

Wind Up the Apple Tree

Source:
Richard Chase
Singing Games and Play-Party Games
New York: Dover Publications, 1972

Wind up the ap - ple tree; hold on tight.

Wind it all day and wind it all night.

A little faster

Stir up the dump - lings, the pot boils o - ver.

Game Directions

Formation: Start with a curved line of players standing in a loose spiral, with a Winder at one end and a Tree at the other. The Winder leads around clockwise while the Tree stands still; and the players, as they are wound up, stop moving one by one, until the Winder stops.

Break off the winding-up song the second the Winder stops, and jump up and down on both feet, singing "Stir up the dumplings, the pot boils over." Sing this over and over, and all start scooting to the left with sideways gallop, as the Winder pulls the spiral out straight – like pulling string out from a ball.

Background Information

This game comes from "The Eller Tree" and other versions of the wind-up game in Lady Gomme's book. It is also called "Wind Up Jack." I understand that Virginia Indians have an identical game called "The Rattlesnake." We have wound up the apple tree in Virginia at John Powell's Apple Tree Wassail on the Eve of Old Christmas, "Twelfth Night." This game can be used at a school's Spring Festival, and the words "Wind up the May Tree" substituted. It can be done around the May Pole by a team of boys.