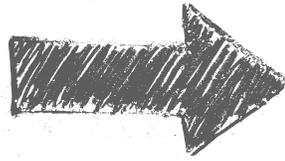


MIGHTY ROOTS ACADEMY



The Gift of
Spring

VOL. 5 | SPRING 2024



INSIDE

welcome	02
springing forward	05
nature's classroom	07
literary adventures	09
a taste of the wild	14
planting memories	18
escape the city	21



photo: cari schawo

rooted in play	24
meet our learning guide	27
up close & personal	32
digging deep	36
final thoughts	41



photo: cari schawo



photo: cari schawo

Cover Photo: Cari Schawo

mighty roots academy

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

Tracy Schroeder

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Renee Bichel

EDITOR & CREATIVE PRODUCER

Christina Sandberg

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Cari Schawo

Isaiah Schroeder

Carolyn Willmore

Josh Bichel

Abby Smerk

Christina Sandberg

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Cari Schawo

Renee Bichel

Krystle Willmore

Angela Schilling

Chloe Heston

Christina Sandberg



Contact Us

 mightyrootsacademy.com

 mra@mightyrootsacademy.com

 [\(816\) 873-2022](tel:(816)873-2022)

 [@mightyrootsacademy](https://www.instagram.com/mightyrootsacademy)

 facebook.com/MightyRootsAcademy

Opinions expressed by authors, contributors, or interviewees in this issue are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views or opinions of Mighty Roots Academy or its staff and editorial team.



Welcome!

One of the hallmarks of Mighty Roots Academy is our commitment to classrooms without walls. Imagine the joy of learning beneath a tree as it begins to bud, the excitement of observing the flowers blossom, and the thrill of running through the fresh spring grass. Nature is our eternal teacher, and we are privileged to learn alongside its wonders. Spring provides the perfect backdrop for our students to embark on a journey of experiential learning that goes beyond textbooks. Through hands-on activities, outdoor adventures, and immersive experiences, we strive to ignite curiosity and spark creativity.

Join us in celebrating this season. Whether it's a family picnic, a nature hike, or a community garden project, there are endless opportunities for connection and shared experiences. Spring is not only a time for growth in nature but also a time for our homeschool community to flourish and deepen its roots.



A Message from our Director

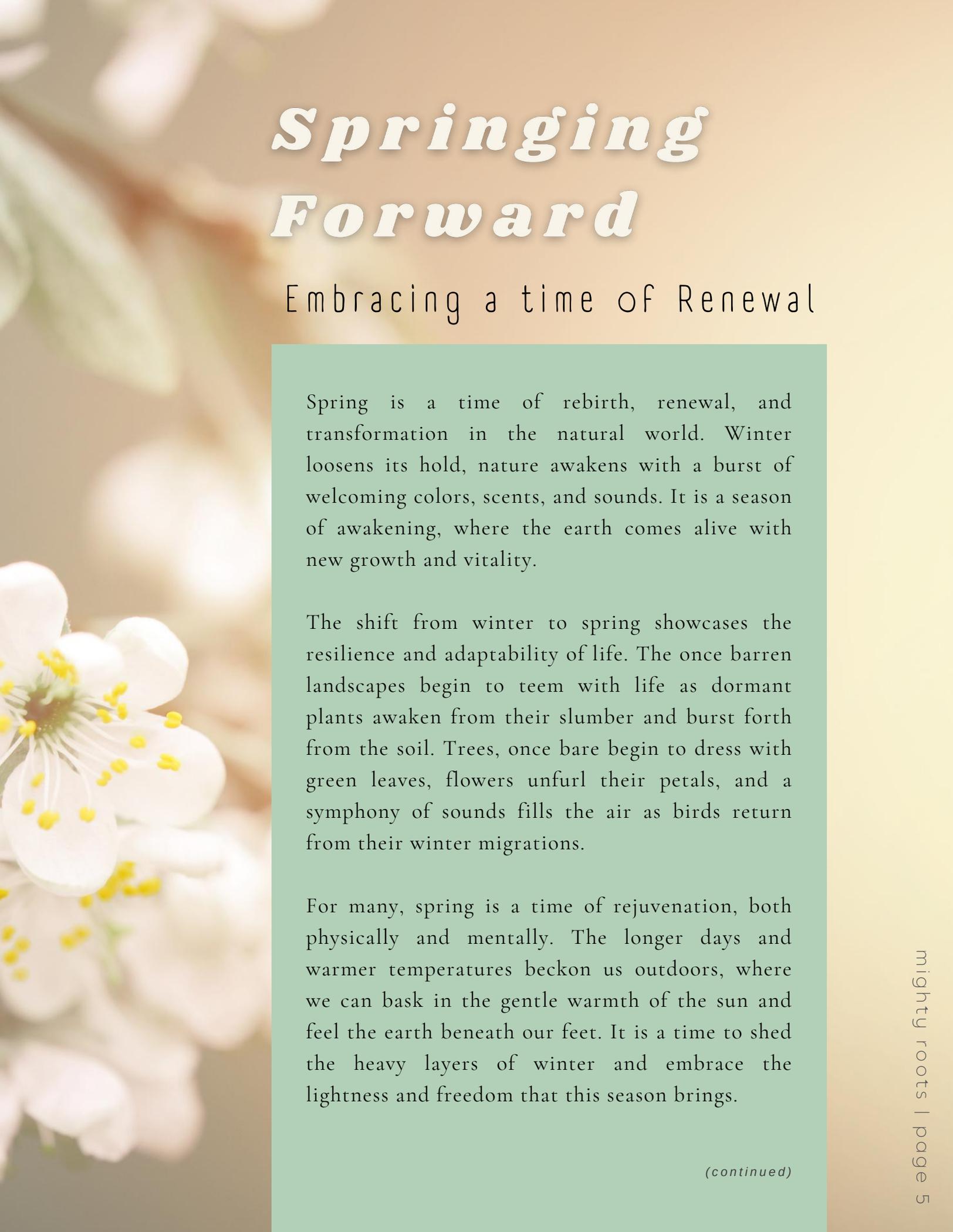
Just as nature begins to come alive and blossom under the care of the sun and rain, so have our students here at Mighty Roots. We celebrate the incredible progress and achievements of our students! They have learned new concepts and expressed their creativity through art, music and literature. Each accomplishment is a testament to the passion and dedication that defines our homeschooling community.

As we look ahead to the remaining weeks of our program year, let us continue to support a spirit of curiosity and wonder in our students, nurturing their innate desire to explore, to question and to learn.

Together, let us work to create an environment where every student feels empowered to reach for the stars and pursue their dreams!



~ Tracy Schroeder



Springing Forward

Embracing a time of Renewal

Spring is a time of rebirth, renewal, and transformation in the natural world. Winter loosens its hold, nature awakens with a burst of welcoming colors, scents, and sounds. It is a season of awakening, where the earth comes alive with new growth and vitality.

The shift from winter to spring showcases the resilience and adaptability of life. The once barren landscapes begin to teem with life as dormant plants awaken from their slumber and burst forth from the soil. Trees, once bare begin to dress with green leaves, flowers unfurl their petals, and a symphony of sounds fills the air as birds return from their winter migrations.

For many, spring is a time of rejuvenation, both physically and mentally. The longer days and warmer temperatures beckon us outdoors, where we can bask in the gentle warmth of the sun and feel the earth beneath our feet. It is a time to shed the heavy layers of winter and embrace the lightness and freedom that this season brings.

(continued)

As we witness nature's annual rebirth, we are reminded of the endless possibilities for change and growth. Just as the earth awakens from its winter slumber, so too can we embrace the opportunity for renewal and reinvention in our own lives.

Spring invites us to shed the old and embrace the new, to let go of that which no longer serves us and make room for growth and abundance. It is a time to plant the seeds of our dreams and aspirations, knowing that with patience, nurturing, and perseverance, they will blossom and flourish in due time.

As we spring forward into this season, let us open our hearts and minds to the infinite possibilities that lie ahead. Let us revel in the beauty and wonder of the natural world, and be inspired to cultivate a deeper connection with the earth and all its inhabitants.

With the coming of spring, we find the promise of new beginnings, endless potential, and the eternal cycle of life renewed.



photo: abby smerk





photo: cari schawo

NATURE'S CLASSROOM

Science lessons in the Great Outdoors

Spring presents a perfect opportunity for families to embrace the outdoors and incorporate nature-based science lessons into their homeschooling curriculum.

These lessons can provide a unique and engaging way to foster curiosity, critical thinking, and a deeper appreciation for the natural world around us.

The following hands-on activities not only deepen scientific understanding but also instill a sense of wonder and appreciation. As the days grow longer and the world bursts into color, take advantage of the opportunity to make science come alive in the great outdoors!

The Lifecycle of Plants

Spring is the season of blossoming flowers and vibrant greenery. Take advantage of this by diving into the fascinating world of botany. You can begin with a simple seed germination experiment, allowing students to witness the magic of growth firsthand. Explore the lifecycle of plants through hands-on activities like planting seeds, observing sprouts, and even dissecting flowers to understand their anatomy.



photo: isaiah schroeder



photo: cari schawo

(continued)

Insect Studies

Springtime brings a flurry of insect activity. Turn your learning days into a mini insectarium by embarking on your own bug excursions.

Encourage your students to observe, identify, and document different insects in their natural habitats. You can create insect habitats or bug hotels to attract a variety of creepy crawlies and facilitate a deeper understanding of their roles in the ecosystem.

Weather Watching

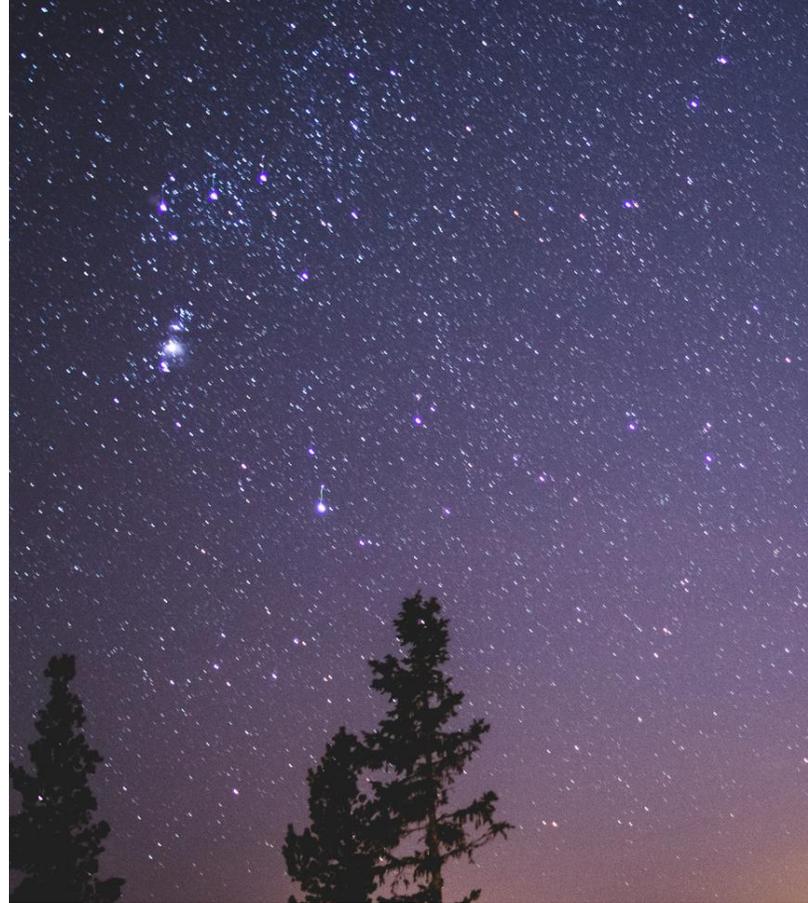
Spring weather is known for its variability, making it an ideal time to study meteorology. Set up a weather station in your backyard and equip your students with thermometers, anemometers, and rain gauges. Have them record daily weather observations, analyze patterns, and make predictions. Engage in discussions about the science behind weather phenomena, such as rainbows, thunderstorms, and the changing temperatures.

Stargazing Nights

Extend your science lessons into the evening with astronomy adventures. Spring nights offer clear skies and a chance to explore the wonders of the cosmos. Set up a telescope or use stargazing apps to identify constellations, planets, and other celestial bodies. Discuss the changing positions of stars and the science behind seasonal constellations.

Nature Journaling

Provide your students with sketchbooks, colored pencils, and magnifying glasses to document their observations and reflections during outdoor excursions. Encourage them to record sightings of plants, animals, and other finds in nature, accompanied by descriptive notes and illustrations.





Literary adventures

Springtime offers a wealth of opportunities to combine homeschool reading routines with the beauty and wonder of the season. By creating a spring reading list, incorporating outdoor reading sessions, exploring nature-themed literature, and engaging in hands-on activities, families can create a truly immersive and enriching literary adventure. Learn to embrace the magic of spring through the pages of a book and watch as your student's love for reading, as well as your own, blossoms alongside the flowers!

(continued)

**"A book is like a garden
carried in the pocket."**

~ Chinese Proverb

Here are some tips to make the most of your springtime literary adventures:

- **Spring Themed Book List:** Create a list of spring-themed books covering various genres and reading levels. Include classics like "The Secret Garden" by Frances Hodgson Burnett or "The Wind in the Willows" by Kenneth Grahame, as well as newer releases. Let your student pick books that will engage and interest them.
- **Outdoor Reading:** Take advantage of the weather by having outdoor reading sessions. You can set up a cozy spot in your backyard, a local park, or even a botanical garden. Let students choose books related to nature or springtime themes to enhance the experience.
- **Nature Walks and Storytelling:** Combine literature with nature walks. Encourage your student to observe the changes happening in the environment during springtime and then create stories or poems inspired by what they see. This could be budding flowers, chirping birds, or the change in weather.

(continued)



photo: carl schawo



- **Spring Poetry:** Introduce your student to the beauty of spring through poetry. Read poems about spring by poets like William Wordsworth, Emily Dickinson, or Robert Frost. Encourage students to write their own spring poems, experimenting with different forms and styles.
- **Literary Picnics:** Organize literary picnics where students can enjoy snacks while discussing books or listening to stories. Bring along a blanket, some sandwiches, and a selection of books to read aloud or independently.
- **Gardening and Literature:** Connect literature with hands-on activities like gardening. Read books about gardening or plants, then let your student plant seeds, tend to a garden, or create nature journals to document their observations.
- **Author Studies:** Focus on studying authors who have written about nature or springtime themes. Learn about their lives, read their works, and explore the connections between their experiences and the themes they write about.

(continued)

- **Outdoor Dramatizations:** Encourage your student to bring stories to life through outdoor dramatizations. They can act out scenes from their favorite books or create their own plays inspired by springtime themes.
- **Spring Book Clubs:** Start a spring-themed book club with other homeschooling families. Choose a book to read together and then schedule regular meetups for discussions, activities, and perhaps even outdoor outings related to the book.
- **Keep a Vocabulary Journal:** Note down unfamiliar words as you encounter them in your reading and look up their meanings. Try to incorporate these words into your everyday vocabulary to deepen your understanding and expression.



- **Art and Literature:** Combine literature with art by creating spring-themed illustrations, collages, or paintings inspired by favorite books. Students can visually depict scenes from the stories they've read or create artwork based on their own interpretations.

By incorporating these tips into your homeschooling routine, you can make the most of springtime literary adventures while fostering a love for reading, nature, and creativity in your children. Grab a book, step outside, and let the wonders of spring inspire your homeschool reading journey!



"The sun was
warm but the
wind was chill.
You know how
it is with an
April day."

~ Robert Frost

photo: isaiah schroeder

A TASTE OF THE WILD

words by krystle willmore
photos by carolyn willmore

Foraging Salads From Your Own Backyard



Purple Dead Nettle, this has a look alike called Gill-Over-the-Ground. Although it is also edible, make sure you are 100% certain what you are foraging.

Have you noticed the patches of green popping up yet? You may want to look up close because it's probably food! What may look like weeds or just grass might actually be delicious greens that you can make an entire salad out of, or pesto, or soup, or much more!

I'll share some basic techniques on what to look out for and a recipe to try, but if you're interested in more, consider getting the book *Foraging & Feasting A Field Guide and Wild Food Cookbook* by Dina Falconi.

This book is an excellent resource on identifying plants, what parts to eat, and how to add them to recipes!

(continued)



Above: Red Clover is similar to White Clover and without the flowers it may be hard to tell the difference. Red Clover leaves are bigger and have the white "V" on them.



Above: Violet leaves will grow to very large in size! Notice the heart like shape it has.

Right now in my backyard I found Purple Dead Nettle, Violet, Field Garlic, Dandelion, and Red Clover. All of these are fantastic in a salad or even eaten alone as a snack. Violet is great because it's also energizing. Once on a bike ride my daughter Carolyn packed violet leaves. When we took a break, we ate some, and we really were energized to ride all the way back. It was incredible!

When making a wild salad consider a few things, some wild herbs have different tastes, so make sure you don't add too many of the same flavor palate. Just take a bite of the herb you're considering and if that's a new taste, add it in! Try picking the leaves before or after the hottest part of the day so as to not have them wilt so fast. Make sure you clean your plants thoroughly, especially the flowers (which you can add) because there might be tiny bugs on the plant. A good rinse and spin in a salad spinner should do the trick.

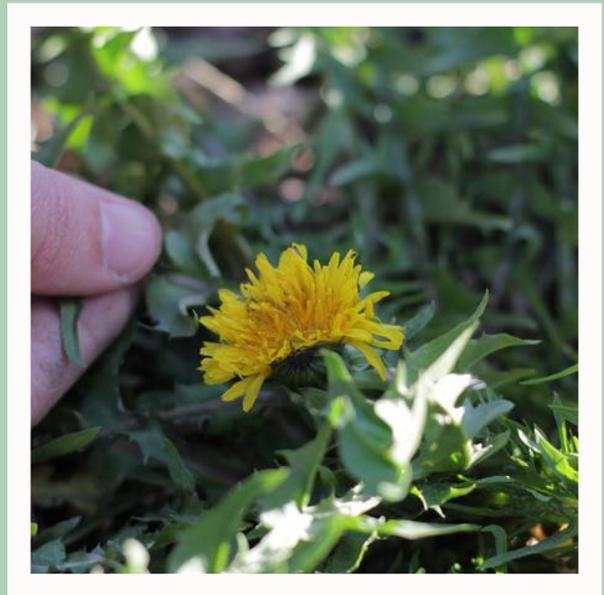
(continued)

This is a recipe for pesto that we love and all of the wild greens came from my backyard!

- 2 oz hard grating cheese such as Pecorino or Parmigiano, cut into chunks
- ½ cup nut or seed of your choice
- 1-2 cloves garlic
- 3 cups packed wild greens (we used 1 ½ cups violet, 1 cup garlic mustard leaf, ½ cup field garlic)
- ⅓-¾ cup olive oil
- Sea salt to taste

1. Place cheese in food processor and process until pulverized.
2. Add nut or seed and garlic, process until medium-fine ground.
3. Add wild green and process until mixture is well minced.
4. With food processor running, add olive oil until desired consistency is reached.
5. Taste first then add salt if desired.

It's so fun to forage for herbs but remember *The Honorable Harvest* and do not forage unless you know the area is safe from being sprayed with chemicals. We are blessed with wild greens and many of them are medicinal too so don't be afraid to pick and eat from time to time. It might just be the thing you need!



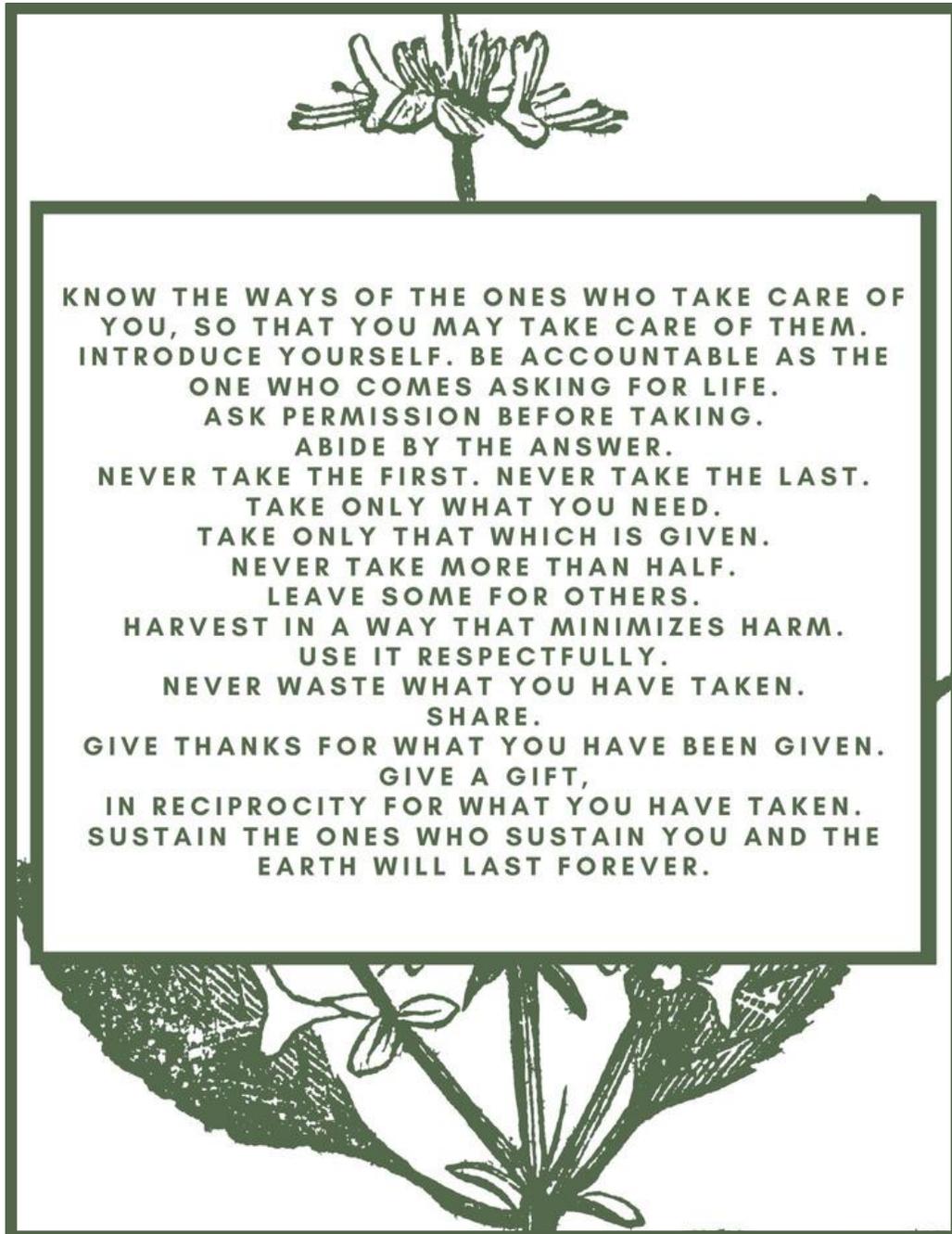
Above: Dandelion is an amazing medicinal plant and you can eat almost every part of it!



Above: Field Garlic

Krystle is the Musical Director and a Learning Guide at Mighty Roots Academy. You can follow her @onthegreenmeadows

The Honorable Harvest



KNOW THE WAYS OF THE ONES WHO TAKE CARE OF
YOU, SO THAT YOU MAY TAKE CARE OF THEM.
INTRODUCE YOURSELF. BE ACCOUNTABLE AS THE
ONE WHO COMES ASKING FOR LIFE.
ASK PERMISSION BEFORE TAKING.
ABIDE BY THE ANSWER.
NEVER TAKE THE FIRST. NEVER TAKE THE LAST.
TAKE ONLY WHAT YOU NEED.
TAKE ONLY THAT WHICH IS GIVEN.
NEVER TAKE MORE THAN HALF.
LEAVE SOME FOR OTHERS.
HARVEST IN A WAY THAT MINIMIZES HARM.
USE IT RESPECTFULLY.
NEVER WASTE WHAT YOU HAVE TAKEN.
SHARE.
GIVE THANKS FOR WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN.
GIVE A GIFT,
IN RECIPROCITY FOR WHAT YOU HAVE TAKEN.
SUSTAIN THE ONES WHO SUSTAIN YOU AND THE
EARTH WILL LAST FOREVER.

Planting Memories

words by angela schilling



our students work in the garden, tending plants and topping up soil.

Introducing your family to the joys of gardening not only fosters a deeper connection with nature but also cultivates essential life skills and values. Gardening offers a refreshing opportunity to get your hands dirty, explore the wonders of the natural world, and develop a sense of responsibility and patience.

From planting seeds to harvesting fruits and vegetables, the journey of nurturing a garden alongside your family can be filled with countless teachable moments and cherished memories. Whether you have a sprawling backyard or a small balcony, there are endless possibilities to create memorable experiences and sow the seeds of curiosity and wonder as well as a lifelong appreciation for green spaces and sustainable living in the hearts and minds of the next generation.

(continued)



students harvest and learn about different varieties of kale and chard.

Spring planting dates for cool-season vegetables for our area is Mid-March to Mid-April. So, we still have about a week left to plant cole crops (cold crops). Like leafy greens, broccoli, carrots, onion, and potato, to name a few. At Mighty Roots Academy, we partner with Kansas City Community Gardens and they are a great resource for gardening questions and purchasing seeds/starter plants. Anyone can become a member at KCCG.

The average last frost date for our area is mid-April but we all know how Missouri weather can be! So, you may hear that local gardeners will wait until Mother's Day to plant their warm-seasoned crops in KC. Here are some tips to help make gardening fun for the whole family:

1: Start small: Choose a couple of easy to grow plants. Plants that can be grown in containers don't need a ton of space, just an outdoor area with lots of sunshine! These include peppers, lettuce, tomatoes, and radishes. Starting small allows for easier results and keeps interest piqued.

2: Choose plants your family will love: Get everyone involved in choosing what they want to grow; from their favorite flowers to their favorite vegetables.

3: Create a theme: Make a pizza garden (tomatoes, basil, pepper) or a salsa garden (tomatoes, cilantro, jalapenos and onion)

(continued)

4: Gardening tools: Provide tools that are safe and easy for everyone to use. Let family members pick out fun gardening gloves. Children especially love exploring and digging in the dirt. Providing the right tools will help them become more involved in the garden.

5: Make it fun: Celebrate each success, from the first sprout to the first flower and finally the first fruit! Harvest and cook with your garden produce. Cooking with ingredients you have worked hard to grow can be very rewarding.

Don't hesitate to get dirty, be creative, and have fun!

Angela is a learning guide at Mighty Roots Academy. She lives in Belton, MO with her hubby, two kids, two pitties, and three snakes. She loves the quiet and stillness that gardening brings.



students learn how to plant spinach, lettuce and broccoli.



Pulling up weeds, watering and adding compost and nutrients to the soil.



Our Gardening and Botany classes made cold frames over two of our beds to extend the spring gardening season. The cold frames will protect plants from frost.

ESCAPE THE CITY

words by renee bichel

One fun way to celebrate our longer, warmer days of spring is with a family day trip. After being cooped up all winter, getting out of the house - a few HOURS away - can be a solace in itself. Homeschoolers spend a lot of time at home, so sometimes our souls need a change of scenery. No chores can derail your day if you get out of the house, travel, and explore somewhere new! Whether you are looking for nature time or a history lesson, opportunities abound around the midwest.

Here are some beautiful, unique, or educational places to visit within a few hours from the Kansas City area:

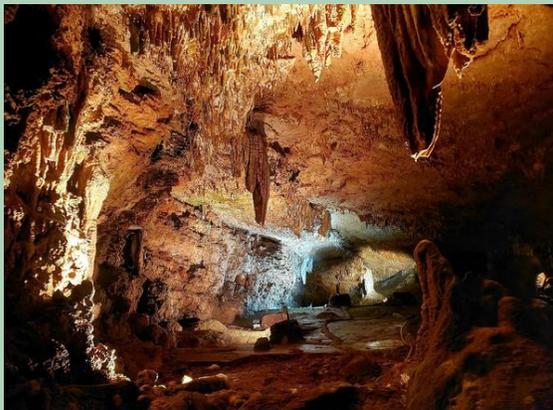
HA HA TONKA CASTLE RUINS AND STATE PARK



Natural Bridge Rd, Camdenton, MO 65020
Sun up to sundown, 7 days a week
Approx. 3 hours from Kansas City
Free

A ruined castle on a cliff looking over Lake of the Ozarks? Yes, it is as magical as it sounds! Learn about the story behind the castle, go on a beautiful hike, or simply get a great view of the lake.

MERAMEC CAVERNS



1135 Hwy W, Sullivan, MO
9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. 7 days a week
4 hours SE of KC
\$28 for ages 12+, \$15 per child ages 5-11,
Free for 5 and under

This cave was one of the most massive our family has ever seen (and we LOVE traveling to see caves). It's worth the tour. Camping is available in the area, too - so it's fun to make a weekend of it.

AMELIA EARHART HANGAR MUSEUM



16701 286th Rd, Atchison, KS 66002
Wed-Sun 10:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.
Closed Mon-Tue
45 minutes north of Kansas City
\$15 adults, \$8 children ages 4-12, free for children 3 and under
This is more than your average museum. Learn all about Amelia Earhart and see a plane similar to the one she piloted. Atchison is a super cute town nestled on the Missouri River. Don't miss the Earthwork nearby and the river views!

(continued)

DEVIL'S ICEBOX TRAIL



Rock Bridge Memorial State Park
5901 South Highway 163, Columbia, MO
65203

Sun up to sundown, 7 days a week
2 hours east of KC

Free

Looking for a quick foray into low risk spelunking? Devil's Icebox is your place. This cave is both beautiful and accessible to the whole family. Bring flashlights! Rock Bridge State Park also has stunning hiking trails.

PINNACLES YOUTH PARK



850 E Pinnacles Rd, Sturgeon, MO 65284

Sun up to sundown, 7 days a week
2 hours NE of KC

Free

If climbing is your thing, this is the place for you. Rock climbing opportunities abound in these rock cliffs. The formations allow for all levels of rock climbing for all ages. Recommended for children that can climb on their own (strollers not accessible if you really want to climb).

THE GATHERING PLACE



2650 S John Williams Way, Tulsa, OK 74114

7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m., 7 days a week
4 hours south of KC

Free

I'm adding this one to the list for those that are seeking something outdoors, but less physically demanding or primitive. This park is THE PARK to end all parks! SO many themed parks all in one; every member of the family will have a blast here. Great for all ages and skill levels. It goes on and on and is worth the drive from KC.

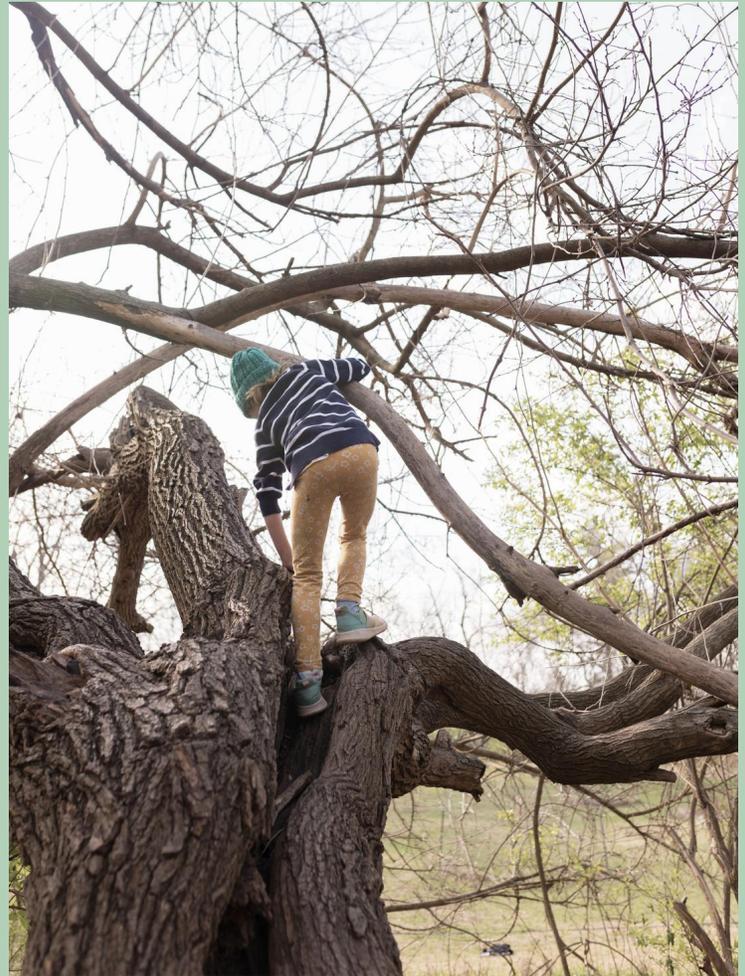
ROOTED IN PLAY

words and photos
by cari schawo

Play is a powerful tool in young children's lives. Play in a nature-based setting is even more powerful. Young children are meant to explore and learn about the world around them. It is extremely rewarding to step back and become an observer in children's outdoor play.

Playing in nature allows children to become more independent. When they are with other children, it helps them to use their imagination to create and carry out their own made-up games. They learn to work together to problem solve with one another. They are able to navigate conflict resolution with their peers and they also learn self-confidence.

Being immersed in nature also has many benefits to children such as strengthening their fine and gross motor skills.



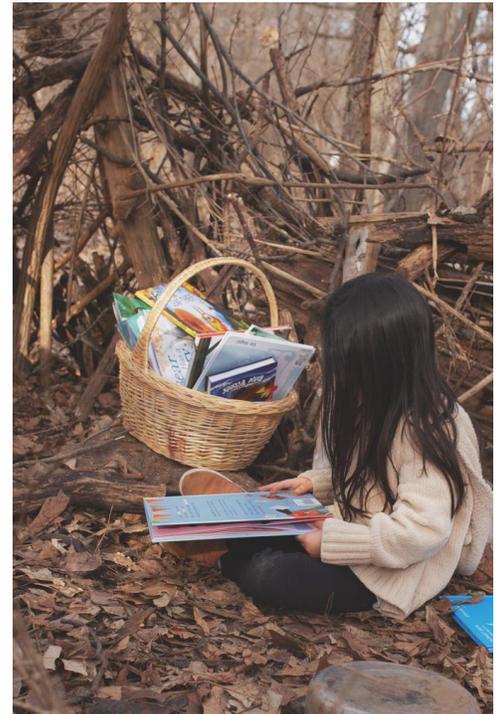
These skills are very important in helping to children to hold writing tools as well as with writing. Digging in the mud, making cakes in the mud kitchen and sorting nature objects are great activities to help develop those fine motor skills. Building upon the gross motor skills helps children improve their core strength which is also important to writing.

Playing in nature also has many benefits to a child's emotional needs. It helps children to self-regulate, learn to problem solve and reason, fosters creativity, grows imagination as well as having many more benefits to a child's emotional needs.



What are some ways you can help your child to explore and play in nature and foster some important skills? You can...

- Set up a mud kitchen in your backyard.
- Supply digging tools to explore dirt and mud.
- Give your child a container to collect bugs and nature items in
- Bring art supplies outside such as paint, paper, crayons, markers,
- Go on nature walks, document what you find.
- Set up a book basket and leave it by your door so it can easily be taken out.
- Do seasonal nature scavenger hunts with your child.
- Go out and explore on a rainy day. Don't forget to jump in puddles!
- Make your own bubble wands and solutions.
- Go on a rock hunt.



Most importantly be enthusiastic about being outdoors and don't be afraid to let your child get dirty and explore!



"I MUST HAVE FLOWERS'
ALWAYS, ALWAYS, ALWAYS."

~ Monet



photo: josh bichel

MEET OUR LEARNING GUIDE

CHLOE HESTON

Our learning guides are more than just instructors, they are facilitators of discovery, and nurturers of potential. Through the guidance of our learning guides, students not only acquire knowledge but also cultivate the skills and values necessary to navigate and succeed in the world around them.

Meet Chloe Heston! Miss Chloe joined our team in August 2023. She leads one of our Logic Games courses as well as Animal Explorations. She also steps in to sub for other learning guides when needed.



What do you love best about teaching at Mighty Roots?

I absolutely love spending time with the students! They're all so brilliant, fun, creative, and silly! It's marvelous to witness their growth from week to week. For example, one particular week in Animal Explorations, I instructed my students to split into small groups, and build beaver lodges in the woods. As I wandered through the trees watching them build, I overheard one of my quietest students leading his group through planning and dividing tasks. Another group planned out a beaver lodge so intricate and complex that even Frank Lloyd Wright would have been impressed! Two of my students, who at the beginning of the school year were hesitant to engage in projects, play in nature, and interact with other kids, were gleefully gathering sticks in the forest together, shouting out their ideas, and were so absorbed in the building process that they worked a full twenty minutes into the lunch hour! I feel so giddy and overwhelmed with gratitude as I spend this time with each of these precious, miraculous children.

(continued)



What inspired you to homeschool?

My greatest inspiration for it was my own magical experience as a child! My mom was one of those homeschooling trailblazers who, despite critical relatives and lots of self-doubt, moved our family out to the country and gave my siblings and I huge amounts of freedom to explore our unique interests. We would spend an hour or two doing book-work (often in our tree house), and then the rest of the day we'd do what my mom called the "real learning"! I'd create bouquets, learn to sketch, read and write poetry, tinker with graphic design, sew dresses, write songs, build epic forts, read towers of books, and work with every art medium I could get my hands on. My siblings' lists of interests were just as varied.

I knew then I wanted to give my own children such a beautiful opportunity to discover and hone their own unique interests and skills.

What are some challenges you find with homeschooling?

By far my biggest challenge has been... (drumroll)...myself! Haha. Homeschooling has been like a daily personal growth conference where my weaknesses are on full display, and success only comes through embracing the (often painful) growth process. My precious kiddos are my mirrors, and through seeing their attitudes, I see areas in myself that I get to work on. There are constant opportunities to give myself grace while also taking responsibility for what I want to create.

The other challenge has been a smattering of learning differences and behavioral and mental health challenges in my family. At times this has been so taxing that I've wanted to throw in the towel. However, through much heart searching, therapy, research, and by the grace of God, we've overcome or adapted in these areas.

(continued)



I believe at a gut level that no matter how difficult it's been, being at home with their mama is what my kiddos most need to flourish.

What are some of your favorite homeschool activities?

As much as I love long, quiet days at home with my kids, I'm a huge fan of getting OUT of the house. This is especially helpful when we've gotten into a rut or when the kids wake up on the wrong side of the bed. Sometimes we'll go to thrift stores... I give the kids each a couple bucks with the guideline that they have to use it for either a book, a game, or an item to craft with. And of course, I "have" to pick something out too (usually I walk out with a nice stack of books).

We love packing up the kid's school books and going on a hunt for a new coffee shop. We'll find a quiet corner to sip tea and do bookwork, then I'll read aloud while the kids color or sketch.

Since I love history, we sometimes will explore a specific area of Kansas City. For instance, the other day I had an errand in Leavenworth, so the kids and I turned it into a field trip. This took very little preparation. I spent maybe five minutes researching the town, packed some snacks and coloring books, chose an audiobook for the road, and that was that. We drove around the prison, and sat in the parking lot while I read an article on my phone about some of the infamous inmates and escapes there.

(continued)

We also found an antique store that was built in the 1800's, and had a lot of information about the founding of Leavenworth (the shop also had some cute cats to cuddle which was a fun surprise).

Nature exploration is another favorite activity. Some of my favorite hikes are Jerry Smith Park, Blue Springs Lake Shoreline Trail, and the Longview Lake Horse and Hike Trail. We like to haul along school books, hammocks, snacks and a deck of cards for these hikes.



**“WE MUST USE TIME
CREATIVELY, IN THE
KNOWLEDGE THAT THE
TIME IS ALWAYS RIPE
TO DO RIGHT.”**

-Martin Luther King Jr.

What do you like to do for fun?

I love to explore nature (especially in the Winter, when the ticks and Poison Ivy are hibernating!) with my lil' black dream dog, Ender. While I'm out in the woods, I'll usually create some sort of bouquet or gather “treasures” to bring home.

I also love to watch British crime TV shows, play games with my family, write, read true stories from WWII, take photos of the people I love, have deep conversations with friends, and shop for books, antiques, or gifts.

Chloe is a Learning Guide at Mighty Roots Academy. She lives in Olathe, KS, with her husband, two kids, and their Miniature Australian Shepherd.



“We could never have loved the earth so well if we had had no childhood in it, if it were not the earth where the same flowers come up again every spring that we used to gather with our tiny fingers as we sat lispng to ourselves on the grass... What novelty is worth that sweet monotony where everything is known and loved because it is known?”

~ George Eliot, “The Mill on the Floss”

UP CLOSE & PERSONAL

Mighty Roots Academy Photography students showcase their work in macro and fine detail photography.



photo: daniel price

Macro and fine detail photography offers a captivating glimpse into the intricate details of the world around us. Ordinary objects transform into extraordinary landscapes, unveiling hidden textures, patterns, and intricacies often unnoticed by the naked eye. Through the lens of our photography students, we are invited to witness the beauty and artistry found in the small, often overlooked, aspects of our environment.



photo: noah smerk



photo: kade leonard



photo: isaiah schroeder



photo: carolyn willmore



photo: daniel price



photo: maylee hanning



photo: abby smerk



photo: kade leonard



photo: josh bichel

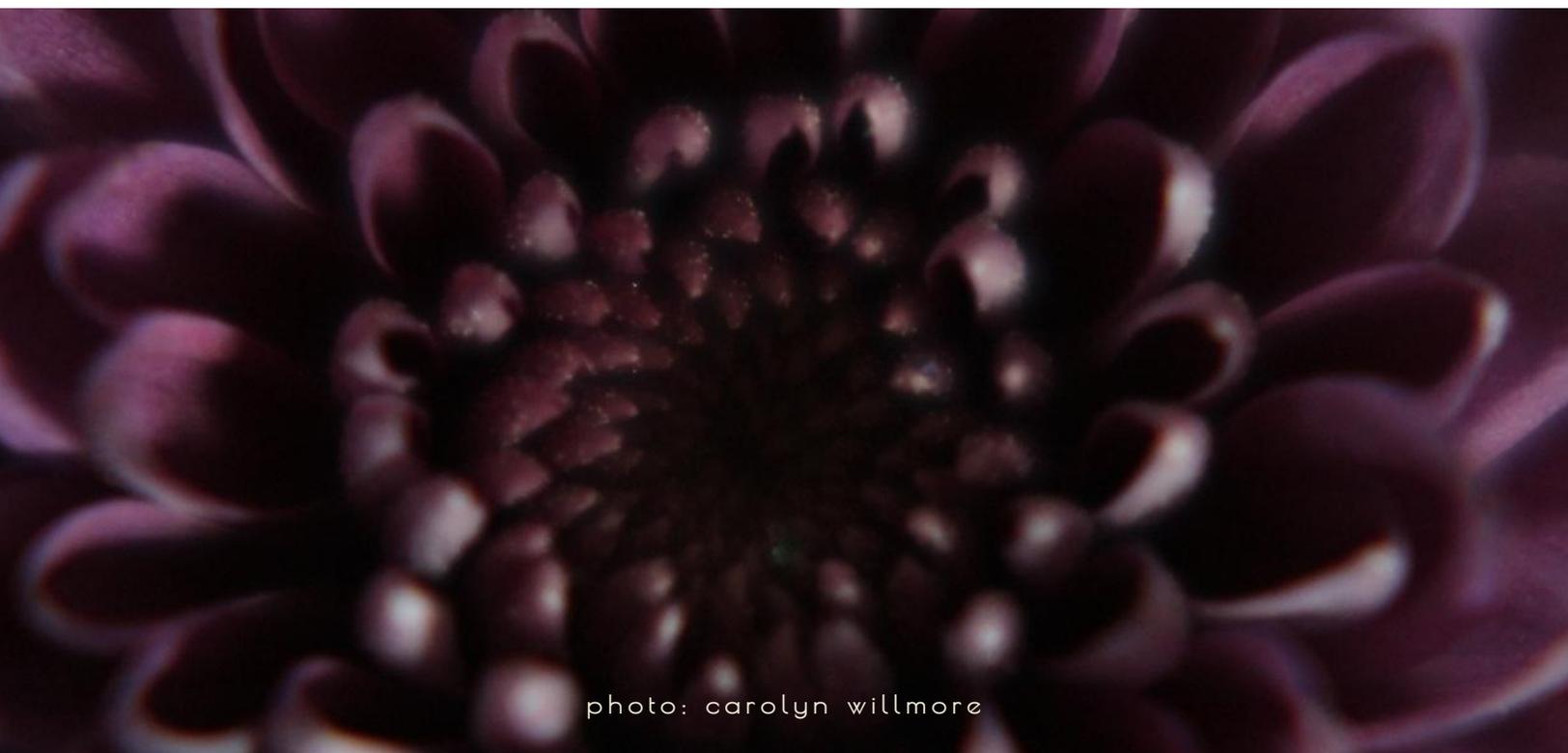


photo: carolyn willmore



photo: caden allison



photo: noah smerk



photo: evelynne leonard



photo: isaac schroeder



photo: abby smerk



words and photos
by cari schawo

DIGGING DEEP

Creating Your Own Worm Habitat

Spring is the time of the year that children love to get out and explore. There is so much that happens in the springtime. The birds start signing, flowers start blooming and the worms come out when it rains.

Children love to dig in the mud for worms. This is a great time for children to have fun while also learning. They can see and feel the dirt all while digging helps them to refine their fine motor skills.

Don't be afraid to get your hands dirty along with your child as you discover the wonderful world of worms.

(continued)

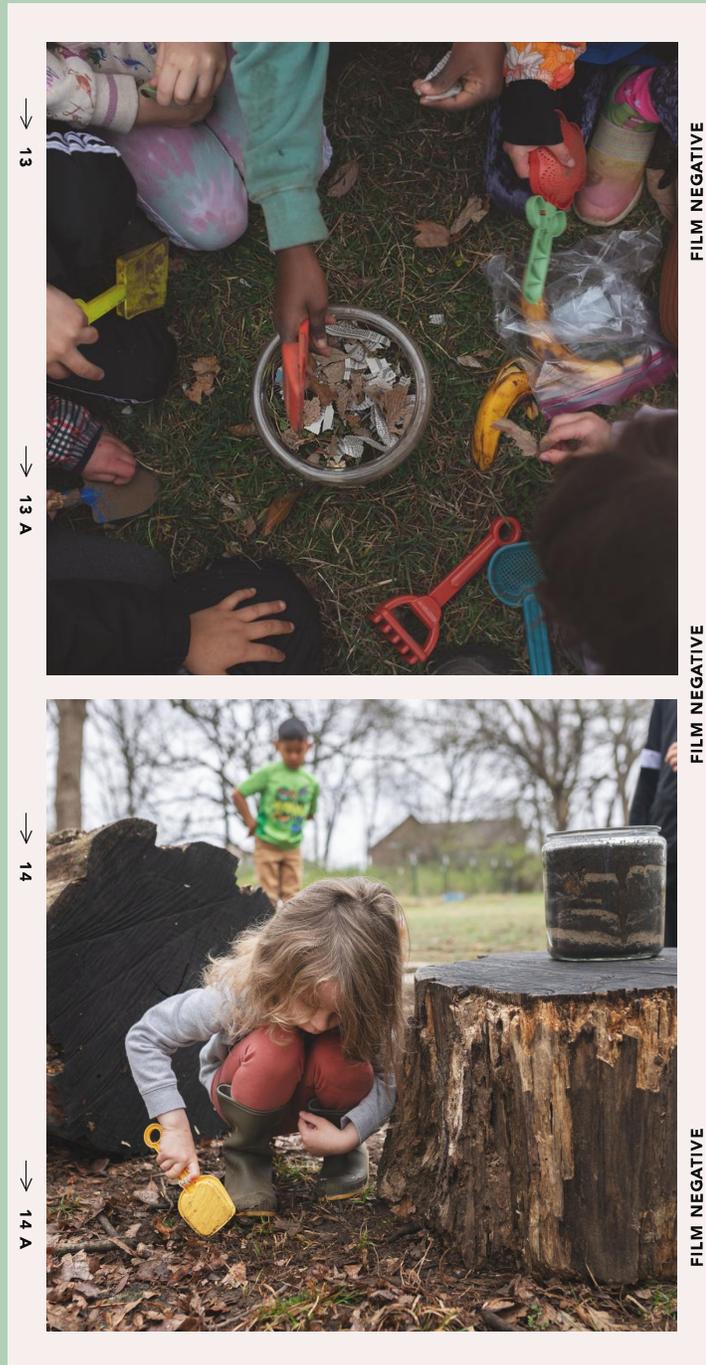


To create your worm habitat you will need dirt, sand, bananas, old leaves, shovels and a glass container as well as something to cover the top. We used plastic wrap and poked small holes in ours.

Here are the steps to create a fun and inviting worm habitat.

- Start with a layer of dirt and then alternate dirt and sand. Stop half way and add a layer of bananas and torn up old leaves.
- Continue to create dirt and sand layers until you reach the top of your jar. Once your jar is full add water but do not over saturate the dirt.
- Add a few banana pieces to the top of the container.
- Take something long like a skinny stick and poke it down to the bottom of the jar. Do this about 5 times (less if you have a small jar)
- Go out and have fun finding and digging up worms. Fatter, bigger worms are best, as you can watch them burrow and follow where they go in your habitat.
- Depending on how big your jar is, add about 5 worms to it.
- Cover your jar with plastic wrap, don't forget to poke small holes in it and secure it with rubber bands or tape.

(continued)



Take time each day to observe what the worms are doing, how the jar looks, does it look different or the same? You can also journal or make pictures each day of what your worm habitat looks like. Ask your child open ended questions as they do their observations.

After about a week release the worms back outside.



worm habitat



Cari Schawo studied early childhood development at Harper Community College as well as attended University of Central Missouri. She has over 25 years of early childhood teaching experience some of which includes as a Director and Assistant Director of an early childhood center. She lives in Lee's Summit with her husband and son. Cari also has daughter who lives in the Kansas City area.



"The earth
laughs in
flowers."

~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

photo: isaiah schroeder

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!



photo: cari schawo

As a non-profit homeschool academy dedicated to fostering a love for learning through immersive nature experiences, we are reaching out to our community, friends, and supporters to seek the crucial support needed to continue our mission. Operating as a non-profit organization, we rely heavily on the generosity of our community to sustain our unique approach to education. Your support can make a lasting impact on the lives of our students. Here are a few ways you can contribute:

- **Donate:** Your financial contributions go directly toward sustaining our programs, maintaining our outdoor classrooms, and providing scholarships to students who may not otherwise have access to our unique educational approach.
- **Volunteer:** If you're passionate about nature and education, consider volunteering your time and expertise. From assisting in outdoor activities to sharing your knowledge and skills, every contribution is valued!
- **Spread the Word:** Help us reach a wider audience by sharing our mission with your friends, family, and colleagues. The more people who know about Mighty Roots Academy, the greater our impact can be!
- **Partnerships:** If you represent a business or organization that aligns with our values, consider establishing a partnership. Collaborations can take many forms, from sponsorships to joint initiatives that benefit both parties.

Final Thoughts



photo: cari schawo

One cannot help but marvel at the transformation witnessed during these past months here at Mighty Roots. Just as the buds on the trees unfold into a tapestry of leaves, our students have blossomed and flourished. The great outdoors has served as our classroom, inspiring curiosity and wonder in ways that textbooks and four walls alone cannot replicate.

The seasons have become our curriculum, and spring, in particular, proves to be a teacher of resilience and adaptation. By witnessing the cyclical process of rebirth and renewal in the natural world, our students can see the importance of

embracing change, learning to adapt to new challenges, and discovering the beauty in every stage of growth.

In the spirit of spring, we can celebrate the achievements, both big and small, of our students and families. We can take pride in the roots we have laid down, knowing that, like the mighty trees that stand tall in our woods, our students are well-equipped to face the future with strength, knowledge, and a profound connection to the natural world.

But perhaps most importantly, spring serves as a reminder of the power of transformation. It is a season that invites us to shed the burdens of the past and to embrace the limitless possibilities of the future. Just as the earth awakens from its winter slumber, so too do our minds and spirits find rejuvenation in the beauty and abundance of the nature that surrounds us!

Our Mission

The mission of Mighty Roots Academy is to provide active, multiage learning in a nature-rich environment.

Our Philosophy

At Mighty Roots Academy, we believe it is most important to develop the skills of independent learning that equip students for a lifetime of inquiry and growth. A true education builds the skills needed for becoming a lifelong learner. We believe that students benefit most when skill-building is the focus, no matter the subject.



Mighty Roots Academy

mightyrootsacademy.com