**Kookaburra Song**

**“Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree”**

**Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree is a nursery rhyme written by Marion Sinclair in 1934. It is a song about an Australian kookaburra bird eating gum drops. The song is often referred to by its shortened name of Kookaburra Song.**

**What do the words mean?**

**Listed below are some of the words in the “Kookaburra Sits in the Old Gum Tree”.**

**Kookaburra – The Kookaburra bird is a large Australian kingfisher. It is sometimes also referred to as the Laughing Kookaburra because it makes the sound like a human laughing.**

**Gum Tree- This is another name for the Eucalyptus tree, which is very common in Australia.**

**Bush- The people of Australia refer to parts of the country outside the major cities and towns as “the bush”. The phrase probably originated because there are lots of bushes and scrub when you go into the Australian country-side.**

**Gay- Until the mid-1950’s, the word gay meant to be “happy and carefree”. So when this song was written, that is what it meant. Since 1955, the term has taken a different meaning. Today, the word refers to a homosexual person, or sometimes the word is used by the younger generation to mean “lame” or “stupid”.**

**Gum drops- When some types of eucalyptus trees are damaged by insects, they ooze blood-red sap (like humans ooze blood). This sap forms large drops that harden when they dry. The dried sap globules are called gum drops. Actually, kookaburras don’t eat them. Gum drops are also a type of candy. So in this song, it means candy, but don’t feed your candy to kookaburras. It will make them sick. Kookaburras feed mostly on insects, worms and crustaceans, and sometimes on small snakes, mammals, frogs and birds.**

**TRY TO:**

**Plant plenty of locally native shrubs and trees such as gum trees.**

**Provide a bird bath so that kookaburras have a place to cool off in the hot sun and get a drink.**

**AVOID:**

**Feeding kookaburras by hand, as they might mistake your finger for food and give you a nip.**

**Using pesticides that can poison insects that kookaburras feed on.**

**Cutting down old, large trees that kookaburras might nest in.**