

UNDER THE CANOPY

Each Half Term Canopy Forest School will produce a Newsletter to share the learning and upcoming events of the Forest School



Welcome to our first Newsletter

Our theme this first half term is connections.

Connections:

"noun: the state of being related to someone or something else"
(Cambridge Dictionary)

Hello and welcome to Canopy Forest School. We are so excited to be starting this new outdoor learning journey with you and we have lots of exciting activities planned.

We have chosen the theme *connections* because it is our first value and we will be exploring how we connect to each other as a group and also how we connect to our Forest School space.

During this first half term we will be playing lots of team building games helping us to build relationships and form a group identity. They will help us feel comfortable around each other, make everyone equal and most importantly they are great fun and promote laughter. We will also be getting to know the trees, plants and animals that inhabit our Forest School space and we will be building a relationship and environmental identity.

"Autumn shows us how beautiful it is to let things go." (unknown)

Hazel leaves turning and revealing the beautiful colours of Autumn.



During the first six weeks of any Forest School programme base line assessments take place and these help us to build up a holistic profile of each member. It is from these assessments that all our future work will be based and this involves observing, reflecting and discussing what motivates and interests the group.

Forest school is based on an emergent curriculum which means that we take our lead from the students. Our planning is loose in form to allow for flexibility and child led adaptations. At the end of each session we always discuss and reflect on our learning and then make plans on where and what we would like to discover and explore next.

The seasons and weather will influence our activities and we are so lucky to start our Forest School sessions in the autumn which I am sure you will agree is such a beautiful time of the year. Playing with leaves and preparing our site so it can accommodate the creatures for the coming winter months, we are sure, be a big part of what we will do.

We are excited to see where the children will take us with their learning. It will be refreshing for us to follow their lead and will build their confidence, self-esteem, self-worth and connect them as a learning community.

Every week we will post our activities on the Canopy Forest School Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts and this will be done respectfully. We will of course not include pictures of any children who we have not got permission from but it will capture the theme and learning journey that we have been on that week. So please do follow us to see what we have been up to.

Each half term in our newsletter we also thought it would be nice to share an outdoors activity that you could do at home. This will be linked to our learning and the season.

Our first activity celebrates the harvest of late summer and is a delicious Bramble Jam recipe. Foraging and collecting blackberries at this time of the year is something that I always enjoyed doing as a child. There is something magical about foraging and collecting the harvest of the hedgerows and as you collect blackberries maybe you could take in the creatures and birds who are also enjoying this special time of the year. Stop and listen to the different bird calls, even better take out a pair of binoculars with you and an identification guide.

This activity is not only a wonderful way to connect with the natural world around you but it is also yummy and you will have the best jam to spread on your toast throughout the winter months.





BRAMBLE JAM



INGREDIENTS

- 1.8kg blackberries
- 1 ½kg jam sugar (the one with added pectin)
- juice and pips of 1 lemon
- finger-tip size knob of butter (optional)

RECIPE TIPS

STORING YOUR JAM

For this recipe, you'll need about 8 jam jars, 8 waxed discs and 8 jar lids or cellophane circles with rubber bands. Remember to label each jar once filled, including the date, and cover with squares or circles of pretty fabric if you're giving them away to friends. You can buy all these from kitchen shops or online from lakeland.com.

STERILISING YOUR JARS

Wash them in hot, soapy water, then dry in an oven heated to 170C/150C fan/gas 3 for at least 10 minutes. Always ladle the jam into jars while the jars are still warm.

PREP TIME: 20 MIN
COOK TIME: 40MIN
TOTAL TIME: 1HR

DIRECTIONS

STEP 1

The night before you make your jam, layer the blackberries and sugar together in a very large bowl. Then cover and set aside at room temperature. This helps the sugar to start dissolving so you don't run the risk of over-cooking the fruit when you actually begin to make the jam. The next morning, give everything a quick stir, then set aside again until you are ready to start cooking.

STEP 2

Before you start, put a small saucer in the freezer. Take a preserving pan or a large, wide-based pan (the wider and more open the pan, the faster the jam will be ready, so a preserving pan is really ideal) and tip the berries in, scraping out all the juices and any undissolved sugar. Stir in the lemon juice, then collect all the pips and secure them inside a tea-leaf strainer or piece of muslin before adding them to the pan (cooking the pips along with the fruit extracts the pectin they contain, helping your jam to set).

STEP 3

Start the blackberries over a low heat until all the sugar is completely dissolved, then bring to the boil and simmer for 5 mins. Turn off the heat and spoon a little hot syrupy jam onto the chilled saucer. Once it's cool, push it with your finger. If it wrinkles a little, it's ready and has reached setting point. If it's too runny to wrinkle, return the pan to the heat and boil in 2 or 3-minute stages, removing the pan from the heat each time you do the saucer check, until the jam wrinkles.

STEP 4

Skim off any excess scum, then stir in the knob of butter, if you want - this will help to dissolve any remaining scum. Leave the jam for 15 mins before ladling into sterilised jars - this allows the fruit to settle so it doesn't sink to the bottom. The jam will keep in a cool, dark place for at least 6 months. Refrigerate jars once opened.