

April 2020

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



New!
April Phenology
Calendar

Planting
your first
garden

Fun ways to play
and learn with
nature at home

Foraging in
your own
backyard

Seasonal poems,
activities, nature
journal pages & more

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Welcome to another issue of Wild Kids.

This is certainly a different time for many of us, isn't it? Lots of folks around the world are staying home because of the Coronavirus right now, which can change how much we do things we're used to doing like going to school, work, shops and parks.

Staying home is the best way to stop the spread, although time outside is still really good for us if we have access to the outdoors.

Since nature is still an important way to stay healthy and happy, I've changed this month's magazine to focus on ways we can all still take advantage of nature's benefits even if we're at home.

This is a great time to spend with our families and focusing on things we might not have time for otherwise. What would you like to learn about this month?

Wishing you the best,

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

Go Wild in April

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Sit on the balcony or deck at night. Try to learn the constellations and listen for night wildlife

Set up a bird feeder near a window and log the species that visit

Count how many edible plants are in your yard (we teach some in this issue)

Use mud and wildflower seeds to make seed bombs

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

Make sprouts from dried beans and seeds in your cupboard

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

Try regrowing veggie scraps in water, such as tops from parsnips, bases of lettuce and herbs

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

Cut budding branches of flowering shrubs and bring them inside to flower in a vase



Plant Your First Garden!

Have you ever planted a garden? If not, let this year be your first time!

It's easy to grow a garden, whether you do it from seed or with purchased plants. Now is a good time to plan your garden or start seeds.

Find a spot that gets a fair amount of sun every day -- at least 6 hours, the more the better for most plants.



You can plant in the ground or you can use pots or raised beds made of lumber, bricks or other materials. Be sure they weren't treated with chemicals. If you live in an apartment or don't have a yard, you can grow a small garden in pots on a roof, balcony or deck.

Here are some good garden plants for your first garden. These tend to be very easy to grow and to produce a lot of fruits or veggies.

From seeds -- peas, lettuce, zucchini, pumpkins, nasturtiums (bright edible flowers that taste peppery), sunflowers, swiss chard and beans



From plants -- tomatoes, peppers, melons, eggplants and mint (careful, it spreads!)



Grow your garden in rich soil and water it lots, especially until the plants are established. Keep it weeded well, especially in the beginning when the plants are young.



Plant a Garden by Edgar Guest

Where to get seeds

If your family doesn't have seeds already, you can purchase them online from lots of great companies. You can also grow some seeds right from your pantry, like dried beans and even some spices.

Where to get plants

Many stores sell seedlings, which are small garden plants. Summer plants like tomatoes and melons are usually planted after the last frost in May or even June, so there's lots of time yet to plan for them.

Did you know?

Scientists have discovered that fruits and vegetables are more nutritious if they were stressed when they were grown. When plants have to deal with pests, inconsistent water, harsh sun and other challenges, they create natural chemicals to protect themselves. When we eat the plants, those natural chemicals protect us from diseases.



If your purse no longer bulges
and you've lost your golden treasure,
If at times you think you're lonely
and have hungry grown for pleasure,
Don't sit by your hearth and grumble,
don't let mind and spirit harden.
If it's thrills of joy you wish for
get to work and plant a garden!
If it's drama that you sigh for,
plant a garden and you'll get it
You will know the thrill of battle
fighting foes that will beset it
If you long for entertainment and
for pageantry most glowing,
Plant a garden and this summer spend
your time with green things growing.
If it's comradeship you sight for,
learn the fellowship of daisies.
You will come to know your neighbor
by the blossoms that he raises;
If you'd get away from boredom
and find new delights to look for,
Learn the joy of budding pansies
which you've kept a special nook for.
If you ever think of dying
and you fear to wake tomorrow
Plant a garden! It will cure you
of your melancholy sorrow
Once you've learned to know peonies,
petunias, and roses,
You will find every morning
some new happiness discloses.

We have lots of gardening resources on the Wild Kids website to help you plan your garden.

Foraging in Your Own Back Yard

You don't have to leave your yard or neighborhood to find lots of tasty, healthy plants to forage. We easily found 23 different edible and medicinal plants growing in our friend's suburban Nebraska yard! Here are 12 common wild edible plants to look for and how we like to enjoy them.

Never forage in a yard that's been sprayed with pesticides or herbicides!



Dandelions: The leaves are very healthy but bitter. We love the flowers dipped in batter and fried as fritters or used for dandelion syrup.



Violets: The leaves and flowers are both edible. The flowers make a lovely color-changing syrup or jelly, or you can candy them with sugar for on top of cakes.



Purslane: The leaves are crunchy and lemony, and they are really high in Omega 3 fats. We like them in sandwiches or wraps.



Burdock: The young leaves are edible but most people enjoy the roots, roasted or stir fried. Burdock root sells for \$18 a pound!



Plantain: It's edible but we use it mostly to treat bee and wasp stings. Chew a leaf and put it on the sting to make it feel better.



Roses: You can use the petals for jelly or the hips (the red seed pods) for a nutritious tea.



Spruce tips: The tender, light spring tips of spruce trees taste lemony. Chop them into shortbread cookies or make tea or jelly. They're very high in Vitamin C.



Walnuts: These are messy and some work to husk and process, but they're great in baked goods!



Crab apples: Just tiny apples, they make good cider (just simmer them in water, then sweeten to taste) or jelly.



Chickweed: This common lawn weed is good in salads and sandwiches.



Mulberries: These berries grow on trees in parks and yards. We like them plain, with milk and sugar, or in smoothies and cobblers.



Lambsquarters: Also called goosefoot, this garden weed tastes like spinach and is good in smoothies, soups and casseroles. We like it better than spinach, actually!

Be sure to always look at lots of ID sources to be sure you have properly identified any plant before you eat it, and always just eat just a little bit the first time in case you have a reaction.

Other Back Yard & Neighborhood Edibles

Remember that lots of other edible backyard plants are not so much wild as unused. Many people have apple trees, rhubarb plants, berry bushes and other edible landscaping that they don't harvest. Do you have anything like that in your yard? Some cities plant edible fruit and nut trees for decorations that you can legally pick from, too.

Neighborhood Wild Plants to Boost Your Immune System

Right now a lot of people are trying to improve their immune systems to help them fight sickness. We've featured lots of plants in Wild Kids that are good for doing this. Here are some examples. If you want to learn more about these plants, check out back issues of Wild Kids.

Pine needles make tea that's very high in Vitamin C. Our very first issue in January 2019 taught you about foraging pine.

Elderberries are good at fighting viruses and elder flowers are great at fighting colds. We talked about elder in the August 2019 issue.

Mullein leaves have been used for many years to treat coughs, colds and lung problems. It was one of the botanical coloring pages in February 2019 and we had some links on the website that month to learn more about it.

Plants featured in our past botanical coloring pages

Here's a list of all the wild (and not so wild) plants we've featured in past issues. Many of these are common "weeds" that grow all around us.

January 2019 -- rose, pine

February 2019 -- mullein, burdock

March 2019 -- sorrel, nettles

April 2019 -- dandelions, clover

May 2019 -- asparagus, chickweed

June 2019 -- gooseberries, mulberries

July 2019 -- raspberries, purslane

August 2019 -- mint, elder

September 2019 -- crab apple, plantain

October 2019 -- acorns (oak), walnuts

November 2019 -- hazelnuts, hawthorn berries

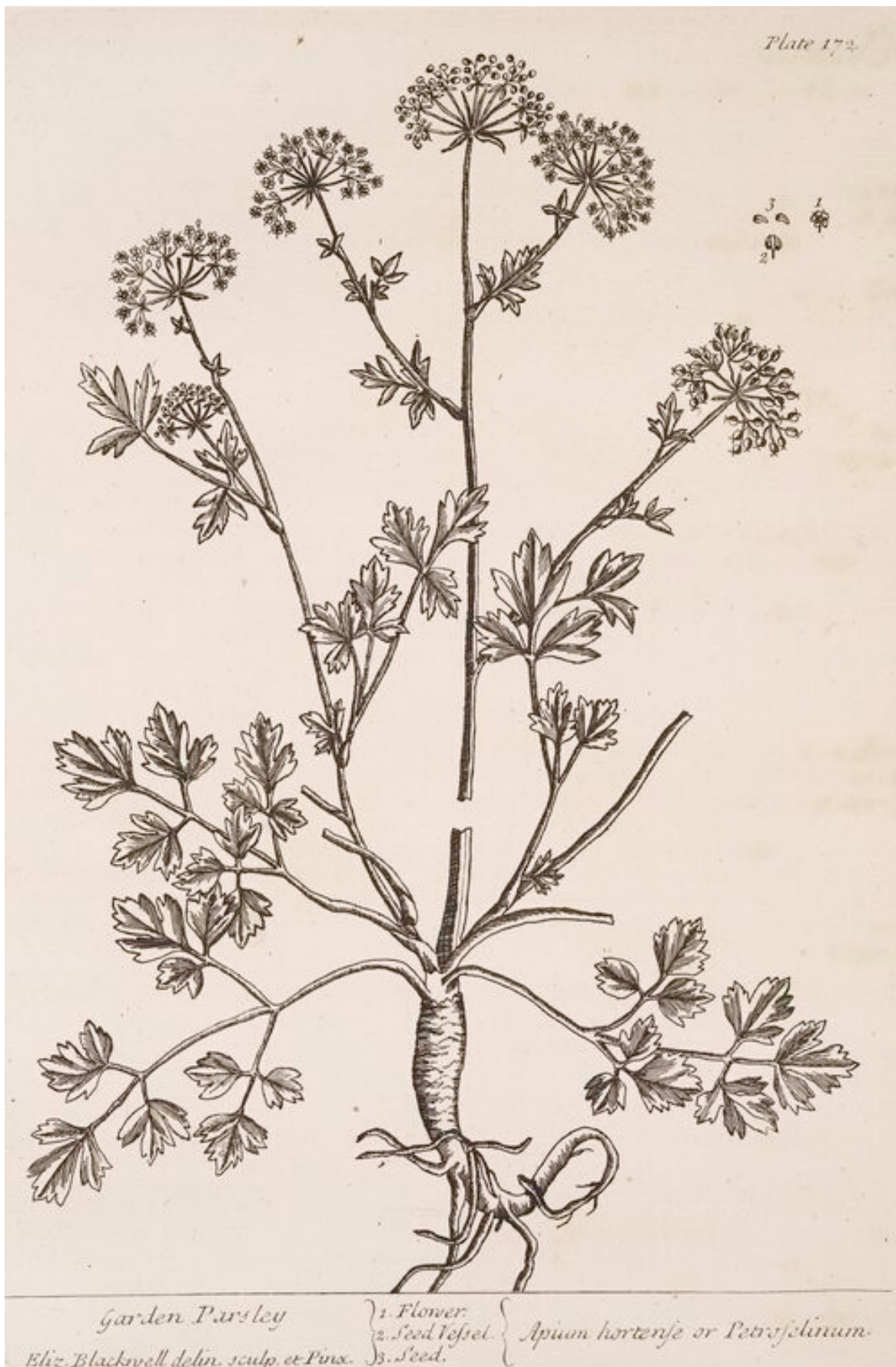
December 2019 -- chestnuts, spruce

January 2020 -- ground ivy, sage

February 2020 -- mallow, aloe

March 2020 -- horsetail, wild mustard

PARSLEY



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

CHAMOMILE



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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Poems for April

"April hath put a spirit of youth in everything."

- William Shakespeare

April

The roofs are shining from the rain.
The sparrows twitter as they fly,
And with a windy April grace
The little clouds go by.

Yet the back-yards are bare and brown
With only one unchanging tree--
I could not be so sure of Spring
Save that it sings in me.

- Sara Teasdale

Spring Song

Hark, I hear a robin calling!
List, the wind is from the south!
And the orchard-bloom is falling
Sweet as kisses on the mouth.

In the dreamy vale of beeches
Fair and faint is woven mist,
And the river's orient reaches
Are the palest amethyst.

Every limpid brook is singing
Of the lure of April days;
Every piney glen is ringing
With the maddest roundelays.

Come and let us seek together
Springtime lore of daffodils,
Giving to the golden weather
Greeting on the sun-warm hills.

- Lucy Maud Montgomery

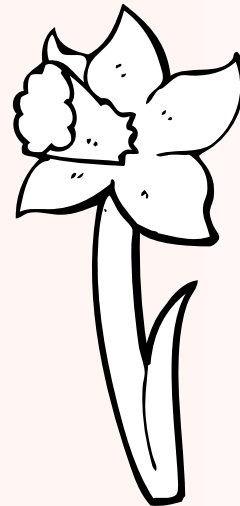
Song of a Second April

April this year, not otherwise
Than April of a year ago
Is full of whispers, full of sighs,
Dazzling mud and dingy snow;
Hepaticas that pleased you so
Are here again, and butterflies.

There rings a hammering all day,
And shingles lie about the doors;
From orchards near and far away
The gray wood-pecker taps and bores,
And men are merry at their chores,
And children earnest at their play.

The larger streams run still and deep;
Noisy and swift the small brooks run.
Among the mullein stalks the sheep
Go up the hillside in the sun
Pensively; only you are gone,
You that alone I cared to keep.

~ Edna St. Vincent Millay



My Nature Journal

April



Phenology Calendar

Keep track of all of the firsts in nature that you see this month!

Write in firsts like these and draw a picture if you like.



- First bluebird seen
- Mourning cloak butterfly spotted
- First ladybug spotted



- Spring peepers (frogs) heard
- First earthworms spotted



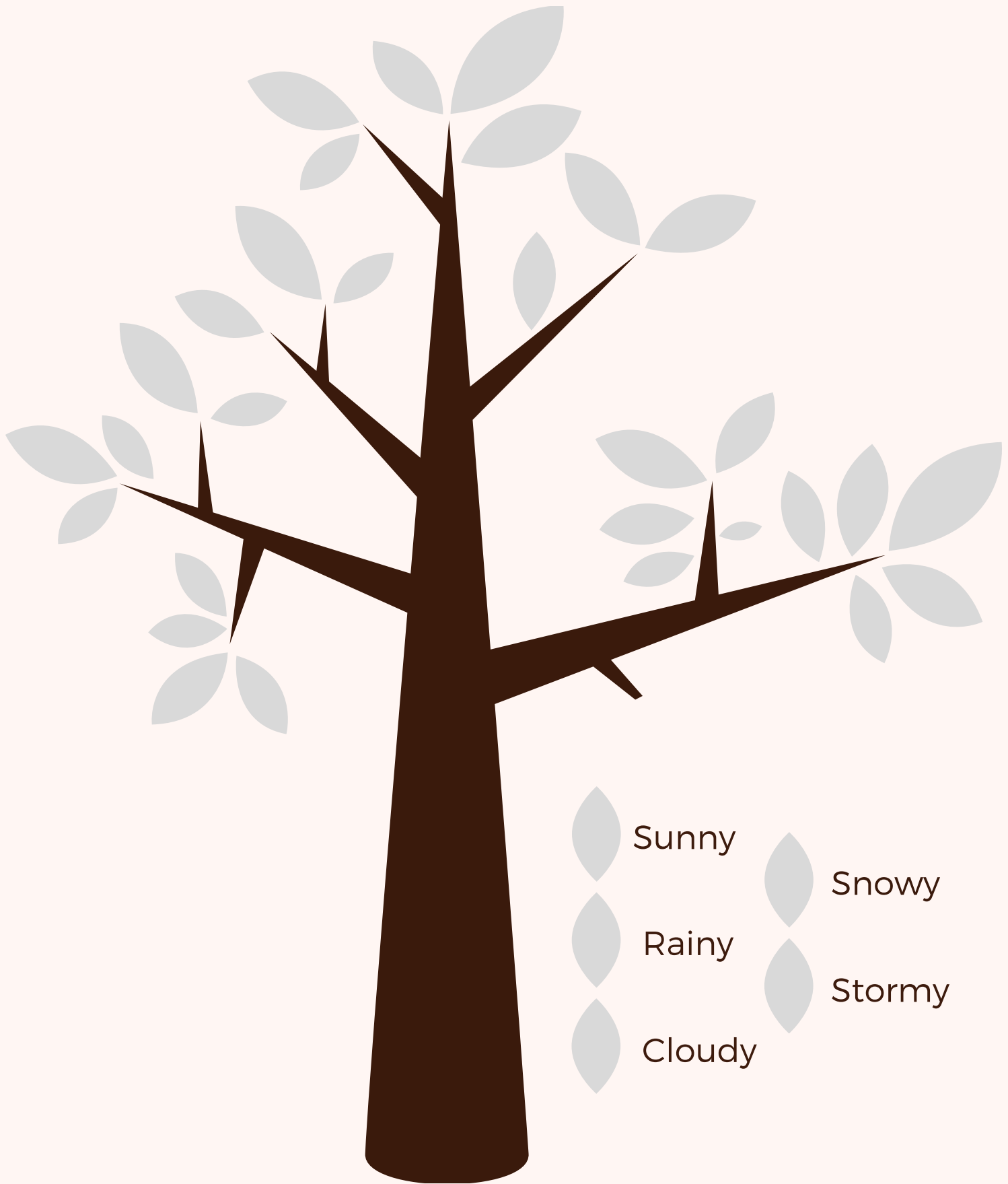
- First garter snake spotted
- Turkey vultures spotted
- First trillium in bloom
- Choke cherries blooming
- Red winged blackbirds heard



April 2020

<u>SUN</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUE</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THU</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>SAT</u>
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

April Weather Tree



April Bird List

Birds spotted this month

April Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

APRIL 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 to learn more

or email photographs, artwork, letters or other submissions to alicia.bayer@gmail.com