook page Oak Leaf Forest School plus there is a private page to share what we have all been doing called Words from the Woods

Nature's Art...

Andy Goldsworthy is an artist who has made land and environmental art and sculptures using nature and has inspired many others to make their own. The basic idea is to collect some pieces of nature that inspire you, maybe you will collect only things with the colour yellow and make a big yellow circle that could be the sun. Maybe you will collect all the colours of the rainbow to make... a rainbow! I have seen some beautiful examples of this and they can even be done as a thank you for the NHS. You can do whatever inspires you in any shape or form, but below is an idea for making circular patterns called Mandalas.



Make a nature mandala



You will need

- Bags or baskets to collect natural materials
- Natural materials:

Sticks	Grass
Leaves	Feathers
Pebbles	Pine cones
Flowers	

Only pick from your own garden and leave plenty for pollinators!

- 1 Head outdoors and collect your natural materials. Try to find a few of the same thing as this will help with your shape (eg. five yellow leaves, four twigs of equal length).
- 2 Find a flat surface – maybe a table or even your lawn or yard outside. Place one of your finds down first to act as the middle of the mandala.
- 3 Use the rest of your finds to make a pattern coming out from the centre. Consider the symmetry of your pattern, making one side mirror the other. You can be as creative as you like.
- 4 Remember to take a photo of your finished mandala!

The word 'mandala' is Sanskrit for circle. The circular shape symbolises how nature doesn't begin or end, but is always connected.

Nature Weaving

On another walk you can do some collecting again, but this time to put into a weaving. Again, you may choose to collect certain colours and any long leaves work well to weave in and collect your nature treasures in a weaving. To make the frame you could get 4 sticks/straws/canes/pencils and tie them together to make a square, then string some string/wool/dental floss/wire or even elastic bands between two sticks that are opposite each other. Other options could be to tie several pieces of string from a tree branch with a weight on the end of each, such as a stone, or I was thinking about using an old bike wheel with it's spokes all ready made for weaving. Then you have to start your weaving pattern with whatever you have: under and over the string for the first weave then on the second row remember to do the opposite, over and under. Some items will be too short to go all the way across so just push them right over and add something else.



Nature Prints

For this activity you need to collect some pieces of nature that look like they might be quite 'juicy' and then we are going to squash them onto material/paper/kitchen roll or even toilet paper! The squashing is done with a heavy object such as a hammer or mallet, so please remember to take care to control this with short taps and not to lift up as high as your head, no bumps please! Instead of a photo of what can be done this time I have taken a video as I felt it had been a long time since we have been at Forest School and it would be nice for you to connect with everybody that does Forest School in some way. Hopefully you can hear me ok, as I am terrible at projecting my voice and you may hear my director (son) trying to tell me so! Let me know if it doesn't work...

<https://youtu.be/HhgguuNRekl>



The Lost Words

This is a beautiful book that came about ten years after the Oxford Junior Dictionary removed several nature words such as acorn, adder, bluebell, conker and dandelion to replace them with more commonly used ones relating to the digital world. Robert McFarlane and Jackie Morris created this book of stunning illustrations and acrostic poems, or 'spells' that with the uttering of, will bring back these words to our children. So I have included one of the spell pages for the Dandelion, which, as I have mentioned I think is a lovely cheery flower we see lots of at this time of year: you can eat it; make tea; pretend to tell the time by blowing their 'clocks' (fluffy seeds); they provide food for many pollinators and have a great name! Dandelion comes from the French Dent-de-Lion or Tooth of Lion, because of the jagged 'teeth like' leaves. Also included are some wordy and creative ideas to do

with this poem and picture for our older children.

dandelion

dandelion

Dazzle me, little sun-of-the-grass!

And spin me, tiny time-machine!
(*Tick-tock, sun clock, thistle & dock*)

Now no longer known as

Dent-de-Lion, Lion's Tooth or Windblow,
(*Tick-tock, sun clock, nettle & dock*)

Evening Glow, Milkwitch or Parachute, so

Let new names take and root, thrive and grow,
(*Tick-tock, sun clock, rattle & dock*)

I would make you some, such as
Bane of Lawn Perfectionists

Or Fallen Star of the Football Pitch
or Scatterseed, but

Never would I call you only, merely, simply, 'weed'.
(*Tick-tock, sun clock, clover & dock*)



#TheLostWords
www.JohnMuirTrust.org/
TheLostWords
for *Explorer's Guide &*
Information



dandelion

dandelion

Dandelion 1

Seek, find, speak

- What does the image on the page remind you of?

Research challenge

- How did the name, *dandelion*, originate? [The artist chose to represent the leaves of the dandelion like a clock and lion's teeth]

Art challenge

- Select a plant and experiment with making a slightly abstracted outline.

Dandelion 2

Wonder words

What do these mean? Can you find any synonyms? Try using them with a partner by creating different sentences.

- *Bane*
- *Perfectionists*

Seek, find, speak

- Who is the writer speaking to and what sort of mood is created?
- Why is the flower called 'sun-of-the-grass' and 'tiny time-machine!'?
- Why would the writer call it 'Bane of Lawn Perfectionists,' 'Fallen Star of the Football Pitch' or 'Scatterseed'?

- Why wouldn't the writer call it 'only, merely, simply' weed'?
- What patterns can you find in the poem? [Bracketed refrain, with fifth word changing each time to include another wild flower]
- If you were renaming the dandelion, which name would you choose?

Writing challenge

- Choose another wild flower, maybe one of the ones in the refrain, and find out about the different names it might have.
- Create a cinquain spell about your chosen flower, or the dandelion.

A cinquain consists of five unrhymed lines.

Each line has a set number of syllables:

Line 1: 2 syllables

Line 2: 4 syllables

Line 3: 6 syllables

Line 4: 8 syllables

Line 5: 2 syllables

- e.g.
- Dog rose
Twined in hedgerows
Five-petalled, pollen crowned,
Pale and fragile, softly blushing
Fruitful.

Research challenges

- Find out about the life cycle of the dandelion.

Watch these time-lapse videos and make notes. Which do you prefer and why?

Which do you think gives the most information?

Search:

YouTube *Dandelion Clock Blowing*;

YouTube *Dandelion Flower Clock Blowing*;

YouTube *Dandelion Blooming Going to Seed*;

YouTube *Pustelblume Cipsela*

- Find out what other uses are made of different parts of the dandelion.



Dandelion 3

Seek, find, speak

- What does this painting depict?

[The different phases in a dandelion's growth]

- Why do you think the hare is in the illustration?
- How does this painting make you feel?
- What is the collective noun for goldfinches and also for hares?

Creative challenge

- Take a dandelion seed and look closely at it with a magnifying glass. See the bright, light parachute that lifts it on the wind; the shape of its spear seed, sharp, so that when it lands, it catches the earth. Imagine the journey from dandelion clock to earth landing. Draw a single seed – huge on a big piece of paper to accompany your imaginings.

Hopefully you can find a copy to look at sometime soon. You can find more posters from the book at the John Muir Trust website <https://www.johnmuirtrust.org/initiatives/the-lost-words>

Dandelion Fritters

As mentioned, you can eat several parts of the dandelion. The leaves can be used in salad, the root was traditionally used as a coffee substitute and the petals can be used in salad, to make tea or I use the whole flower to make dandelion fritters. First collect several flower heads with a little bit of stalk, picking from areas away from road traffic and potential dogs. Shake out any creatures and give them a good wash. Make a runny pancake mix (mine is dairy and egg free) and then dip the flower head in and pop face down onto a medium/hot frying pan. Let it cook through then scrape it up and lift off by the stalk, ready to eat. Some people will just eat the petals, some the whole flower, which will be a bit bitter, see what you think!



Creating with Mud!

Mud is a great resource to play and create with and merits a whole newsletter for itself, in fact there is Mud Day at the end of June to look forward to! However here is one quick idea for getting creative with mud from Wilderness Outdoor Education. More nature spotting next week...



play • learn • connect