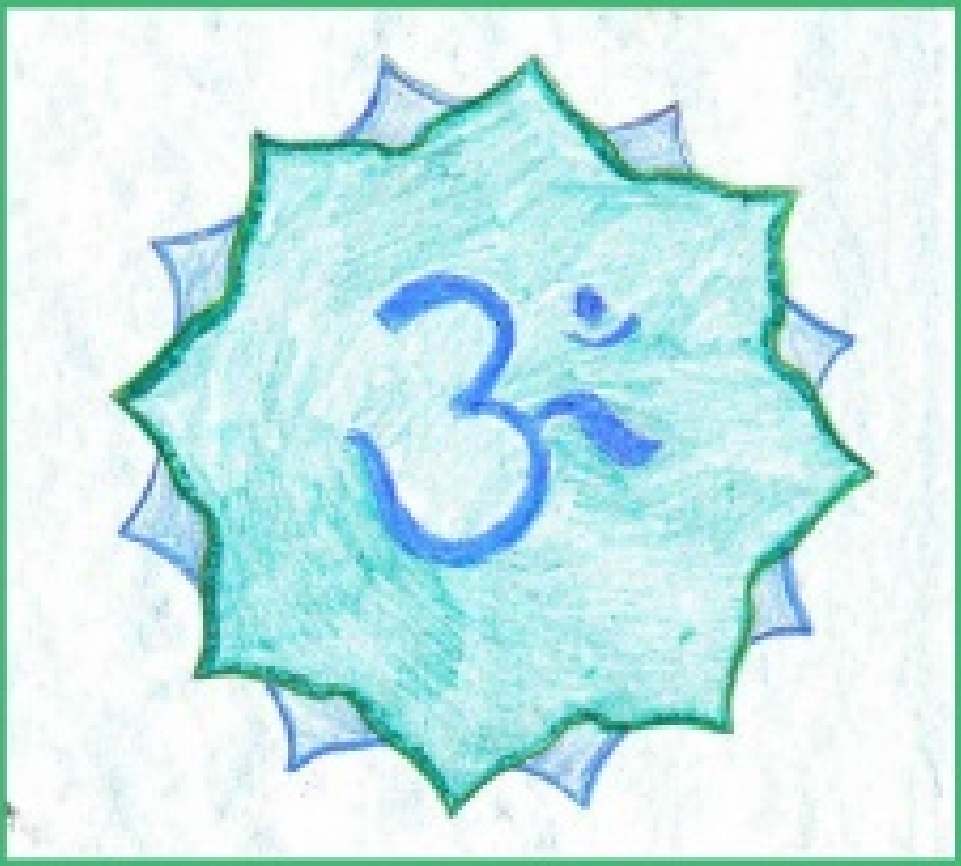
A Journey Through Waldorf Homeschooling Grade Five



by Melisa & Erik Nielsen

Grade 5
Table of Contents

Introduction 7
History of Waldorf schools and anthroposophy 8
Part One: Feeling 11
Chapter 1: Parent care: Inner work for self and family 13
Chapter 2: Ages and stages: Your child at eleven 17
Chapter 3: Setting the mood: What fits in your wagon? 19
Chapter 4: The basics of Waldorf 21
- Your changing rhythm 21
- Festivals 21
- The nature table 25

Part Two: Thinking 27
Chapter 5: Grade Five overview 29
- Who is ready for fifth grade? 29
- Coming to Waldorf late: what should I know? 29
- Movement, circle time and music 29
- Foreign language 32
- Form drawing 32
- Handwork 32
- Painting, coloring and modeling 33
- Language arts, grammar and English 34
- Mathematics 35
- Science 35
- Planning 36

Chapter 6: Grade five lesson blocks 39
- Year at a glance 39
- Weekly/daily schedule 40
- Grade five lesson content 46

Part Three: Willing 157
Chapter 7: Handwork 159
Appendix 161
- Poems and verses 163
- Resources and supplies for grade five 166
- Waldorf Homeschooling Curriculum Chart Grades 1 to 6 167

Bibliography & Other Reading 168

Introduction

"Rich in royal worth and valour,
Rich in holy Vedic lore,
Dasaratha ruled his empire
In the happy days of yore"
~Dorothy Harrer

Grade five is such a fun year, full of so much, it really begins to bridge the gap between the folklore they have had and the history they are encountering. I have to say that writing this grade was a bigger challenge than I originally thought it would be, not because the material was difficult but because there is so much of it and I really had to wrestle with what to bring the children. I stuck with many of the common Waldorf suggestions, but also stepped outside those lines a bit and brought in more cultures, lest they be forgotten. I would have loved to spend time on ancient China and Japan but with all the other cultures in the mix it was impossible. I do encourage you to study these on your own, to seek out resources from your library and give these stories to your children, find stories too that they can read on their own and allow them the opportunity to really explore what interests them.

I found that while writing this year I really looked at faith in a different way. Reading about all these ancient cultures really brings together the idea, the thought and the peace that comes from knowing we are all one body. One can really look at these ancient stories and see roots of many modern day faiths embodied there. It is comforting to me to know that the Universe, God, whatever name you give that energy, hasn't changed a whole lot and that we are still all learning.

May the lessons in this year inspire and ignite not just your children, but you as well!

Blessings!

Melisa Nielsen
October 2012

Chapter 6
Grade Five Lesson Blocks

Year at a glance

September Social studies/history/Geography • 1 week mapping review, going from local to a national level. Introduce US Geography (if you are not American then the geography of your own major area.) • 1 week African studies • 1 week Atlantis studies • 1 week Australian studies • Daily journaling • Daily math practice Celebration of Michaelmas.	**October** LA/social studies/English/Geography • 2 weeks India • 1 week Buddha • 1 week Persia, Zarathustra & Xerxes • Daily journaling • Daily math practice • Festival celebrations **English lessons are integrated into all of their writing	**November** LA/social studies/English • 1 week mathematics review • 2 weeks new math concepts • Daily journaling • Daily math practice Festival celebrations with 1 week Thanksgiving and service.
December LA – The Epic of Gilgamesh/Mathematics/Winter holidays ▪ 1 week new math concepts ▪ *The Epic of Gilamesh* ▪ Daily journaling	**January** Geometry • 4 weeks geometry • Daily journaling • Daily math practice	**February** LA/social studies/English/Geography ▪ 2 weeks Egypt ▪ 2 weeks Greece ▪ Daily math practice ▪ Daily journaling Festival celebrations
March Mathematics • 4 weeks mathematics concepts. • 4 weeks Greek myths • Daily journaling • Festival celebrations	**April** Science/Geography • 4 weeks The Wisdom of Plants • Daily journaling • Daily math practice	**May** Science ▪ 2 weeks The Wisdom of Plants ▪ 2 weeks school wrap up ▪ Daily journaling ▪ Daily math practice

April	
Week 1 – Science, The Wisdom of Plants ☐ Lesson 99– What is a plant? How are they the same as humans? How are they different? How do plants grow (in general) what elements are needed? What process do the seasons play? ☐ Lesson 100 - What are the five branches of the tree of life? Draw out the tree. ☐ Lesson 101 - Bacteria ☐ Lesson 102 – Fungi Part 1. Daily math practice.	Week 2 – Science, The Wisdom of Plants ☐ Lesson 103 – Fungi Part 2 ☐ Lesson 104 – Kingdom protoctista. ☐ Lesson 105 – Begin plants, mosses. ☐ Lesson 106 – Ferns Daily math practice.
Week 3 – Science, The Wisdom of Plants ☐ Lesson 107 – Conifers. ☐ Lesson 108 – Flowering plants, trees ☐ Lesson 109 – Flowering plants, grasses and grains ☐ Lesson 110 – Flowering plants, flowers, annuals and perennials. Daily math practice.	Week 4 – Science, The Wisdom of Plants ☐ Lesson 111 – Diagramming a flowering plant ☐ Lesson 112 – Other plants & the seed cycle. ☐ Lesson 113- Monocotyledon & dicotyledon ☐ Lesson 114 – Photosynthesis Daily math practice.

Lesson 99. What is a plant? How are they different from humans? How do you think they grow? What role do the seasons play? Last year we talked about how animals differed from humans – for this block, start out by discussing how we are the same… the roots or brain of the plant is in the ground where much of the nourishment is – but the ground is only part of the equation – you have to have all the elements to make a plant grow (just like a human!)

Earth	To grow food and walk upon	Root development, nourishment
Air	To breathe	The carbon dioxide in the air allows the plant to transform substances taken from the earth and convert it into food (covered later in photosynthesis.)
Fire (the sun)	Warmth, vitamin D absorption	Warmth that starts the growing process and helps with photosynthesis.
Water	Keeps our bodies running smoothly, quenches and hydrates us	Helps provide hydration for the plant.

There are of course other things that we have that the plant does not. Another thing we share is an etheric body, but beyond that, a plant is stationary, for the most part it cannot get up and leave the room, while its offspring can sometimes move about, the plant lacks the ability to move about. The seasons mark the time in our lives and the lives of plants when we are changing. The rhythms of plants changes just as ours does. Most plants naturally die off in the fall, sleep through the winter, awake in the spring and bloom in the summer (generally speaking of course) – how do we mirror this?

A great drawing for today would be to illustrate the chart above, a comparison between plants and humans. Below is a great poem that can go with your illustration.

Mother Earth by Eileen Hutchins
Mother Earth, Mother Earth
Take our seed and give it birth.

Sister Rain, Sister Rain,
Shed thy tears to swell the grain.

Father Sun, gleam and glow,
Until the roots begin to grow.

Brother Wind, breathe and blow
The blade green will grow.

Lesson 100. Draw the tree of life with the five branches below.

- Kingdom Monera
- Kingdom Protoctista
- Kingdom Animals
- Kingdom Plants
- Kingdom Fungi

Take the time to draw out the tree of life. Afterward take a few minutes to discuss how it is like a family tree and give your child time to draw out their personal family history as well. I like this imagery because it shows us all as one whole. As a separate writing assignment, you could have your child write something memorable about someone on their family tree.

Lesson 101. We will start with the lower plants and move up through trees and flowers. Today let's talk about bacteria. Most people think of bacteria and they go right to the icky kinds, the ones that make us sick – but in reality there are so many good kinds of bacteria. They are the smallest life form on the Earth, we all carry some with us in our bodies everyday. There are bacteria that live in our intestines to help us stay healthy and fight off the bad bacteria. One is called lactobacillus acidophilus and it is found in some of the foods we eat like yogurt, kefir and others. Many plants could not survive without bacteria, some live in the roots of plants helping them to gain the nutrition they need from the Earth to survive. The oldest known bacteria are cyanobacteria, they date back 3.5 billion years!

Make yogurt together!

Here's a recipe I came across and changed a bit to suit us.

SERVES 6-8
1/2 gal. milk
1/2 cup yogurt or starter (make sure you are using a good live, plain yogurt)
1/2 pint heavy cream (Optional for more richness)

METHOD:

Pour the milk into a saucepan and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. When it comes to a boil, add ½ pint of heavy cream, and pour into an earthen bowl or Pyrex dish. When it is lukewarm (105 -110 degrees), stir the yogurt/starter with a spoon until it is smooth and dilute it with some of the warm milk. Pour this mixture into warm milk and stir.

Wrap the warm milk (with yogurt starter), and leave it in a warm place, undisturbed, for at least eight to 10 hours. Yogurt should be set by then. Place pot in refrigerator until cold, and ready to serve. You can use your homemade yogurt as a starter for the next batch.

Use your yogurt in some recipes, as dressings or sauces, or alone. You can also make a kefir type drink by adding some milk to it and some sort of flavoring.

Bad bacteria like e. coli can live in undercooked meats and can make people very sick. It is important to keep a good store of good bacteria living in our bodies to properly protect us from the bad.

Lesson 102. Fungi part 1. Sometimes when we think of fungus, we think of the icky stuff! We'll cover that later in the week, first we are going to talk about fungus that we encounter in our foods. Some fungi are parasitic, meaning that they need to grow on other plants or animals in order to get the nutrients to survive. Other fungi are decomposers. These types of fungus get their nutrients from dead plants or animals. They can be seen as the recyclers of nature, they also help keep our world clean. As they consume this dead matter, they create carbon dioxide and we know from earlier lessons that carbon dioxide is what plants need in photosynthesis – we will cover this a bit more later.

There are about 72,000 known species of fungi. Sac fungi account for roughly 30,000 of those species. Included in there are yeast, lichen, morels, truffles and more. They are called sac fungi because of how they release their spores, through tiny little sacs on the head of the fungus. What are spores? A spore is a little like a seed in that it contains what is needed for new life, but it is not as self contained as a seed, it needs to be more dependent on other life forms to grow.

Lichen are some of the recyclers of the fungi world. They absorb some of the toxins in the air. Lichens of different kinds are also used by some Native American weavers as dyes for their yarn. (*Note: if you are also teaching a third grader studying Native Americans, this could be a great crossover subject that could be combined and taught together.)*

Morels are another type of fungus, the morel mushroom looks different from other mushrooms in that they have a netting over the head portion that has deep depressions in it. Many people love morel mushrooms and think they are very tasty. It is worth reminding your children that they should never eat a mushroom that you have not approved of!

Another type of sac fungus is yeast. Yeasts that are used in breads, beer and in fermented drinks such as kombucha along with others. Imperfect yeasts such as candida will be discussed later. Yeasts need the conditions to be just right in order for them to grow. When you add water and sugar to active dry yeast then it begins to bubble and ferment the sugar to create ethanol and carbon dioxide. The yeasts in some breads is responsible for the rising. Make bread together. Take time to watch the yeast ferment, smell it as it changes. Then make your dough and watch it rise. Enjoy your creation afterward. If you get really brave, you can make some fresh butter to go with it (a bit of cream in a baby food jar and shake, shake, shake!)

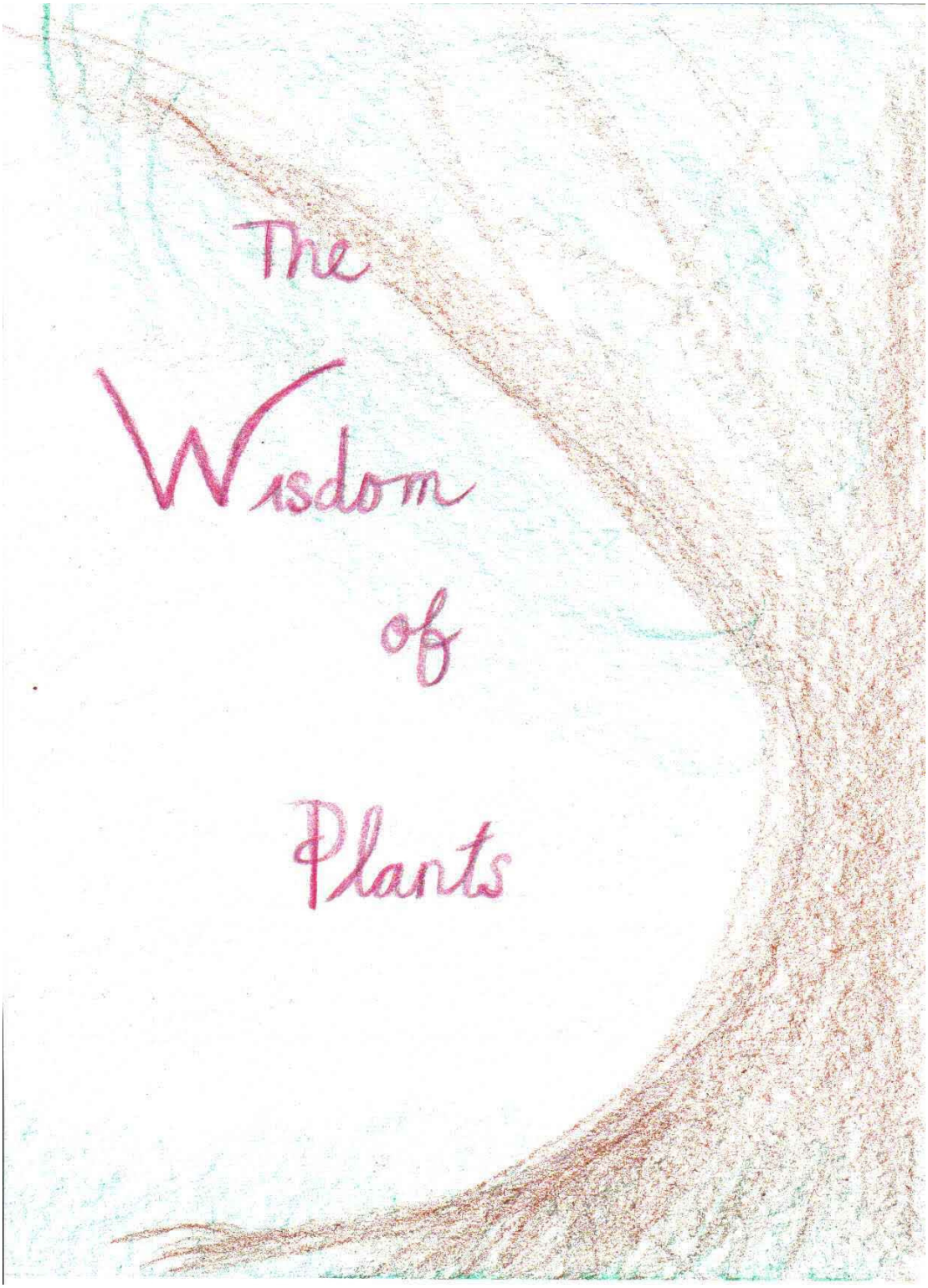
Basic Kombucha recipe:

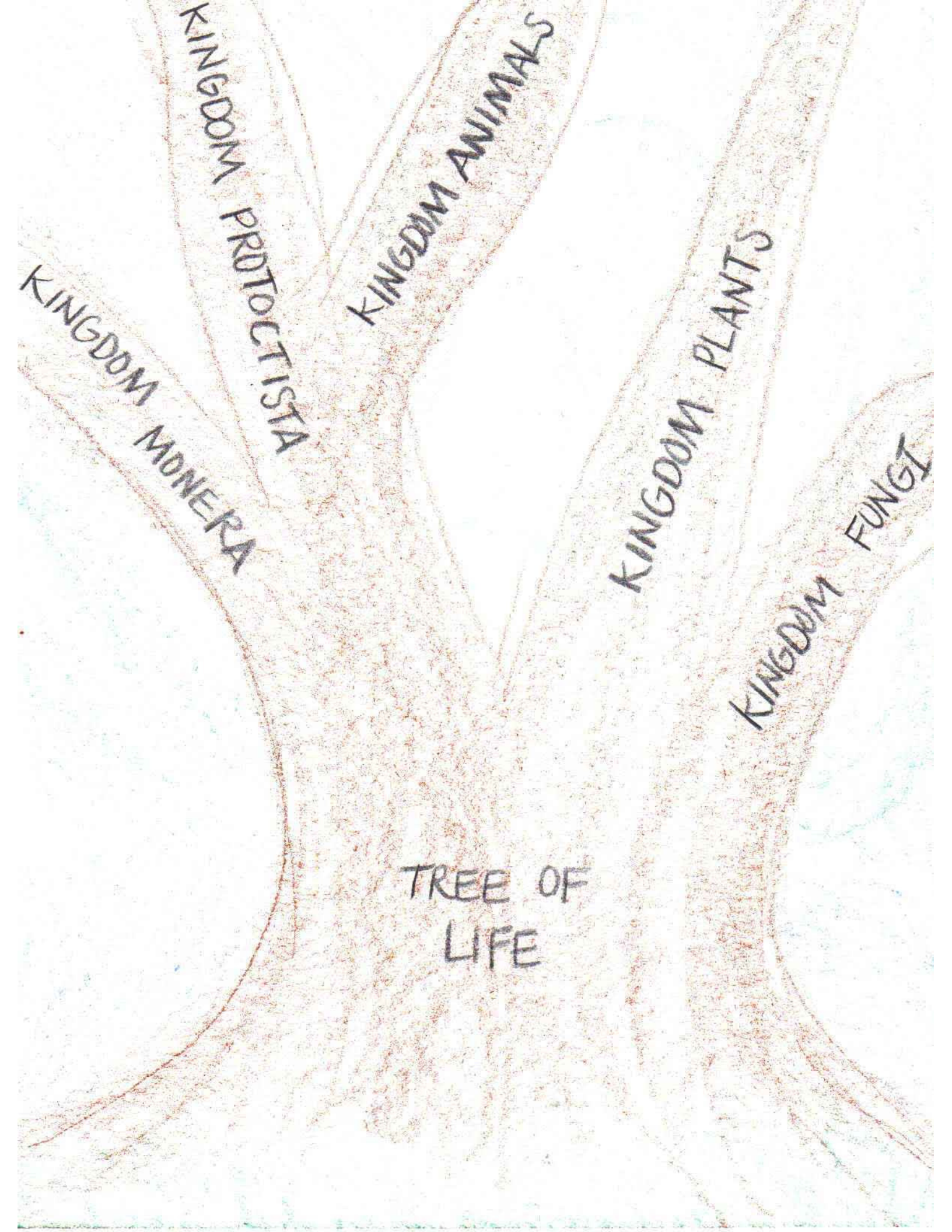
1. Make tea using five black tea bags, a cup of white sugar, and three quarts of boiled purified water. Let tea seep for 15 minutes before removing tea bags.
2. Cool to room temperature.
3. Add the kombucha starter and a cup of previously prepared Kombucha tea.
4. Cover the container with a paper towel or coffee filter or breathable cloth and secure it with a rubber band, elastic, or string to keep out insects and airborne contaminants.
5. Place it where it will remain relatively undisturbed and away from bright lights.
6. Let it ferment for about seven to 10 days depending on the growing temperature and how acidic (sour) you like it with the optimum temperature being approximately 72 to 74 degrees Fahrenheit or 21 to 22 degrees Celsius.
7. Remove the original kombucha starter and the new baby colony that formed on the surface of the tea.
8. Strain the Kombucha tea and store it in the refrigerator.

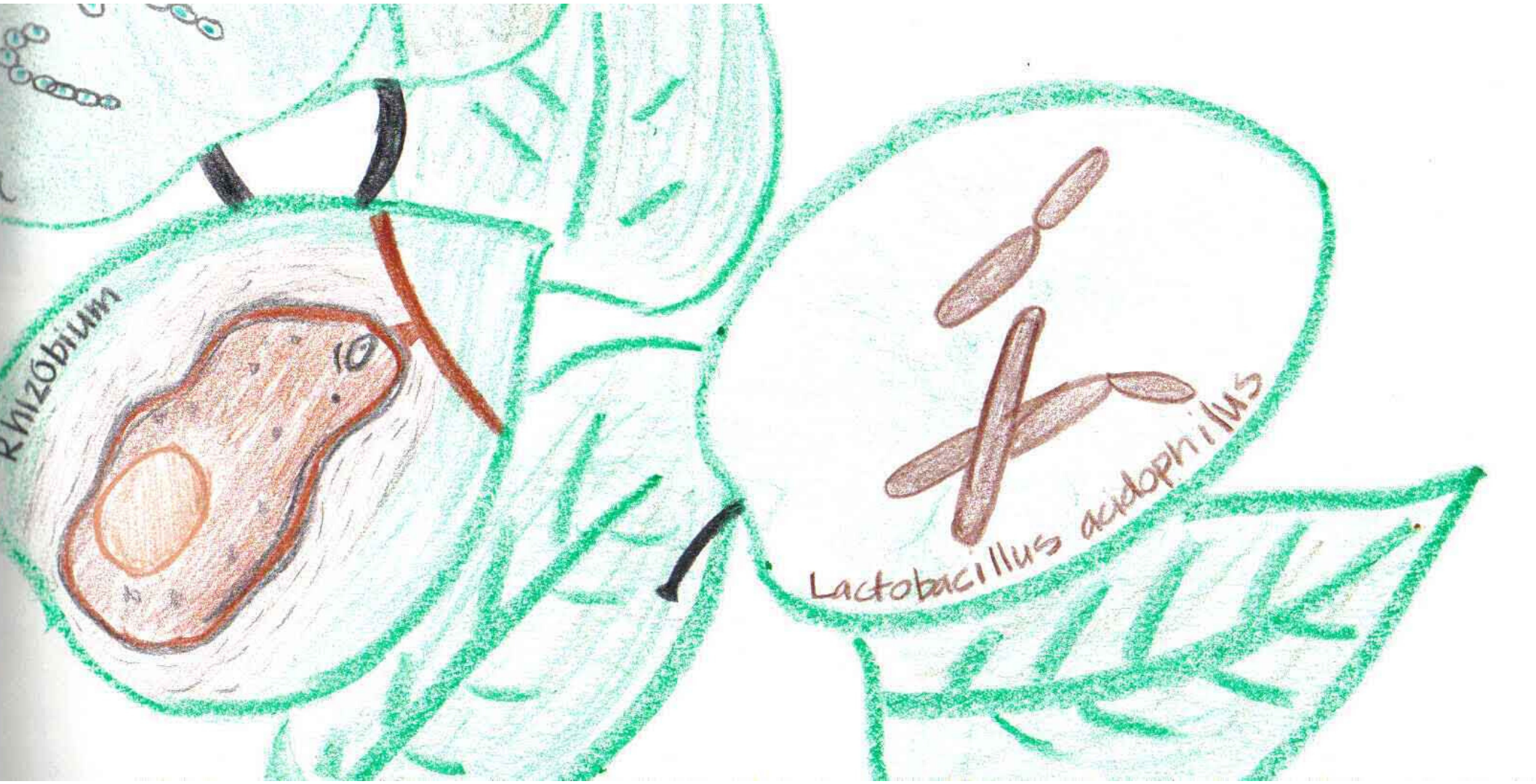
Most people will agree that a glass container is best. Never let metal touch your tea. Most health food stores have kombucha starters and simple instructions on how to make this basic recipe as well as many others.

"Wildness is…everywhere: ineradicable populations of fungi, moss, mold, yeasts, and such, that surround and inhabit us. Deer mice on the back porch, deer bounding across the freeway, pigeons in the park. Spiders in the corners." ~ Gary Snyder, *Sierra*

Main lesson picture samples to accompany sample lessons.




KINGDOM PROTOCTISTA
KINGDOM ANIMALS
KINGDOM MONERA
KINGDOM PLANTS
KINGDOM FUNGI
TREE OF LIFE


Rhizobium
Lactobacillus acidophilus

British Soldier Lichen
Armillaria bulbosa