

Grasshopper Sittin' on a Sweet Potato Vine

The musical score is written in D Major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff is marked with a boxed 'A' and has a 'D' chord above the first measure. The second staff has 'D', 'A', and 'D' chords above its measures. The third staff is marked with a boxed 'B' and has 'A', 'A', 'G', and 'D' chords above its measures. The fourth staff has 'A', 'D', 'A', and 'D' chords above its measures. The music features a mix of eighth and quarter notes with a fiddle-like melodic style.

"Grasshopper Sittin' on a Sweet Potato Vine" is an Old-Time breakdown in D Major. The parts are played AB (Silberberg) or AABB (most versions).

Galax, Grayson County, Virginia, area fiddler Luther Davis (1887-1986) is usually credited as the source for most versions of this tune. African-American collector Thomas Talley printed a song by this title in his 1922 work **Negro Folk Rhymes** (reprinted in 1991, edited by Charles Wolfe). His lyric (which seems to scan with this tune) goes:

Grasshopper a settin' on a sweet tater vine,
'Long come a Blackbird an' nab him up behind.

Blackbird a-settin' in a sour apple tree,
Hawk grab him up behind; he "Chee! Chee! Chee!"

Big hawk a-settin' in de top of dat oak,
Start to eat dat Blackbird an' he git choke.

There are some similarities to the Irish melody "*An Comhra Donn*" (The Brown Chest). There are also melodic similarities in parts to some versions of the song "The Battle Hymn of the Republic / John Brown's Body".

The banjo tablature is by John Letscher.

It was printed in Johnson's **The Kitchen Musician No. 2: Occasional Collection of Old-Timey Fiddle Tunes for Hammer Dulcimer, Fiddle, etc.** (1982, 1988 & 2003), Levenson's **Old Time Festival Tunes for Clawhammer Banjo** (2006), Phillips' **Traditional American Fiddle Tunes, vol. 1** (1994), Silberberg's **Tunes I Learned at Tractor Tavern** (2002) and Songer's **Portland Collection** (1997).

It was recorded by Grand Picnic on **Grand Picnic** (2003) and Liz Slade on **Old Time Friends** (1987).