



The Outdoor Practitioner



Outdoor Hub

Autumn activity inspirations!

FOREST SCHOOL FOCUS

- features
- activities
- guides

Practitioners Voice))))))



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MUDDYFACES

IDEAS, ACTIVITES AND EVENTS FOR THE OUTDOORS

Welcome

to Issue 3 of the **Outdoor Practitioner** magazine!

Hello friends

Our new issue is packed full of contributions from actual real life Outdoor Practitioners - and we love it that way! We think reading about outdoor provision in practice, real examples of overcoming barriers, and inspiring reflections on how we work is a great way of acknowledging and learning from the tremendous skills and experience in this welcoming, generous, nature-connected community.

"A really good read and an asset to those working with children outdoors. Really recommend."

Kathryn Solly

"Wow, an amazing magazine, well done! NAEE will also be happy to feature this in our weekly e-update."

Carolina Salter, NAEE

"Just having a read of this new magazine - really good advice & well presented. I'll be looking out for future editions."

Snapdragons Forest

"It's amazing! Lovely to read something refreshing and related to outdoors."

Anne-Marie Louise

"Your new magazine looks great! Lots of interesting thought-provoking articles. Hope you don't mind but I've just shared it with the OWL Facebook Group that has 6K+ members. They'll love it!"

Mandy Tulloc, Mud Pies



With Forest School Day coming up, we thought our Autumn issue would be a great way to join in and celebrate Forest School - you'll find activities, case studies and more on this subject which is at the heart of all we do.

Our winter issue will focus on health and wellbeing, especially mental health. If you have some great practice, inspiring solutions or reflections to share please do send me an email - this magazine is so much the better for you!

Enjoy autumn!

Beccy

Beccy Golding

Editor, The Outdoor Practitioner

ps We've had some lovely feedback for our first two issues - you'll see some of it here - thanks so much to everyone who took the time to email us or post on social media - do keep letting us know what you think, and sharing with all your outdoor and outdoor-interested networks!



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The Outdoor Practitioner

A FREE online magazine for people passionate about working outdoors, brought to you by the outdoor specialists at Muddy Faces.

Muddy Faces has a range of resources to buy & the fantastic Outdoor Hub with free downloadable activities and ideas to get you outdoors.

Please contact us if you would like to contribute an article or share activities - our next issue will be a **Health & Wellbeing** focus.

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Disclaimer: Muddy Faces cannot take any responsibility for accidents or damage that occur as a result of following activities in our magazine.





On the 2nd Friday of October
PLAYFUL AND JOYFUL CELEBRATIONS



MUDDYFACES
Forest School, Outdoor Play
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Visit our Outdoor Hub for Forest School history, research & ethos, inspirations & practicalities, resources and guides.



Download our free Outdoor Practitioner magazine Forest School Focus with features, guides & expert opinion.

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For more information:

The **Forest School Association** is the professional body and UK-wide voice for Forest School, protecting standards and promoting best practice.

Is your practice nature connection or nature contact? And does it matter?

Forest School practitioner and trainer Louise Ambrose considers

You might be wondering, what's the difference?

Let me begin with a story of a timeless wander I had this summer with my 10 month old.

We were walking the footpaths near home, talking to the sheep and tasting the first blackberries of the season. We stood in awe for a long time at a butterfly-covered buddleia, marveling at the vivid colours of the red admirals and peacocks. We wondered whether when they were caterpillars they knew what they would become, grateful for their beauty.

A dog walker hurried past, smiled at us and called "Fidget" as her dog rushed up to greet us tail wagging.

As we continued we turned our heads skywards as we heard the buzzard's familiar call, tracking their spiral path through the sky. We were standing wondering what message the aspen's leaves were

sharing with the wind as two walkers marched past complete with rucksacks and poles. They nodded a quick 'hello'.

As we were thanking the mugwort for the few stems we were harvesting we heard a couple approaching, one of whom was on her phone to her grandson. They passed us not really noticing we were there.

I wondered if we might have become invisible and decided to test this notion.

We continued the homeward stretch of our journey as softly as we could. Carefully fox walking and stretching our senses out as far as possible. As we came to the edge of the village we surprised a green woodpecker on the lawn of one of the gardens. He took off, yaffling like laughter.

All the people in this story were outside in nature – we were all in contact, but not everyone was in connection.

So what is Nature Connection?

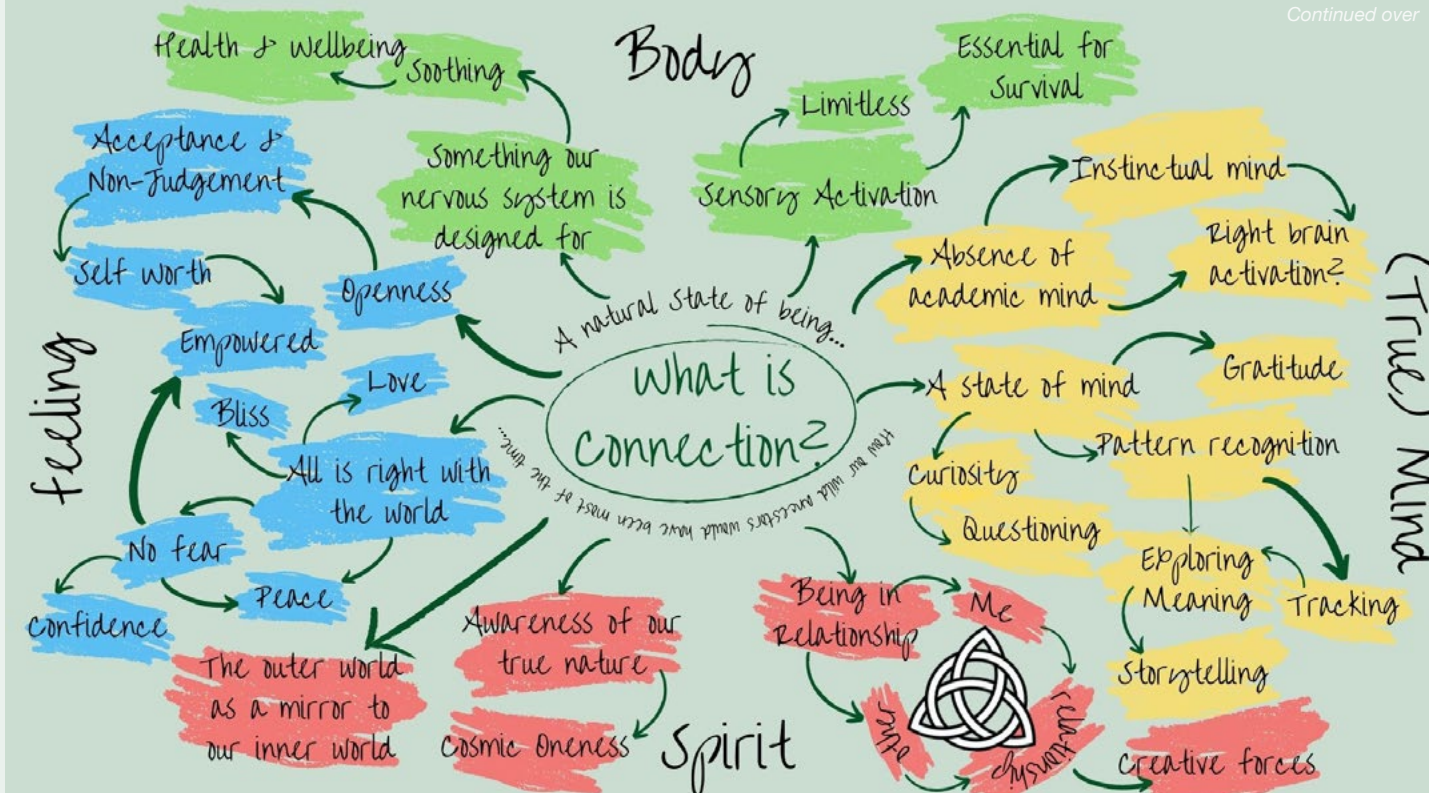
I've contemplated this for some time and mapped my thoughts. I believe that connection involves all aspects of the self; body, feelings, spirit and mind.

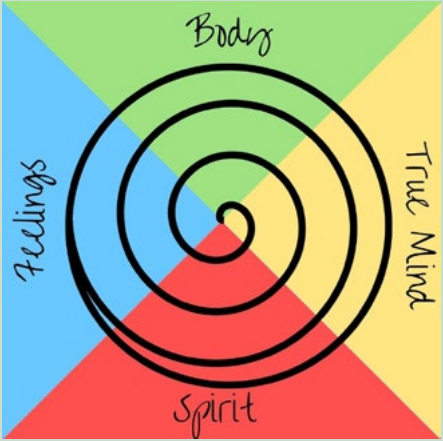
In contrast, nature contact may focus solely on the academic mind, in nature education for example and/or the body, as in outdoor recreation.

Rather than an 'either or' approach, I believe that nature contact and connection are on a spectrum. I visualise this as a spiral of ever expanding awareness as our self grows. Nature contact is at the centre, the beginning of that spiral and a much needed starting point for the journey.

Dr Miles Richardson and colleagues have discovered that although visiting nature once a week (contact) provides general health benefits, it is 'Nature Connectedness' that is associated

Continued over





with eudaemonic wellbeing (a sense that one's life has meaning and is worthwhile). Nature connection helps people to feel self-worth and find their purpose - aims also shared by the Forest School philosophy.

One of the six Forest School principles is:

Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

The statement of 'relationship' between people and other parts of nature suggests to me that nature connection is core to this principle. A 'relationship' suggests much more than just passing through the woods like the people in the opening story.

Another of the principles says:

Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved...

As we've explored above, nature connection is an inherently holistic process, whereas nature contact usually has a focus on only one area of a person's growth. Connection promotes holistic development.

Hopefully I have persuaded you that as Forest School practitioners part of our role is to facilitate connection and that just being outside isn't enough to become connected.

So how do we 'do' nature connection?

As with most things at Forest School, it starts with us. If we want to support nature connection we must be connected ourselves. We will then model practices and behaviours unconsciously as well as consciously as the threads of connection weave their way through us.

One of the challenges we face is that we live in a modern, consumeristic society which does its best to disconnect us - from nature, each other and ourselves. It can be difficult to 'do' connection when other people are looking at us funny.

We need to create a culture of connection - to nature, to each other, to ourselves. Forest School can be an opportunity to create such a container.

Mentor, storyteller, and naturalist Jon Young has spent 40 years trying to figure out why some cultures are more nature connected than others. Spending time with indigenous peoples from across the globe he has repeatedly observed connective practices which he has collated into a map of universal truths and wisdom, referred to as the 8 Shields model. This model holds cultural elements which can be used to repair disconnected cultures. His book *Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature* provides a great overview of the model and how it can be used to create nature connective experiences for all ages.

One of the layers of the model is the

Attributes of Connection, observable qualities that are expressed by a person when they are in a state of connection (see diagram below). We can use these indicators to help us recognize when we (or anyone else) is in connection.

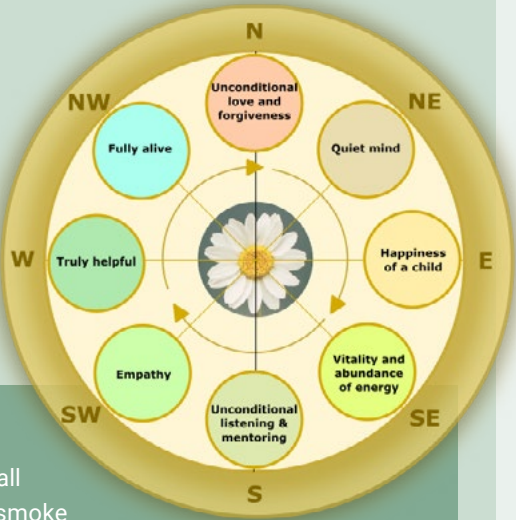
Consider these eight attributes and their significance to an individual's life. Perhaps this is why Dr Richardson found that Nature Connectedness correlated with eudaemonic wellbeing?

I invite you to reflect on your own connection with nature - how often do you exhibit any of these attributes? How often do you see them in others?

Now take a step back and imagine a culture (or a world!) filled with people expressing these qualities. Imagine growing up in such a culture. Forest School could be that culture if we expand our own spiral from nature contact to nature connection.

References
Miles Richardson blog: [Beyond Nature Contact to Connection: A Missing Link in a Sustainable & Worthwhile Life](#)

Jon Young - [Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature](#)



Louise Ambrose wants to live in a world where everyone is connected to nature; where people of all ages have muddy knees, twigs in their hair, woodsmoke infused clothes, a sparkle in their eyes and warmth in their heart.

She's worked as a Forest School practitioner with groups of all ages, coordinated Forest School development for a local authority and been a Forest School trainer for the last 15 years.

Currently she is enjoying being a mama and having a small human attached to her 24/7, which has enabled her to confront her luddite ways and create a YouTube channel [Forest School Lou](#) to share all things Forest School-sy.

Attributes of Connection Concept Credit: Jon Young and the 8 Shields Institute, Image Credit: Nic Harding

7 ways to deepen your connection with nature

1 Visit a 'Sit Spot'

Find a place in nature which you can visit regularly, ideally every day. It could even be in your garden. Try to spend at least 20 minutes there (but even 5 minutes is better than nothing!). With regular visits, the unseen world of nature will slowly reveal itself to you.

2 Share your 'Stories'

Find at least one person to recount your adventures in nature to (and perhaps hear theirs in return). Be selective, it can be disheartening to share a story with someone who isn't interested or who doesn't believe you. Tell your stories recalling as much detail as possible.

3 Activate your Senses

Whilst in your sit spot or whilst wandering bring your awareness to the current moment. Become present by focusing on your senses. Consciously notice all of life around you; the sights, sounds, smells, textures and tastes. Try to accept the sensory information you are receiving without judgement and without naming things. Appreciate the moment.

4 Practice Gratitude

Being in a state of gratitude changes our energy so we are perceived as less of a threat. It is also great for our mental health. It doesn't matter what you are grateful for, just that you are grateful!

5 Be in a 'Beginner's Mind'

Try to encounter things as if you are experiencing them for the first time. Take time to explore and discover. Be curious, ask questions, see where things lead. When you return indoors, use books or online resources to investigate things more deeply.

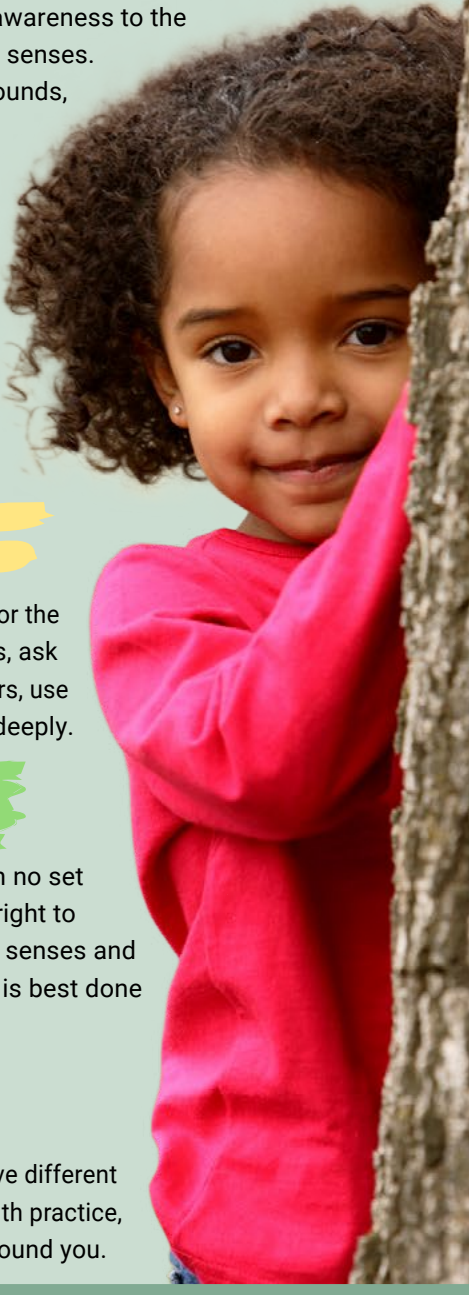
6 Try a 'Timeless Wander'

If you have some free time, go on a walk in nature with no set destination or duration. Wander whichever path feels right to you to explore. Tune in to your body by activating your senses and see what direction it wants to take you in. Initially this is best done in a place which you know well so you don't get lost!

7 Notice 'bird language'

Birds are the messengers of nature. Just like us, they have different tones to their voices to communicate different things. With practice, listening to the birds will tell you what is going on all around you.

With gratitude to [Jon Young](#) and friends for sharing these important practices. Discover more in [Coyote's Guide to Connecting with Nature](#).



Forest in the City

Louise Black, deputy headteacher of an urban primary school in London, on the importance of outdoor provision for all, and how the children she works with benefit from connecting to nature.

‘Given a chance a child will bring the confusion of the world to the woods’, wrote Richard Louv, in his seminal book *Last Child in the Woods*. ‘They will wash it in the creek, and turn it over to see what lives on the unseen side of that confusion... In nature, a child finds freedom, fantasy, and privacy; a place distant from the adult world, a separate peace.’

I work with children who bring a lot of ‘confusion’ through the school gates. As a Deputy Headteacher in a primary school serving families from the deprived Patmore Estate in Battersea, London, I see daily the mismatch between the complex and hectic lives of my students and a relatively rigid national curriculum that provides them with few opportunities to stop and breathe, and be playful, let alone develop creatively as independent learners.



But last autumn we made a decisive change. With the financial backing and full support from our academy trust, The Elliot Foundation, we transformed our dilapidated asphalt running track into an onsite Forest School and outdoor learning space

- our very own Forest in the City. Its impact has been transformational.

Take Jamari*, for example, a year 4 student who presents with attachment issues, struggles with boundaries and finds transitions very problematic. He lives on the local estate and like most students at our school has never had access to a garden. In his initial interview with me he described his experiences of being outside as “going places with mum in the car. Like auntie’s house and to see friends” and having a shared space “out the back” but being “never allowed” to go down there.

Understandably, then, Jamari wasn’t convinced when we first introduced Forest School. During the sessions he actively disengaged. However, the

allure of a freshly toasted marshmallow eventually won him round. And when he realised he could spend two hours every week shinning up trees and dragging pieces of wood around, I could see him secretly beginning to enjoy himself. He tried to convince me otherwise, of course. But one day when I watched him be the first to successfully use a fire steel, there was no hiding his happiness. Or mine.

He had been given the freedom to play, to explore and to succeed. And fundamentally he felt like he belonged. In the final week of the summer term, he rushed down to my office with one of our tin mugs in his hand, “Miss, Miss, I found one of our Forest School cups in the hall. It’s ours! It shouldn’t be there!”. His urgency, his need to find me, his sense that this cup was ‘ours’ said it all.

**This child’s name has been changed to protect anonymity*



I have long been a passionate advocate of Forest School, ever since attending a training session as a young teacher led by one of the Bridgewater College leaders who created ‘Forest School’ after their 1993 study visit to Denmark.

But anyone who has interacted with Forest School in the UK will also be aware it has a big inequality problem. Both practitioners and students tend to be white and middle-class, and sessions are usually private and prohibitively expensive.

I have experienced this first hand, having attended many sessions across South London with my two young girls. Wonderful sessions with wonderful leaders. But sessions which have also been costly and

noticeably unrepresentative of the diverse local community.

Addressing this glaring inequality was always at the heart of our project. We wanted to democratise access to Forest School, just as it was intended by its early pioneers in Europe. In the Danish model, for example, harnessing open air culture (‘Friluftsliv’) is seen as a pivotal building block in achieving a more inclusive way of life.

We’ve adapted this logic at Griffin. We want all our students to enjoy the benefits of having a connection with nature, and to foster a sense of pride in their local natural environment. And for those who need it, we offer therapeutic sessions to support their Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs. Over time, we are also excited to see how the experiences that our students bring to our forest will begin



to shape and alter the direction we take the learning.

And it’s not just us. There is now a small but growing movement of other education providers in London, like The Garden Classroom and Wild Bears Forest School, who share our vision to provide urban children from working-class backgrounds with a chance to develop a long-lasting connection to the natural world.



Growing and changing through the seasons, Forest School at Griffin is a space for our children to connect with nature and with themselves. A space for clarity. And a space that belongs to every single student in our school. It is our Forest in the City.

[Griffin Primary School website](#)

Follow on Twitter:
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Louise Black is working as a Deputy Headteacher at Griffin Primary in South London, leading on the curriculum across the school and also EYFS and KS1. She is passionate about Forest School, Outdoor Learning and play.





Forest School stories - arson on site

Beccy Golding interviews Sam Victoria of My Little Explorers about a shocking event and what she learned.

MY LITTLE EXPLORERS

Mini Explorers, the nature kindergarten run by Sam Victoria, has been based in a woodland at Farley Mount, just outside Winchester, for 9 years. In 2019 Sam's family moved to a cottage on the Broadlands Estate at Romsey. Supportive of her work, the estate gave Sam permission to set up a second Forest School site within their woods.



During lockdown, although sessions were cancelled, Sam continued building up this new site, making structures from pallets, shelters etc. In March 2021 Sam and her team of eight were back offering daily sessions for parents and toddlers and the home education Wild Explorers group - all helping to make improvements to the site.



The fire

"On the morning of 5th of May, right after the bank holiday weekend, I went out to set up - I was making a Gruffalo trail," Sam told me, "I went into the clearing, and did a double take - everything was gone - it had all been burnt - a fire had been lit and



all the equipment, storage boxes and structures around the site dragged onto it - the handwashing station, craft table, fence posts, pallets - anything that was wood had been piled in the middle - even plastic storage boxes full of equipment. The whole site had been covered with a parachute - that had gone up too - everything had gone."

Dazed, and having discovered the damage right before a session, that morning's Mini Explorers went ahead, but later she managed to get a message out to all parents and cancelled the afternoon Wild Explorers group. "I didn't want the families and children to see the damage," Sam said, "these groups had helped build the site. There were items they'd made, hanging in the trees - all burnt."



She filed a report, by email, to the police but "they couldn't do anything - there was no CCTV and no witnesses."

I asked Sam who had access to the site. "The woodlands are part of the estate. An area of the woods is open to the public," she told me, "but there is no public access to our Forest School. I live on a small country lane - it's just me and a riding stable who have access to this part of the woods - but anyone could have discovered it if they wandered off the bridle paths.

"I hate to think it was deliberate," Sam added, "I think a group of people came across the site and decided to light a fire. They got reckless and the fire got out of control, with the parachute high in the canopy of the trees catching light.

"After initial anger I realised the possible consequences - the woods could have been damaged. It was thoughtless and reckless but it could have been so much worse - I am grateful that no one was hurt."

Rebuilding

"We closed for two weeks," Sam explained. Parents spoke to the children and they came, wanting to help and rebuild. "People were amazing. A Wild Explorers parent

set up a Go Fund Me page to buy more equipment. On the Sunday a working party of around twenty friends and family cleared the area of all the burnt wood, equipment and materials. The stable down the lane lent us wheelbarrows and gave sawdust. Children and parents helped - dad's came with drills and hammers. People donated pallets, wood, pots and pans, materials and resources."



Muddy Faces topped up funds raised by parents to replace some items.

"The heart of our Forest School is the woods," Sam said, "and the woods are still standing, so we can start again. I talked about it with the children, some were very sad, but overall they were positive - they said - we won't let anyone stop us enjoying Forest School! And - whoever did it - they don't do Forest School - they don't know how to light a fire properly! We decided we felt sorry for the people who did it, because they didn't understand. Our children really appreciate the woods - they value all of it."



Changes & tips

Sam told me what changes she had made since the fire, and what advice she would offer other outdoor provision.

- "We don't leave any equipment on site anymore. I've seen on forums that some people have gun boxes, buried or hidden on site, but we're not doing that - our storage boxes were pulled into the fire so all equipment comes home with us now. We use trolleys and backpacks to take what we need to site each day.
- We always use a raised fire pit. We don't light fires on the ground - so anyone that stumbles on the area won't see any evidence of a fire on site.



- I've learnt that you can replace and rebuild areas. The fire circle seating is our hub, but the equipment was our biggest loss. We don't leave anything of value on site - and children take stuff they value home with them, and bring it back when they return.
- We do have a musty old bell tent for shelter, and a parachute canopy again (kindly donated by a FS colleague - Jackie Roby of Go Wild Education). I do leave the shelters up - I'm not going to let the bully's beat us!
- Having your site in private woodland is the ideal way to run Forest School sessions - so you're not discovered.

Continued over

- We used to have signs that said 'If you have discovered our forest clearing please enjoy the area but leave it as you found it.' Now our signs say 'Private woodlands - keep out.' The signs are polite but firm - it's not worth being angry.
- We have looked into getting a security camera but it would need to be a solar one that sends a signal of any movement to your phone. It would also need to take photographs so if anyone was trespassing again they could be used as evidence and reported to the police. It's an investment worth considering at the moment.
- My biggest tip is to keep the woods as natural as possible - you don't need a lot to make a magical place for the children to enjoy and learn in, just make sure it's safe."

Moving on

And now? "It's better than it was before. The children were happy to rebuild. It's their woodlands - we're there because of the children who've made it there. After the initial shock, it's not put any of us off - it's made the children resilient, stronger, and sad for those who did it.

"And it makes you realise how powerful Forest School can be. I've been working in this area for thirteen years - there were people who first came when they were four who came back to help. It goes way back - you don't realise the impact, what you do. I'm so used to doing everything myself - the amount of people who donated, wanted to help - it was very overwhelming and I am truly grateful. Forest School really does produce some wonderful people!



"At the heart of Forest School is the woods - those are still standing, so we can carry on. The trees are still there - the heart wasn't broken."

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sam@mylittleexplorers.co.uk



About Sam Victoria & My Little Explorers

Sam Victoria has been working in Early Years for 20 years, and has been the manager and owner of My Little Explorers Forest School for thirteen.

"The business has grown organically; I never say no to work. I love the opportunities Forest School gives children."

Based in Hampshire, she offers FS sessions across 3 sites, including My Little Explorers, the nature kindergarten; parties and celebrations; parent/toddlers groups; school sessions and Wild Explorers, the home education project.

Bushcraft knots

Square lashing

Attach two sticks or poles together rigidly using this handy knot - particularly useful for natural frames and den and raft building.

What you'll need: sturdy sticks of similar width, scissors/knife and string or cord

Preparation: make sure you cut a much longer length of rope or string than you think you require. In this example we cut lengths of string approximately 2 metres long. The string or rope needs to be strong. When you tighten the string to make the joint rigid it exerts quite a lot of pressure and you don't want your string snapping. If you are using a manmade rope (e.g. para cord or hempex), you'll need to heat seal the ends to stop the cord from fraying.



STEP 1 Tying on Tie the string to one of the sticks - a clove hitch is a good knot to use, but not essential. Leave a short length (approximately 10cm) loose at one end (for tying off at the end).



STEP 2 Square lashing Place the 2nd stick under the first, at right angles. Take the string down, away from the knot, under the 2nd stick, and back up towards you.



STEP 3 Take the string over the top stick and down, then under the bottom stick. (Note: in the photo the sticks have been rotated 90 degrees).



STEP 4 As you pull the string up towards you it should be going over your tying-on string. As you follow this back over the top stick you should be arriving back where you started. This completes your first wrapping. The wraps should cross at a 90° angle - this right angle gives the square lashing its name.



STEP 5 Follow the line of string, tracing around 3 times. Try to keep tension on the string as you do this.



STEP 6 Check your work Return to your initial knot and stop. If you are super neat you can make sure the lines of strings line up next to each other. If you wiggle the sticks you will feel they are pretty loose, despite putting tension on the string as you tied them together. This neatly leads onto the clever part...



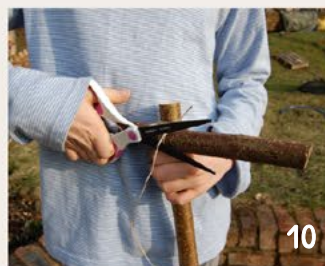
STEP 7 Frapping Instead of continuing along the normal path, turn off and pass the string around the outside of the lashing, effectively creating a ring in-between the sticks.



STEP 8 Continue wrapping around in this direction, whilst keeping the string as taut as possible. Repeat approx 3-4 times. More is fine, or if you're near the end of your string make less turns. Leave about 10cm remaining to tie-off to the loose end left from your initial 'tying on' knot. At this stage, if the lashing has not become taut and the joint rigid, then we suggest you unwrap the frap and re-do it, pulling harder this time.



STEP 9 Finishing off Tie-off the two ends of the string firmly.



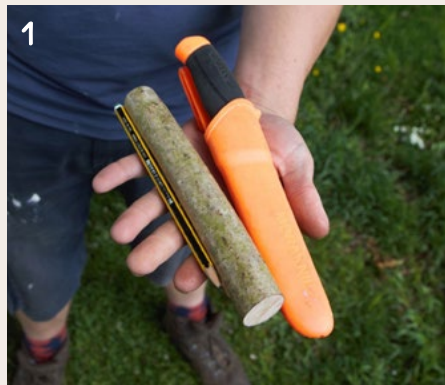
STEP 10 Cut loose ends off with a knife or scissors to neaten it all up.

Whittle your own Hazel Knife

In a pinch at snack time in the woods? Need to peel some bark or just fancy a quick whittle to take your mind off things? Try making this simple knife with these instructions.



STEP 1 To make this knife you will need a length of wood 20cm long and 2cm in diameter, a sharp knife and a pencil.



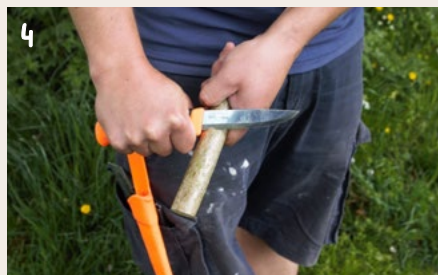
STEP 2 Draw a line around the circumference of the wood around halfway along its length. Decide which half will be your blade and which will be your handle.



STEP 3 Draw two parallel lines either side of the pith at the blade end. Make sure you can see them clearly.



STEP 4 The push cut. Keep your elbows locked into your sides to focus all the force along the wood. Starting from the heel of the blade and slicing across the wood, push the blade away from you to make the cut.



STEP 5 Carefully cut down the length of the blade to the parallel lines. Work at angles rather than trying to do the whole section in one go.



STEP 6 Mark a line the length of the blade about 1/3 to half way across on both sides. This will be the cutting bevel.



STEP 7 The thumb push cut. Bring your non-cutting hand up to the back of the knife blade and rest your thumb at the top of the handle. Using just your thumb to push the blade make a cut as far as your non cutting hand can push.



STEP 8 Using the push and thumb push cuts make a bevel on the blade by gently cutting the wood so that it meets at a point. Use the thumb push cut to define the transition from the handle into the blade.



Add any decoration you like by rounding the end, thinning the handle or just get to using it spreading, cutting fruit or peeling bark: what else can you think of?



With thanks to Snapdragon's Forest School leader Tim Graham for sharing these activities.

Snapdragons Nurseries are based in Bath, Bristol and Wiltshire and have their own dedicated Forest School leader, Tim Graham. Find out more [here](#)



Snapdragons Forest on social media:



6 Forest School Principles

The Forest School ethos has six key principles, which were agreed by the UK Forest School community in 2011.

1 PRINCIPLE 1 Forest School is a long-term process of frequent and regular sessions in a woodland or natural environment, rather than a one-off visit. Planning, adaptation, observations and reviewing are integral elements of Forest School.

2 PRINCIPLE 2 Forest School takes place in a woodland or natural wooded environment to support the development of a relationship between the learner and the natural world.

3 PRINCIPLE 3 Forest School aims to promote the holistic development of all those involved, fostering resilient, confident, independent and creative learners.

4 PRINCIPLE 4 Forest School offers learners the opportunity to take supported risks appropriate to the environment and to themselves.

5 PRINCIPLE 5 Forest School is run by qualified Forest School practitioners who continuously maintain and develop their professional practice.

6 PRINCIPLE 6 Forest School uses a range of learner-centred processes to create a community for development and learning.

For more information:

FSA The Forest School Association is the professional body and UK-wide voice for Forest School, protecting standards and promoting best practice.

Read [Full Principles & Criteria for Good Practice](#)

Muddy Faces Outdoor Hub has tons more on Forest School - with guides, research, activities, history, benefits & more.

Autumn inspirations

Make leaf decorations

Campfire bread on a stick

Ingredients:
300g (2 cups) self raising flour
240ml (1 cup) milk
½ tsp salt
75g (2 tbsp) butter
1-2 tsp sugar (optional)
Flavourings - herbs, spices, cheese etc... (optional)

Use a conker clamp

Go on a scavenger hunt

Make a sycamore leaf basket

Go on a tree ID walk

Spiral an apple

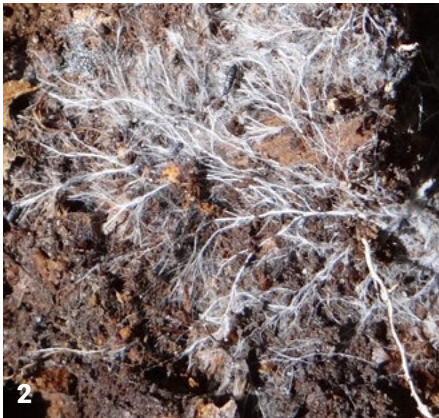
Count some apples

Thread some berries - or leaves!

Fascinating fungi



1



2



3

Did you know...

- 1 The giant puffball fungus - *Calvatea gigantea* - can grow **larger than a football** in just a few days. It is estimated that a single giant puff ball could produce over 7 trillion spores. That's one thousand microscopic, seed-like spores for every person living on this planet!
- 2 A patch of woodland soil about the size of your thumbnail is home to **10 metres** of fungal mycelium! Mycelium is the thread-like part of the fungus that lives underground, from which the fruiting bodies - the mushrooms - grow.
- 3 About 70 species of fungi are bioluminescent – they **glow in the dark!** Around three quarters of these light-emitting mushrooms are saprophytes, feeding off dead organic matter and recycling carbon and nitrogen into the soil.

UK Fungus Day

UK Fungus Day brings together fungus scientists, enthusiasts and foragers to study and enjoy the wonders of the Fungal Kingdom. Since the first UK Fungus Day in October 2013, this yearly celebration of our fungal world has grown: alongside the many local groups offering a chance to get involved in fungus events, identification and recording, UK Fungus Day provides

opportunities to discover more about fungi through art and performance, online talks, crafts and creations, blogs, quizzes, competitions and more.

Thousands of species of fungi are known to grow in the UK, with many more undiscovered. Through UK Fungus Day, the British Mycological Society can share the importance of fungi to our lives and, in turn, inspire others to help preserve our native fungi, and improve our scientific knowledge of these amazing organisms.

Join in

- Find activities and resources for learning more about fungi on our website: www.ukfungusday.co.uk
- Follow UK Fungus Day on X [@ukfungusday](https://twitter.com/ukfungusday)
- For help identifying a fungus you've spotted, share your photos with the [Facebook Group](#)
- Contact the British Mycological Society about becoming a member or with other questions: bmsevents@britmycolsoc.info

Images

Football-sized *Calvatea gigantea* - giant puffballs

Credit: [Josh Phangurha](#)

Fungal mycelium in the soil

Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Glowing *Panellus stipitatus* - bitter oysterling

Credit: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

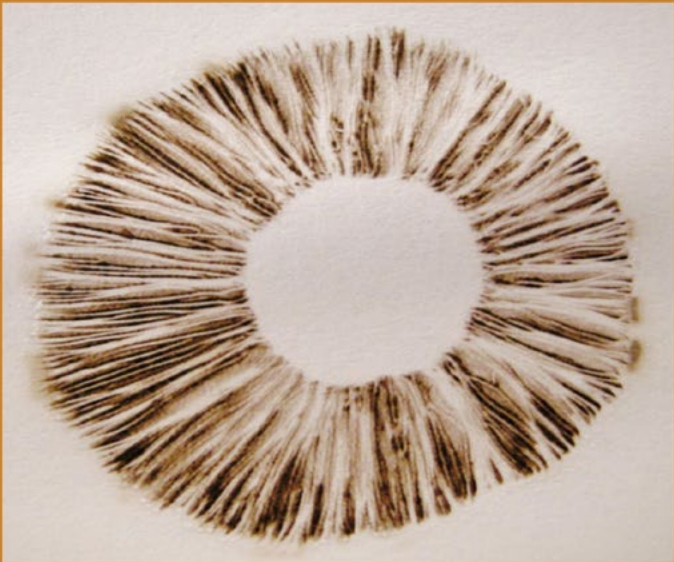


British Mycological Society promoting fungal science

HOW TO MAKE A SPORE PRINT

Introduction

Fungi produce millions of spores, which are similar to the seeds of flowering plants. Fungi that make mushroom fruit bodies release their spores from the underside of the cap, from plate-like gills, tubes, ridges or spiky projections. Other fungi produce different shaped fruit bodies to release their spores, such as cups, clubs, ears and balls. When a mushroom is mature its cap expands and the gills are seen. Spores can then drop from the gills and are picked up by wind currents and carried away. Spores are so small that you normally need a microscope to see them, but with a spore print thousands of spores are seen all together.



MATERIALS NEEDED PER CHILD

- A MUSHROOM – STALK REMOVED
- A PIECE OF WHITE/BLACK CARD
- A BOWL TO COVER THE MUSHROOM CAP
- HAIR SPRAY (OPTIONAL)

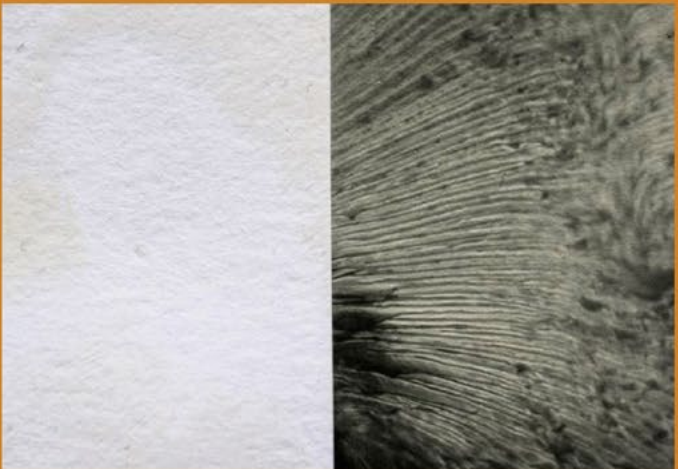
METHOD

1. Gently place your mushroom cap face down on the piece of card. There is no need to press it down.
2. Cover the mushroom with a bowl (to stop it drying out and to reduce air currents that might spoil your print by blowing the tiny spores around).
3. Leave everything where it is for at least 2 hours (if freshly picked) or longer (overnight if shop brought).
4. Carefully remove the bowl and the mushroom cap. You should see a pattern on the card that matches the pattern of gills on the mushroom!
5. You have successfully made a spore print. To prevent smudging, 'fix' your spore print with hair spray.

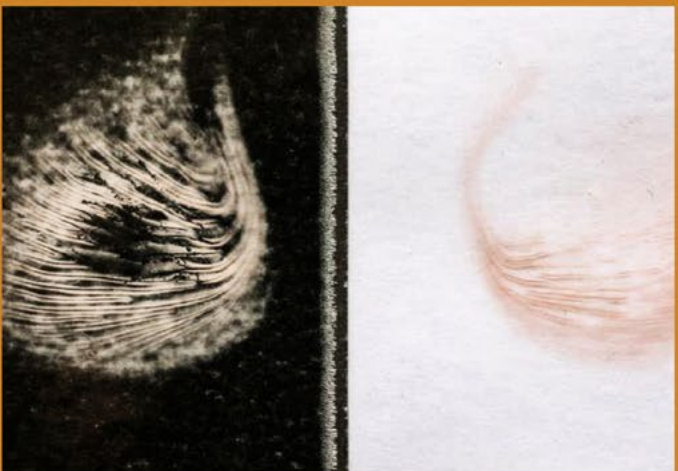


DIFFERENT FUNGI PRODUCE DIFFERENT COLOURED SPORE PRINTS:

Fungus spores drop directly downwards from the gills of a mushroom and land on top of one another, making a pattern that resembles the gill pattern underneath the cap. Fungus spores can be coloured. Sometimes this is not revealed until a spore print is made. If you are not sure about the colour of the spores produced by a fungus then carry out a spore print on half black and half white card as shown below. The spore print colour can often help to identify a particular fungus. If spores are allowed to drop onto glass slides, it is possible to view the spores that make up the spore print under a microscope with high resolution. It is not possible to see individual spores without the aid of a microscope because they are too small to see with the naked eye.



The spore print (left) produced by the Shiitake mushroom (right)



The spore print (left) produced by the Pink Oyster mushroom (right)

The British Mycological Society is a scientific society supporting fungal research and conservation. Our **Code of Conduct** provides guidance for the responsible collection of fungi for research and education.

Leaf needle felting

A simple starter project & introduction to needle felting - create an autumnal felt leaf.

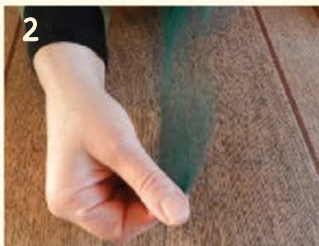
What you'll need

- Wool tops
- Felting needle (size 36/38 gauge is a good starter needle)/needle felting tool
- Needle felting mat (or piece of upholstery foam/pile of green scourers)



STEP 1

Find some leaves for inspiration and select wool tops in a range of colours. Wool tops are long combed parallel fibres that come in thick lengths.



STEP 2

Ease out small fibres of wool by spreading them out then gently pulling off small bits (without ripping). If the fibres don't pull off easily spread them out more finely.



STEP 3

Arrange the fibres onto your pad/mat in a rough leaf shape, taking inspiration from the leaves you gathered. It doesn't need to be perfect at this stage.



STEP 4

Holding the needle near the top, in a way that feels secure and comfortable, stab in and out of your wool shape, building up your speed and then working as quickly as you feel you can. As you stab you will begin to observe the fibres meshing together. When they look like they are felting together, carefully pull the piece off the mat and turn it over. This prevents the fibres sticking into your block/mat. Keep turning your piece throughout the following steps.

Tip: the fibres stick into the bristles of the manufactured needle mat and make it difficult to remove them. A foam pad or pile of scourers works well.

Tip: always be aware where your opposite hand/fingers are to avoid stabbing yourself!



STEP 5

Add more fibres if you want to build up/change the shape/add different colours to your piece. The beauty of needle felting is that it is an organic process and you can work with it as you go.



STEP 6

To add a stalk to the leaf, twist and shape some fibres first, then overlap them slightly over your main piece. Use the felting needle to begin stabbing the felt stalk onto the main piece.

STEP 7

If you are not happy with the shape you can use the tip of your needle to lift the edges and fold them in to change the shape. Once folded over, stab gently to hold in place. Once it is secure you can felt it into the main piece.

Tip: a multi-needle tool is better for working on larger pieces (it is noticeable how much quicker the fibres felt!).

Take it further

- **Appliqué** (felting onto another piece of material) Use the same technique as the free-standing leaf but with a base layer of fabric (or card) underneath. A manufactured needle felting mat works well with this method of felting.
- Appliqué felt directly onto an item of clothing.
- Try using a playdough/cookie cutter as a guide/template for a shape.

Autumn hanging mobile

Simple, timeless and effective - all you need is a piece of string and some natural materials.

You will need

- Basket or bag for collecting
- String & scissors/knife
- Also useful: palm drill, [conker clamp](#)

Preparation

Head out on a **nature-collecting hunt**, looking for items to add to your mobile - find as many different colours as you can. Include some **conkers** and **sticks** to make tiers.

Remember to only collect fallen items, not things that are still growing.

- Some items might need to be drilled ready for threading - a conker clamp is very useful!
- Cut some nice long lengths of **string**.
- Make a **needle** by finding a very thin stick and tying it onto the end of your string. Alternatively wind Sellotape tightly round the end of the string to make it rigid, or use large plastic threading needles.



STEP 1

Tie the loose end of the string to a small stick - this acts as your stopper.



STEP 2

Use your stick 'needle' to thread the natural materials onto the string - slide each item right down to the bottom, stacking them up on the stick.



STEP 3

Once you have your first section complete tie another stick onto the string to make a gap - a **clove hitch** is good here, but anyhow you want to do it is fine.



STEP 4

Start threading your second layer - how and what you thread is entirely up to you. Add another stick for a third layer. Once you're done remove your needle and make a loop at the top for hanging, or finish off with one last stick.

Take it further

Go big and make a massive mobile by finding a couple of large sticks and connecting all the mobiles to them. They'll look great hung outdoors or indoors. Hang them horizontally to make festoons.

For more [Autumnal Inspirations](#) visit our Outdoor Hub.

Practitioners Voice))))))

This new section will feature thought-provoking articles, perspectives on good practice, letters to the editor and more. We invite you to reflect, react and respond to anything you read here - we'll feature highlights in future issues. Share your views and start a conversation with The Outdoor Practitioner!



Marina Robb, Forest School trainer, author & founder of Circle of Life Rediscovery, reflects on inequalities and access to nature programmes and Forest School.

"You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete".

Buckminster Fuller, 20th century inventor

The society we live in is undoubtedly unequal. If we are to offer more inclusive practices that engage families from all backgrounds and ethnicities in nature, we need to remove financial barriers to accessing nature, education, health, clean food, air, water etc.

There are millions of people impacted everyday by a society that cannot imagine a way to distribute wealth more evenly, or to heal inherited cultural and wounded views that put one human's value above another because of their skin colour or disability, or age.

We have inherited flawed economic and educational systems that are of a different time and full of mistaken assumptions. This extends to the fundamental and persistent blindspot that does not recognise that we are entirely related to the earth's life-giving systems. Our economic models persistently leave out the earth's inputs and outputs (waste) of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

At Circle of Life Rediscovery (CLR) we have consistently and with difficulty applied for funding since 2004 to enable us to offer targeted family-based programmes in nature. We have worked alongside NHS services and their multiple departments in partnership. The teams in CLR, the NHS and the people who attend, have co-created programmes that meet the needs of the participants. We do our best to include the views of all participants and this takes time - time to listen to different priorities, fears, demands on services and people, and to include the land's needs as well.

With years of running groups in nature with people with mental health difficulties, dementia, travellers, severe

disability, psychosis, teenagers at risk and with their families or carers – the overriding feeling that we aim to create is that of *welcome*. Over time we hope this feels like a place they belong to and can feel at home.

We want people to know that we are genuinely glad they are here with us. How do you teach a person to value another's humanity? I believe this is born out of the pain of knowing what it feels like to be excluded, wounded, scared – accessing our deepest feelings. To be innovative and inclusive is to be truly human. To really know the value of *relationship*, that we do matter to each other. That you will notice me, and when I am helpless, you will help. There are countless people asking for help, but often asking in a defensive way, as the need to protect ourselves is primary. That's why difficult behaviour (or any behaviour) is always communicating a need. It continues to cost me to be vulnerable and trust.

Imagine a man and woman falling in love and soon she becomes pregnant. They have dreams of playing with their child, becoming grandparents and the child following a successful, fulfilling career. The baby is born with severe disabilities and doesn't sleep, they eat and walk with great difficulty, often screaming in joy and pain. The neighbours come like uncles and aunts and pop in to help and soothe the growing boy. The children on the street make a wheelbarrow as a bed to include him in the games they play despite his shouting. The parents feel connected. The school children welcome him and know his character. The parents go shopping and the community says hello and meets their eyes and this touches them – they feel connected to their community.

Our society needs to build a model that makes the current one obsolete.

Nature programmes can offer a refuge that builds a model of how society could and should be. We can be genuine with our joy and sadness. We can listen together to partners and parents and co-create programmes that meet all our needs. Naturally, at the beginning we need to create opportunities for families to suss us out. They have been hurt and need to be protective, we need to rebuild trust. Welcoming parents to come as a trial day to ask any questions and start the relationship is a really good idea! Offering basic hospitality, the chance to experience our conduct and understand any customs or traditions.

This doesn't stop at our Forest School or families. We need to inspire a generation and propose new perspectives across our big systems within, for example, education, economics, health, technology and land ownership. The Forest School approach is one thread of educational thinking that forms part of a deep cultural tapestry of nature, society, educational values and ways of learning, it brings together key insights into ways of thinking that should be part of everybody's educational toolkit.

Why not start with grass root programmes like Forest School or Forest Kindergartens, or intergenerational programmes that have the potential to show us *how to learn, unlearn and relearn* (Alvin Toffler 21)? What are the big picture goals we are aiming for? We need a narrative that places our society and education systems within nature's limits. Whatever we teach or do, we aim to think how this is regenerative and sustainable, *"a social foundation of well-being that no one should fall below, and an ecological ceiling of planetary pressure that we should not go beyond. Between the two lies a safe and just space for all."* Donut Economics, Kate Raworth.

Let's imagine that our kindness and generosity will be met in times of our need. Imagine that our human development provides us with a positive sense of who we are, with a clear sense of direction and purpose in life. Let's imagine that we feel we belong and have orientation. That we can go to adults who will listen to us and show us love and compassion. That our children don't need to rely on their peers for guidance in matters that require maturity. Can our children feel enough attachment and want contact that develops into emotional closeness and a sense of psychological intimacy?

We need to get our bearings and become acquainted with our places of community and green spaces. Children learn this from the adults around them and our role is to offer guidance, unconditional love and acceptance. We must invite dependence before we foster independence. You can rely on me. I will keep you safe. You can trust us, count on us, lean on us, be cared for by us. You can come to us for assistance and expect our help.

Even as I write this, I know this doesn't happen and I often lack this trust. But I remain hopeful, as I know this requires an internal healing before the external responds. Classic cues and returns. How can we create a schooling and society that offers this foundation of well-being? Can we imagine it and set our arrow towards this goal? Can we move the 1% to share their wealth more equitably and operate within natural limits?

We are all within a social story. Our smiles are reflected to us by our parents, carers and neighbours. All the small interactions form in us a long-lasting sense of worth and belonging – that we are indeed loved and do indeed matter.



Marina Robb is founder and managing director of Circle of Life Rediscovery CIC and The Outdoor Teacher Ltd. Marina has more than 30 years experience in outdoor learning and nature connection. She provides a deep understanding of effective nature education at all levels and for a range of diverse backgrounds.

Marina is a qualified teacher (PGCE) and since 1989 has studied Environmental Education (MA), Environmental Management (BSc) and Social Research (MSc). She is a leading Forest School endorsed trainer and practitioner. Her aim is to share her knowledge and experience with teachers and others wishing to work outside the classroom.



Circle of Life Rediscovery offers nature-centred learning and therapeutic experiences for young people, adults and families in Sussex woodlands, along with innovative continuing professional development for the health, well-being and teaching professionals who are supporting them.

Want to learn to take your groups into nature? Join Marina Robb and Jon Cree offer in person training: [Nature-based Practice for Health and Education](#). Online [CLR Certificate in Nature Based Therapeutic Skills](#) also available.

circleofliferediscovery.com



Practitioners Voice

Rebecca Favier, Head Teacher

I have a Master of Education (Leadership & Management) and am passionate about place-based learning, ethical leadership and school improvement.



St Andrew's Fox Covert Primary School, Edinburgh

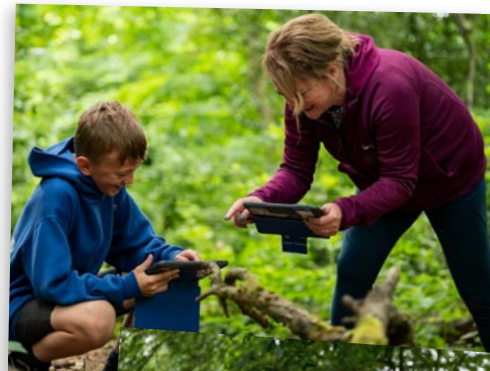
Dear Outdoor Practitioner

At St Andrew's our school setting encompasses not just our playground but the local urban and wild spaces around us too. These outdoor spaces are our classrooms; each outdoor space has a different purpose and feel and each offers something different. All areas of the curriculum are explored in these spaces and every child in our school learns outside daily.

You will find us learning on our local streets studying houses and homes, searching for symmetrical windows and doors or off for a wander to find print in the community. Look for us in our local park programming robotic toys or making our own stick models of playground equipment. Join us in the wild spaces near our school to measure paths, identify moss and lichens using our ipads or simply to enjoy a story.

Learning is messy, real, fun and relevant at St Andrew's. The impact? A school community that works together to develop a shared love of the outdoors, improved staff and pupil wellbeing and never-ending opportunities to learn about ourselves and our world.

from Rebecca



Practitioners Voice



Aliex Holliday

I've been running Happy Wild Ones for 7 years. I used to work for CBeebies making kids TV shows, the best being Springwatch & Autumnwatch where I travelled the UK filming so much amazing wildlife - I even won a BAFTA! I've worked with many special people along the way including Bill Oddie, Steve Backshall and Sir David Attenborough!

Happy Wild Ones Forest School, Croydon

Dear Outdoor Practitioner

Our family-friendly Forest School sessions create a space for kids to play and connect with nature as well as the grown ups they attend with. However we recently teamed up with an amazing choir director from Green Tree Chorus to run a special event just for adults - an evening of singing in harmony, drinking wild teas, eating foraged snacks from the campfire, crafting, and taking the time after a year of hardship to be present and mindful - it was a beautiful and special evening.

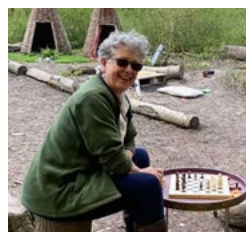
Whilst my skills and expertise are with children and my love for running sessions for them will never change, it felt incredibly special to run an event just for adults and to help them relax and unwind in a different way in our beautiful setting. It was so good to know that nature had played a huge part in healing folks that evening. In the words of one of our attendees "Uplifting and joyful, thank you for filling my soul!"

from Aliex



Book Review

Book preview: Creating a successful Forest School - from the roots up!



Academic & Forest School leader Sara Knight reviews a new book from the Forest School Association

An exciting new book will soon hit the shelves – *Creating A Forest School – from the roots up!* The FSA has asked some of their key trainers and providers to create a book that plugs the gaps in the literature about setting up Forest School provision. Thirteen chapters cover practical and reflective issues that may be potential barriers to success. I have been lucky enough to have read the book pre-publication, and share my thoughts with you here.

FSA project officer Nic Harding writes about the definitions of Forest School in Chapter 1. After unpicking the six guiding principles of Forest School (FS) he addresses the universality of its application,



including a case study of using FS with those living with dementia, then invites the reader to reflect on whether Forest School is what they are looking for, and what that means for their way forward. Carol Middleton and Elizabeth Swift, known for their training company Huathe, as well as their Fire Choir and more, have written Chapter 2. They have delved deeper into the theoretical justifications of what we do and how we do it, with some nicely up-to-date references as well as more familiar ones.

Next we have two chapters written jointly by Lily Horseman and Francesca (Froo) Signore. Until recently Lily was the Chair of the Forest School Association and Froo manages the Recognised Provider scheme; both roles are voluntary and in addition to their day jobs of running their own FS provision. One of their chapters unpicks the benefits of Forest School, principally but not exclusively for young children. This provides the ammunition needed to convince managers and governors that Forest School is **A Good Thing**. The other, wonderfully illustrated by Lily, looks at the role of the FS Leader. It will give you an insight into the wonky world of FS leaders, from protecting children to protecting equipment and all stages in between!

By this stage you will have a good idea whether FS is for you or your setting. In Chapter 5 Nell Seal sets out the qualification routes into FS. She has helped to develop the Endorsed Forest School Trainer Scheme and revised the Recognised Forest School Provider Scheme. Nell spells out how to decide which qualification to start with, and how to find a trainer who can support that training. Alongside this, she looks at setting up your own FS business – or not! This is illustrated with examples from her experience and that of 3 or 4 others who have all taken different routes.

Gareth Davies, CEO of the FSA, and Nic Harding look at the business end of FS in Chapters 6 and 7. Whether you are pitching a proposal to a school management team or to your bank manager, there are pearls of wisdom to be garnered here.

The rest of the book gives flesh to the bones. Do you want to run your own FS provision? Or do you want your school or organisation to offer FS? How do you

choose a site, and how do you maintain it safely for you, the participants and the environment? And what do you need by way of equipment and practical skills? Contributors to this section include Dawn Preston, based in Hampshire, Louise Ambrose from Norfolk, Charlotte Atkinson from Suffolk, and Sarah Lawful, the current FSA Chair, from Oxford.

The book covers all the angles and by the end you should have a very clear picture of what FS is and how you could interact with it. It aims to be practical, although there are enough theoretical elements to give justification for adopting this amazing way of being in wild wooded spaces. It is available via the FSA website, as is the free booklet

How to set up a Forest School.



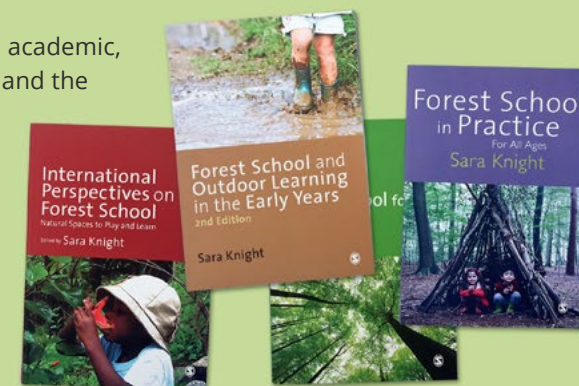
Lily Horseman from Kindling sums up conceptions of Forest School.

Be warned – if you decide that Forest School is for you, it will change your life.



Sara Knight is a retired academic, a Forest School leader and the author of many books, chapters and articles about Forest School.

Sara's books are available from our [online shop](#)



A step-by-step guide to using a Storm Kettle



Introduction

Storm kettles are often referred to as **Kelly kettles** or **volcano kettles**.

In the early 1900s, in the western part of Ireland, crofters constructed simple water boilers using hand tools. They were normally made of copper and took many hours to produce.

These water boilers were also used in the summer months to easily and quickly boil water for tea, by enthusiastic fishermen who visited Ireland regularly to enjoy the splendid fishing.

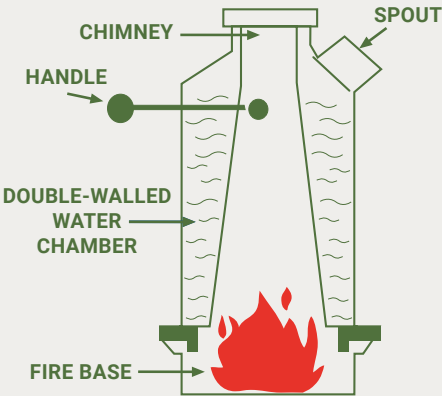
In the early 1970s John Grindlay (of the Eydon Kettle Company) and his colleagues decided to manufacture the kettles in quantity, so that they could be made available to outdoor enthusiasts all over the world. John borrowed an original copper kettle and took it to England where tooling was manufactured and the first ten kettles were produced. These were very quickly sold, for £10 each, in 1979.

Today, John still produces the storm kettle in the UK and they are used on all continents of the world. The storm kettle has quickly become a vital and important piece of kit for all outdoor enthusiasts, survival and bushcraft experts.

What is a storm kettle?

The storm kettle is a water heater that uses twigs and other materials easily found in woodland as fuel. Using a storm kettle means you can boil water easily, in the wettest and windiest of weathers, both rapidly and safely.

The structure is a water-jacketed double-walled aluminium chimney with a removable aluminium fire pan. A small fire is built in the pan, the water-filled chimney is placed over the fire, and the fire heats the jacketed water. The heating process is speeded up by the draw effect of the chimney pulling air in through the bottom and feeding the fire in the base.



Cross section diagram from Kelly Kettle instruction leaflet

These kettles are an excellent way for groups to observe many aspects of the fire triangle (heat, fuel, oxygen), and concepts such as fuels, heat, convection, radiation, chimneys, boiling temperatures of water, etc, whilst producing a lovely hot brew at the same time.

Storm kettles come in two sizes, the **Original** and the **Popular**. The Original will boil up to 2.5 pints (approx 1.5 litres), the Popular up to 2 pints (approx 1 litre).

Preparation

Clear the immediate area around the kettle - to prevent surrounding materials catching alight through direct contact with flames or through heat radiation.

Find a stable position - due to the small base area and high centre of gravity, when these kettles are full they can easily become unstable, topple over and cause injury. To prevent this from happening:

- prepare a level, stable position to sit the base upon
- ensure that the kettle is not knocked or banged during use.

Increase oxygen - position the base so that the hole is facing towards any wind.

Collect all required materials - tinder, kindling and fuel, and fire steel or matches.

Fill the kettle - pour the correct amount of water into the spout (if too full it will bubble over when boiling).

Place the kettle on the base securely - ensure no debris is caught in the rim which will make it unstable.

Additional safety considerations

Group safety rules - ensure roles have been allocated to group members and that everybody is clear about the safety rules.

Safety distance - everyone should remain outside an agreed safety zone except for the people tending the fire. The zone needs to be big enough to ensure that the kettle or the people tending the kettle will not be knocked into.

Movement near the kettle - people tending the kettle should be knelt down at all times, except for when moving away. To do this they should move back and stand up, then back out of the zone, away from the kettle.

Communication - the people tending the kettle need to inform each other clearly of what they are about to do.

Pressure - always check that the cork bung has been removed before heating the water. If the bung is left in pressure can build up in the kettle causing the bung to fly out, spraying boiling water or making the kettle topple over, which both have the potential to cause serious injury.

Lighting the kettle

With a fire steel

If you are using a fire steel to light the fire, fill the base with tinder and use the steel or another ignition source directly onto the tinder in the open base. Once this has caught add more tinder and then gradually add kindling. Once a very small fire has been established put the kettle over the fire. Check there is no debris in the rim and beware of any heat rising through the hole towards the handle.



With matches

Alternatively, if you are using matches, set up the tinder in the base and place the filled kettle in position. Then light the tinder in the base through the hole. Gradually add kindling through the hole in the top of the kettle, making sure each piece catches alight. Once the kindling is burning well add the fuel. Make sure that all fuel is short enough to drop into the cavity and is not poking up through the hole.

WARNING: never look directly down the chimney to see if the fire is burning as hot air and ash may cause burns to eyes and face.

Boiling water

When the kettle starts making a strange gurgling noise or you can see water bubbling near the spout this indicates that the water is boiling.

Removing the kettle from the base

WARNING: this is a potential time for injury so take care.

Using protective fire gloves, take hold of the carry handle with one hand and swiftly lift the kettle off the base. Watch that the base doesn't stick to the kettle.

Alternatively hold the carry handle with two hands at a right angle to the kettle and lift it off.

Pouring the water

Line the cups/pans up on stable ground. Do not hold cups when pouring as spillages could cause burns.

Check the pouring chain is cool enough to touch as it often gets hot.

Using heat resistant gloves, hold the

carry handle in one hand and pull the chain up with the other, this will tip the water out of the spout into the cups.



If the chain is too hot to touch or has been removed, use a strong stick placed inside the bottom of the chimney, with your hands well away from the kettle, and use this to lift the bottom of the kettle up and pour the water.

Handy hints

Oxygen - you can assist the fire by gently blowing through the hole to increase the amount of oxygen reaching the fire. Make sure you are not too close to the kettle and there is no potential for the kettle to fall onto you. As the fire heats it should

naturally rise up through the chimney, drawing air into the base through the hole, automatically feeding the fire with oxygen.

Aluminium - is lightweight, but it is a relatively soft metal that can easily be dented if not maintained correctly. Poor maintenance can lead to the base staying attached to the chimney when taking the boiled water off the heat. This could cause the person carrying the kettle to have their hand over the heat for a sustained period.

Bung - keep the bung in the kettle when not in use, to prevent dirt and debris getting into the water compartment – but take it out when lighting the fire/boiling water.

Base - when not in use, turn the base upside down – it fits neatly into the main chimney for easy transportation and storage.

Avoiding burns - to reduce the chance of the bung being used when heating water, and the risk of burns from the chain, some people choose to remove the bung and chain completely. If you do this you must set up a safe alternative for pouring the water.



#OutdoorEdChat is a community based on a love of outdoor learning, a way of connecting with other outdoor education practitioners via Twitter, and a regular online conversation.

It was set up by [Sam Wyman](#) and [Matt Harder](#) as a platform for discussing all things outdoor education-related, from Forest School to farming, conservation to climbing and all things inbetween.

Thursdays 8-9pm

Each week has a different theme, with conversation starter questions. We enjoyed one of their recent conversations and thought you might find it interesting/inspiring too - participants were asked:

What is your favourite/most useful piece of kit or equipment you have?

Rope! It's definitely the thing I use most!
[@MuddyKneesFS](#)

My fire bowl and tripod which I'm able to leave standing in our enclosed garden. It is a great focal point in the fire circle and very useful too!
[@LeaLeaLemon](#)

At school it would probably be tarps and a wonky outdoor tap. At my own camp definitely the parachute & lots of firewood around.
[@EdadventuresM](#)

Igloo PPE Handwash Sanitiser Station - our kids love it for washing hands and keeps water warm for them too!
[@JacquelineMcBe6](#)
(Ed: Muddy Faces also sells [Igloo water dispensers](#))



For me it is ropes, great for sorting things they find, gauging opinions and games. Of course you can't beat a stick!
[@little_chatters](#)

My favourite is @Muddyfaces Dragons Sneeze.
[@JoFreeRangePlay](#)

My favourite is a good lighter. The children's, as many tyres as possible with as varied a size as possible.

It would have to be the parachute that is used as a canopy.

A knife. The only thing I carry into the woods.

Join the conversation using #OutdoorEdChat and follow @OutdoorEdChat to get involved.

What is your favourite or most useful bit of Forest School kit or equipment?

Let us know by emailing beccy@muddyfaces.co.uk. We'll share your recommendations in a future issue.



This charity is the professional association for Forest School. It is the umbrella organisation representing many different providers and trainers at a national and international level, advocating quality Forest School for all.

We work with awarding bodies and Forest School trainers to develop training and protect standards, promoting the ethos and values of Forest School.

Our dedicated staff and volunteer team are leading on creative projects, building the standing of Forest School as a valuable contribution to our education and health systems, and offer professional guidance to the wider community, signposting to resources, webinars, and a weekly bulletin.

Members volunteer nationally and locally to support this important work, some as directors and advisers to the board, others work on specific projects or lead our local [FSA affiliated networks](#). These network groups host gatherings, provide skill shares and mutual support, taking it in turns to work with the national FSA to host an annual conference.

Membership helps you demonstrate professionalism to prospective employers or 'clients', to access a broad range of benefits, whilst demonstrating a high level of commitment to learning more and building a community of learning.

Membership

- Individual
- Associate
- Recognised Provider
- Endorsed Trainer

Find out more about membership benefits and joining us [here](#).

FSA website



Take it further: Try cooking with the storm kettle using the storm kettle cooking kit.



Poppin STORM Kettle Kit

The kit includes a black powdercoated Poppin STORM Kettle and base with a separate anti-tilt pan support, two piece grill, saucepan, frying-pan and universal handle grip. It also includes a jute STORM Carry Bag.

Visit the [Muddy Faces shop](#) for all our storm kettles and accessories; pan supports, tripods, kettle bases and pan holder handles.



Disclaimer: Muddy Faces cannot take any responsibility for accidents or damage that occurs as a result of following this activity. You are responsible for making sure the activity is conducted safely.



FOREST SCHOOL, OUTDOOR PLAY AND LEARNING RESOURCES



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Visit our online shop with its inspiring range of innovative outdoor play and education resources, sections on **clothing & footwear, UK wood products, shelters, tools, hand washing, den building, curriculum learning, fire & cooking, books, art & craft materials, mud kitchens, health & safety** and more.

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