



PERFORMANCE GUIDE

THE TINY TREE

BY ANNIE CUSICK WOOD



WWW.HTYWEB.ORG

**ALOHA FROM HTY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,
ERIC JOHNSON**



Aloha!

Welcome to the work of Honolulu Theatre for Youth. We are delighted to share these resources with you. We believe wholeheartedly in the power of stories to bring us together. When that happens, we often find great similarities with our fellow humans that strengthen our sense of belonging and shared purpose. Coming from a place that is both geographically remote and culturally diverse, we treasure stories in our community and are deeply honored to share this one with you.

Thank you so much for taking the time to look over these resource materials. If you would like more information on the company or our work, please look us up at htyweb.org.

CONTENTS

ALOHA FROM HTY ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, ERIC JOHNSON	2
PRODUCTION CREDITS	3
SYNOPSIS	4
NOTES FROM PLAYWRIGHT/DIRECTOR, ANNIE CUSICK WOOD	4
HOW DOES A SEED GROW?	5
HOW DO TREES KEEP OUR PLANET HEALTHY?	5
BOOKS FOR THE CLASSROOM	6
VIDEOS AND WEBSITES	6
CLASSROOM ACTIVITY: SCIENCE CONNECTIONS	8
DRAMA ACTIVITY: STORY DRAMATIZATION	9
DRAMA ACTIVITY: RESPONDING/CREATING AFTER THE SHOW	10
ABOUT HTY	11



PRODUCTION CREDITS

Written and Directed by
Annie Cusick Wood

Set, Costume and Prop Design by
Karen Kiefer

Lighting Design by
Chesley Cannon

Sound Design by
Mattea Mazzella

Performed by
Mattea Mazzella and Hermenigildo Tesoro, Jr.
Sean-Joseph Choo (Understudy)

Technical Direction
Eric West

Stage Manager
Sarah Danvers

Performance Guide by Reiko Ho
National Core Arts Standards compiled by Daniel A. Kelin II

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A very special mahalo to our Partners:
Department of Land and Natural Resources, Year of the Community Forest
Trees for Honolulu's Future



ABOUT OUR SHOW

SYNOPSIS

Embark on an unforgettable cosmic adventure with Matt and his dad aboard Roger Rocketship as they explore distant galaxies. When their spaceship malfunctions, they land on a mysterious planet and discover a magical blue seed. Filled with upbeat songs, delightful creatures, and exciting adventures, this enchanting tale teaches the importance of caring for our planet and each other.

NOTES FROM PLAYWRIGHT/ DIRECTOR, ANNIE CUSICK WOOD



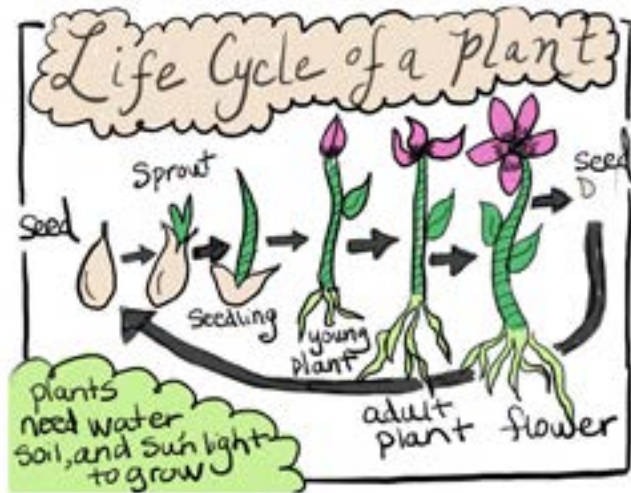
It's a rare and special experience to return to a piece years later and rediscover it with fresh eyes. I first created this show in 2016, at the same time I also planted an indigenous hala tree with Healthy Climate communities on Hamakua marsh in Kailua. Both the tree and the play have grown in ways I could never have imagined. *The Tiny Tree* play evolved into a puppet film that went on to win Best Fantasy Film at the San Diego Children's Film Festival, and the hala tree is now a beautiful strong tree surrounded by many new native trees that we hope, one day, becomes a forest. At HTY, we are lucky to be able to care for our stories in this way, to revisit them, nurture them, and share them with new audiences. What I love most about this process is the longevity of the work — how a story can take root, grow, and be reimagined over time. Like seeds in a forest, stories need tending. They need care, patience, and the right environment to thrive. In the same way, we are reminded to care for the world around us, and for one another just as the trees do.

We are delighted to bring this show to a new generation of space adventurers, forest guardians, and planet protectors. May it spark imagination, deepen connection, and remind us all of the role we each play in caring for our world. And if you feel inspired, go plant a tree — it's a beautiful place to begin.

Mahalo for being part of its continuing journey.

show photos by Chesley Cannon

HOW DOES A SEED GROW?



In our play, Matt and Dad find a magical blue seed that they nurture. That seed becomes a tiny tree. How do seeds grow?

The life cycle of a seed, or plant, is a continuous circle featuring four main stages:

1. a seed
2. germination (sprouting)
3. seedling
4. adult plant that makes new seeds.

When a seed is supplied with water, soil, and warmth, it wakes up! It begins germinating which means that it begins

sprouting and growing roots. It then becomes a little plant or a seedling, and eventually grows up and produces flowers that create new seeds, so the cycle continues.

(Check out the related worksheet/activity in our Activities for the Classroom section.)

HOW DO TREES KEEP OUR PLANET HEALTHY?

Trees are essential for life on Earth. Data from the U.S. Forest Service shows that a **single tree** can provide a day's worth of oxygen for up to four people, will absorb over 48 pounds of carbon dioxide annually, and provides crucial habitat for hundreds of species.

Facts about how trees keep the Earth healthy

1. Trees filter the air and keep the Earth cool.

Trees filter pollutants like nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, and carbon monoxide, while releasing clean oxygen. They also act as natural "air conditioners," reducing temperatures by up to 25° F.

2. Trees protect against floods and water pollution.

Roots absorb water, mitigating storm runoff and preventing soil erosion. Tree roots also filter harmful chemicals and pollutants from storm runoff that ends up in lakes, streams and rivers.

3. Trees promote biodiversity.

A single tree can provide food, nesting spots, and shelter for hundreds of species of insects, fungi, birds, and mammals.

4. Trees improve our health and well-being.

One study showed that just looking at trees through a window reduced stress in a workplace. Exposure to trees is linked to reduced stress, improved mental health, and faster healing times for patients.

(Check out the links to websites about trees on our Resources page.)

BOOKS FOR THE CLASSROOM



- *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle
- *Tell Me Tree: All About Trees for Kids* by Gail Gibbons
- *Plant the Tiny Seed* by Christie Matheson
 - *We Planted a Tree* by Diane Muldrow
 - *What Do You See When You Look at a Tree?* by Emma Carlisle
 - *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein
 - *Up in the Garden, Down in the Dirt* by Kate Messner, illustrated by Christopher Silas Neal
 - *The Amazing Life Cycle of Plants* by Kay Barnum, illustrated by Maddie Frost
 - *The Girl Who Planted Trees* by Caryl Hart
 - *The Great Kapok Tree* by Lynne Cherry

VIDEOS AND WEBSITES

- Little Bookworms read along of *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle about the life cycle of a seed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VybLoRyvZvI>
- *The Power of One Tree* from U.S. Department of Agriculture: <https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/blog/power-one-tree-very-air-we-breathe>
- *The Canopy Tree Project: Five Reasons We Need Trees for a Healthy Planet* - Earthday.org: <https://www.earthday.org/5-reasons-we-need-trees-for-a-healthy-planet/>
- Healthy Climate Communities: <https://healthyclimatecommunities.org>
- Trees for Honolulu’s Future: <https://www.treesforhonolulu.org>
- Department of Land and Natural Resources- 2025 Year of the Community Forest: <https://dlnr.hawaii.gov/dofaw/trees/>

The Tiny Tree



POST SHOW DISCUSSION

WHO ARE THE MAIN CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY?

WHAT HAPPENS IN THE PLAY? DISCUSS THE "PLOT."

WHAT IS AN IMPORTANT LESSON(S) THAT MATT LEARNS?

DO YOU KNOW HOW A TREE GROWS? DISCUSS.

BASED ON OUR PLAY, WHY DO YOU THINK TREES ARE
IMPORTANT?

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF OUR PERFORMANCE?
AND WHY?

JOURNEY OF A SEED

In our play, Matt and Dad plant and care for the magic seed until it grows into a tiny tree.

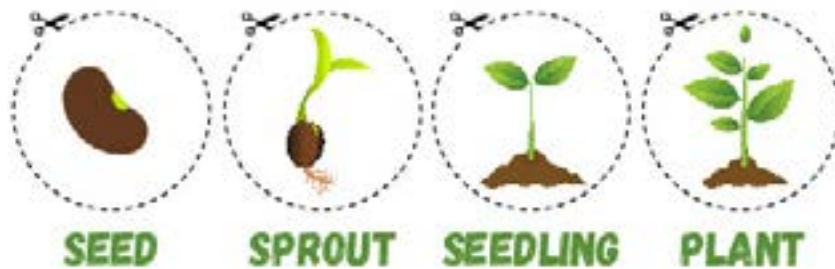
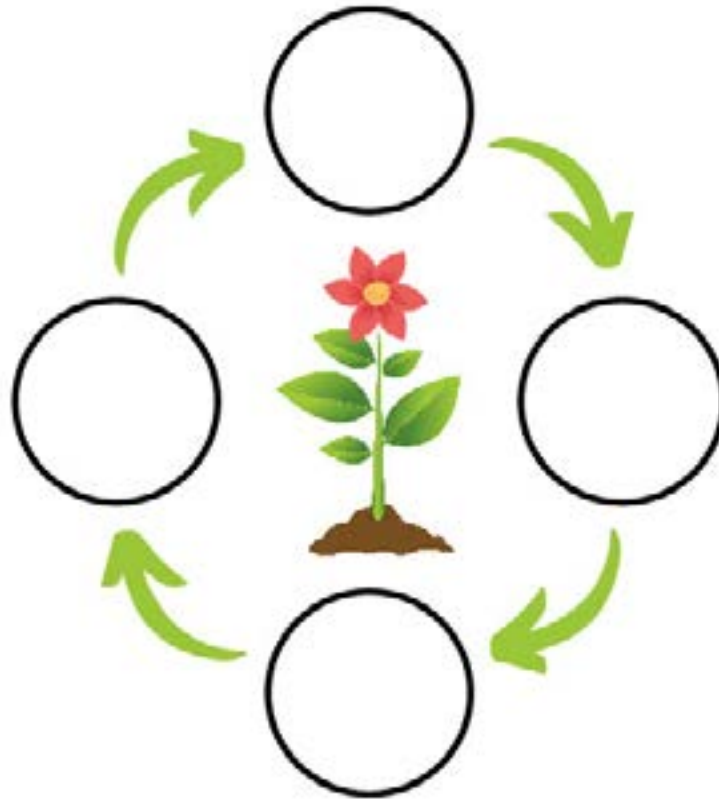
Lesson Objective

To enrich student's understanding about a theme in the play and to learn about the life cycle of a seed. Discuss the four stages in the life of a plant.

NurseriesAndSchools.org
Exploring | Explaining | Explaining

PLANT LIFE CYCLE

Cut and paste the stages of the life cycle of a plant!



ACT OUT THE LIFE CYCLE OF A SEED

. Lesson Objective

For students to connect to text using their bodies and imaginations.



Instructions

Read *The Tiny Seed* by Eric Carle (or your favorite book about the life cycle of a plant) to the class.

Instruct students to become a tiny seed.

Let them know that they will use their bodies and imagination, but not their voices.

Read the story again.

Instruct students to use their bodies to act out the journey of the seed as you read.

Allow students to explore movement before reading the next page.

Optional: play music for the quiet interludes where they are devising with their bodies.

Additional prompts to assist with comprehension of the text:

How do you think the sun feels?

How do your roots grow into the earth?

How does the little sprout feel in the summer heat (or winter wind, etc.)?

Optional: This could be done with half the class watching as the audience, then they switch roles with the other half performing and the group that performed first practicing being a good audience.

CREATE YOUR OWN TINY TREE ADVENTURE

. Lesson Objective

For students to respond to the performance, discuss the plot, and identify characters. After discussing, they will deepen their understanding by dramatizing their own version of the play.

- STEP 1** **Discuss the PLOT and CHARACTERS of the play.**
-Define plot: a sequence of events or actions that happen in a play or story.
-Prompt students: What happened in the play?
-Make a list of the main events as remembered by the students.
-Make a list of the characters: the fictional people or creatures in the play.
-Define dialogue: the words or sounds that the characters speak.
- STEP 2** **Prepare your students.**
Assign characters to different students for them to act out or have them act out the characters of the story as a whole group or small groups. Multiple students may play a single character together, if desired, which may make it a little easier for the littlest ones.
- STEP 3** **Prompts for Students**
a. "I will tell the story and you will act out the action."
b. "If I stop, please help me speak like the character, adding what the character might say."
c. "How can you show what the characters look and act like?"
- STEP 4** **Narrate the story**
Use the outline of events that you created during your discussion to tell the story. Allow the students to creatively improvise and perform the actions of the story as you narrate. Validate and note strong choices made by students as they enact the story and encourage students to add details that show the actions and reactions of their character.
- STEP 5** **If time, go through the story again**
Encourage more detailed exploration of the story and characters. Optional: Have a student tell the story.
-Ask students to suggest other lines of dialogue that the characters might say.



ABOUT HTY

Honolulu Theatre for Youth (HTY) is a theatre of place, deeply rooted in the cultures and people of the Pacific and dedicated to serving young people, families and educators across the Hawaiian Islands. Founded in 1955, HTY is one of the oldest professional TYA companies in the country and is recognized for its long history of innovative drama education programming and the creation of original theatrical works that celebrate the diverse cultures of Hawai'i. In 2023, HTY was awarded the Orlin Corey Medallion by the Children's Theatre Association of America, the highest honor in the field.

OUR COMPANY

Becky Dunning
Development Director

Stu Hirayama
School Reservations

Brad DeCaires
Box Office

Stephanie Conching
House Manager

Jian Gu
Accounting

Eric Johnson
Artistic Director

Reiko Ho
Artistic Associate/Marketing Dir.

Moses Goods
Artistic Associate/Actor

Annie Cusick Wood
Artistic Associate

Misy Singson
Artistic Producer

Artistic Team
Jarren Amian
Chesley Cannon
Sarah Danvers
Serina Dunham
Lokomaika'i Lipscomb
Mattea Mazzella
Hermenigildo Tesoro Jr.
Eric West
Emily Wright

Daniel A. Kelin, II
Director of Drama Education

Tamara Smith
Drama Ed. Administrator

Erin O'Hara
Teaching Artist

Ms. Lisa
Teaching Artist

Kirsten Erickson
Teaching Artist

Jill Jackson
Teaching Artist