

DRAWING FROM NATURE
Science and Art Lessons for Kids
Los Angeles Times Kids' Reading Room Page



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People go to gardens and other quiet places to escape the noise of everyday life and enjoy the silence. But even within the "silence" of a garden, many sounds can be heard.

If you listen carefully, you might hear the sounds of rustling leaves, the chirping of birds and buzzing of bees.

Perhaps you'll catch the chattering of squirrels as they scurry along down paths. You might hear the cracklings of small creatures as they hop on the dry leaves beneath bushes and trees.

If the garden has a pond, you might hear the rushing of water as it flows over rocks or falls into a stream. There may be the sounds of fish as they break the water's surface with a light splash. People may be talking and humming as they walk, or tapping their feet on a wooden bridge or scuffling along on hardened paths.

The garden's staff and volunteers might be busy at work, talking to each other, scraping their hoes in the ground and clipping their clippers as they prune trees and plants. You might hear their rakes scratching and poking through the gravel, and their saws whining through trunks and branches.

This mixture of sounds can be described as a symphony. The rhythm of the sounds may change from loud to soft and from fast to slow. They can make you happy and glad to be alive. Sometimes, depending on the kinds of sounds and your mood, they can be irritating.

The next time you are in a garden, pay attention to the sounds. Take a pencil and some paper with you and write down your thoughts. How would you describe what you hear? Draw a picture. Give your garden "symphony" a name. Share your experience with a friend or a family.

** Illustration by Hannah, age 5.*