

July 2019

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Nature Fun to Beat the Heat

Don't Bug Me!  
Outsmarting Insects

Make Your Own  
Sea Salt

Seasonal poems,  
activities, nature journal  
pages and more!



# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

*Hello July!*

What are you hoping to do outdoors this month?

Here in Minnesota, we're busy in July watering and weeding our gardens, picking black raspberries and cherries in the front and back yard, hiking, swimming at the lake, playing outside and trying to keep up with the ever-growing grass and weeds. Our youngest 3 kids and their dad act in an outdoor pageant in nearby Walnut Grove about Laura Ingalls Wilder's time living in our area. Fireflies come out at night and we tell the temperature by counting cricket chirps.

This time of year we forage lots of wild edibles like raspberries, lambs quarters, chokecherries, gooseberries, chicken of the woods mushrooms, purslane and mint (just to name a tiny bit of what's out there right now!). This is a good time of year to harvest wild plants that are good for healing skin remedies like plantain and jewelweed, too. Both of those grew as weeds in our yard for years before we knew that we could use them to heal things like wasp stings and poison ivy rashes.

July can bring some outdoor obstacles, too. In this month's issue we'll talk about ways to beat the heat and the bugs. We'll also talk about how to make your own sea salt from seawater, so if you're lucky enough to get to a beach any time soon you might want to try that. It's definitely on our list for next time we get to an ocean!

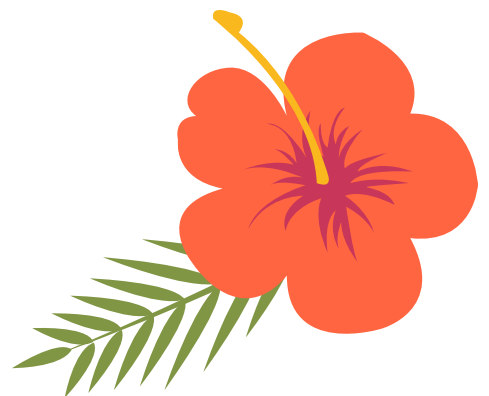
I hope you have a fantastic July, with lots of wild adventures.

*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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Contact: [alicia.bayer@gmail.com](mailto:alicia.bayer@gmail.com)

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

# Cool It!

## 10 Fun Ways to Play in Nature & Beat the Heat



Go on a sprinkler walk (plan a route so the sidewalk goes through as many sprinklers as possible)

Wade in a stream

Head to the beach

Explore a cave (they're naturally cool year-round)

Visit a waterfall (get close enough to feel the cool mist and hear the roar!)

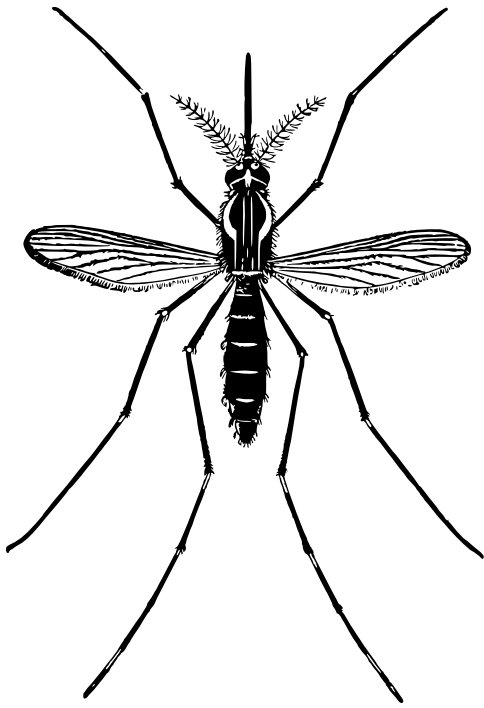
Splash in a kiddie pool in the back yard

Have a squirt gun fight outside

Visit a nature center (head into their air conditioning during the hottest part of the day)

Play outside early in the morning or late in the day, or even after dark!

Find a shady spot and read or draw



# Don't Bug Me!

## Outsmarting Insect Pests

We all know that bugs are important for nature, but sometimes they can make it hard to have fun outside. Here are all kinds of natural ways to keep from getting stung, bit and bothered.

### Mosquitoes

Mosquitoes aren't just annoying since they can spread diseases like West Nile Virus. Here are some ways to keep mosquitoes at bay:

- Wear loose long-sleeved shirts and long pants
- Avoid standing water and dump out or cover containers in your yard (or put goldfish in them!)
- Look for breezy spots (mosquitoes have trouble flying in anything over 1 mph) or use a fan
- Avoid peak mosquito hours around dusk & dawn
- Wear light colors
- Avoid scented products like perfume and lotion
- Try natural repellents like lemon eucalyptus & citronella
- Make your yard friendly to toads, bats, dragonflies and birds who all love to dine on mosquitoes

### PLANT THESE TO REPEL MOSQUITOES:

Lemongrass, marigolds, catmint, , coleus, thyme, lemon balm, garlic, basil, citronella, lavender

### Ticks

Ticks are other bugs that aren't just annoying, but can also spread diseases like Lyme Disease. To protect yourself from ticks try these strategies:

- Wear hats and long pants tucked into your socks when you're in tick-heavy areas
- Do a head-to-toe tick check in the evening after spending time in nature. Ticks must feed for 36 to 48 hours in order to transmit Lyme disease so you have lots of time to catch them.
- Wear light colors so you can easily see ticks
- Spray clothes with lemon eucalyptus repellent
- Raise chickens or guinea fowl, who eat about 10 ticks per hour
- Stay in sunny areas (ticks need moist environments)
- Keep grass short where kids play
- Toss clothes in the dryer on high heat for 5 minutes
- Make barriers of wood chips, which ticks won't cross
- Encourage lots of wildlife in your yard
- Be friendly to opossums that visit, as they are great for tick control

## Bees and Wasps



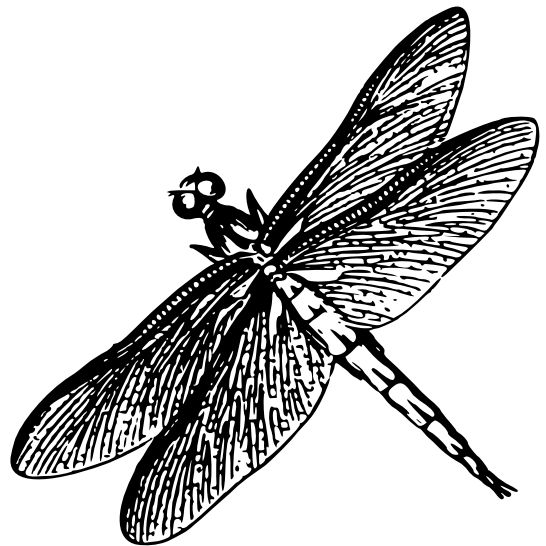
Bees are very important for pollinating crops and flowers, making honey and more. Most bees don't want to sting us but they will to protect themselves or their hive. Wasps are also important pollinators but they can be aggressive if they're irritated or confused.

- Wear light colors
- Stay cool -- sweat aggravates some bees
- Use unscented laundry detergent
- Avoid scented products like perfume and lotion
- Avoid drinking sugary drinks like soda outside, which attract wasps (they're also attracted to fruit and meat)
- Cover your food at picnics
- Be careful going barefoot -- bees and wasps are often on or near the ground
- Be aware that bees are most active during the hottest times of the day
- Stay more than 7-8 yards away from wasp nests
- Avoid waving your arms or making lots of movement, which can be seen as threatening
- Don't smash wasps -- the smell will bring more angry wasps to defend themselves
- Just leave them alone! Most bees and wasps don't want any trouble. As long as you don't try to swap them or interfere with their nests, they'll generally just go about their business

## Don't Forget!

All insects serve a purpose in nature. They feed wildlife, pollinate crops and keep other insects in check, among other duties.

Scientists teach us that insects are vital for the health of the world and even our own health. Most of them will not harm us. Outsmart the pesky ones and try to look out for the good ones. They need our help and we need theirs!



# Foraging Sea Salt

Did you know you can make your own sea salt? People have been doing it for thousands of years. This is a fun way to make an edible souvenir of beaches you visit and vacations you take! Here's all you need to do.

1. Gather some sea water from the ocean. Try to get your water from a beach that is not polluted. You can check your beach's water quality online (we have more information on our site about this).
2. Strain the water through a coffee filter, several layers of cheesecloth, or a clean t-shirt to filter out dirt and impurities.
3. Put the seawater in a wide pan and heat it over medium-high heat, stirring often, until it gets very sludgy.
4. When it's a thick paste, turn the heat down and use a heatproof spatula to stir it while cooking out most of the rest of the water.
5. Scoop the salty paste onto a cookie sheet and spread it thin to dry. You can finish drying it outside in the sun, in a hot attic, in a warm oven (turn on the heat for a few minutes and then turn it off and put the salt inside to slowly dry out) or you can spread it in a dehydrator. It will finish drying out in several hours or several days, depending on your method.
6. Transfer your dry salt to a small jar or salt grinder and enjoy!

## How much salt will you get?

One gallon of seawater will yield about 3/4 cup of sea salt.

# July Poetry

*"Hot July brings cooling showers, apricots and gillyflowers."  
- Sara Coleridge, Pretty Lessons in Verse*



In July  
by Sir Henry Newbolt

His beauty bore no token,  
No sign our gladness shook;  
With tender strength unbroken  
The hand of Life he took:  
But the summer flowers were falling,  
Falling and fading away,  
And mother birds were calling,  
Crying and calling  
For their loves that would not stay.

He knew not Autumn's chillness,  
Nor Winter's wind nor Spring's.  
He lived with Summer's stillness  
And sun and sunlit things:  
But when the dusk was falling  
He went the shadowy way,  
And one more heart is calling,  
Crying and calling  
For the love that would not stay.

Sleepy July in Skipwith Common  
by Stephen Patrick

Across the open common land  
shines glowing purple floral blooms  
The bumble bee can hardly stand,  
as flowers' scent is rising fumes

And lies there in the summer shade  
a resting deer quite joyfully  
for in this beautiful sunlit glade  
all's observed by sentinel tree

This tall oak stands by sparkling stream,  
whose water splashes grass and rock,  
reflecting in its azure gleam,  
the woodland plant and dandy clock

While goes beneath the cloudless sky,  
amidst a warm and dreamy breeze,  
a squirrel idling, passing by,  
past numerous, careless, floating seeds.



July  
by John Clare

Loud is the summer's busy song  
The smallest breeze can find a tongue,  
While insects of each tiny size  
Grow teasing with their melodies,  
Till noon burns with its blistering breath  
Around, and day lies still as death.

Bed in Summer  
by Robert Louis Stevenson



In winter I get up at night  
And dress by yellow candle-light.  
In summer quite the other way,  
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see  
The birds still hopping on the tree,  
Or hear the grown-up people's feet  
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,  
When all the sky is clear and blue,  
And I should like so much to play,  
To have to go to bed by day?

# Foraging raspberries and purslane

This month's botanical coloring pages are for raspberries and purslane. Here's a little bit of information about foraging these great wild edibles.

## Raspberries

Wild raspberries are just like the ones you buy in the grocery store. They grow all over the United States and especially like to grow along the edges of forests and streams.

Raspberries grow on thorny canes, and are usually about 3 feet tall but the canes can grow much taller. Look for small white flowers in late spring, which will turn into berries in summer. There are no poisonous lookalikes for raspberries.



Black raspberries look like raspberries but are dark purple, almost black, when they're ripe (the red ones on those bushes are not ripe and will taste sour). A lot of people confuse black raspberries with blackberries. One easy way to tell black raspberries from blackberries is to pull the berry off the plant. If a little cone shaped middle remains on the plant and the berry has a hole in it, it's a raspberry or black raspberry. Blackberries don't have this hole.



Raspberries are best eaten the day they're picked -- or even the minute they're picked! They don't preserve very well. Keep them cool in the fridge until you can eat them. You can use them to top cereal, granola or ice cream. We also like to make raspberry jam or raspberry lemonade. Scientific studies have shown that the seeds of black raspberries are very powerful at preventing and even treating some cancers, especially cancers of the digestive system.

We preserve our raspberries by flash freezing them on cookie sheets and then bagging them up in the freezer. We use them all year for cobblers and smoothies.

## Purslane

Purslane (portulaca) is one of the only plants that is high in Omega 3 fatty acids, healthy fats that are really important for our health (some fish, walnuts and flax seeds are also high in Omega 3s). You can find it growing as a low-growing weed all over the place -- sidewalks, back yards, parks, you name it. The leaves are small, plump and lemony tasting with a nice little crunch. Purslane is great for sandwiches, wraps, garnishes for soups, or just as something to nibble.



# RASPBERRY

Platz 289.



Raspberry-Bush.

1. Flower.  
2. Fruit.

*Rubus idoeus.*

*Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.*

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

# PURSLANE

Plate 237



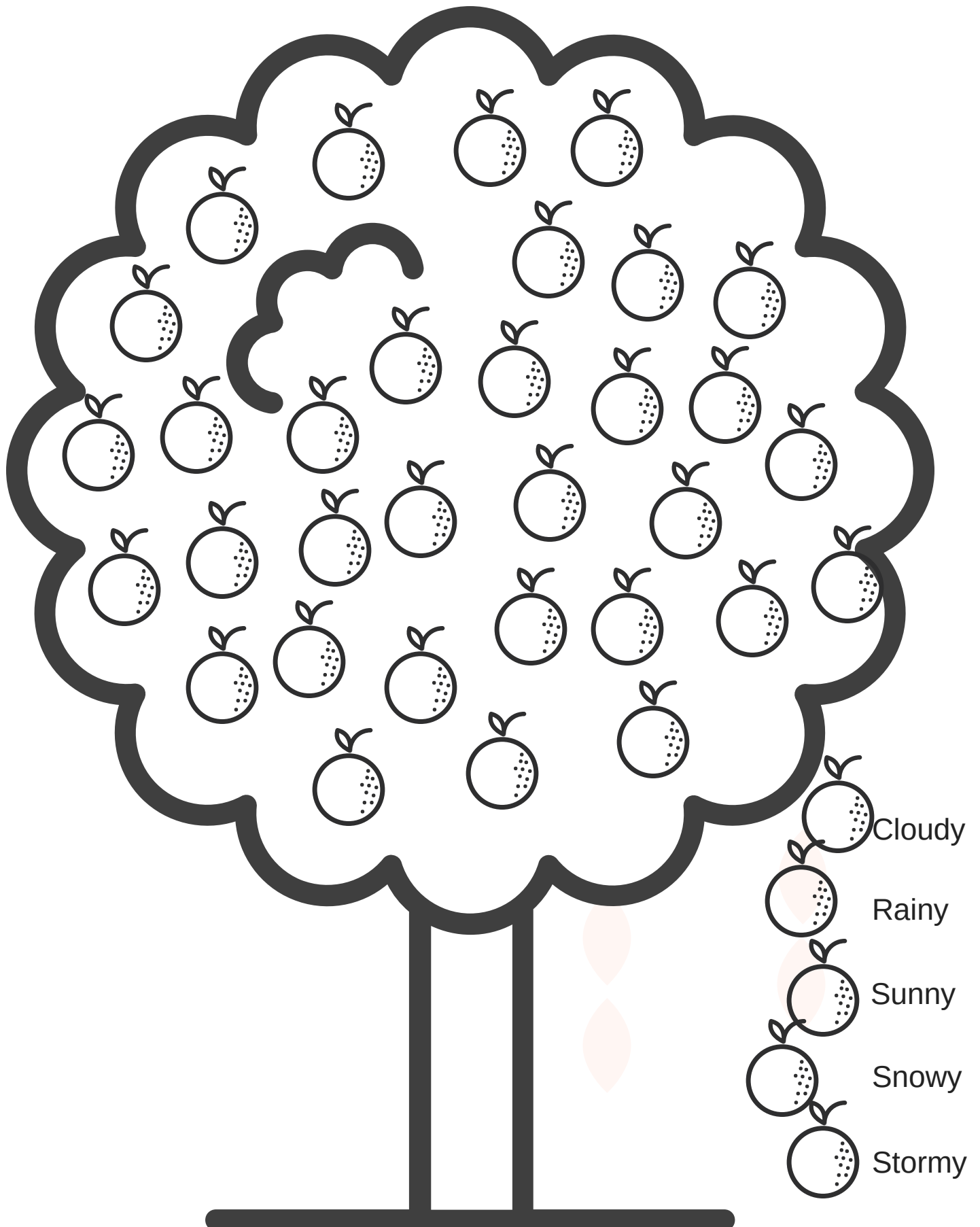
*Purslain.* } 1. Flower.  
*Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.* } 2. Seed Vessel.  
} 3. Seed. *Portulaca.*

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

*My Nature Journal*

*July*

# July Weather Tree



# July Bird List

Birds spotted this month

# July Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

# JULY 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](https://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids) to learn more.