

# SPRING



## *Some ideas for spring*

- Laurel leaf game
- King of the castle
- Pond dipping
- Leaf boats
- Pooh sticks
- Clay pots
- Stone skimming
- One potato, two potato
- Dams and bridge building
- Stick-in-the-mud
- Puddle jumping
- Cowpat frisbees
- Cherry ear-rings
- Apple peel game
- Fairy pillows
- Dowsing



## Laurel leaf game

We entered our school via three long parallel pathways, the central one for cars, divided from each other by tall (to us) laurel hedges. As we became older and noticed boys and girls were different, we used laurel leaves for a 's/he-loves-me, s/he-loves-me-not' ritual. We'd find a particularly waxy, shining leaf and, privy only to close friends, secretly scratch onto it the first name of our current heart-throb. Then we'd slip the leaf into a shoe, under the instep but outside the sock. We'd hobble uncomfortably round on this all day.

At home-time (if we'd had the patience to wait that long) the leaf would be carefully extricated and examined in the presence of only the closest of friends. If the name had gone rusty brown, s/he loved us! Looking back, of course they all went brown – from our hot little feet, so it was a pretty safe adventure in fortune-telling.

### How to make a laurel leaf love predictor

1. Pick a large, flawless laurel leaf
2. Scratch on the name of your beloved
3. Place under your foot between sock and shoe
4. Leave all day
5. Check it at end of day – a name turned rusty brown means that your love is returned!



## Pond dipping

Whatever the season, water is an endlessly creative element for children of any age or temperament. Pond-dipping is one of the more structured activities but is great, messy fun. It is sometimes teacher-led but it is easy to manage at home, given a pond nearby and either adult supervision, a very shallow pond, or very sensible children!

It is easy and inexpensive to equip for pond dipping: a simple fishing net from a toy shop, or one created from tights or muslin fixed on a wire coat hanger hoop and tied to a stick, or a sieve or a colander; a white ice cream container to show up small creatures; a clear jar for more detailed observation (you can buy them with a magnifying top, very classy); a magnifying glass; a simple reference book; a notebook and pen if you want to take notes.



To dip a pond is easy. Fill your two containers with pond water, to have somewhere ready for your treasures so they are not left gasping and stranded while you hurriedly get life-saving water. Sweep the net steadily through the top few inches at the surface of the pond, being careful not to fall in. Peer into the net and gently empty anything worth looking at more closely into the white container, without hurting any creatures, however small. You may want to transfer, for example, a water snail or some other interesting-looking animal into the clear container to study it with the magnifying glass, perhaps referring to your pocket reference book or making a quick sketch to look up details later on the internet or in a more informative tome. Always put everything back into the pond carefully!



## Pond dipping equipment

1. Fishing net from toyshop or one made from muslin on coat hanger wire or sieve/colander tied to stick etc
2. White ex-ice cream container
3. Clear glass/plastic jar (can be bought with magnifying top)
4. Magnifying glass
5. Simple reference book
6. Note pad and pen/pencil

### Method

1. Fill both containers with pond water
2. Sweep net through top few inches of pond/rock pool
3. Empty anything vaguely interesting into white container
4. Sweep again a couple of times
5. Transfer anything especially interesting into clear container
6. Study with magnifying glass, take notes, sketch etc
7. Look up in reference book if applicable
8. Carefully return any living specimens back into the pond or rock pool, without hurting them