

A Dozen Weeks of Fun! Summer Closet Program

Spring Cleaning, The Spring Equinox and Summer Solstice

Introduction

Can cleaning ever be fun and educational? That is a question that I asked myself and the answer seems to be yes. So let's start the summer out by cleaning up and learning a ton.

In week one (1) of A Dozen Weeks of Fun program I am going to give you a lot of ideas for getting some cleaning and organizing done in a short amount of time, all the while sprinkling in activities and fun for your children. They are going to learn where the term "Spring Cleaning" comes from, why people do it and that it can be fun.

They will learn all about the Spring Equinox and then move towards the Summer Solstice. I couldn't resist doing both because spring cleaning is usually associated with the spring equinox, which we have just passed and how can you talk about spring without talking about summer when it's June?

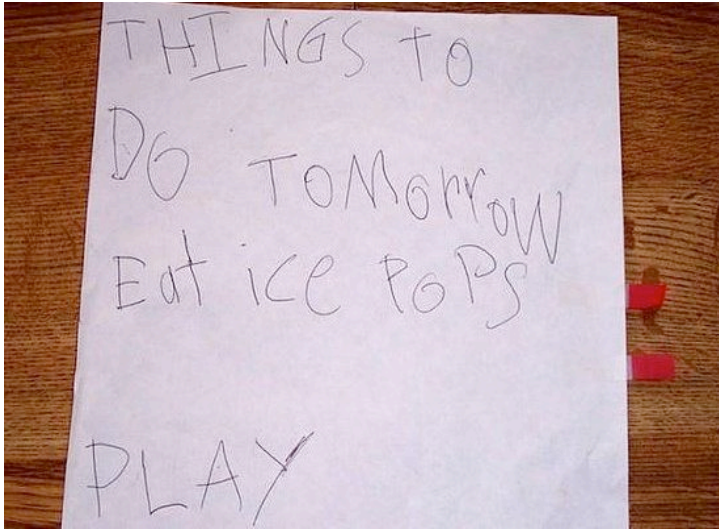
So get ready to rock and roll this summer beginning with cleaning up, clearing out, organizing and having a whale of a good time doing it.

Some writers suggest making a list of all the work to be done, gathering your supplies and choosing a day to devote to the job, the WHOLE day. That is exactly what I would have done in my former, far less enjoyable life. Now I would do it differently.

Pick the jobs that are bugging you the most. Then parcel them out over the next few weeks; maybe just one major item that you all do together, or one major item per person that can be done in an hour or less. Schedule it as part of your regular structured family learning time. Have the jobs written out as in a spy movie – you know where they say "if you choose to accept this job" and "this tape will self destruct in 2 minutes". Then add one or two activities to your Closet related to your spring cleaning that you can all relax

and rest with when the jobs are done.

By the way, I just have to share a hilarious “to do” list by a child.



Spring Cleaning Ideas for Fun

1. Plan to have snacks and drinks on hand. Play some up-tempo music to keep everyone's energy level up.
2. Let everyone in on the fun. Preschoolers enjoy helping with cleanup, and can easily dust lampshades, books and tabletops, or line up CDs. Pair up an older child with a younger child for more difficult tasks.
3. Want to make room in the closets? Why not have a fashion show? Put a big invitation in the Closet. Invite them all to be models. Have everyone try everything in their closet on. Whatever doesn't fit gets handed down to a sibling or packed up for donation. (Have some packing boxes ready to go.) This might also be a good time to have each child make a list of what clothing items they will need for the upcoming year. Have some simple note pads and cool pencils available in the Closet for some writing practice.
4. What about those messy dresser drawers? Have badges in the Closet marked Clothes Drawer Inspector. Have the children sort all the clothes looking for anything too small, out of season or in poor shape or torn. You could do this on the same day as the closet cleaning and then have ice cream on the way to donate anything you aren't keeping. (You will see this ice cream reward being used more than once.)
5. Want to clean out the toy box and those toy shelves? Create a treasure hunt for your younger children by hiding chocolate coins or other small incentives among the toys. Send everyone searching for the treasures while collecting any toy found on the search.

When each person's box, bag or basket is full have them meet in a central room and then dump the toys in a pile. Now make a game of sorting into "keep" and "go" piles. Then find a permanent place for the toys that are staying. Maybe buy ice cream on your way to donate the "go" pile.

6. Maybe the cleanliness of the toys is the problem. Haul all the toys that need to be washed outside in baskets or boxes. Fill buckets with soapy water and let the kids have rags and soft bristled brushes. Make sure everyone is in a swim suit or shorts. Line up the toys and spray off the soap. In your Closet have some empty squeeze bottles and when you are done cleaning the toys have a glorious water fight.

7. Book shelves need a good dusting? Give everyone a shelf and a time limit. Now race to see who can remove the books, dust the shelves and put the books back on the shelf within the time limit. Whoever makes it gets a cool summer activity page to work on. (I actually did this game with my grandchildren. I had a pile of about 60 activity sheets of all kinds. They loved it and couldn't wait to choose one. We did a number of jobs with the timer and they got a page after each job. They kept them in a colored file until we were done working and then they were free to work on their sheets.) Have the sheets in a bin in your Closet to introduce the activity for the day.

8. Do you have too many kids' papers and memorabilia hanging around in the bedrooms and on the kitchen counter? Purchase a really cool, beautiful or corny box for each child. Put them in your Closet. Then have each child sort all their "stuff" and put what they are going to keep into the box. Have them label their box. You could add a few frames from the dollar store to your Closet so that as they find really special items they can be framed and hung. In place of the box you could use pocket folders which they decorate before the sorting activity.

9. Want to clean out that pencil drawer in the kitchen? Purchase some small baskets to fit the drawer or use a utensil holder. Let your children sort the pens, pencils and markers. Give your kids a piece of paper and let them test drive the markers and pens tossing away the ones that don't work. Buy some inexpensive pencil sharpeners at the dollar store and let them sharpen all the crayons and pencils. Throw all the broken crayons into a muffin pan and make some cool mixed crayons.

Get directions at <http://bit.ly/iYXRzp>



10. Make a "to-do" list that's clever and inspiring. Try a tongue-in-cheek menu of spring-cleaning tasks, and let your child decide which jobs to tackle by ordering from it. Put the menus in your Closet.

For example:

Surf and Turf: Clean the garage, organize sports equipment, hose off boogie boards and surfboards, inflate basketballs and beach balls, rake the lawn.

Hot Tamales: Clean the stovetop, dust the radiators, empty the crumbs from the toaster.

High Tea: Banish cobwebs from the ceilings, replace burned out light bulbs, dust the chandeliers.

From <http://www.scholastic.com/resources/article/clever-cleaning-games>

11. Let your children chose wacky clothes for their cleaning outfit, the wackier the better. Give them a party hat to wear and blast some great music in the house. End your spring cleaning party with a treat. See party hat template below found at <http://bit.ly/IWKpgS>

12. If there is a lot of laundry to fold hide a prize in a sock and see who finds it. You can also do this with a room by hiding a prize in a hard to clean spot. These can be inexpensive items from the dollar store or even small amounts of money. You can also use coupons for a trip to the park, etc.

13. Here are some "spring clean up" books to put in your Closet and read aloud or have your older children read them aloud.

Allie and Scratchy: Spring Cleaning by Keisha Fulton

The Berenstain Bears and the Trouble with Chores by Stan Berenstain

Clifford's Spring Clean-Up (Clifford the Big Red Dog) by Norman Bridwell

Clean-Up Time (Toddler Tools) by Elizabeth Verdick

Arthur Helps Out by Marc Brown

Chicken And Cat Clean Up by Sara Varon

14. Here is some information on the origin of "spring cleaning" to share by having some "familiar conversations" with your children during dinner, lunch, a walk or while engaged in spring cleaning. This information is taken from Wikipedia.

Spring cleaning is the period in spring time set aside for cleaning a house, normally applied in climates with a cold winter.

The most common usage of spring cleaning refers to the yearly act of cleaning a house from top to bottom which would take place in the first warm days of the year typically in spring, hence the name. However it has also come to be synonymous with any kind of heavy duty cleaning or organizing enterprise. A person who gets their affairs in order

before an audit or inspection could be said to be doing some spring cleaning.

It has been suggested that the origins of spring cleaning date back to the Iranian Norouz, the Persian New Year, which falls on the first day of spring. Iranians continue the practice of "khooneh tekouni" which literally means "shaking the house" just before the New Year. Everything in the house is thoroughly cleaned, from the drapes to the furniture. A similar tradition is the Scottish "New Year's cleaning" on Hogmanay (December 31), a practice now also widespread in Ireland, New Zealand, and to some extent North America.

Another possibility of the origin of spring cleaning can be traced to the ancient Jewish practice of thoroughly cleansing the home in anticipation of the spring-time memorial feast of Passover.

In remembrance of the Jews' hasty flight from Egypt following their captivity there, during the seven-day observance of the Passover memorial or remembrance, there are strict prohibitions against eating or drinking anything which may have been leavened or fermented with yeast. They are not only supposed to refrain from leavened foodstuffs, they are expressly commanded to rid their homes of even small remnants of chametz (bread crumbs) for the length of the holiday. Therefore, observant Jews conducted a thorough "spring cleaning" of the house, followed by a traditional hunt for chametz crumbs by candlelight on the evening before the holiday begins.

In North America and northern Europe the custom was for practical reasons. During the 19th century in America, prior to the advent of the vacuum cleaner, March was often the best time for dusting because it was getting warm enough to open windows and doors (but not warm enough for insects to be a problem), and the high winds could carry the dust out of the house.

The Spring Equinox

1. Here is some information on the spring equinox to share by having some "familiar conversations" with your children during dinner, lunch, a walk or while engaged in spring cleaning:

Spring is one of four temperate seasons. It is the transition between winter and summer. Spring is thought of as a time of renewal, birth and growth. During the spring equinox days are about 12 hours long. The word "equinox" comes from Latin and means "equal nights." Around March 20, sunrise and sunset are about twelve hours apart everywhere on Earth. The term vernal equinox and spring equinox mean the same thing.

The first day of spring in the U.S. is considered to be around March 20 or 21; depending on what day the vernal equinox occurs. This is when the sun sits directly above the

equator on its apparent trip northward. Of course this sun isn't moving; Earth is. As Earth revolves around the sun, the top half, called the Northern Hemisphere, becomes tilted more toward the sun as winter turns to spring. Meanwhile the bottom half, the Southern Hemisphere, becomes tilted more away from the sun. So it is autumn for people in Australia and the southern parts of Africa and South America.

The Christian Easter is calculated according to the date of the Spring Equinox. Each year Easter falls on the first Sunday after the full moon that follows the Vernal Equinox.

The Spring Equinox is a day that symbolizes dawn, youth, birth, and rejuvenation. The Saxon goddess, Eostre is a goddess of dawn and the festival of new growth is her festival. Eostre, sometimes called Ostara, appears with a basket of colored eggs, accompanied by a rabbit. The color green represents the new vegetation growing on the land, turning it green. Why not explore the Christian Easter symbols and those of the Saxons. Have a good book about the Saxons and where they lived. You might want to add the book 5000 Year Leap by Cleon Skousen, which gives some fascinating information on Saxon government and how it has affected our own government.

See below for some spring coloring pages.

2. There is an old tradition that you can stand an egg on its end on the first day of spring. People think that somehow the pull of gravity is more equal on this day because the sun is more directly overhead. There is no scientific support for this.



The egg legend apparently got its start in 1945 when a reporter for Life Magazine wrote a story about a Chinese ritual in which people stood eggs on end on the first day of spring. But the Chinese recognized the first day of spring in early February, or about six weeks before the spring equinox! Later, in 1983, one hundred New Yorkers got together on March 20 to balance eggs, and an article about the event appeared in the New Yorker magazine. A year later, five thousand New Yorkers repeated the tradition on the first day of spring, and the egg legend grew.

The truth is that if you can get a raw egg to balance upright on the spring equinox, you can get it to balance any other day of the year. The pull of gravity or the position of the sun in the sky has nothing to do with it.

Give it a try. Just give each person an egg and let them see how steady a hand they have. Be prepared for a few broken eggs. This might be a good outdoor project.

3. You can conduct a cool science experiment yourself to see how the tilt of the earth changes as we move from spring through summer. Find the directions at <http://bit.ly/munYF0>

4. Here is a list of things that you can do to celebrate the spring equinox:

Prepare egg dishes & share them with friends.

Decorate your home with spring flowers.

Wear green.

Have a picnic (indoors or out)

5. Plan a spring equinox meal. The Persians celebrate with a dinner made up of seven foods, each one beginning with the letter 'S.' Table decorations include a mirror, a bowl of water with one freshly-picked green leaf, a centerpiece of candles, one for each child in the house and a copy of some sacred text like the Koran or Bible. Accompanying the seven 'S foods are rose water, some sweet desert, fruit, a single fish, yogurt and colored eggs. Why not learn about Persia. Where is it located? Does it have a different name today? <http://bit.ly/mN4cTl>

6. According to pagan legend, the goddess Demeter is reunited with her daughter, Kore, who has been living in the underworld for the past six months. When Kore, whose name means essence of spring, returns to her mother's world, new growth is apparent in the fields, babies are born, and flowers begin to bloom. Other goddesses celebrated in the Spring are Astarte, Isis, Aphrodite, and Cybele. Why not get a couple of books on mythology, Greek, Roman, German, etc. <http://bit.ly/lrucWV> For information on Persia try <http://bit.ly/2mq27N>

Summer Solstice

1. Here is some information on the summer solstice to share by having some “familiar conversations” with your children during dinner, lunch, a walk or while engaged in spring cleaning:

There is a summer solstice and a winter solstice. These happen when the sun reaches its highest or lowest point in the sky at noon, marked by the longest and shortest days.

In the United States and the rest of the northern hemisphere, the first day of the summer season is the day of the year when the Sun is farthest north (on June 20th or 21st). This day is known as the Summer Solstice. It is the longest day of the year. See below for some summer coloring pages

Some people--even some textbooks--say that the solstice, and the hot weather of summer, is produced when the earth's orbit brings it closest to the sun. This is wrong. As Eric W. Weisstein, a research scientist in astronomy at the University of Virginia, explains, the earth is nearest to the sun in January--and we all know that doesn't stop January from being very cold, at least in the northern hemisphere. Scientists call this time the perihelion.

Some say the solstice drives people to do strange things--like getting married under the Arctic midnight sun. In old days, it was known as midsummer, a mystical time of year.

2. You might want to print out--or even act out--a few scenes from Shakespeare's comedy about romance in a fairy kingdom that takes place--when else?--on the summer solstice, otherwise known as A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM. See Coloring pages below

3. Plan your own summer solstice celebration. Make this darling sunny cupcake. Put the ingredients in your Closet. Find a menu at <http://bit.ly/iQRQin> but any yummy food will do.



4. The solstice is a good time to watch the June full moon--called the Strawberry Moon--come up. In ancient times, people usually marked the solstice at sunrise, rather than sunset. This name, strawberry moon, was found in the Algonquin tribe. However, in Europe they called it the Rose Moon. Because of the relatively short season for harvesting strawberries in the month of June, the full moon was named for the strawberry. If you want to take a side adventure check out this site for the names and meanings of all the full moons in a year <http://www.farmersalmanac.com/full-moon-names/> Be forewarned this can take you on a journey to learn about Native Americans!

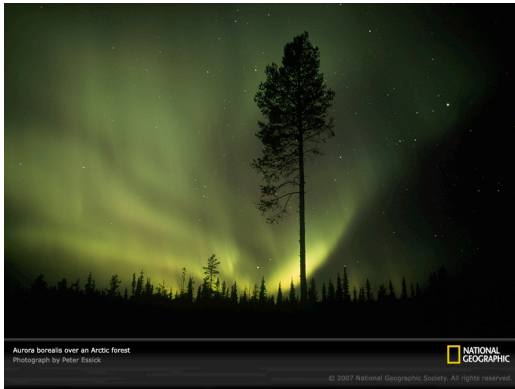
5. One of the earliest known astronomical observatories is Stonehenge, dating from about 3100 BC in Salisbury Downs, England. Stonehenge, as you probably know, is an arrangement of stone slabs standing up straight. What you might not know is that the circle of stone megaliths opens up in the direction of the midsummer sunrise. See color pages below.

6. The Incas also built an entranceway that captured sunrise on the solstice. Today

Peruvians still use the temple to mark the solstice. Add some books on the Incas to your Closet. See color page below

7. For the ancient Romans, midsummer was a time to honor Fors Fortuna, the goddess of fortune. Have some books on Rome. See color pages below.

8. In modern times, the day has special meaning for people north of the Arctic Circle, because it brings them out of months of darkness into a brief period of constant light. Have some books on the Arctic Circle. Who lives there? What animals live there? What is the aurora borealis?



Solstice information taken from <http://bit.ly/jXVqy4>

9. Here are some experiments to better understand why we have a change in seasons:

As time goes by, spring turns to summer, summer turns to autumn, autumn turns to winter and eventually winter becomes spring again. The years roll by and the Earth keeps spinning around the Sun.

Why, though, do these different seasons of the year occur? The simple answer is that it's due to the Earth being tilted at an angle of about 23.5° and to its rotation around the Sun.

The following experiments should give you a better understanding. You will need:

A spherical piece of fruit. An apple with the stalk still on is particularly good, although an orange or lemon will also do the job.

A large spacious darkened room.

A lamp or torch in the middle of it.

Imagine your piece of fruit to be the Earth, while the light is your Sun. The stem or core of the fruit represents the Earth's core and the North and South Poles.

Experiment One: Understanding Night and Day

www.Home---School---Coach.com

Holding your fruit level with the lamp, notice how the side nearest the lamp is illuminated, while the side further away is in darkness. Try spinning the 'Earth' around its core. Picking a particular point on the surface will allow you to track a town through night and day.

Experiment Two: Earth with No Tilt

Holding the 'Earth' upright with the stem on the top, spin the 'Earth' again. Notice that the whole side of the 'Earth' facing the 'Sun' has sunlight from the 'North Pole' to the 'South Pole'. Again, if you pick a point anywhere on the surface, you will notice that it always receives light at some time during the rotation.

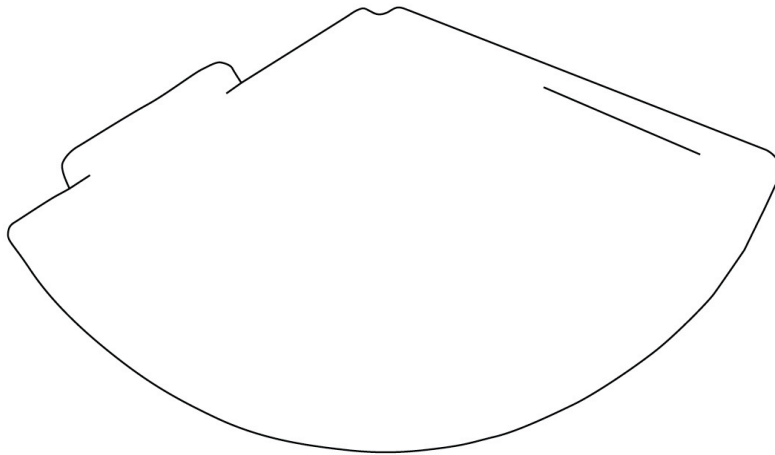
Experiment Three: Tilted Earth

Repeat the experiment as before, but this time tilt the pole of your sphere by about 45° away from or towards the light source. Notice now how despite spinning, the area around one of the poles has sunlight all the time, while the other stays in darkness.

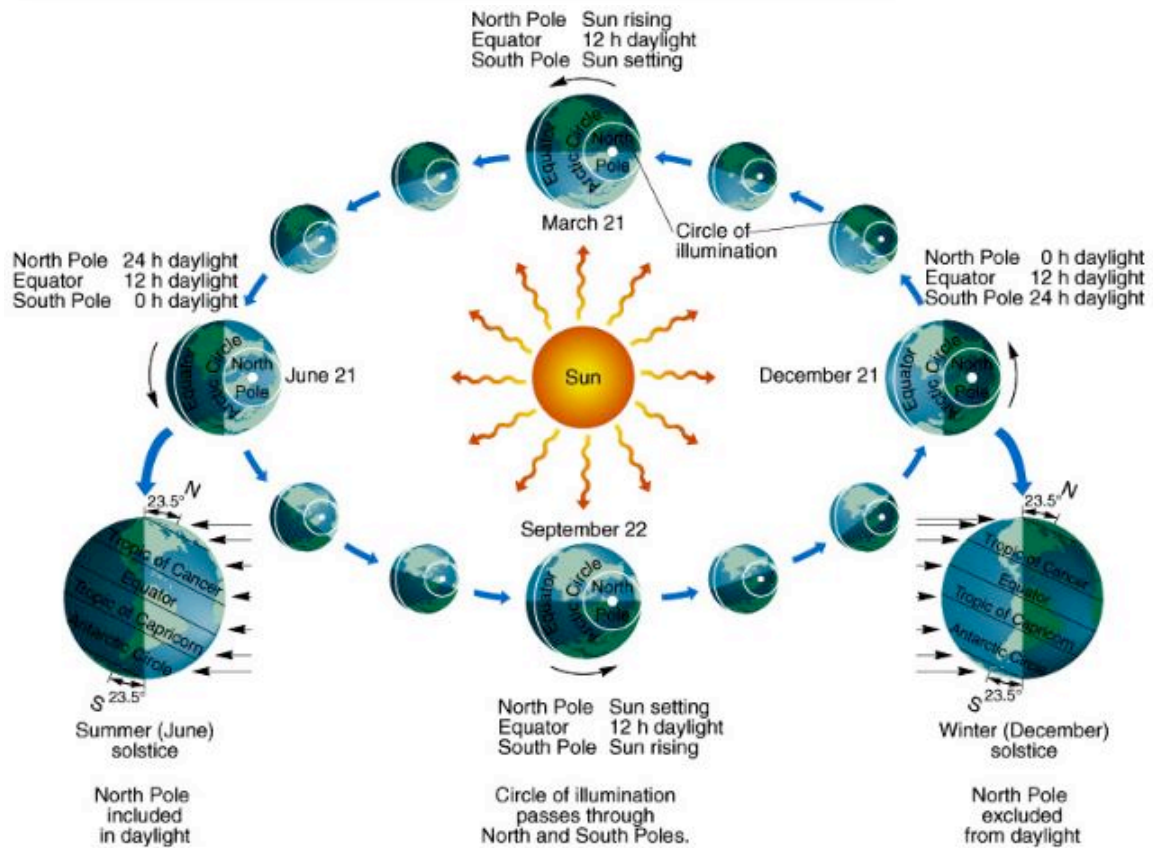
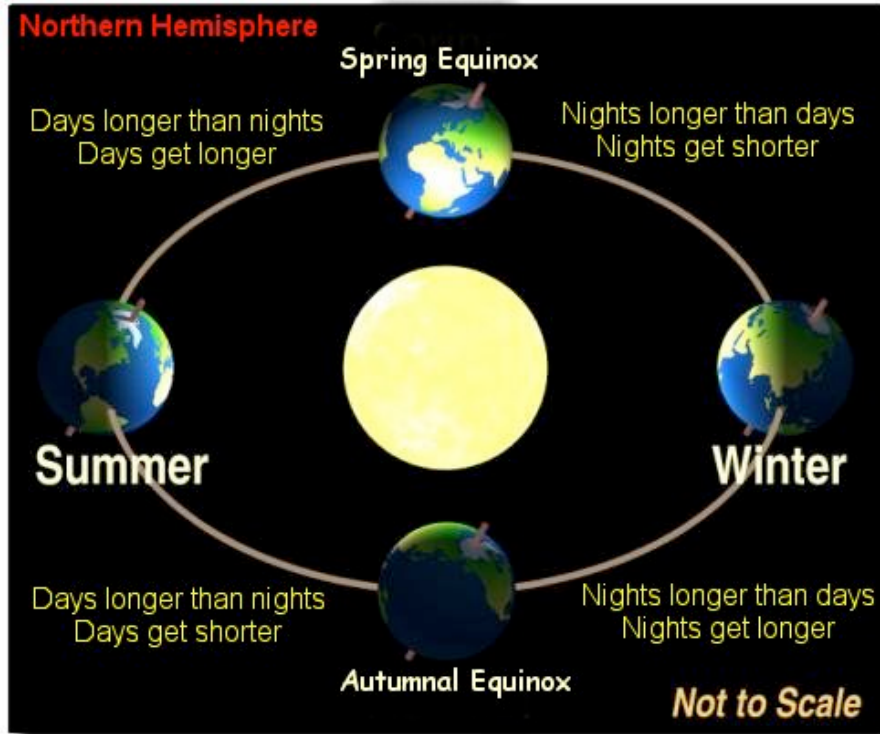
Experiment Four: Creating the Seasons

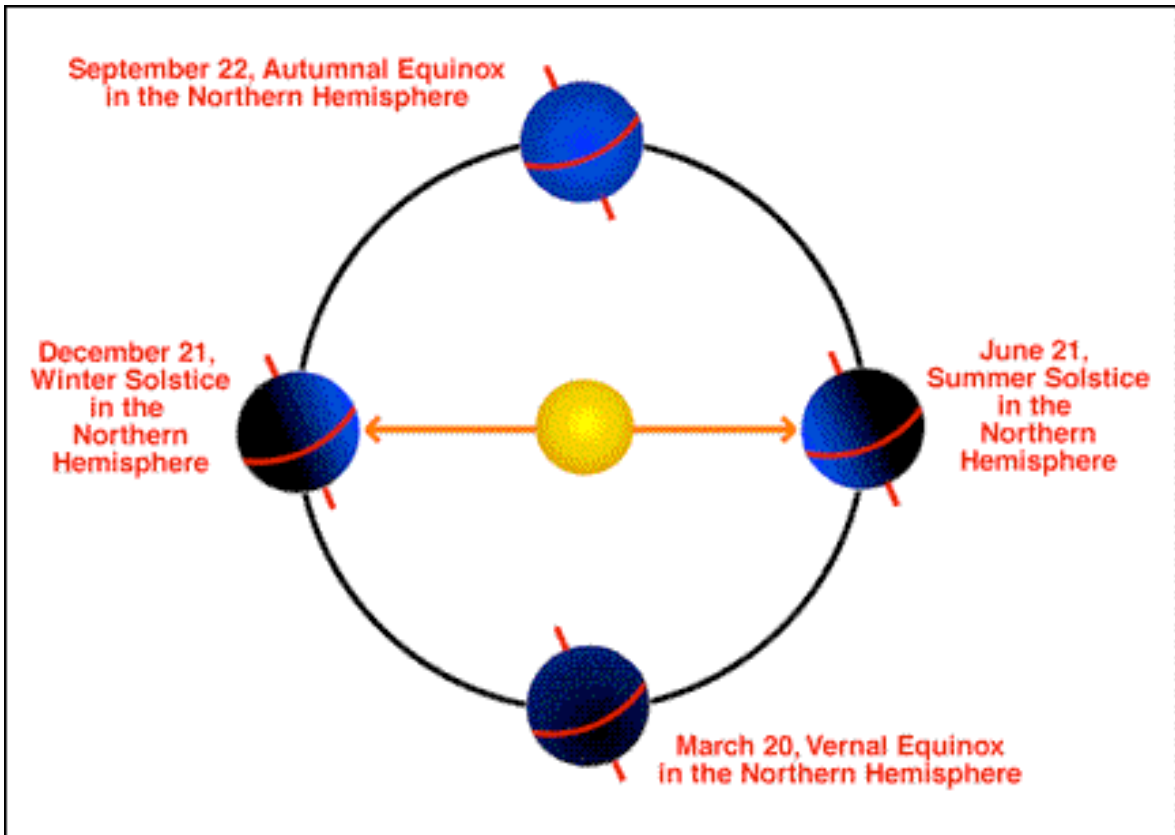
Now, keeping the 'Earth' tilted at the same angle and in the same direction move to the opposite side of your 'Sun'. Spinning it again you will find that the pole that was previously in darkness now has sunlight all the time. Walking around the 'Sun' you will find how this process of change has occurred and if you can imagine yourself as being in a 'town', you will find that the Sun moves higher or lower in the sky.

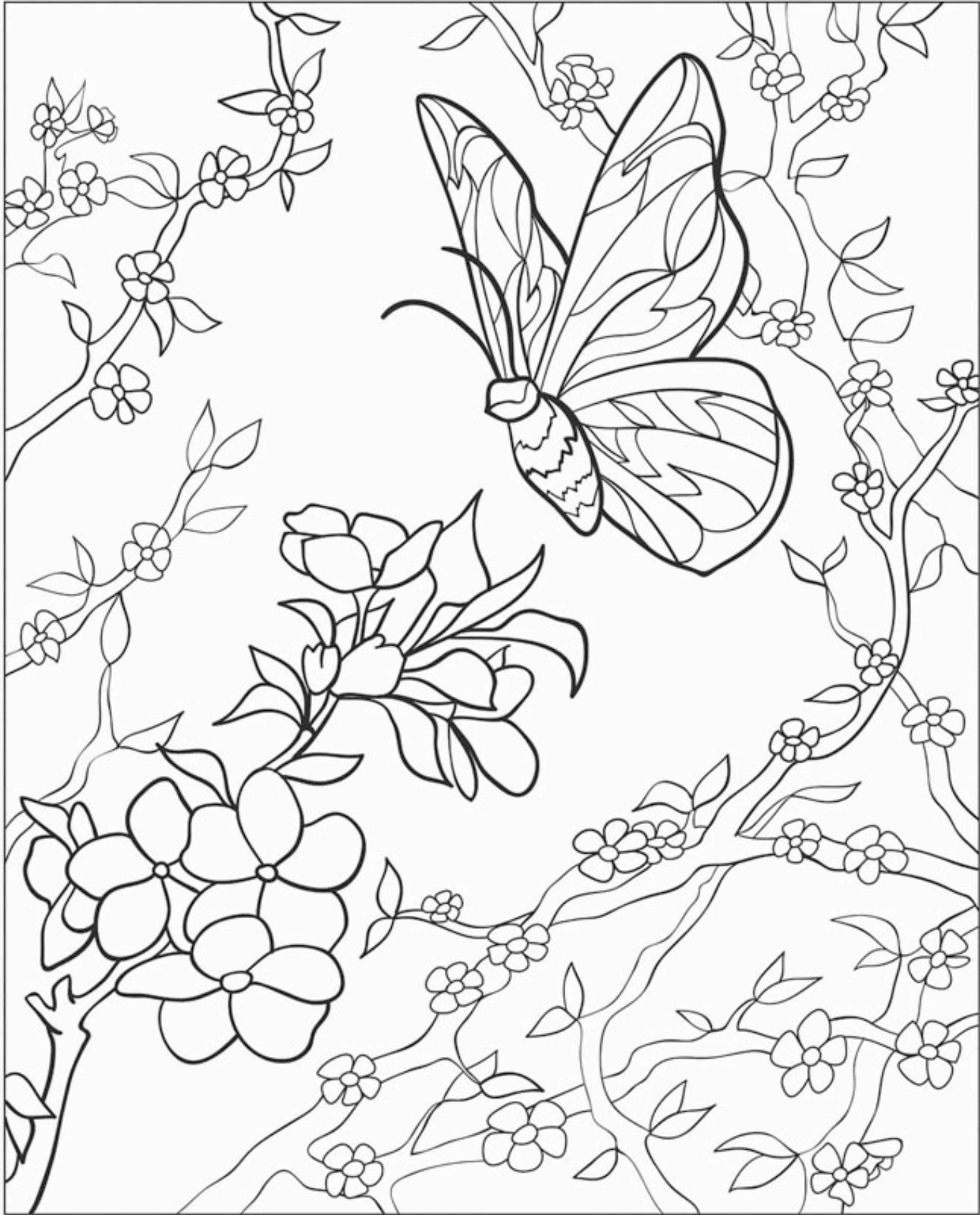
These experiments came from <http://bbc.in/5c6f2L>. You will find lots more information on this site.

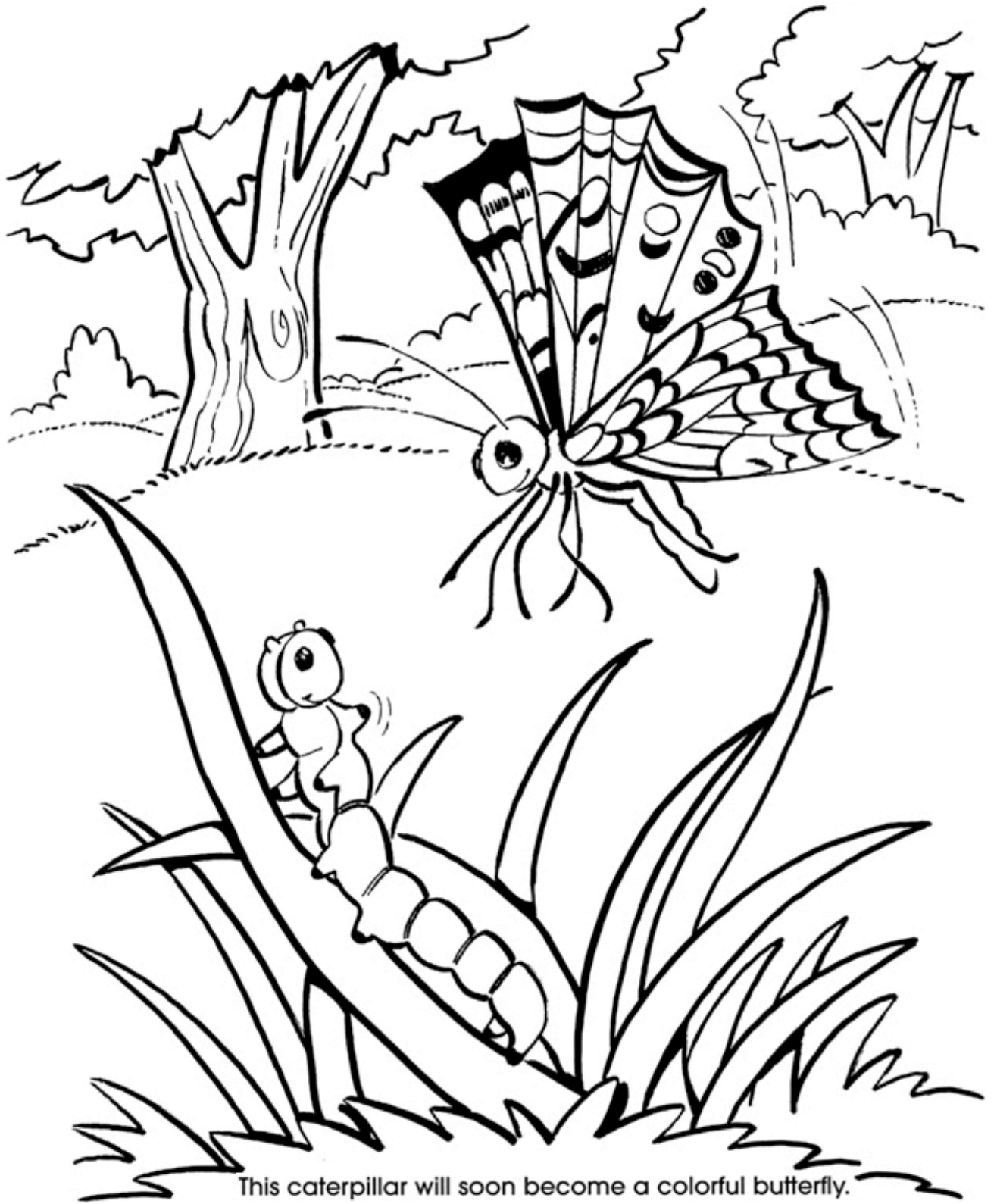


Go to <http://bit.ly/IWKpgS> to print off a full sized template.









This caterpillar will soon become a colorful butterfly.

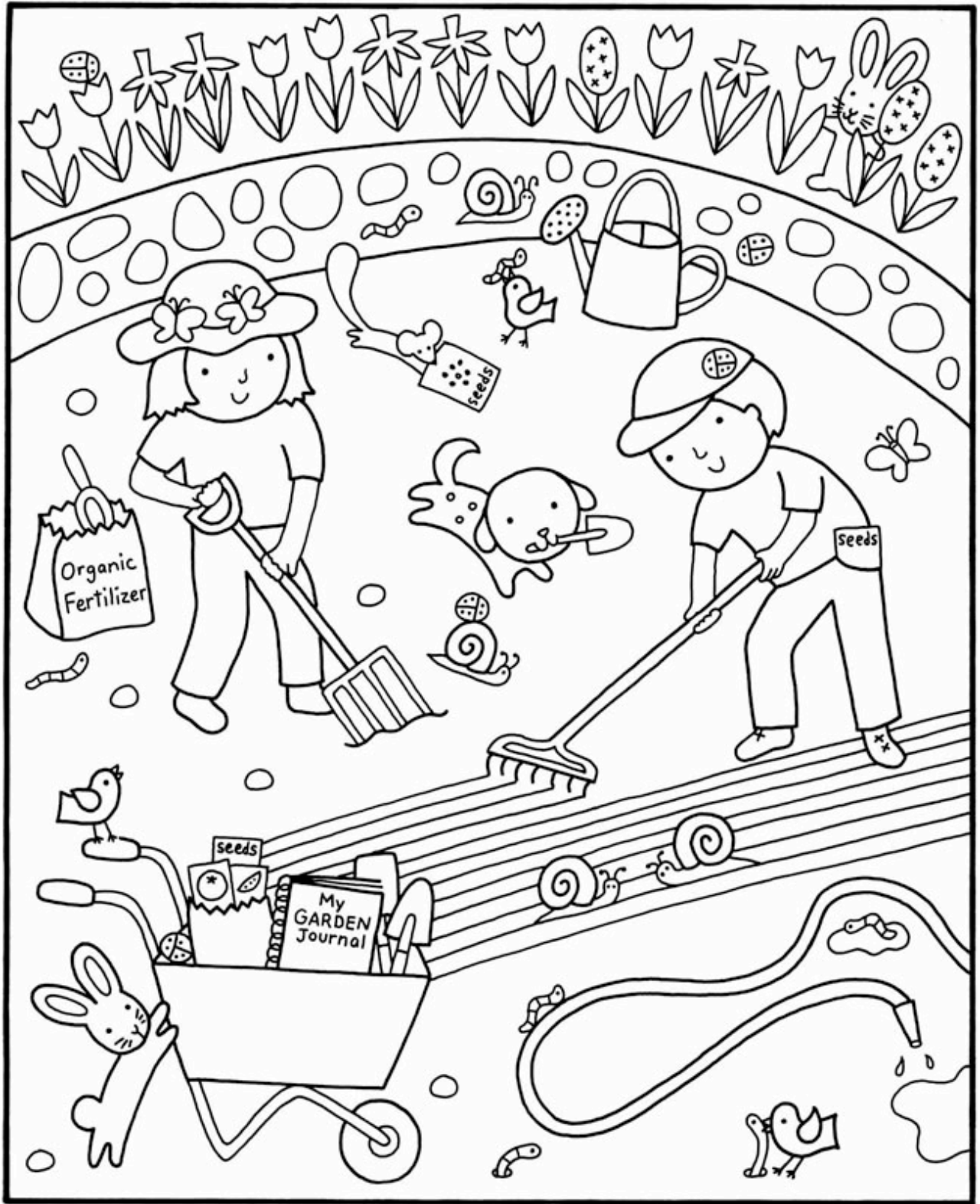


A Spring Garden

Hyacinth (*Hyacinthus orientalis*), Dutch Crocus (*Crocus vernus*).



Tommy and Kim are having fun covering Dad with sand.



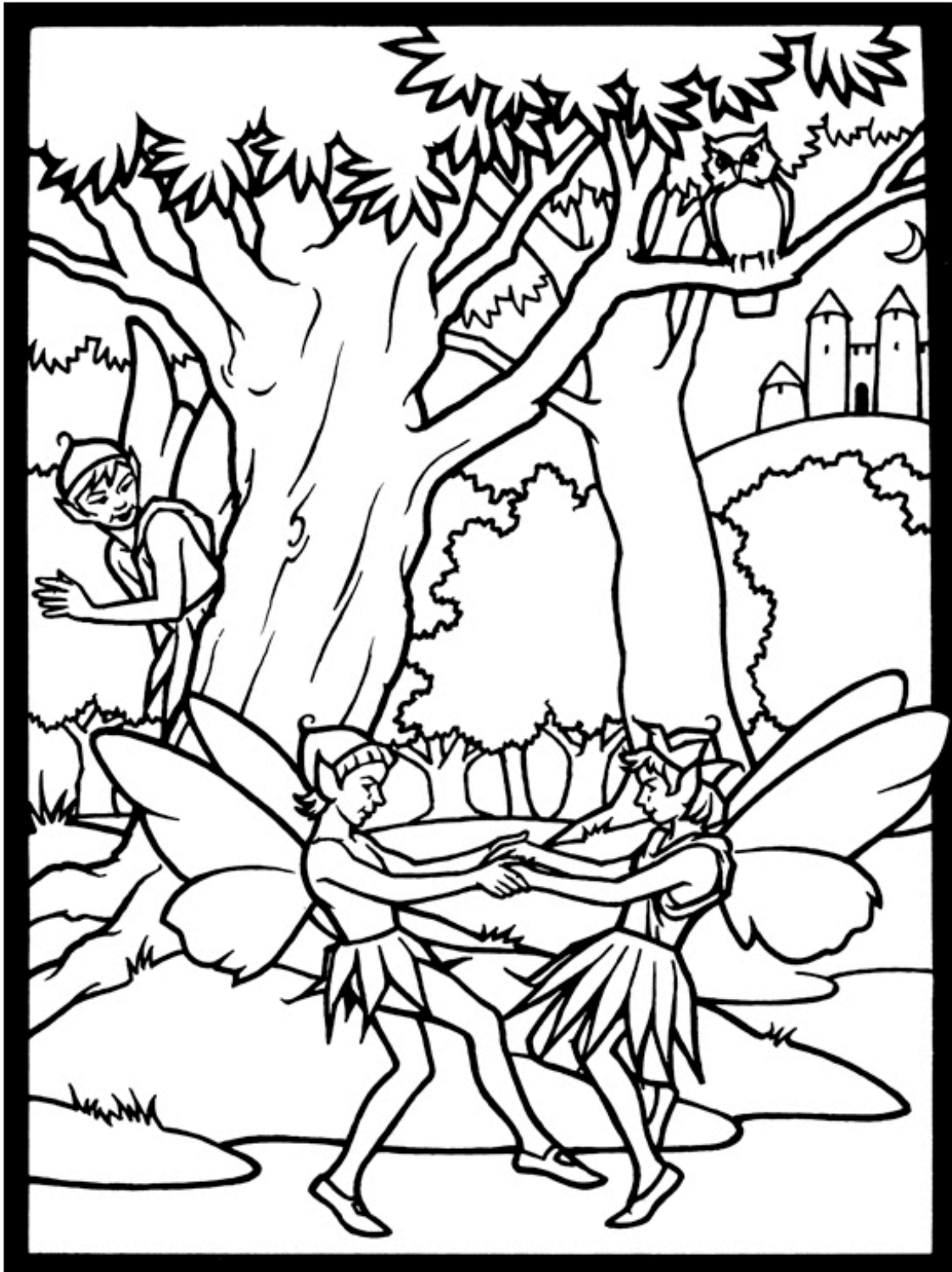
Lucy and Sam get the ground ready for planting.
They have a lot of help from creatures in their garden!



Sam picks the first big red ripe tomato.
Lucy pulls up the first big orange carrot.



Lucy and Sam get out the tools they need from their gardening shed.

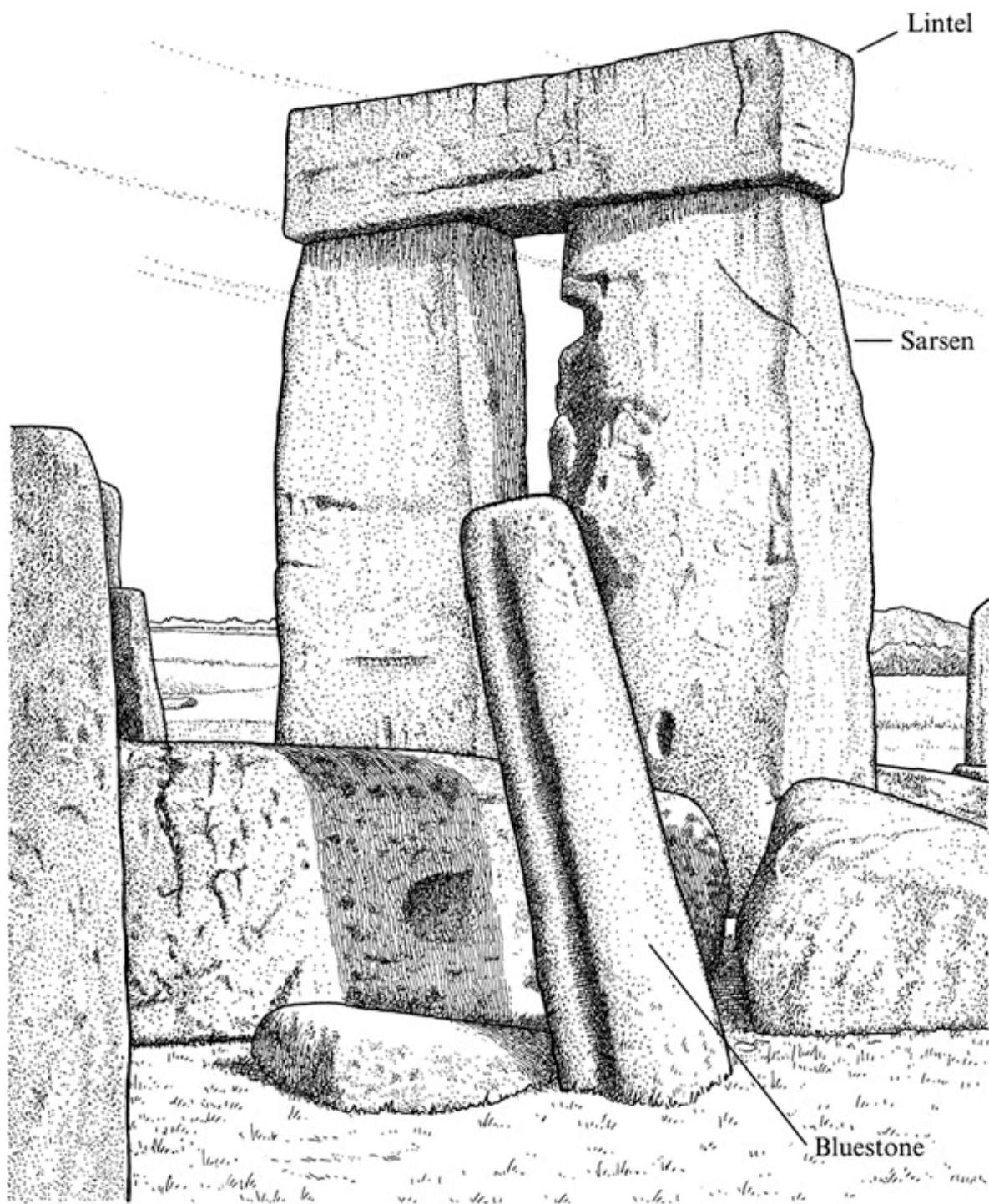


The enchanted wood



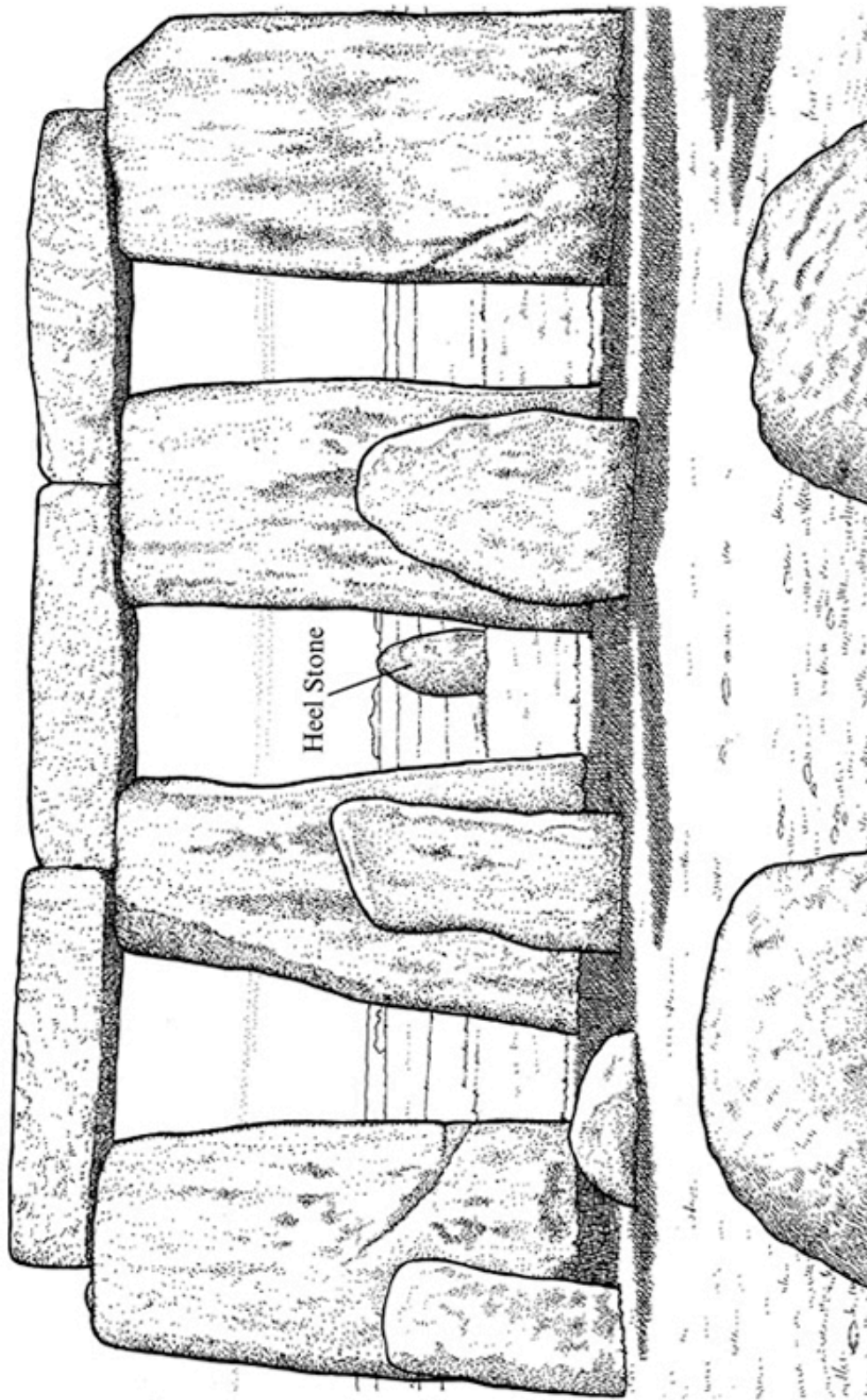




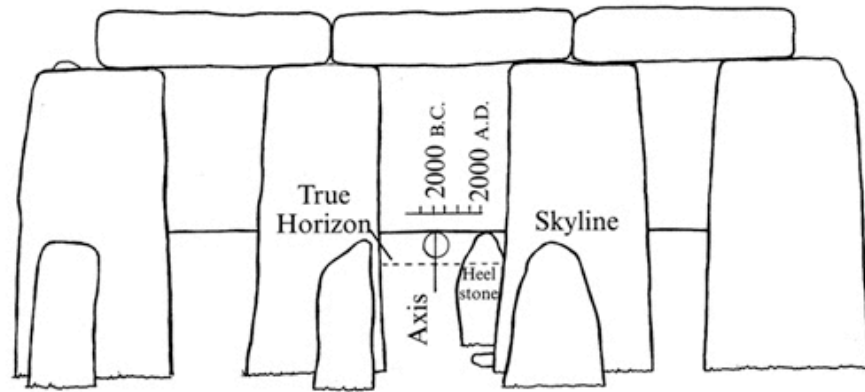


10. Within the enclosure formed by the circle of sarsen stones, the builders also constructed five trilithons—two giant sarsen stones topped by a lintel. These trilithons

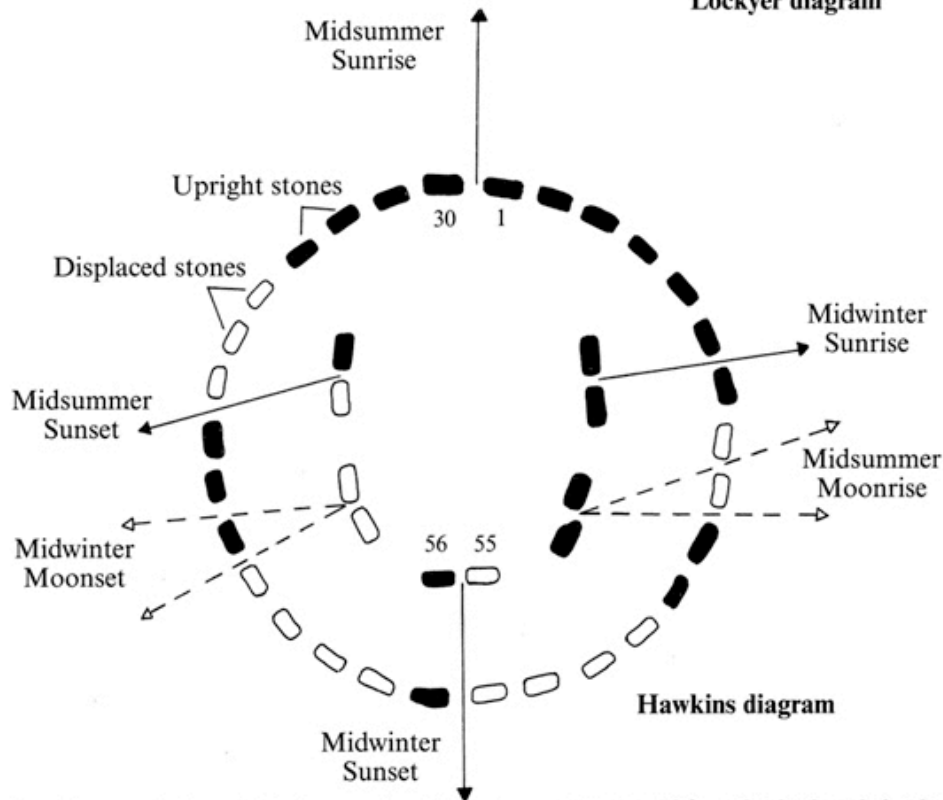
were arranged in the form of a horseshoe. Shown here is a trilithon with a grooved bluestone in the foreground.



11. The Heel Stone (a giant sarsen stone sunk into the earth outside the structure) viewed from the Great Trilithon within. In 2000 B.C. the midsummer sun rose directly over the Heel Stone.



Lockyer diagram



Hawkins diagram

18. Scholars have long sought to explain the meaning of Stonehenge. The upper diagram illustrates observations by Sir Norman Lockyer (1836–1920), a British astronomer who theorized that Stonehenge was aligned so that the midsummer sun arose over the Heel Stone, and that the

monument was used for calendar-based rituals and celebrations. The lower diagram illustrates the theories of Dr. Gerald S. Hawkins (1928–2003), also an astronomer, who thought Stonehenge was a kind of astronomical observatory that could even be used to predict eclipses.

All the above pictures of Stonehenge, Midsummer Nights Dream, gardening, spring and summer came from the free Dover sampler which you can receive every week. Go to this link to sign up. <http://bit.ly/kVrocE>



© 2010 - www.hellokida.com

Picture from <http://bit.ly/j9z470>



Picture from <http://bit.ly/j7xgNI>



Picture from <http://bit.ly/j7xgNI>

www.Home---School---Coach.com



Picture from <http://bit.ly/j7xgNI>