

“Pawpaw Patch” Play-Party Games

You can listen to my version of “Pawpaw Patch” here on this site by clicking on the “Listen” link. Or you can buy the song from the album *This Is Our House* by clicking on the “Buy” link.

Many traditional songs from the Appalachian Mountains are connected to games or dances. They are often referred to as play-party games or singing games. Here are a couple of traditional games to play with “Pawpaw Patch.”

Game #1

The way I often present this song to kids is with simple hand motions. You can make up your own or use the ones below. You can also change “Susie” to the names of the children playing.

*Where oh where is poor little Susie
Where oh where is poor little Susie
Where oh where is poor little Susie
Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch*

Simply put your hand on your forehead above your eyes as if you are looking for something that is far away. Then, on the last line, point behind you with your thumb.

*Pickin’ up pawpaws, put ‘em in her pocket
Pickin’ up pawpaws, put ‘em in her pocket
Pickin’ up pawpaws, put ‘em in her pocket
Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch*

For each of the first three lines, reach down to the ground and pretend to pick up a pawpaw and put it in your pocket. For the last line, point behind you with your thumb.

*Come on boys, let’s go find her
Come on boys, let’s go find her
Come on boys, let’s go find her
Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch*

For the first three lines, pull your hand towards you like you are beckoning someone to come to you. For the last line, point behind you with your thumb.

Scroll down for another game.

Game #2

Preparation:

- Pair up partners.
- Form two lines facing one another and have the partners stand in different lines across from one another.
- Choose one of the children from the head couple at the top of the line and use their name as the first name in the song. They will be the "head child" for the first time through the song.

The game (dance):

Where oh where is poor little (name)
Where oh where is poor little (name)
Where oh where is poor little (name)
Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch

head child skips around the
outside of both lines

Pickin' up pawpaws, put 'em in her pocket
Pickin' up pawpaws, put 'em in her pocket
Pickin' up pawpaws, put 'em in her pocket
Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch

head child grabs the
hand of their partner,
skips around again with partner

Come on boys, let's go find her
Come on boys, let's go find her
Come on boys, let's go find her
Way down yonder in the pawpaw patch

The couple starts around again. All of the other couples take hands and follow them. The head couple stops at the bottom of the line and makes an arch. All of the other couples pass through the arch and stop at the head of the line. Now there is a new head couple and the dance begins again.

Game #2 learned from:

Jameson, Gladys, *Sweet Rivers of Song: Authentic Ballads, Hymns, Folk Songs from the Appalachian Region*, Berea College, Berea, KY, 1967.