

*October 2019*

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



**Making  
acorn flour**

**Wild  
Wreaths**

**Shrunken  
apple heads**



**With seasonal  
poetry, activities,  
nature journal  
pages & more**



# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

*Happy October!*

What are you hoping to do outdoors this month?

Here in Minnesota, it's (usually) starting to get pretty cold in October. Most of the trees lose their leaves and we spend a lot of time hiking and enjoying nature while it's still warm enough to be outside for long periods.

We are busy harvesting pumpkins in the garden beds (or the front yard, where they often escape to on their long vines) the last of the apples, herbs and fall garden crops like Brussels sprouts, cabbage and Kale.

This time of year we are foraging lots of acorns.

Acorns are some of our family's favorite wild foods and we process lots of them every year to make into acorn flour. We use our acorns to make everything from breads to hot cereal to donuts to casseroles. We'll show you a little bit of how to do it in this issue.

We'll also show you how to use salt and lemon juice to make shrunken apple heads, and how to make a wild wreath with vines.

In the Southern Hemisphere, you are lucky enough to be welcoming spring and the return of warmer weather.

Wherever you are in the world, I hope you have a fantastic month 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.

All materials copyright Alicia Bayer and Wild Kids Magazine.  
This publication is free for personal use. Please do not redistribute.  
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).

# *Go Wild in October*


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

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.


Make a bucket list of  
20 things you want to  
do outside this  
season

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.


Visit a  
pumpkin patch  
or other farm

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.

Make a stacked rock  
sculpture for folks to  
find outside

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.

Make shrunken apple  
heads (we tell you  
how in this issue)

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.


Rake leaves for a  
neighbor (and jump  
in them!)

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.

Pack a lunch and  
spend a whole day  
outside with a friend  
or family member

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.


Make ink from  
something wild  
and write or paint  
with it

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.

Find fun seeds like  
milkweed pods or  
cattail fluff and  
scatter them

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.

Plant a tree

A stylized orange pumpkin with a green stem and a small leaf. The text is centered inside the pumpkin.

Make a wild wreath  
(we tell you how in  
this issue)

# Shrunk Apple Heads!



Here's a fun little nature craft just in time for Halloween.

All you need are some apples (we used imperfect ones off a generous neighbor's tree), salt and lemon juice.

First peel your apples. You can leave a little on the top and bottom like a little hat and scarf.

Then get some carving tools (a chopstick, grapefruit spoon or pen knife all work well, depending on skill level). You can trace your design first with a pen or pencil, if you like.

Carve out a face, making sure to make each feature large since they will shrink up and collapse somewhat.

Then mix up some salt and lemon juice and apply it all over, especially in the parts you've carved out. This will prevent mold and also protect them from getting too brown. Salt has been used for thousands of years to preserve foods and other things. Acids like lemon juice slow oxidation (browning caused by a chemical reaction when substances react with oxygen).

Now just put your apple heads somewhere to dry. Choose a location where you can watch them and keep up with how they change.

Have fun!





# Making Acorn Flour

*"The smell of roasted acorns is my all-time favorite fall scent. There is no taste or smell quite like it. Our entire family loves this seasonal staple that we've been foraging for about fifteen years.*



*Every August or early September, my husband, my kids and I start gathering bags of acorns. We collect them at church, at parks, at friends' houses and anywhere else where we find a nice stash of them.*

*Various members of our family help with all the steps of acorn processing. The little ones help play "sink or float" when we discard the nuts that float (they're typically buggy). My husband and older kids crack the shells and pare off any bad spots, then we leach out the bitter tannins with either hot or cold water leaching. We roast or dry our final product, and begin cooking all kinds of wonderful treats with our bounty..."*



This is an excerpt from my acorn foraging book

Our family started foraging acorns about 15 years ago as a homeschool project. We did it for fun to see how people ate "in the old days" but we liked the taste so much we've done it ever since!

All acorns are edible, but you must leach out their bitter tannins first.

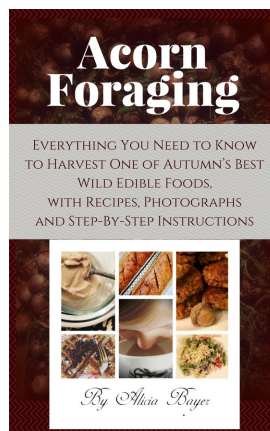
People do this all different ways.

We've got some information about leaching the tannins on the Wild Kids website.

Once you leach the tannins out, you can use the acorns for flour or use them in other ways.

Some of the things we've made with acorns are ice cream, hot cereal, soup, bread, donuts, waffles, acorn patties, crackers, and even a hot drink called racahout that inspired hot cocoa.

We've put links up to lots of acorn recipes on the Wild Kids website.



# Let's Make a Wild Wreath!

*Use wild vines like grapevine to make a seasonal decoration*

Here's a fun way to play with nature. Make a fall wreath from vines you find outside.

You can find all kinds of wild vines like wild grapes, Virginia Creeper and even kudzu (an invasive vine that everybody tries to get rid of).

Simply cut lengths of fresh or dried vines and wrap them in a circle. Tuck the ends into the wreath and add more vines until it's the size you like.

You can use hot glue or florist wire to add natural materials like pine cones, colorful leaves or dried flowers. You can add fresh flowers too (just tuck them in) but be prepared to change them often as they wilt quickly.

Have fun!





# October Poetry

*"There is no season when such pleasant and sunny spots may be lighted on,  
and produce so pleasant an effect on the feelings, as now in October."  
- Nathaniel Hawthorne*



## A Calendar Of Sonnets: October By Helen Hunt Jackson

The month of carnival of all the year,  
When Nature lets the wild earth go its way,  
And spend whole seasons on a single day.  
The spring-time holds her white and purple dear;  
October, lavish, flaunts them far and near;  
The summer charily her reds doth lay  
Like jewels on her costliest array;  
October, scornful, burns them on a bier.  
The winter hoards his pearls of frost in sign  
Of kingdom: whiter pearls than winter knew,  
Oar empress wore, in Egypt's ancient line,  
October, feasting 'neath her dome of blue,  
Drinks at a single draught, slow filtered through  
Sunshiny air, as in a tingling wine!

## An October Garden By Christina Georgina Rossetti

In my Autumn garden I was fain  
To mourn among my scattered roses;  
Alas for that last rosebud which uncloses  
To Autumn's languid sun and rain  
When all the world is on the wane!  
Which has not felt the sweet constraint of June,  
Nor heard the nightingale in tune.  
Broad-faced asters by my garden walk,  
You are but coarse compared with roses:  
More choice, more dear that rosebud which uncloses  
Faint-scented, pinched, upon its stalk,  
That least and last which cold winds balk;  
A rose it is though least and last of all,  
A rose to me though at the fall.

## October By Robert Frost

O hushed October morning mild,  
Thy leaves have ripened to the fall;  
Tomorrow's wind, if it be wild,  
Should waste them all.  
The crows above the forest call;  
Tomorrow they may form and go.  
O hushed October morning mild,  
Begin the hours of this day slow.  
Make the day seem to us less brief.  
Hearts not averse to being beguiled,  
Beguile us in the way you know.  
Release one leaf at break of day;  
At noon release another leaf;  
One from our trees, one far away.  
Retard the sun with gentle mist;  
Enchant the land with amethyst.  
Slow, slow! For the grapes' sake, if the were all,  
Whose leaves already are burnt with frost,  
Whose clustered fruit must else be lost—  
For the grapes' sake along the all.



# OAK (ACORN)



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



# WALNUT



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*

*October*



# October Weather Tree



## Key



sunny



cloudy



rainy



snowy



windy/  
stormy

# October Bird List

Birds spotted this month

# October Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month



# October 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



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.