

June 2019

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



## *The Flower Issue*

*Making  
Perfume from  
Flowers*

*20 Fun  
Ways to Use  
Flowers*

*Foraging  
Elderflowers*

*Seasonal poems,  
activities, nature  
journal pages and more!*



Our son Jack gathering  
elderflowers last June

# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

*Hello June!*

Welcome to another issue of Wild Kids Magazine!

June is a pretty special month wherever you live. For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, it marks the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. There aren't extra hours on that day, just the most daylight of any day of the year. For folks in the Southern Hemisphere, June brings the winter solstice, or the shortest day of the year.

Here in Minnesota, June is a beautiful month with lots of sunny days and flowers blooming everywhere. The strawberries ripen in our garden and we also go strawberry picking at a local farm. We forage all kinds of wild foods this month like gooseberries, lambsquarters, mulberries, black raspberries, elderflowers, chicken of the woods mushrooms and the last of the wild asparagus of the year.

We also spend a lot of time hiking, bird watching and swimming at the lake, and lots of time in our gardens and "putting up" food from our gardens and our foraging adventures.

What do you do outside in June? What would you like to try this month?

Have a wonderful month!

*Alicia*



Why is Wild Kids free?

Kids (and their grown ups) need nature, and nature needs us! Our family believes in the importance of sharing & helping each other, and of passing on skills to help our world and each other. As long as we are able, we plan to produce Wild Kids to help do this for families who find it useful.

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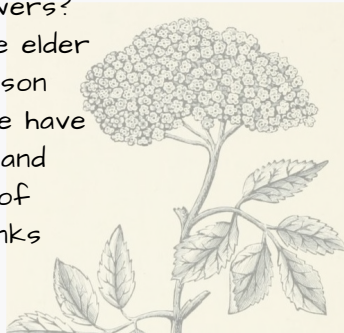
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Find lots more links, information and fun to accompany this month's themes at  
[www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids](http://www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids).

# Foraging Elderflowers

Have you heard of elderflowers? They are the flowers of the elder shrub, which later in the season become elderberries. People have been foraging elderflowers and elderberries for thousands of years to use for foods, drinks and even medicine.



Elder shrubs grow wild all over the world -- in every state in the United States, throughout Canada, and all over Europe, Australia and beyond. Most people don't realize how many elder shrubs are all around them because they just look like big bushes most of the year. In late spring and early summer, though, they bloom and are covered in very light yellow-beige (almost white) flowers.

The flowers are in umbel shapes, like the spokes of an umbrella. You can gather them and use them for drinks, jellies, foods and more.

Some people dry the flowers and use them for tea. Elderflower tea is an old fashioned remedy for colds and allergies. Some research studies have shown that it does help these conditions.



Elderflowers were also used historically in beauty recipes.

Our family gathers lots and lots of elderflowers every June. We dry some of them for tea. We use some of them for elderflower syrup, jelly and liqueur. We use some of them for elderflower soda, a naturally bubbly soft drink made from elderflowers, water, lemons and sugar. The natural yeast on the flowers makes it bubbly after a few days (if we let the yeast keep going, it turns into champagne or wine).

We also make elderflower fritters, dipping the flower heads in pancake batter and then frying them. We sprinkle them with powdered sugar and hold them by the stems to nibble off the flowers (not the stems, as they'd make us sick to our stomachs). Sometimes we dip the fritters in maple syrup, jam or honey.

We are careful to leave lots of flowers on the shrubs, because those are what turn into elderberries later in the season!

We have links to ID information and some recipes at the Wild Kids Magazine web site, if you'd like to try some elderflower recipes this year.



# *Go Wild in June*

## 10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Use mud and  
wildflower  
seeds to make  
seed bombs

Make flower  
perfume (we  
tell you how  
in this issue)

Go on a  
nighttime  
nature walk  
with a  
flashlight

Visit a park  
you've never  
been to

Go to the  
beach

Start a garden  
(even on a  
window sill or  
balcony)

Dig up some  
weeds & pot them  
up for an  
experiment that  
you design

Make a  
recipe using  
dandelions (be sure  
they weren't  
sprayed!)

Feed the  
ducks or  
seagulls

Go on a sprinkler  
walk--try to walk  
where the sidewalk  
goes through where  
people are watering  
their lawns



# 20 Things to Do with Flowers

There are so many ways to enjoy flowers!  
Here are some fun things to do with them.

- Make flower perfume (we have instructions in this issue)
- Chop up the petals and add them to homemade play dough
- Arrange them in a vase with water
- Plant them to attract butterflies, birds and bumblebees
- Press them
- Photograph them
- Draw or paint them
- Use an ID book and identify them
- Arrange them under a glass frame
- Start a wildflower journal with sketches & information
- Make homemade paper and add petals
- Arrange them on clear contact paper and then seal with another sheet of paper
- Dry them for wreaths and decorations
- Make fairy mud pies
- Make flower crowns (instructions are in the May issue)
- Use them dried in homemade potpourri
- Arrange them with rocks and make nature art
- Use the petals for natural confetti
- Save dandelion "wishes" in a jar for later
- If they are edible (like roses, dandelions, violets and elderflowers), make jelly, syrup or other recipes with them

Remember to get permission if you pick them,  
and leave most of them for wildlife and others to enjoy!



# Making perfume from flowers

You can make your own perfume from wildflowers! Here's all you need to do.

Step 1: Gather some fragrant flowers. They will be the most fragrant if you gather them in the morning. Chop them into small pieces and fill a small jar with them (baby food jars work well).

Step 2: Cover the flowers with alcohol and put the lid on. Leave for two weeks.

Step 3: Smell your perfume. If it is strong enough, put the lid back on and leave it for another week to age. If it is not strong enough, chop some more flowers and add them, and let sit for another two weeks.

Step 4: Strain the flowers out and bottle your perfume. Enjoy!



Flowers and plants to try:

- Violets
- Lily of the Valley \*
- Roses
- Lavender
- Sagebrush leaves
- Lilacs
- Vanilla pods
- Cloves
- Cinnamon bark

*Caution: Lily of the Valley is poisonous.*



# Poems for June

*"I wonder what it would be like to live in a world where it was always June."*

- L. M. Montgomery

Mine is the Month of Roses; yes, and mine  
The Month of Marriages! All pleasant sights  
And scents, the fragrance of the blossoming vine,  
The foliage of the valleys and the heights.  
Mine are the longest days, the loveliest nights;  
The mower's scythe makes music to my ear;  
I am the mother of all dear delights;  
I am the fairest daughter of the year.

- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow



June

Now summer is in flower and nature's hum  
Is never silent round her sultry bloom  
Insects as small as dust are never done  
Wi' glittering dance and reeling in the sun  
And green wood fly and blossom haunting bee  
Are never weary of their melody  
Round field hedge now flowers in full glory twine  
Large bindweed bells wild hop and streakd woodbine  
That lift athirst their slender throated flowers  
Agape for dew falls and for honey showers  
These round each bush in sweet disorder run  
And spread their wild hues to the sultry sun.

- John Clare

Dusk In June

Evening, and all the birds  
In a chorus of shimmering sound  
Are easing their hearts of joy  
For miles around.

The air is blue and sweet,  
The few first stars are white,--  
Oh let me like the birds  
Sing before night.



Sara Teasdale

All In June



A week ago I had a fire  
To warm my feet, my hands and face;  
Cold winds, that never make a friend,  
Crept in and out of every place.

Today the fields are rich in grass,  
And buttercups in thousands grow;  
I'll show the world where I have been--  
With gold-dust seen on either shoe.

Till to my garden back I come,  
Where bumble-bees for hours and hours  
Sit on their soft, fat, velvet bums,  
To wriggle out of hollow flowers.

- William Henry Davies



The Swing

How do you like to go up in a swing,  
Up in the air so blue?  
Oh, I do think it the pleasantest thing  
Ever a child can do!  
Up in the air and over the wall,  
Till I can see so wide,  
River and trees and cattle and all  
Over the countryside.  
Till I look down on the garden green,  
Down on the roof so brown--  
Up in the air I go flying again,  
Up in the air and down!

- Robert Louis Stevenson

# Foraging gooseberries and mulberries

By Daryl Hrdlicka

Gooseberries (*Ribes* sp.) and their close cousins, the currants, are one of our favorite summertime berries to forage. We find them in county and state parks, and they are EVERYWHERE. Varieties are found on almost every continent.

The plants themselves grow all along the wood margins and back into the trees, and are very easy to identify. The leaves resemble small, rounded maple leaves, the stems have thorns (sometimes just at the branch joints, sometimes all along the stems), but it's the berries themselves that seal the deal. When they're unripe, they're small, green berries in clusters of 2 or 3 (or more, for currants), and as they get close to the picking stage they start to turn translucent and develop vertical stripes. Our daughter Fiona called them "watermelon peas" when she was 5.



They range from pea size to grape size, and they are deliciously tart! Since the stems are so thorny, you have to be very careful picking them. Long sleeves are a necessity, and gloves are a good idea too.

Gooseberries are good for jellies, drinks, and pies, but you need to be careful about which species you pick. Spiny gooseberries are just that – covered in spines. You can juice them for things like jellies, but that's about it.

At the end of the summer, they ripen and turn dark red to black. The flavor matures and turns a little sweeter. You have to work hard to beat the birds to them, though, as they love them. We usually pick them green just because we like the flavor better.

If you're juicing them, you can use them as they are, but if you're going to be baking with them you need to prep them. Pick up one of your foraged gooseberries, and you'll notice they usually have a bit of the blossom on one end and a piece of stem on the other. It's time to "tip and tail"! With your fingernails, or a fine scissors, just clip off both ends until you're left with the round berry. Repeat until finished.

"Here we go 'round the mulberry bush..."

You've probably heard the nursery rhyme, but have you ever actually tried mulberries? They're a delicious summertime treat, and incredibly easy to forage!

Mulberries don't really grow on bushes. They grow on trees, and frequently the ripest fruit is out of your reach. But fortunately, you don't HAVE to reach them to harvest them.



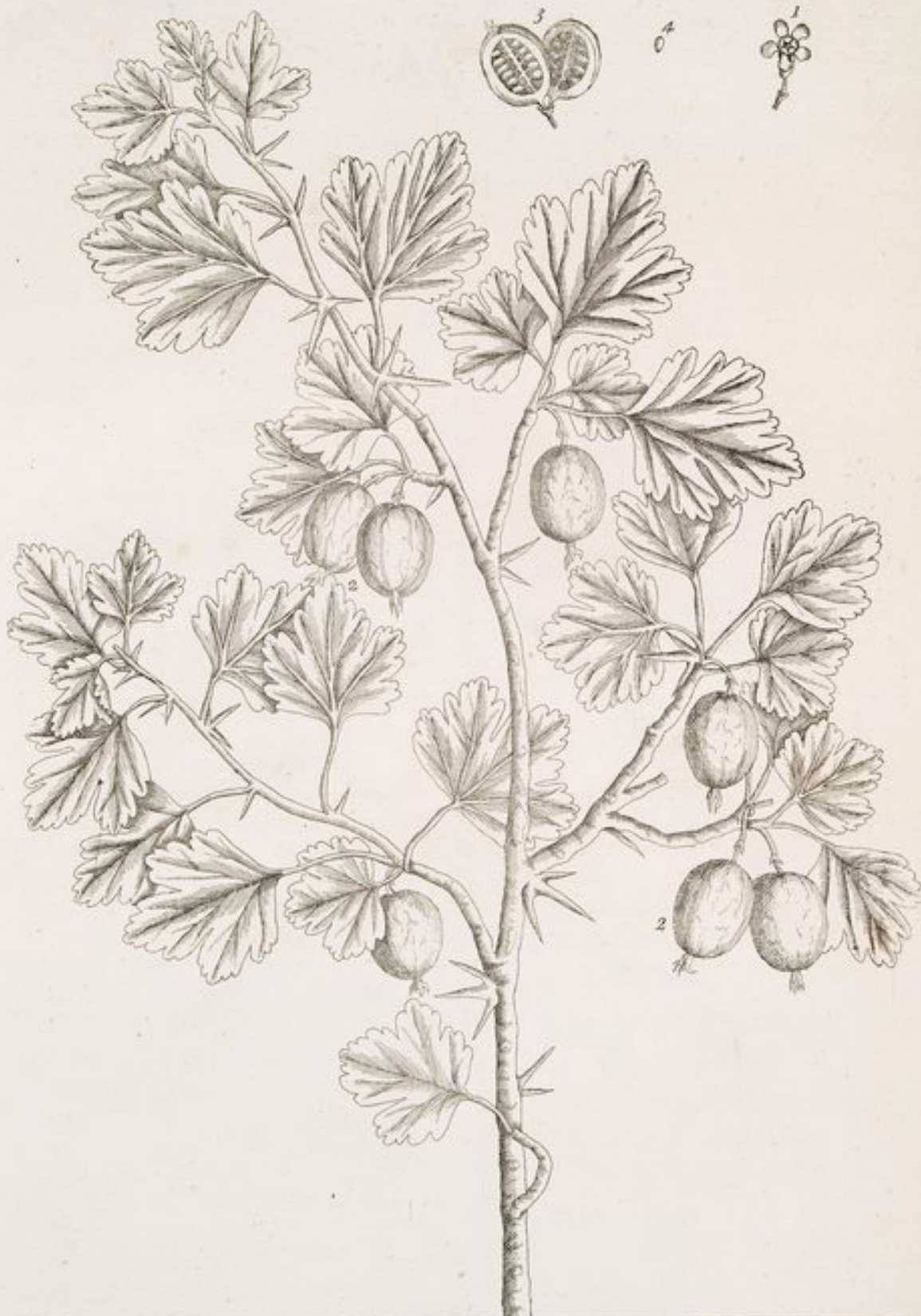
The ripe fruit falls off the tree at the slightest touch, and this makes them easy to gather. Simply lay a blanket or sheet under the tree (we have a "harvesting sheet" that we've used for years), and shake the branches right above it. This is a wonderful way for kids to help! The mulberries will be dropping like rain. You can either pour them into a container to sort and clean at home, or do it before you pour them off the sheet. But you WILL have to sort it. There will be leaves, unripe mulberries, and insects to go through. But the sweet taste makes it all worthwhile.

*Find links to find out more about foraging mulberries & gooseberries along with recipes at the Wild Kids website.*



# "GOOSEBERRY"

Plate 277.



Gooseberry. *Grossularia.*  
 Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx. { 1. Flower.  
 2. Fruit.  
 3. Fruit open.  
 4. Seed. }

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 MULBERRY TREE"

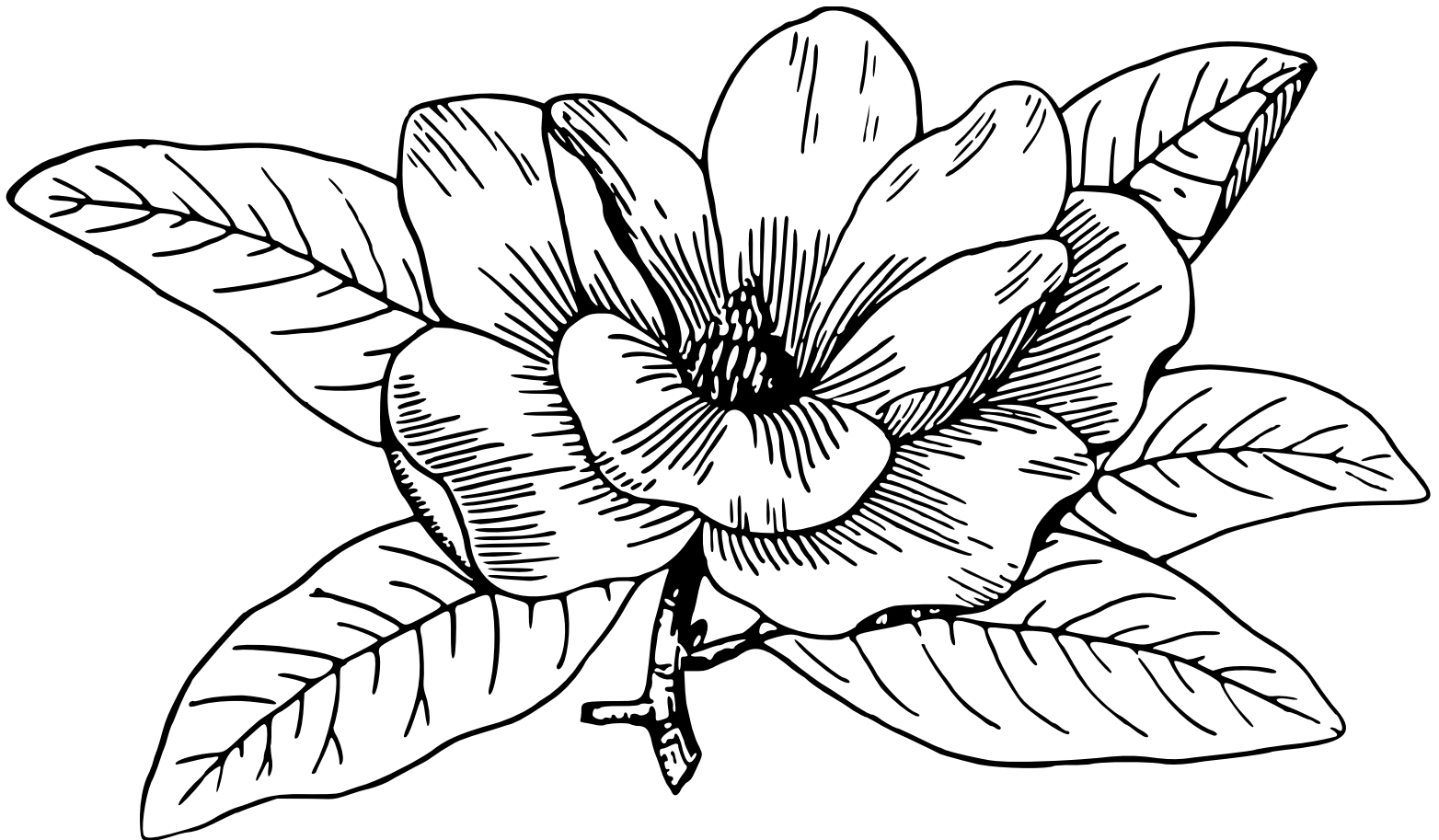


From: *A Curious Herbal: Containing Five Hundred Cuts Of The Most Useful Plants Which Are Now Used In The Practice Of Physick,*  
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*My Nature Journal*

*June*



# June Weather Tree





# June Bird List

Birds spotted this month

# June Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

# JUNE 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 Observations

Week 2 Observations

Week 3 Observations

Week 4 Observations

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CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS





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](http://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids) to learn more

or email photographs, artwork, letters or other submissions to [alicia.bayer@gmail.com](mailto:alicia.bayer@gmail.com)