



The Gift of Blackberries

July 16, 2021



"I'd lie on my stomach in my favourite patches, watching the berries grow sweeter and bigger under the leaves. Each tiny wild berry was scarcely bigger than a raindrop, dimpled with seeds under the cap of leaves. From that vantage point I could pick only the reddest of the red, leaving the pink ones for tomorrow." Braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Wall Kimmerer



On this morning in Exploring Mother Nature at Millpond, Eliza and her mom discovered the low lying wild blackberry bushes lining our walk on the trails. Red un-ripened berries and juicy, glistening deep purple berries presenting as almost black greeted us on long prickly canes lined with fresh green leaves. The berries were plucked by mom and by Eliza with her strong fingers and sometimes held in her cupped hand and with a gentle coaching to eat only what mom advised was safe, she accepted the berry into her mouth. Her face gave little about the taste but her return to foraging spoke of a connection to the gifts the plant offered. For an hour she stopped and gazed into plants looking for the berries, picking one at a time slowly, examining them and the juices that leaked onto her hands giving her a clue as to the contents. I was left curious about a child's connection to the earth when the earth offers food. The canes reached out like arms as if offering themselves personally to Eliza. *Did Eliza make a connection to the berries from the store and their origin?*

We left the forest that day with tummies full and fingers stained, evidence of the gifts the plants offered. Eliza took home a new relationship, one she shared with the animals and other walkers. I wonder what she will think when she sits down to her next bowl of berries at home and the juice stains her fingers and bursts in her mouth. The beginning of a beautiful earth centered relationship.