



WORDS FROM THE WOODS

Week 8- 18th May 2020

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

In this issue:

- What can my stick be?
- Creative sticks
- Stick Games
- Stick Homes

Woody wonders of the woods

You could not have Forest School without sticks! To a Forest Schooler a stick can be part of an imaginative game; it might be made into something; be part of a game or used in the ultimate Forest School activity-building a stick house. Hopefully you can all get out to somewhere where you can access sticks and maybe do some of the suggested ideas in this newsletter. These are only a few ideas as you can easily write a whole book on what to do with a stick, in fact there is one called *The Stick Book* by Jo Scholefield and Fiona Danks and we may include some further ideas in another newsletter. There is another video this week where we read the story *Stanley's Stick* and make things with some Elder tree branches. Next week there will be no newsletter, but please do revisit some of the past ones and have a look at the Wildlife Trusts 30 Days Wild campaign for June, which has lots of ideas.

What can my stick be?

A stick can turn into so many things at Forest School and really is a great imaginative tool, it might be a magical wand (see newsletter 5), sweeping brush, broomstick, stickman or a fairy (newsletter 5), but the most common thing is for it to turn into a weapon. This then becomes a very important prop in imaginative play and children can get incredibly involved in this kind of play with themselves or friends. It can be uncomfortable watching your child turn anything into something as destructive as a gun, however, as mentioned in the imaginative play newsletter, it is important that imaginative play lets children make sense of things they have heard or seen.

Sometimes I try and divert the play from guns to magic wands by mentioning that I have cast a spell with my magic wand, which is far more powerful, and the guns no longer work but have become magic wands too. This doesn't make much logical sense, as really it is still being used as a weapon, but some settings do have a no gun play policy and you can really spice up the play with an exciting, no limits magic wand. This kind of play can also be very physical and require the children to become quite dexterous at wielding their stick. If two children decide to do battle with their sticks/sword/jousting poles they then learn a huge amount about spatial awareness and can become very good at learning controlled movements that ultimately do not hurt each other. When my son was very young, we made a magical sword with a strong piece of Hazel and a shorter piece tied on as the handle with some square lashing. See this link for a video on how to do square lashing <https://youtu.be/3GVE0EPEc1o>. We then wrote a spell and found a magic feather that were placed on the hand grip and wool was tied around to cover them up. 12 Years later this sword still exists, minus the decorations and handle and it still gets expertly swung around! It does feature in the video in the next section too...



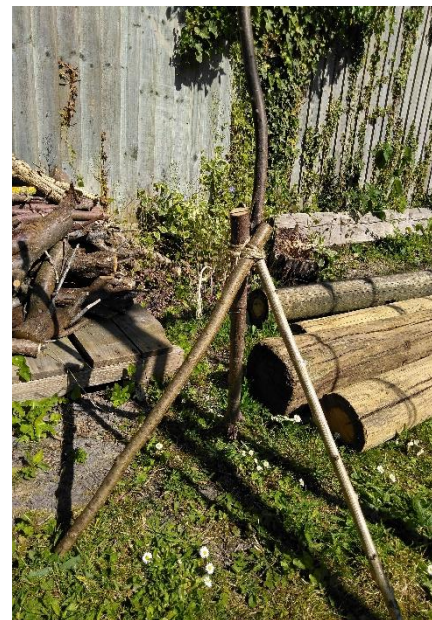
Creative sticks

As with imaginative stick play there are also endless things that can be made from sticks. You can join 4 together to make a picture frame, you can bend them into circles to decorate with wool and nature treasures. In the following video I use wood from the Elder tree that has beautiful white flowers at the moment and was introduced in last week's newsletter. A branch from this tree is special as the middle part, called the pith, is soft and can be scraped out easily allowing you to make things with it such as beads; whistles and the paintbrush I make in the video (along with a bead). I also look at the book 'Stanley's Stick' all about a boy and his stick, which he uses in many imaginative ways and I thought was very apt for the theme this week. <https://youtu.be/XhcukaVICYg>



Stick Games

Sticks can be used in games too, maybe you can try knock over logs stood up on end, or make quoits from a bendy branch bent round. My challenge is to see if you can make the tallest stick tower. You can try this in different ways. Maybe you can stack the sticks on top of each other in a square or triangle. The other option is to tie the sticks together, what shapes are good for this? Squares or triangles? Take a photo and put it on our Oak Leaf Forest School Facebook page or join our private one Oak Leaf Words from the Woods.

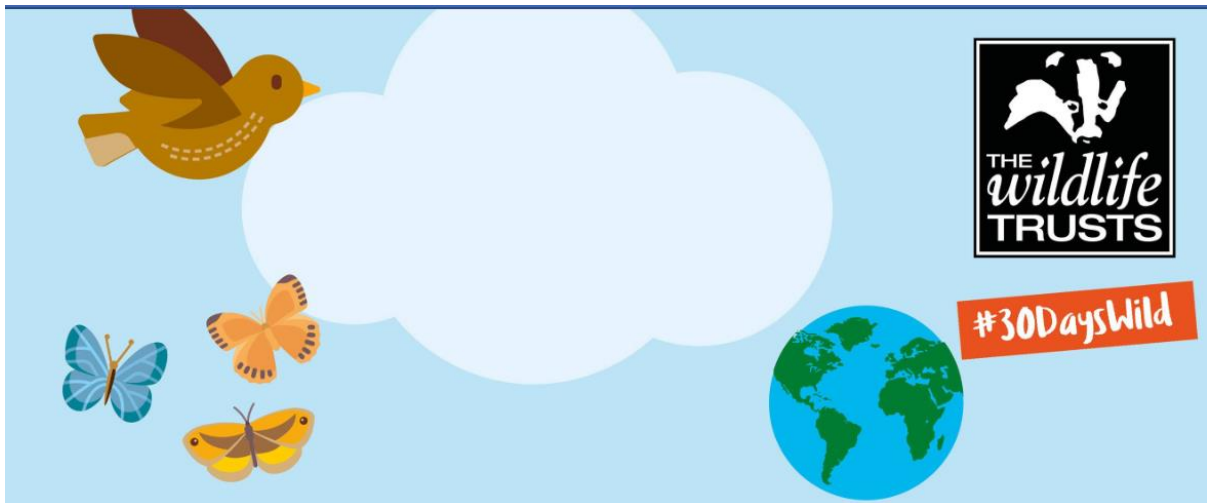


Stick Homes

Stick homes can be small stick structures built for a toy or imaginary creature, maybe you will make one for your stick fairy. They can be the shape of a tepee where the sticks all lean on each other in the middle or you can lean them against another structure like a wall, pot or tree. You can make an A frame by pushing two sticks in the ground at angle meeting and crossing over at the top, then place another one opposite it and place another stick across the two to make a ridge which can have lots more sticks added. Once you have had some practice at little homes it is then time to upsize and use long sticks or canes and make a stick home for yourself!...



Remember to find out about the Wildlife Trusts 30 Days Wild and download the pack here
<https://action.wildlifetrusts.org/page/57739/petition/1>



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