

The Secret Garden

Toolkit Activities

This toolkit is designed for use by teachers / librarians / after-school advisors / parents to enhance learning moments with children aged 4–8.

The Longwood Gardens Community Read is a program designed to encourage reading for pleasure and start a conversation. Focusing on literature about gardens, plants, and the natural world, we feature an exceptional book annually (paired with similarly themed younger readers' book) through a variety of programs, discussions, and lectures across all community partner organizations.

For more information about the Community Read, go to longwoodgardens.org/community-read.



Community Read
Read. Think. Engage.

The Secret Garden

Adapted By Calista Brill



Overview and Synopsis

When young Mary Lennox moves into Misselthwaite Manor, she hates it. She hates the cold hallways and ugly manor. And she hates how lonely she is. The only comfort Mary has is exploring the manor's grounds. After uncovering a hidden key, Mary discovers an old, abandoned garden that has a few secrets. With two unexpected friends, Mary is determined to bring her garden back to life. Based on the beloved classic children's novel by Frances Hodgson Burnett, *The Secret Garden* is a beautifully illustrated adaptation for children to treasure.

Activities

- Secret Garden Mural
- Miniature Nature Notebooks
- Build A Bird Feeder

Extend the Story

- Upcycled Windchimes
- Secret Garden Keys
- Decorate Rocks
- Other Activity Ideas
- Secret Garden Songs

This toolkit was developed by the Longwood Gardens School and Youth team.



Activities meet the following Next Generation Science Standards:

2-LS4-1 Biological Evolution

Make observations of plants and animals to compare the diversity of life in different habitats.

Activities meet the following Common Core State Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.2

With prompting and support, retell familiar stories, including key details.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.3

With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.K.10

Actively engage in group reading activities with purpose and understanding.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.1.3

Describe characters, settings, and major events in a story, using key details.



Secret Garden Mural Activity

Engage children in an ongoing activity of creative expression! With this exercise, children will work together to create a mural inspired by the illustrations in *The Secret Garden*. An activity that is designed to change from week to week, this project will encourage children to return to the library as *The Secret Garden* mural evolves. They will be excited to see the finished piece!

Materials Needed

- Roll of mural paper
 - Masking tape
 - Colored pencils
 - Markers
 - Crayons
 - Construction paper
 - Glue sticks
 - Scissors
-

Directions

- Using the roll of mural paper, unroll a large piece of paper and secure it to the floor or a wall using masking tape. This can be as large as you would like the finished mural to be.
- Using a marker and colored pencils, draw a large brown rectangular door in the middle of the mural paper. Don't forget to draw a doorknob and a keyhole.
- Now, children can get started on the design! Encourage children to use a variety of materials you have provided to draw plants and flowers in the secret garden. They can use the colored pencils, markers, and crayons.
- Each week, both children and librarians can add to the mural. For example:



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- Week two: Librarians might draw bees on the mural and children can add more pollinators.
- Week three: Librarians might draw a robin and children can add other types of birds.
- Week four: Librarians can draw a squirrel and children can add other wildlife.
- Use the mural to generate discussion about how creating gardens, also helps create habitats for wildlife, and how gardens can help improve health and well-being at home and in the community. This is a perfect opportunity to inspire community collaboration in your library.



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Miniature Nature Notebooks

Materials Needed

- Printed Nature Notebook template
 - Scissors
 - Pencil / colored pencils / crayons / markers
 - Natural / outdoor area
 - **Optional:** tape / glue
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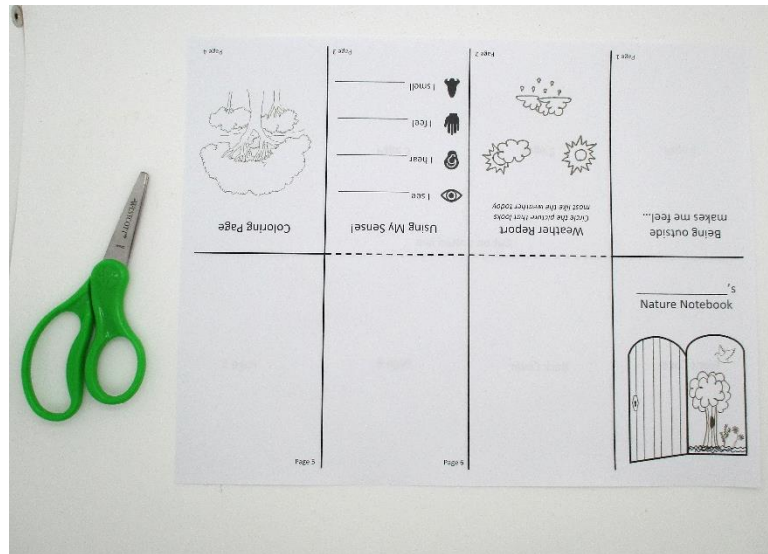
Directions

- Print one Nature notebook template for each child.
 - Tip: when printing...
 - Pages 10-11
 - Print on Both Sides – Flip Pages on Long Edge
 - Portrait Orientation

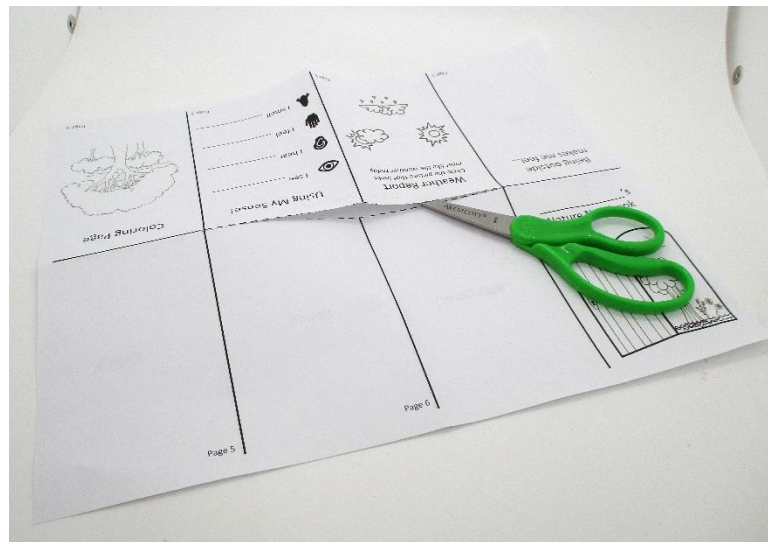


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- Have children carefully use scissors to cut on the dotted line. This will create a cut in the center of the page. The ends of page should remain intact. Do not cut the page fully in half.

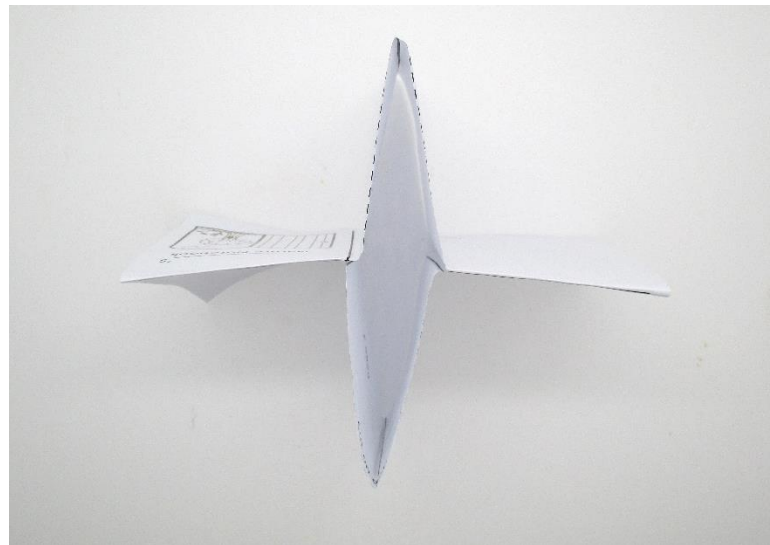
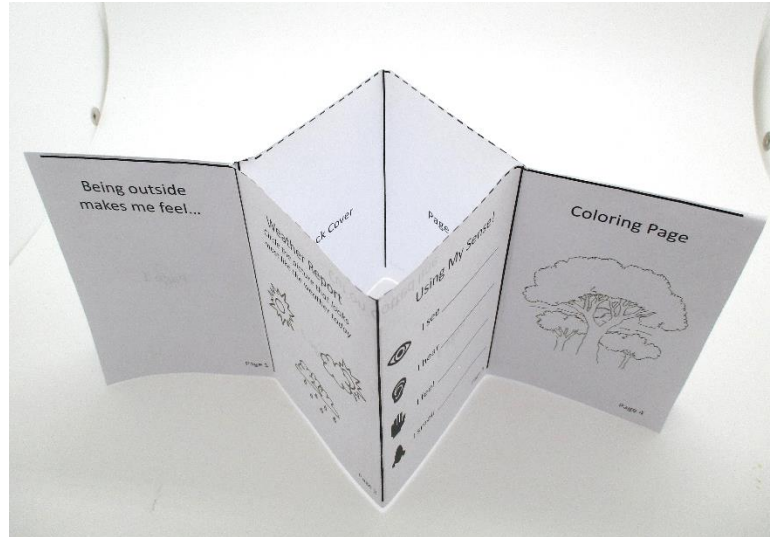


- Next, create folds in the paper along all the solid lines. Then, unfold the paper so that it is flat again. This will create creases in the paper that will make the following steps easier.
- Fold the paper in half along the solid and dotted line where the paper is cut. This will be folding it hot-dog style. Make sure you fold it so that the pictures are facing outward.



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- Using the photos below as a guide, separate where the paper is cut and push the two ends of the page together so that when you look at the paper from the top it creates a “+” shape.



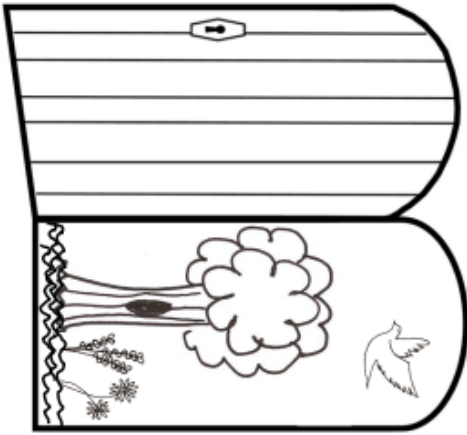
- Next, fold and organize the pages so that the “_____’s Nature Notebook” cover page is on the top. Make sure the paper lays flat, like a notebook. When complete, the pages should be in sequential order.





- One of the themes of *The Secret Garden* is healing through nature. Take children to an area outside where they can work through the activities in their Nature Notebooks and enjoy the benefits of nature on mental and physical well-being.
 - Page 1 – Have children think about how spending time in nature makes them feel. Do they feel happy, relaxed, calm, curious?
 - Page 2 – Have children take note of the weather and record their observations.
 - Page 3 – Have children use all their senses (except taste!) to notice the world around them. What do they see, hear, feel, and smell outside?
 - Page 4 – Using colored pencils, crayons, or markers, allow children time to color and relax.
 - Pages 5-6 – Have children use these blank pages however they wish. See some ideas below!
 - Write a nature poem
 - Draw something you see...
 - From far away, like a landscape
 - From close up with a lot of detail
 - Tape natural objects like leaves or flowers to the blank pages





Nature Notebook
S,

Being outside
makes me feel...

Weather Report

Circle the picture that looks most like the weather today



Using My Sense!



I see _____



I hear _____



I feel _____



I smell _____

Coloring Page



Page 5

Page 4

Back Cover

Front Cover

Cut on dotted line

Page 4

Page 3

Page 2

Page 1

Build A Bird Feeder

Materials Needed

- Birdseed
- Flour
- Unflavored gelatin
- Corn syrup
- Water
- Cooking spray (such a Pam)
- Parchment paper
- Skewer
- Cookie cutters (with thick sides)
- Ribbon or yarn
- Mixing bowl and spoon
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Paper plates
- Mobile device with Merlin Bird ID app downloaded
 - <https://tinyurl.com/MerlinBird>



Directions

- Take children outdoors and have them identify birds around the library by using the Merlin Bird ID app. This app allows for bird identification by their colors, size and even their songs.
- Have children create a list of birds they see or hear.



- Mix 4 cups of birdseed, $\frac{3}{4}$ cups flour and 5 teaspoons of unflavored gelatin together in the mixing bowl.
- Add 3 Tablespoons corn syrup and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water, mixing well. Children may need to use their hands to sufficiently mix.
- Lay out parchment paper onto a table
- Have children choose a cookie cutter and spray the cookie cutter with the cooking spray.
- Place the cookie cutter on the parchment paper and press the bird feed mixture into the cookie cutter. Make sure to evenly press the bird feed mixture into the shape, getting the mixture into all the edges.
- Have children use a skewer to make a small hole in the mixture. This can be towards the top of the shape, so it will hang like an ornament.
- Allow to dry for a few minutes, then have children remove the cookie cutter and place their creation on a paper plate to dry overnight.
- Once dried, use ribbon or yarn to string through the bird feeder and hang from a tree or other areas outside of the library.
- Take children outdoors and have them identify birds using the Merlin Bird ID app. Have children create another list of birds they see or hear. Ask children if the list is similar to or different from their original list. Did their bird feeders attract any new birds to the library?
- Alternatively, the children can take their bird feeders home along with some ribbon or yarn and hang them around their homes.



Extend the Story

Upcycling Windchimes

- Use upcycled and recycled materials to create windchimes to hang in your garden—
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/345158758922804438/>

Secret Garden Keys

- Use popsicle sticks to create a secret garden key similar to the one in the story—
<https://www.gluedtomycraftsblog.com/2021/01/popsicle-stick-key-to-my-heart.html>

Decorate Rocks

- Paint rocks to decorate your garden or outdoor space—
<https://www.messylittlemonster.com/2020/06/rock-painting-ideas.html>

Other Activity Ideas

- Start seeds in egg cartons, hunt for pollinators, identify plants using the Plant Snap App, and force spring bulbs.

Secret Garden Songs

- Gardening Song— <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hR0V37t8sfc>
- Grow, Grow, Grow! (The Flower Song)— <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkpxpxBrxO4>
- Rockin Robin— <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7oiq-MqsY8k>

