

July 2020

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



**What to watch in this
Month's Night Sky**

**July Phenology
Calendar**

**Forage & Grow
Borage & Bay**

**Rockhound
Scavenger Hunt**

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

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Hello July!

We've all made it through another month of this challenging time. I hope you and your loved ones are safe and healthy, and that you're finding ways to get out into nature. There are so many ways that nature helps keep us happy and healthy that it's just as important now as ever to find ways to take advantage of it, even if it's closer to home or in new ways.

How are you spending in time outside these days? This time of year, we spend lots of time gardening, hiking, foraging and playing at a nearby lake. We picked up some inexpensive inflatable boats that our kids have been having fun rowing around in, and we've also been having fun biking in the neighborhood.

Our black raspberries are just starting to ripen, and we spend lots of time in the back yard eating them right off the canes. Roses and lilies are blooming in the gardens, along with delphiniums and mallow (weeds that we let grow in one corner for their pretty pink flowers).

Elderflowers are finishing up their bloom here, and will be making berries soon. We're not harvesting any more wild nettles since they're making flowers now and aren't as good for us after they bloom. We'll wait for them to make seeds and then (carefully) harvest those for their medicinal properties.

In this month's issue, we have some rock-hunting fun and some information on really special things going on in the night sky this month. We also have information on growing or foraging borage and bay, along with lots of other nature fun.

This has been a rough time for all of us, but I hope you've found some ways to let nature help make it better. There are lots of wonderful ways to appreciate it now, whether it's watching meteor showers, gathering rose petals for jam or just looking for cool rocks in a parking lot. 😊

Wishing you a wild, healthy, happy July,

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

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

10 Fun Ways to Learn & Play in Nature in July



Gather rose petals for rose petal jelly

Take part in our rockhound scavenger hunt

Sketch or read a book in a tree

Go for a walk in the rain (splash in lots of puddles!)

Watch a meteor shower (we have info in this issue on when to look)

Do an art project with natural materials like berries and flowers

Do yoga or meditate in your back yard or on your balcony

Press wildflowers (flat flowers work best) in an old book

Research which wild berries grow in your area and how to spot them

Plant seeds for a fall (or spring) garden



A STELLAR MONTH!

All you have to do is look up to see some pretty cool stuff this month!

Here's a list of some of the coolest.

July 4/5 (just after midnight, depending on where you live)- Penumbral Lunar Eclipse

A penumbral lunar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes through the Earth's partial shadow, or penumbra, causing it to darken slightly but not all the way. This eclipse will be visible throughout most of North America, South America, the eastern Pacific and the western Atlantic Ocean. It will begin on July 4, at 11:07 p.m. EDT and last until 1:52 a.m. EDT. The best time to look will be around 12:30 a.m. during the middle of the event.

July 5 -- Full moon (Buck Moon, Thunder moon, Hay moon)

July 14 - Jupiter at Opposition

Jupiter will be closest to Earth tonight and its face will be fully illuminated by the Sun, making it easier to see than any other time of the year. You can use a good pair of binoculars or a telescope to try to see Jupiter's cloud bands and four largest moons.

July 20 - New Moon

The moon will be on the same side of the Earth as the sun so it won't be visible, making it the best time to see faint objects like galaxies and star clusters.

July 20 - Saturn at Opposition

Saturn will be at its closest to Earth and will be fully illuminated by the sun, making it brighter than any other time of the year and visible all night. Use good binoculars or a telescope to view Saturn's rings and some of its moons.

July 22 - Mercury at Greatest Western Elongation

This is the best time to view Mercury because it will be at its highest point above the horizon in the morning, just before sunrise. It will be in the Eastern sky.

July 28, 29 - Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower and the Alpha Capricornids Meteor Shower

There will be a rare double meteor shower during this time period! The Delta Aquarids shower, which is produced by debris left behind by the comets Marsden and Kracht, can produce up to 20 meteors per hour. It runs annually from July 12 to August 23 and peaks this year on the night of the 28th. The Alpha Capricornids run from around mid-July to mid-August but will also peak on these days. This shower produces "a number of bright fireballs produced during its activity period," according to the American Meteor Society.

The moon's light will make it hard to see a lot of the fainter meteors but you should still be able to see some of the brighter ones. The best viewing will be from a very dark location after midnight when the moon has set.

Rockhound Challenge

One of the nice things about rock hunting is that you can do it anywhere. We've found fossils and petrified wood just walking along in parking lots! You can find interesting rocks on the beach, in parks, at riverbeds and in your own back yard. Here's a scavenger hunt of rocks and minerals to try to find this month (or throughout the year).

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Quartzite |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Black | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A fossil | | <input type="checkbox"/> Granite |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Black & white | | <input type="checkbox"/> Shale | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shiny | | <input type="checkbox"/> A shell | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orange |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Green |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pink | | <input type="checkbox"/> Red | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue | | <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Petrified wood | | <input type="checkbox"/> Striped | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mica | | <input type="checkbox"/> Metallic | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clay | | <input type="checkbox"/> Square | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Coal | | <input type="checkbox"/> Layered | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> An agate |  | <input type="checkbox"/> Fool's gold (pyrite) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A geode | | <input type="checkbox"/> Molten | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multicolored | | <input type="checkbox"/> Slate | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A conglomerate | | <input type="checkbox"/> River rock (worn smooth) | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A rock with a hole | | <input type="checkbox"/> An artifact made of rock | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soft (can scrape it easily) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Sea glass | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eroded by water | | <input type="checkbox"/> A porous rock |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A rune rock (looks like a letter is carved into it) | | <input type="checkbox"/> Lots of rocks that are just really pretty or cool! | |



Want some help with your rock ID?

Rock Identification

From Texas Rocks and Minerals, by Roselle M. Girard

This public domain book has lots more information on rock ID and can be found at gutenberg.org.

1. GLASSY appearance (rock is dark, smooth, and shiny)

Obsidian Entire rock is glassy

Vitrophyre Crystalline grains are scattered through the dark glassy mass

2. COMPACT, DULL, OR STONY appearance (individual grains too small to be recognized)

A. Can be scratched by a fingernail

Chalk Dilute hydrochloric acid fizzes on it

Clay Earthy odor when breathed on

Diatomite Crumbly

Rock gypsum Made up of the mineral gypsum

Soapstone Soapy or greasy feel

B. Cannot be scratched by a fingernail but can be scratched by ordinary pocket knife

Dolomite Dilute hydrochloric acid may fizz slightly on it; will fizz if rock is powdered

Limestone Dilute hydrochloric acid fizzes on it

Serpentine rock Commonly some shade of green

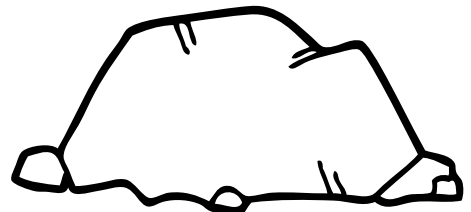
Shale Breaks in flat, thin flakes; earthy odor

C. Cannot be scratched by an ordinary pocket knife

Basalt Dark colored and heavy

Chert Hard, smooth, and porcelain-like

Rhyolite Light to dark colored; may show streaks or flow structure



3. GRANULAR appearance (at least some of the individual grains are large enough to be seen without a magnifying glass)

A. Can be scratched by an ordinary pocket knife

Limestone Dilute hydrochloric acid will fizz on it

Marble Dilute hydrochloric acid will fizz on calcite marble, and it may fizz slightly on dolomite marble

Rock gypsum Made up of the mineral gypsum

Rock salt Has a salty taste; made up of the mineral halite

B. Generally cannot be scratched by an ordinary pocket knife (some schist is softer)

1. Grains are of about equal size (equigranular)

Granite Quartz and feldspar grains interlock

Pegmatite Large interlocking grains; commonly feldspar, quartz, mica

Quartzite Rock breaks across the quartz grains

Sandstone Rock breaks through the cement but around the sand grains

2. Easily seen grains are scattered through a mass of finer grains

Basalt Dark colored, heavy rock

Llanite Rusty pink feldspar and blue quartz grains embedded in a brownish rock mass

Rhyolite porphyry Light to dark colored rock; may show streaks or flow structure

3. Grains are arranged in layers

Gneiss Interlocking grains are in straight or wavy bands

Schist Splits in thin layers; some schist is soft enough to be scratched by a knife

4. FRAGMENTAL appearance (rocks are made up of fragments that are either loose or cemented together)

Breccia Angular, gravel-size fragments that are cemented together

Conglomerate Rounded, gravel-size fragments that are cemented together

Coquina Shells and shell fragments that are cemented together

Gravel Loose fragments

Pulverulent limestone Loose, powdery fragments; dilute hydrochloric acid fizzes on them

Sand Loose fragments no larger than a pinhead

Sandstone Sand fragments that are cemented together

Volcanic ash Loose, fine, gritty particles

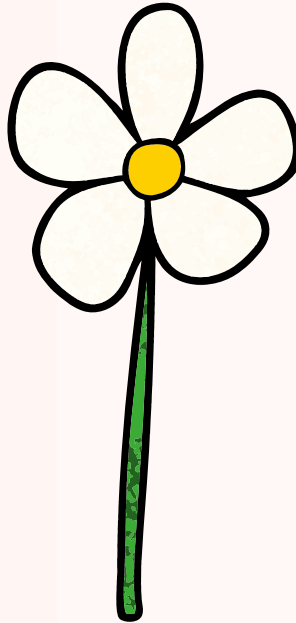
Poetry Corner

Nature poems by Emily Dickinson

Emily Dickinson was a famous poet who loved nature. She often wrote about birds, insects and flowers in her poetry, and she wrote letters about missing her garden when she was away from home. Here are some Emily Dickinson poems that feature nature themes.

Nature, the Gentlest Mother

Nature, the gentlest mother,
Impatient of no child,
The feeblest or the waywardest, —
Her admonition mild
In forest and the hill
By traveller is heard,
Restraining rampant squirrel
Or too impetuous bird.
How fair her conversation,
A summer afternoon, —
Her household, her assembly;
And when the sun goes down
Her voice among the aisles
Incites the timid prayer
Of the minutest cricket,
The most unworthy flower.
When all the children sleep
She turns as long away
As will suffice to light her lamps;
Then, bending from the sky
With infinite affection
And infiniter care,
Her golden finger on her lip,
Wills silence everywhere.y.



The Daisy Follows Soft The Sun

The daisy follows soft the sun,
And when his golden walk is done,
Sits shyly at his feet.
He, waking, finds the flower near.
"Wherefore, marauder, art thou here?"
"Because, sir, love is sweet!"

We are the flower, Thou the sun!
Forgive us, if as days decline,
We nearer steal to Thee,—
Enamoured of the parting west,
The peace, the flight, the amethyst,
Night's possibility!

A Drop Fell On The Apple Tree

A drop fell on the apple tree
Another on the roof;
A half a dozen kissed the eaves,
And made the gables laugh.

A few went out to help the brook,
That went to help the sea.
Myself conjectured, Were they pearls,
What necklaces could be!

The dust replaced in hoisted roads
The birds jocosely sung;
The sunshine threw his hat away,
The orchards spangles hung.

The breezes brought dejected
And bathed them in the glee;
The East put out a single flag,
And signed the fete away.

To Make a Prairie

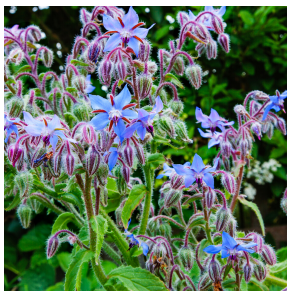
To make a prairie it takes a clover and one bee,
One clover, and a bee.
And revery.
The revery alone will do,
If bees are few.

Foraging and Growing Borage



Borage (*Borago officinalis*) grows wild in the Mediterranean and throughout Europe and beyond. It's a garden plant that easily self sows, which leads to it escaping into the wild in many areas throughout the world. The flavor is a bit like cucumber and it's full of healthy vitamins and minerals.

Borage was a very popular plant in many cultures throughout history. People believed it gave you courage and helped make you happy. They also used it for a lot of health remedies, some of which are still used today. Some people make a poultice of the leaves to help with leg swelling and pain. Some people use the seeds to support the adrenal system and to lower blood pressure, and the seeds are also used to make an oil that many people use for skin treatments.



Mother Earth News says of borage: *"The pretty plant belongs as much in a flower garden as in an herb bed and is well worth the large amount of space it requires. Germinating quickly from seed, borage grows from 1 to 3 feet tall with coarse, 4- to 6-inch gray-green leaves. Both the stems and foliage are covered with bristly hairs, and mature specimens produce clusters of five-pointed, star-like flowers that are almost an inch across."*

If you can't find borage where you live, you can easily grow it in your garden, where it will help strawberries grow and protect tomatoes from pests like hornworms. It is an annual that likes sun and is not picky about its care. People enjoy the leaves in salads or teas, though they are slightly hairy in texture, which makes them a bit odd to nibble unless they're young. Once they're cooked, they taste a lot like spinach and can be used similarly.

The flowers are especially fun to use for cooking. Many people like to candy them (paint a mixture of egg white and water on them and dip them in sugar, then dry them) to use as edible decorations on cupcakes and other sweets. Others add them to salads or drinks as pretty little edible decorations. You can even use the flowers for an edible dye. If you add vinegar, it turns pink!

Borage is a big boost for pollinators! Bees and hummingbirds flock to it, and painted lady caterpillars devour the leaves before turning into butterflies.



BORAGE

(BORAGO OFFICINALIS)

Plate 16



Borago

Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

1 Flower
2 Calyx
3 Seed

Borago

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



Foraging and Growing Bay Laurel

Lots of people use bay leaves for cooking, but if you're lucky enough to live in places like California, Florida or Greece, you can also just pick the leaves from trees growing outside.

Bay leaves grow on trees called bay laurel trees, and they are common trees in warmer climates. These trees can grow quite large but they are also happy in containers and can be kept as potted plants. If you want to grow a bay tree in a pot, bring it outside in warmer months and then move it inside when the weather cools. It will grow fairly quickly and will need to be repotted as it grows, but you can also keep it trimmed to keep it smaller. Some people even trim them into fun topiary shapes.



Bay leaves aren't just great for cooking. They are also used to keep insects away from food storage. Some people use the ground leaves for skin treatments and the stems were used throughout history to make crowns and wreaths.

We have links on the web site to learn more about how to safely forage and use bay.



BAY LAUREL

(LAURUS NOBILIS)

Plate 175.



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

Phenology Calendar

Keep track of all of the firsts in nature that you see this month!
Write in firsts like these examples and draw a picture if you like.

- First apples ripen
- First sphinx moth spotted
- First garden tomatoes harvested
- Fireflies spotted
- First day over 100° F
- Foraged wild raspberries
- Hummingbird spotted
- First hollyhock blooms
- Milkweeds in pod stage
- First turtle spotted sunning on log

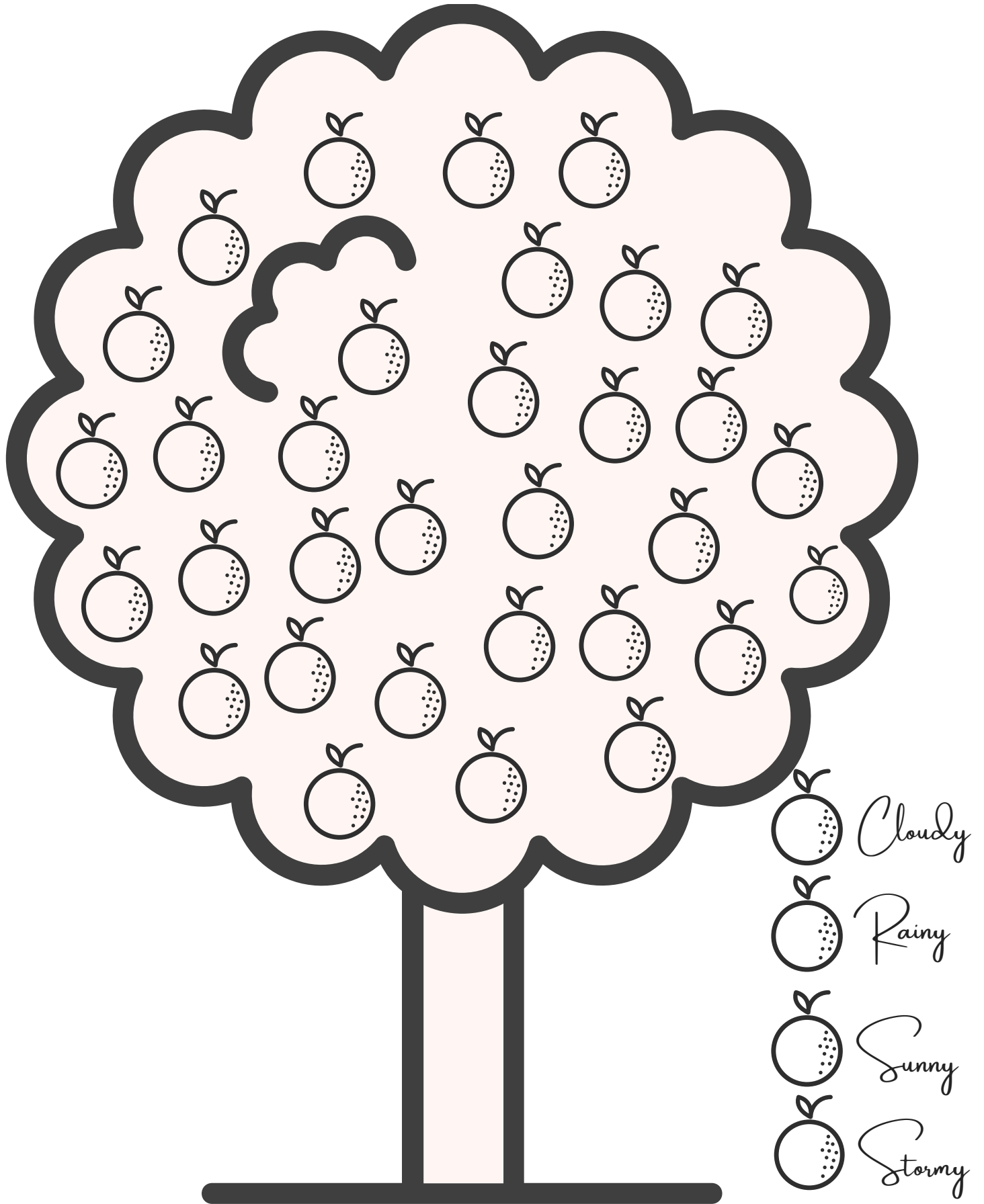
July 2020

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | | | 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 | 31 | |

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

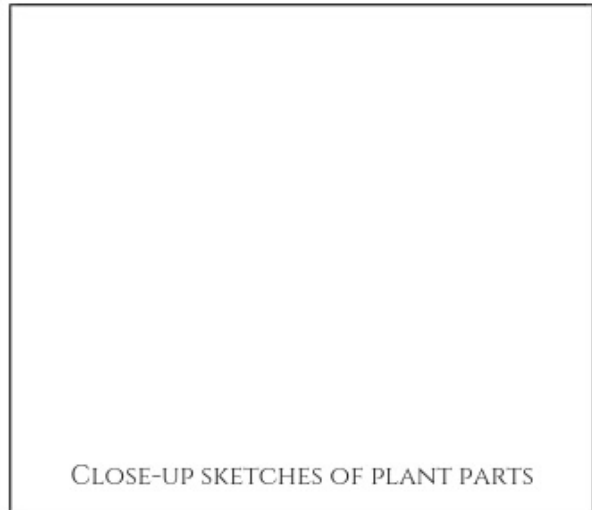
Week 3 Observations

Week 4 Observations

MY FORAGING GUIDE FOR:



GENERAL SKETCH OF THE PLANT



CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS

LATIN NAME _____

WHERE FOUND _____

PARTS USED _____

LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

WARNINGS: _____

FORAGING RECORD (DATES, WHERE FOUND, HOW IT WAS USED)

MY RATING FOR THIS PLANT





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.