

February 2019

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Foraging Cattails All Year
Round (for Food & More!)

Making Homemade Play
Dough with Natural Dyes

Whose tracks are those?
Free Printable Guide!

10 Fun Ways to Study Nature
This Month --no matter where you live

Seasonal poems, crafts,
coloring pages and more!



FROM THE EDITOR

WRITTEN BY ALICIA BAYER

HAPPY FEBRUARY!

Welcome to the second edition of Wild Kids Magazine.. I hope you and your kiddos are enjoying the magazine.

This month we're looking at all the ways we can use cattails. We've also included directions for making homemade play dough with natural materials for dye, plus we'll learn how to recognize common animal tracks in sand, snow or mud.

As usual, we've included some foraging coloring pages to color and collect, plus seasonal poems and more.

Be sure to visit our web site to find lots more links to learn more, plus free printables.

Have a great month!

Find lots more links, information & fun to accompany this month's themes at www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids.

Inside this issue...

- *Foraging cattails*
- *Making play dough with natural dyes*
- *Printable track ID guide*
- *10 Ways to enjoy nature this month*
- *Foraging coloring pages*
- *February Nature Journal pages*
- *and more!*

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Get Wild in February!

10 Ways to Learn and Play in Nature this Month

If the weather gets cold enough, try blowing bubbles & freezing them (find instructions on our website)

Learn about plant propagation -- Take a cutting of a friend's plant and put it in water. Change the water every day and once it forms roots, pot up your new plant. *

Go on a natural Valentine hunt! See how many heart shapes you can find in nature. Take pictures or sketch them.

Visit a park you've never been to before.

Read a book about maple syrup tapping and then make pancakes with real maple syrup. Find out if people can tap maple trees where you live.

Start a family nature Instagram account. See if you can get outside together every day and post one picture to it. Tag your photos @WildKidsMagazine

Set up a taste test for the birds. Put out a variety of healthy treats & see which they like best.

Cut up some vegetables for dinner & look for seeds. Plant some of them in an egg carton with a little damp soil & see if any of them sprout.

Take our animal track guide and head out to see which animal tracks you can ID.

Predict how much rain or snow you think your town will get this month. Set up a rain/snow gauge and keep track of how close you get

* Good plants to grow from clippings include ivy, geraniums, fuschias, philodendrons, mint & pothos. Hanging and trailing plants are especially easy to root in water.

Naturally Dyed Homemade Play Dough



Making your own play dough is fast, easy and inexpensive! Using natural dyes adds to the fun and produces some beautiful, earth-friendly results.

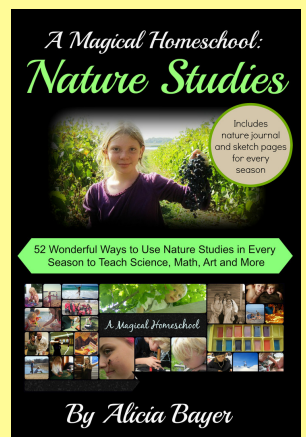
You can tint your dough with either dry powders like turmeric or liquids like beet juice. Feel free to use gluten free flour blends. Different blends will have different results, but they all work.

Ingredients

- * 1/2 cup of flour* (including powders like turmeric, if using)
- * 1/2 cup of water or concentrated juice (for color, see list)
- * 1/4 cup of salt
- * 1/2 tsp cream of tartar
- * 1/2 tsp cooking oil


Directions


1. Combine all ingredients in a pan.
2. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixtures thickens into a ball and pulls away from the sides of the pan (about five minutes).
3. Allow to cool slightly and knead. Store in a covered container in the fridge.





Reprinted from
A Magical Homeschool:
Nature Studies
(52 Wonderful Ways to Use
Nature Studies in Every
Season to Teach
Science, Math, Art and More),
by Alicia Bayer.


Here are some materials to try for natural colors:


 Turmeric powder produces a bright gold and mixes well to make secondary colors.


 Beets make a beautiful deep pink. Use beet powder, simmer a sliced beet in water for a few minutes to make a dark pink liquid dye, or just use some juice from pickled beets.

 Blueberries can be simmered in water, crushed and put through a sieve for purple-blue.


 Crab apples can be simmered in water, reduced by cooking & strained for a red-pink.


 Cherries, strawberries and other berries can be similarly cooked to make red or pink.

 Concentrated juices such as grape can make purple and other colors.

 Brewed coffee can be used for the liquid to make tan.

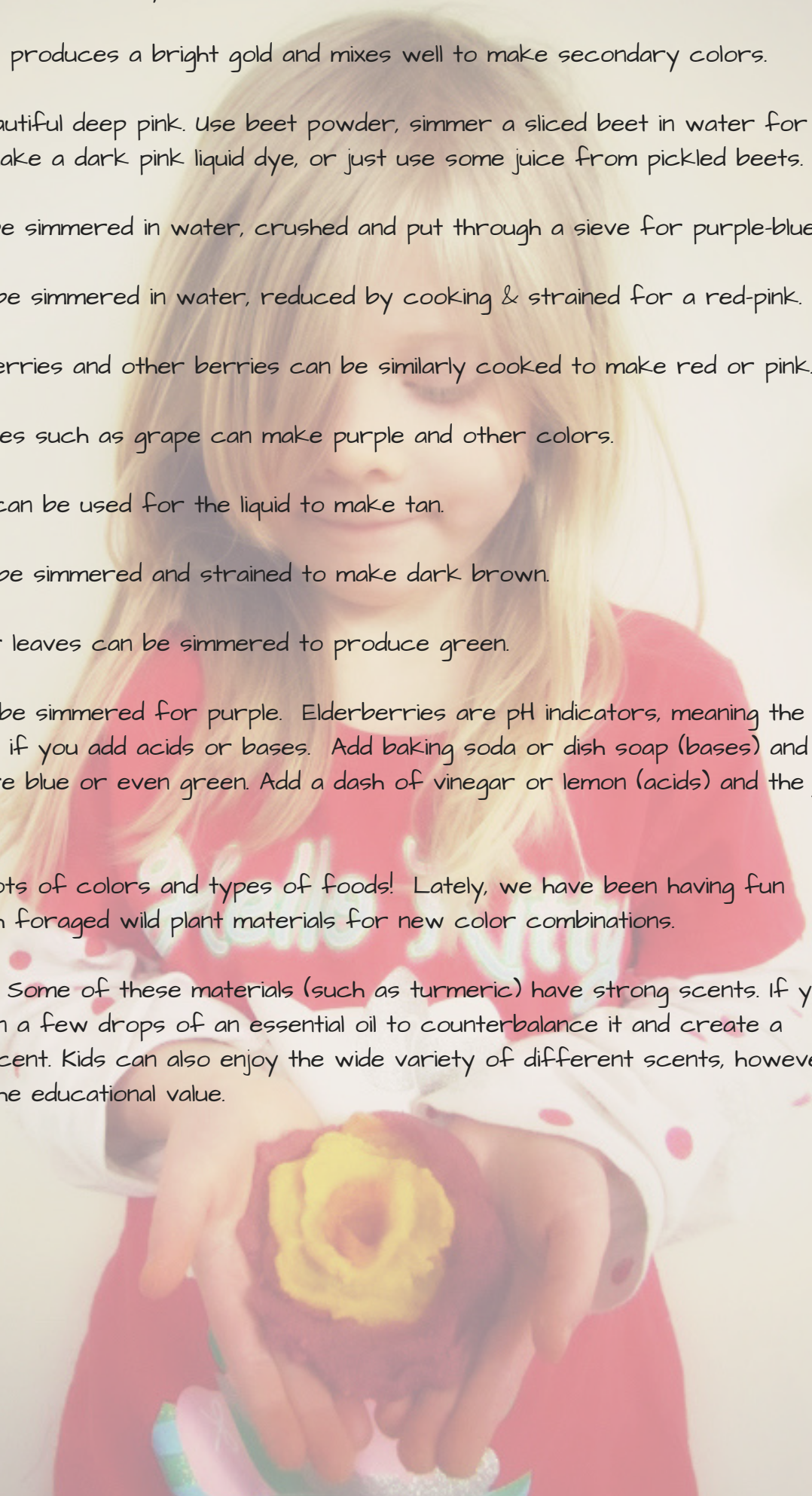
 Walnut bark can be simmered and strained to make dark brown.

 Spinach and other leaves can be simmered to produce green.

 Elderberries can be simmered for purple. Elderberries are pH indicators, meaning the liquid will change colors if you add acids or bases. Add baking soda or dish soap (bases) and the juice will turn more blue or even green. Add a dash of vinegar or lemon (acids) and the juice will turn pink!

Experiment with lots of colors and types of foods! Lately, we have been having fun experimenting with foraged wild plant materials for new color combinations.

A note on scents: Some of these materials (such as turmeric) have strong scents. If you like, you can mix in a few drops of an essential oil to counterbalance it and create a soothing or fun scent. Kids can also enjoy the wide variety of different scents, however, and this adds to the educational value.



Foraging Cattails

All Year Round

BY JOHNATHON HRDLICKA, 15



Did you know that not only can you eat cattails but you can use every part of them one way or another?

Cattails are one of the first things I remember foraging with my family. Most of them avoided the muck but when I was told go in and yank cattails out of the ground I was ecstatic. It was one of the most memorable things about foraging and got me willing to do more of it. To this day it's one of my favorite childhood memories.

Cattails are great because you can use them whenever you need to. They are a great food and even when you can't eat them you can still find many uses for them, and to make it better you can find them almost anywhere.

All parts of the cattail are useful, from the roots to the pollen. The roots can be used to make starch, the stalk's heart can be eaten as a vegetable, the bright yellow pollen can be used as a flour, the leaves can be used for weaving, the fluff can be used for stuffing toys or pillows as well as kindling, and the dried flower heads can make torches -- and those are just a few of the ways to use them!



Make sure you find a good guide and make sure you harvest in a safe and clean area as they are bioaccumulators, which means they clean the pollution out of the water and soil and absorb it into themselves.

Euell Gibbons said "cattails are nature's supermarket" and that is a wonderful way to put it.



Whose Tracks Are These?

Next time you're out in nature, take a look at the ground and see if you can find any bird or animal tracks.

They're usually easy to find in sand, snow and mud.

We've put together a printable guide for you to take outside with you.

See how many tracks you can collect!



Dog $\geq 1\frac{1}{2}$ " to 4"



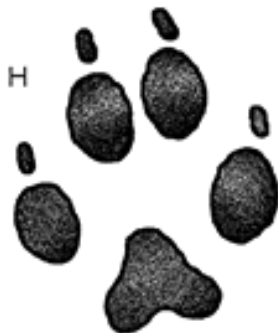
Coyote
front $\geq 1\frac{1}{2}$ "
hind $\geq 1\frac{1}{4}$ "



Grey Fox
front 2"
hind $1\frac{3}{4}$ "



Red Fox
front $\geq 1\frac{1}{4}$ "
hind $\geq 1\frac{1}{4}$ "





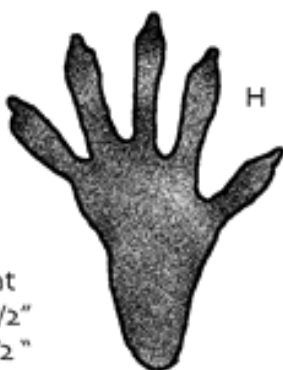
Striped Skunk
front 2"
hind 2"



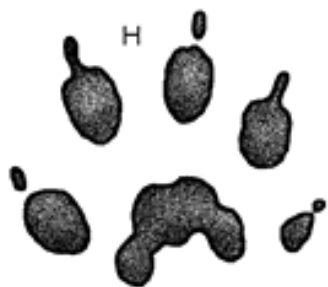
Porcupine
front 2 3/4"
hind 3 1/4"



Muskrat
front 1 1/2"
hind 2 1/2"



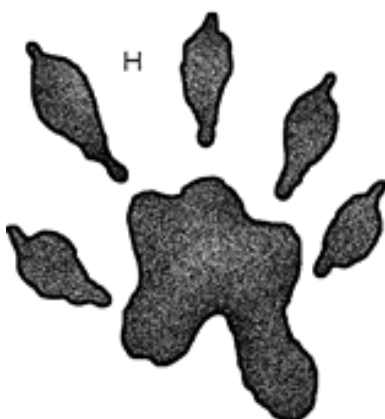
Cottontail Rabbit
front 1"
hind 3 1/2"



Mink 1"



Weasel 1/2" to 1"



Otter 1 1/2"



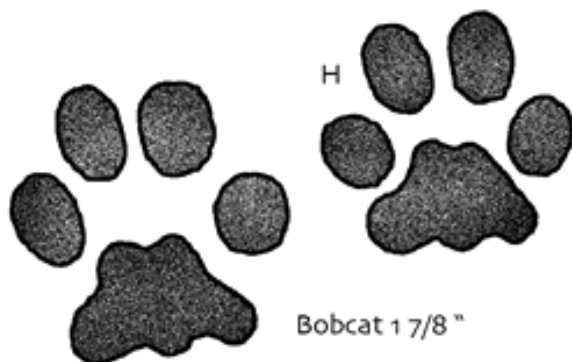


H



F

House Cat 1" to 2"



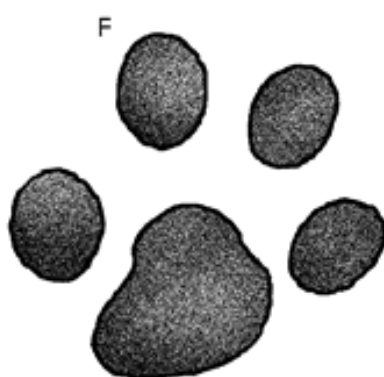
H

F

Bobcat 1 7/8"



Lynx
front 4 1/4"
hind 3"



F

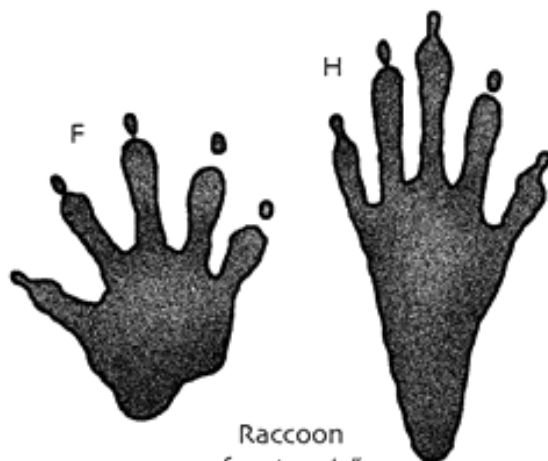


H

Opossum
front 1 1/4"
hind 2"



F



H

Raccoon
front 2 1/2"
hind 4"



F

Woodchuck
front 2"
hind 2 1/4"



H



H

Grey Squirrel
front 1 1/2"
hind 2 1/4"



F



H

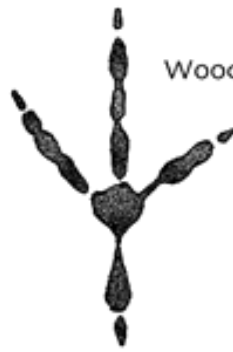
White-footed Mouse 1/4"



F



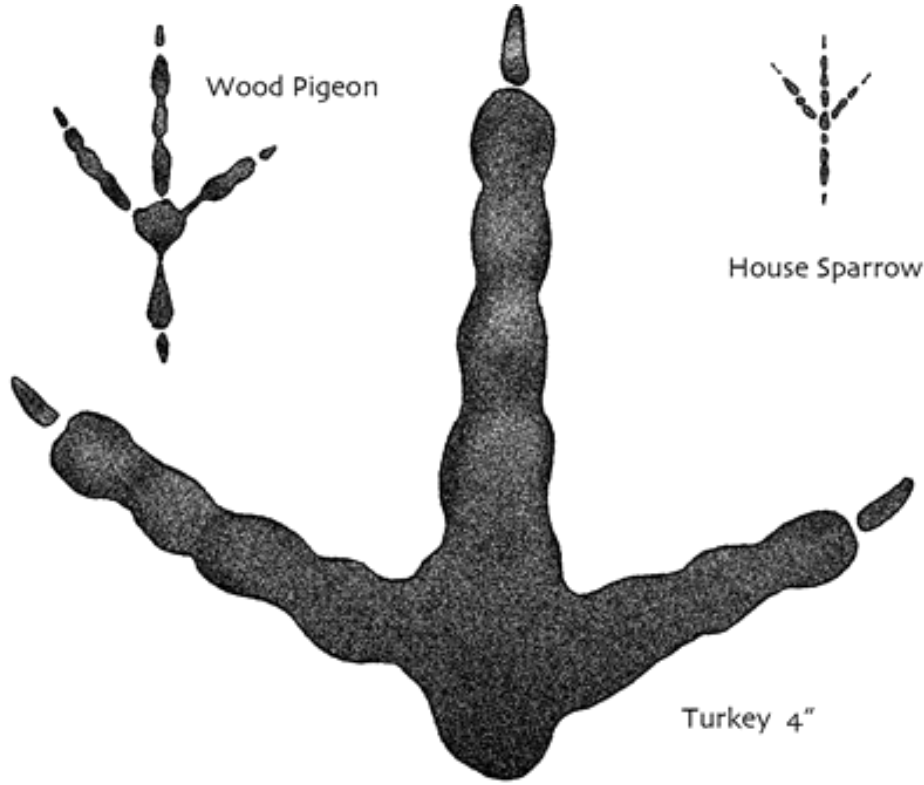
Crow 2 1/2"



Wood Pigeon



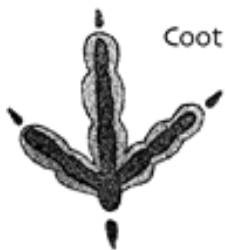
House Sparrow



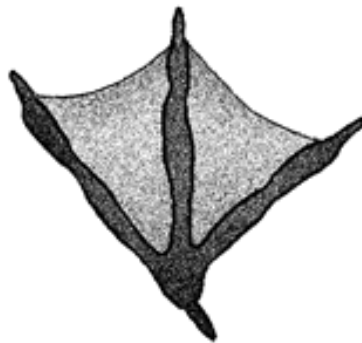
Turkey 4"



Grouse



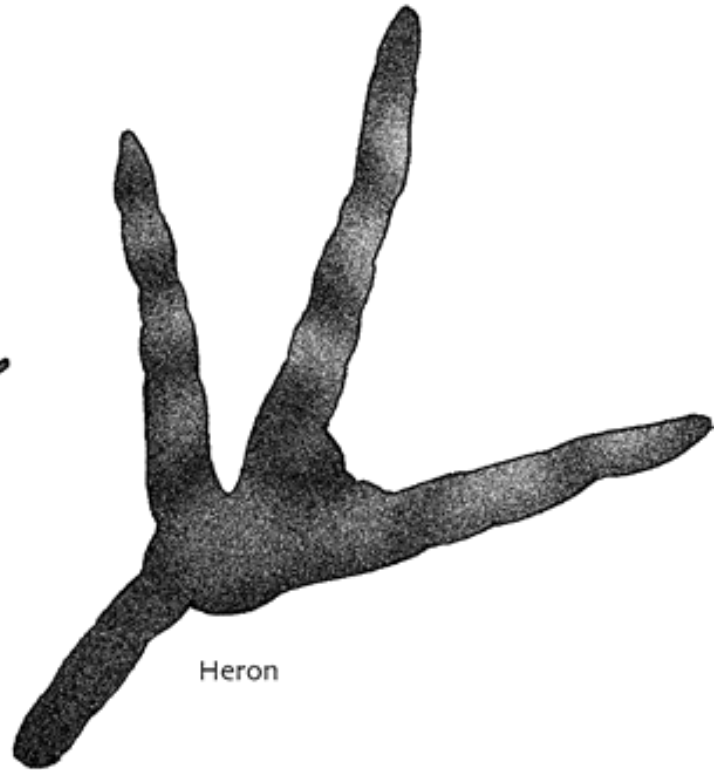
Coot



Mallard



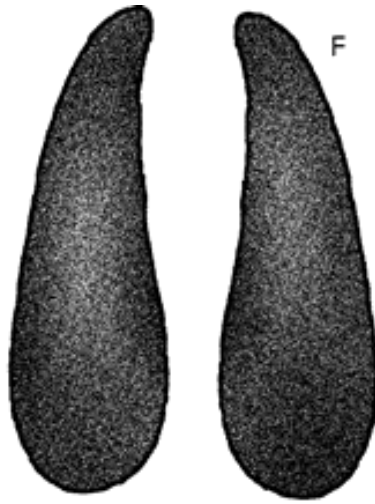
Killdeer



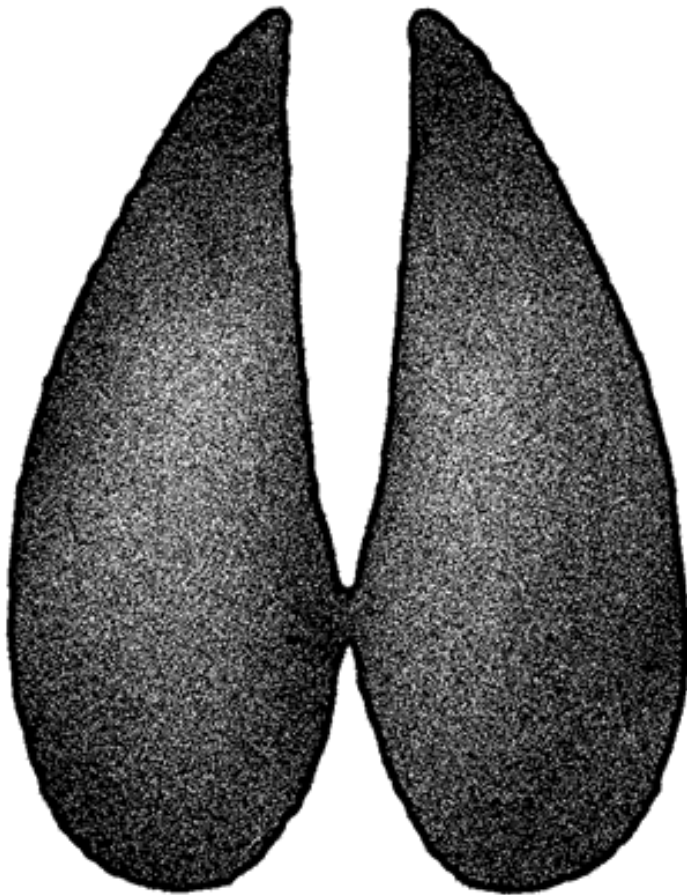
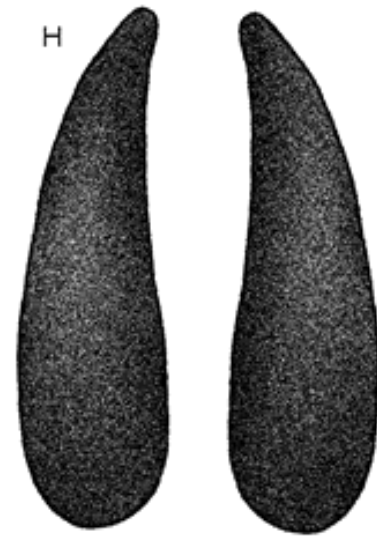
Heron



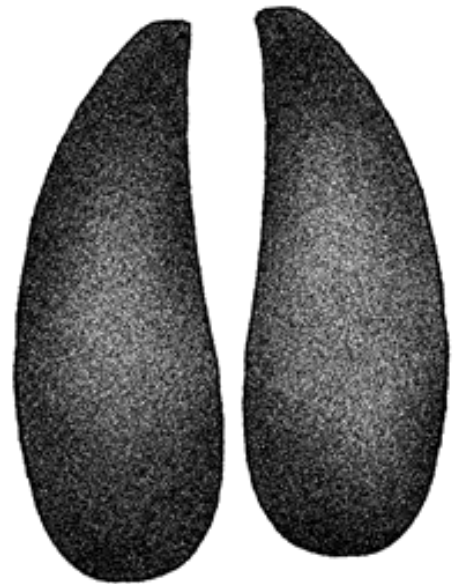
White Tailed Deer
2 1/2" to 3"



Antelope
front 1 1/2" x 2 3/4"
hind 1 7/8" x 3 1/4"



Moose 4 1/2" to 5 1/2"



Elk



Brown Bear – Grizzly Bear



Black Bear



WildKids asked you...

What do you like to do outside in February?

"Go to all the frozen waterfalls!"
-Sawyer, 5



"Feed the birds seed and see how close they come"
-Autumn, 8

"Make snow forts with my brother"
-Fiona, 7

"Jump in puddles."
Elysia, 3



"Ski, ski, ski!!!"
-Jack & Aidan, 10



"Skiing, making snow volcanoes, sledding, & looking for moose, fox & rabbits"
Mason, 5 and aspen, 2

"Go outside at night and look at the stars, seeing my breath in the air."
-Jack, 15

"Snowball fights, sledding and making snow forts"
-Alex, 11

"Explore frozen creeks!" -Hazel, 7



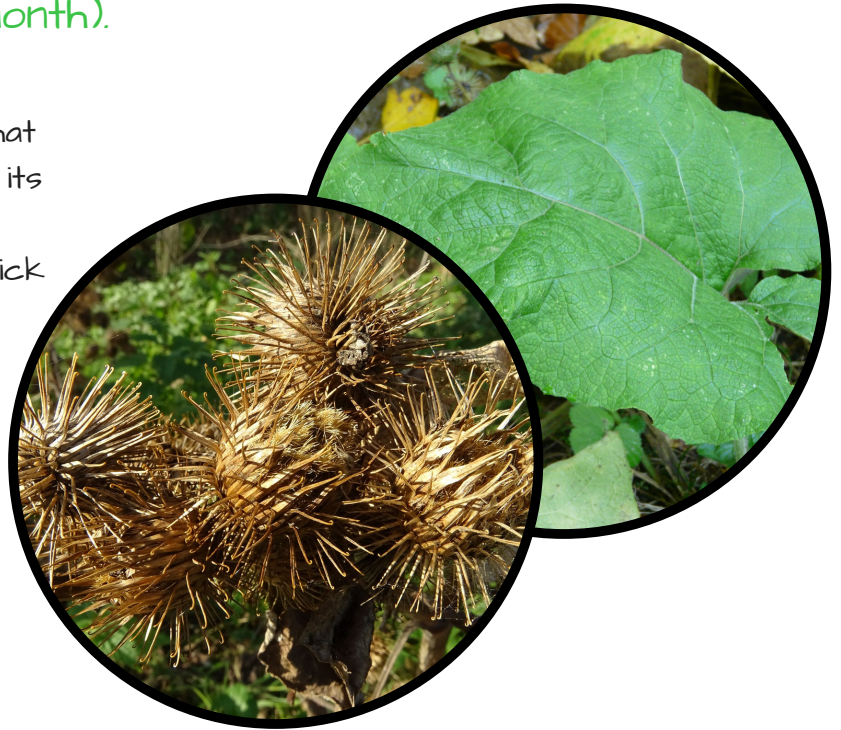
"We have bald eagle day in February, and have a few really good spots that several assemble at a time. We go out and watch them from this time through into March." -Nicole

Next month's question:
What's your favorite wild food?

Let's learn about Burdock & Mullein

This month's foraging coloring pages are two great "weeds" that are useful in lots of ways. The illustrations are by Elizabeth Blackwell (whom we learned about last month).

Burdock is a very common weed that looks a lot like rhubarb because of its great big leaves. Most people recognize its annoying burrs that stick to clothing, hair and animals' fur. These burrs were actually the inspiration for the invention of Velcro. Many people eat burdock root, which you can buy in some natural food stores, and the stems are said to taste like artichoke hearts. Burdock is also used medicinally.



Remember to NEVER forage a plant without following foraging safety and courtesy rules. Never consume a wild plant or use a wild plant medicinally without an adult and without thoroughly researching the plant with multiple trusted sources.

Mullein is known for two of its distinguishing characteristics -- its softy, velvety leaves when it is young and its giant yellow flower stalk that comes with it is two years old. Mullein leaves are some of the first wild plants you'll find in the springtime, and they are commonly used medicinally.



You'll find good resources for your research on mullein and burdock at the Wild Kids Magazine web site and in reliable foraging books.

"MULLEIN, HIG TAPER"



From: A Curious Herbal: Containing Five Hundred Cuts Of The Most Useful Plants
Which Are Now Used In The Practice Of Physick,
Written, illustrated and engraved by Elizabeth Blackwell, 1737

"THE GREAT BURDOCK"



From: *A Curious Herbal: Containing Five Hundred Cuts Of The Most Useful Plants Which Are Now Used In The Practice Of Physick,*
 Written, illustrated and engraved by Elizabeth Blackwell, 1737



Poems for February



Picture-books in Winter

Robert Louis Stevenson, 1850 - 1894

Summer fading, winter comes—
Frosty mornings, tingling thumbs
Window robins, winter rooks,
And the picture story-books.

Water now is turned to stone
Nurse and I can walk upon;
Still we find the flowing brooks
In the picture story-books.

All the pretty things put by,
Wait upon the children's eye,
Sheep and shepherds, trees and crooks,
In the picture story-books.

We may see how all things are,
Seas and cities, near and far,
And the flying fairies' looks,
In the picture story-books.

How am I to sing your praise,
Happy chimney-corner days,
Sitting safe in nursery nooks,
Reading picture story-books?

Places [III. Winter Sun]

Sara Teasdale, 1884 - 1933

There was a bush with scarlet berries,
And there were hemlocks heaped with snow,
With a sound like surf on long sea-beaches
They took the wind and let it go.

The hills were shining in their samite,
Fold after fold they flowed away;
"Let come what may," your eyes were saying,
"At least we two have had to-day."

Leap Year Poem
Mother Goose

Thirty days hath September,
April, June and November.
All the rest have thirty-one,
Excepting February alone,
And that has twenty-eight days clear
And twenty-nine in each leap year.

On Snow

Jonathan Swift, 1667 - 1745

A Riddle

From Heaven I fall, though from earth I begin.
No lady alive can show such a skin.
I'm bright as an angel, and light as a feather,
But heavy and dark, when you squeeze me together.
Though candor and truth in my aspect I bear,
Yet many poor creatures I help to insnare.
Though so much of Heaven appears in my make,
The foulest impressions I easily take.
My parent and I produce one another,
The mother the daughter, the daughter the mother.

Winter Haiku

—Natsume Soseki (1867–1916)

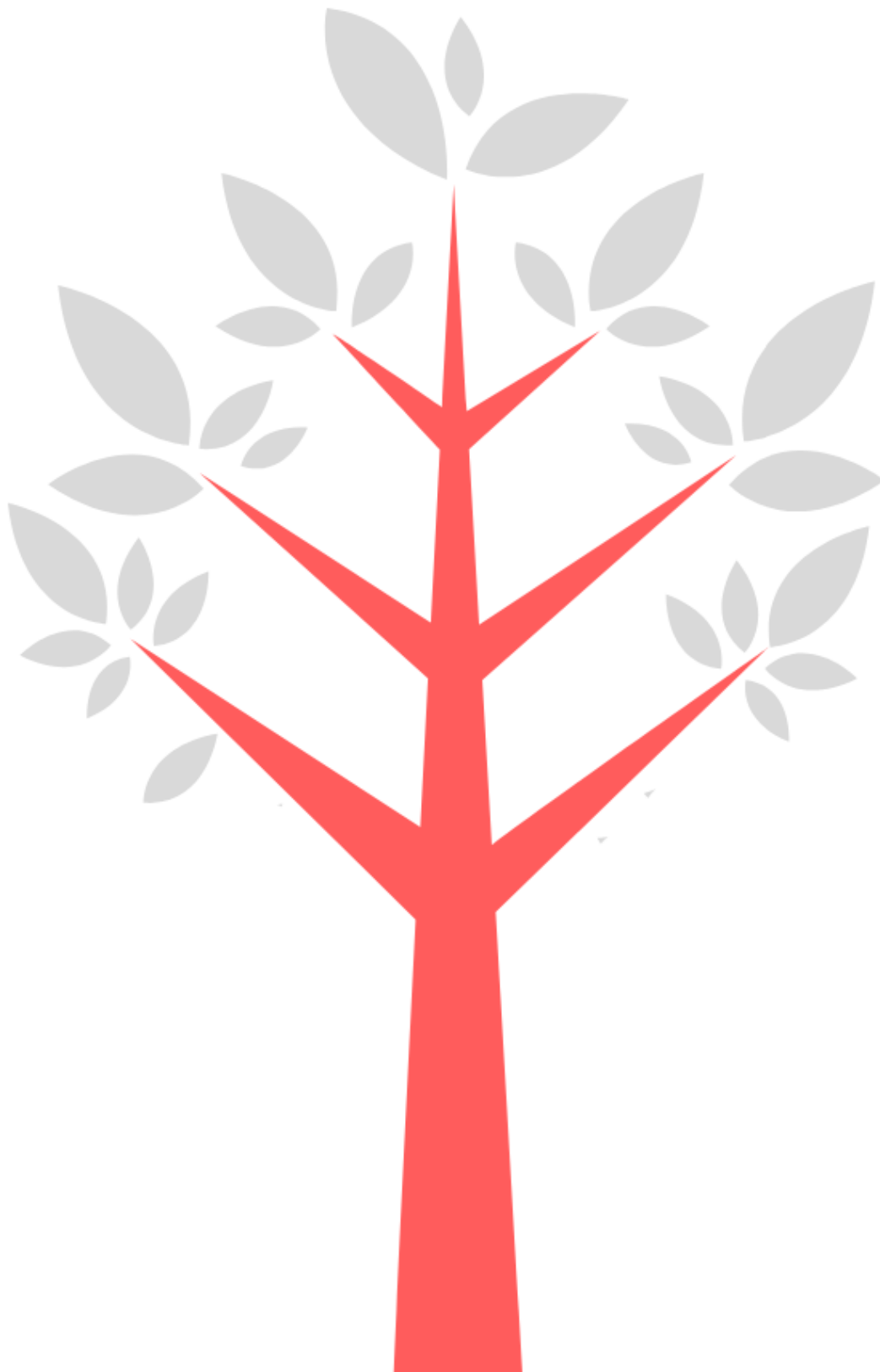
Over the wintry
forest, winds howl in rage
with no leaves to blow.

My February Nature Journal



February Weather

Directions: Designate one color for each type of weather.
Color a leaf with one or two colors each day to show that day's weather.



Key



sunny



cloudy



rainy



snowy



windy/
stormy

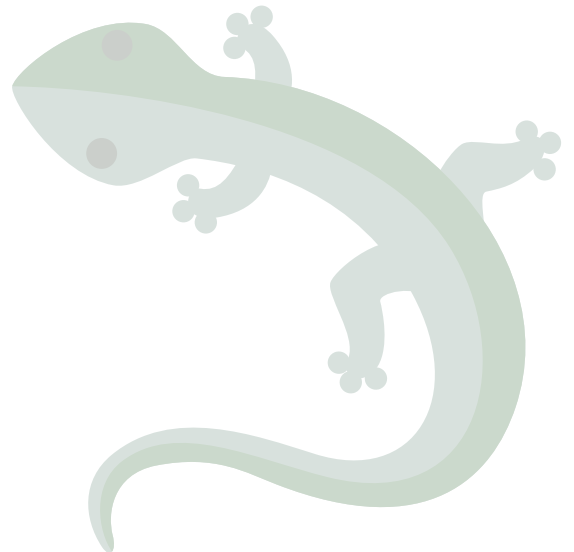
February Bird List

Birds spotted this month



February Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month



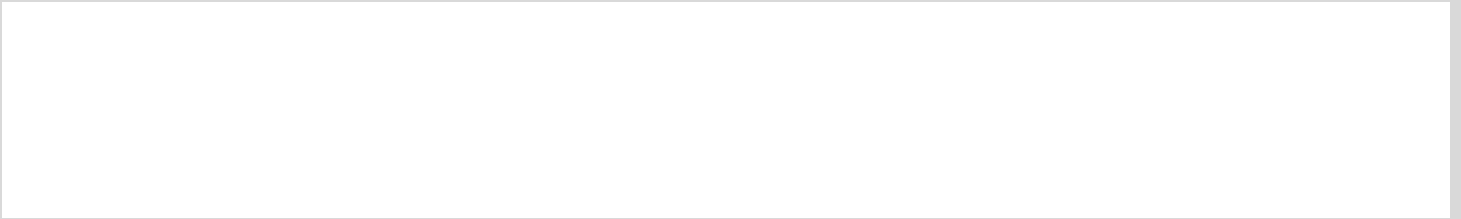
February Nature Notes

Record any interesting discoveries here -- plants you identify, foods you forage, outdoor activities, cool nature projects, nature books read, or just notes about what it's like outside this week!

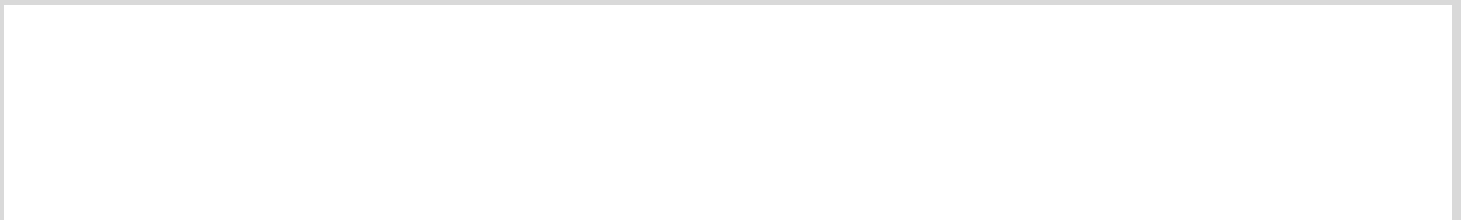
Week 1



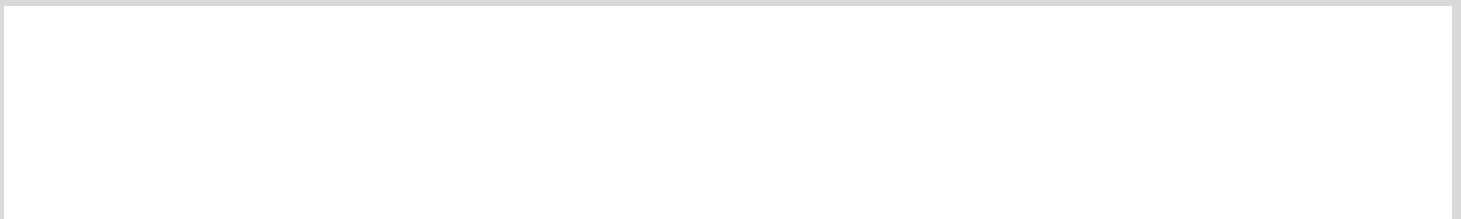
Week 2



Week 3



Week 4





Next month in Wild Kids...

Making Outdoor Shelters
Forcing Flowering Branches to Bloom Indoors
The Magic of Maple Syrup
Seasonal crafts, Poems & Activities
and lots more!

Want to see your stuff in Wild Kids?

We welcome articles, photos, artwork and other submissions from kids and their grown ups.
Visit magicalchildhood.com/wildkids to learn more.