

September 2020

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Drying Flowers & Herbs

Nature BINGO!

**Make an Easy Fruit
Picker**

**Growing & Foraging
Motherwort & Yarrow**

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



From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Welcome September!

How can it be September already? The seasons are passing fast these days.

I hope you and your family are well and that you've been finding fun ways of spending time in nature.

Here in Minnesota, we are busy harvesting tomatoes, lots of varieties of squash, and herbs from the garden, among other goodies. We make up big batches of roasted spaghetti sauce and can it so we have the delicious taste of garden tomatoes into the winter. Our daughter Rhia's little house has a big pear tree in the back yard and we pick pears from it and from a few other area trees for canning, which the kids all love. One year, our son Alex had canned pears with breakfast every day until February! Grapes are another September harvest for us, both wild grapes and grapes from friends' and neighbors' backyard vines that we turn into jelly and juice..

We're also foraging some tasty wild foods this month. Elderberries, acorns, walnuts, wild mushrooms and hawthorn berries are some of our favorite September treasures.

What's in season in your neck of the woods? What do you have planned for this wonderful month?

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

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

Go Wild in September

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Plant flower bulbs for next spring, like tulips or daffodils

Collect wildflower seeds from dried flower heads to plant next year

Take nature photos from a new angle, like down in the grass or up in a tree

Dry herbs & flowers to use later (we tell you how in this issue)

Make homemade play dough and gather seeds, flower petals and scented leaves to play with it

Go apple picking (or pick whatever else is in season near you)

Watch a sunrise or sunset

Dance in the rain (except if there's lightning!)

Have a picnic lunch

Look for milkweed pods, cattail heads or other big fluffy seed pods to blow, scatter and make wishes on

Drying Herbs & Flowers



Dried herbs and flowers are so wonderful and useful! You can use them to make your own teas and spice mixes, decorations, herbal vinegars, sachets and even homemade perfumes and lotions.

There are three common ways to dry plants -- hang them to dry (we used a grapevine wreath for this example), spread them in single layers on a screen or basket, or place them in paper bags.



Whichever way you choose, you want to give them lots of air between them and keep them away from light. They might look pretty in a sunny window, but that will take lots of their lovely color, scent and taste away!

Leave them for several days and check them every so often. If it's very hot and dry, it won't take long. Be sure they have lots of air circulation. When they are absolutely crisp and dry, transfer them to an airtight container like a recycled jar and label them with the plant name and date. Store in a cool, dark place.

Make an Easy Fruit Picker!



BY DARYL HRDLICKA

Making your own fruit picker is a fun and easy way to harvest apples, pears, and anything else out of your reach! And all you need is a broom handle (or even a tree branch), a plastic bottle, some duct tape, and an adult with a knife or scissors.



- 1 Take the plastic bottle and remove the label.
- 2 Have an adult cut out an opening on the side of the bottle, towards the bottom end. The size of this opening determines what size fruit you can pick.
- 3 Cut a notch from the original opening towards the bottom end. This is where the stem of the fruit will go.
- 4 Put the spout end of the bottle over the broom handle and duct tape it down. You're ready to go picking!

Just lift your fruit picker up so the fruit goes into the opening, get the stem caught in the notch, and pull! The fruit will come right off and be caught in the bottle.

If you use a longer bottle, you can store two or more pieces of fruit before you have to empty it. And if you want a longer reach, many stores sell telescoping handles in the paint section. With one of those, you can get the really high fruit.

Happy picking!





Changing Seasons

What are you looking forward to? What will you miss?

All around the world, the season is getting ready to change. In the Northern hemisphere, fall will be starting this month. In the Southern hemisphere, spring is coming. Every season has wonderful ways to enjoy nature. When I'm sad about summer ending here in Minnesota, I remind myself of all the things our family loves to do in fall, like having backyard campfires, hiking, crafting with fall leaves, picking apples and gathering acorns for crafts and processing into acorn flour. Take some time to brainstorm about ways you'd like to enjoy the coming season in nature and jot them down here. Also note the things you want to do soon at the end of this season before the weather changes. Even if you don't get to everything on your list, it's a nice way to focus on all the good about each season and not mind the change so much!



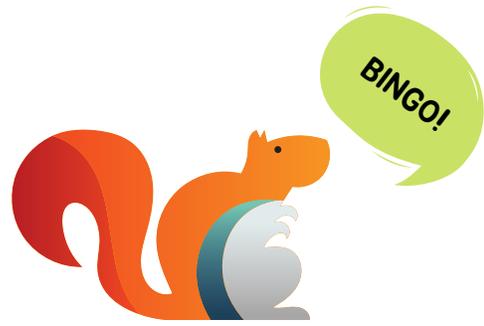
I would like to...



I still want to find time to...



NATURE BINGO



Beetle	Spotted Rock	Berry	Animal Scat (poop)	Shell
Wildflower	Seed Pod	Vine	Edible Plant	Burrow or Animal Home
Nest	Moss	Poisonous Plant	Butterfly	Nut
Worm	Variagated (2 colored) leaf	Bird	Ant Hill	Invasive Plant
Bird or Animal Tracks	Bee	White Rock	Mammal	Spider

HOW TO PLAY

Gather some pebbles, acorn caps or pennies to use as markers and head outside. If you see one of the items on the grid, put a marker on that square (you can also x it out with a pen, but then you can't reuse the game). Play on your own until you get a BINGO with a line of squares in any direction, or until all the players do.

Want to make it challenging? Go for a black out and try to fill all the squares!



Phenology Calendar

Keep track of firsts and special events in nature this month!
Write in observations like these and draw a picture if you like.

- First frost of the season
- Migrating geese spotted
- First leaves of backyard tree changing colors
- First pears harvested



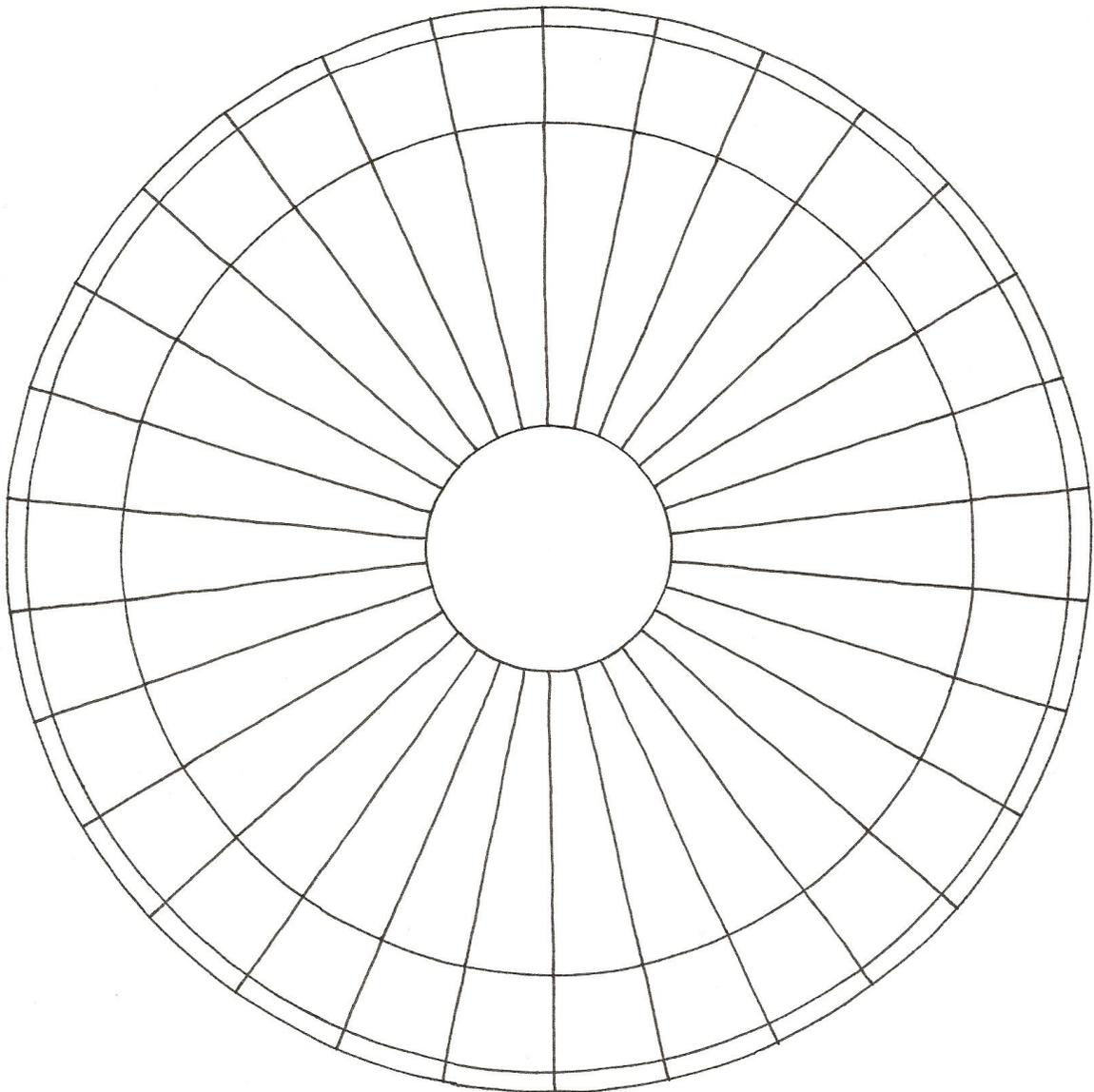
- First asters blooming
- Oyster mushrooms in state park
- Hawthorn berries ripe
- Last monarch butterfly emerged
- Rose hips ready for harvesting

September 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			

September Nature Wheel

Make a picture record of nature observations in September!
Draw, paint or color whatever you'd like to record each day this month --
the moon phases, a bird or flower spotted each day, color coded
temperatures, a picture to represent what you did each day, the color of
the sky, or any other way you want to record this month.





Magical, Mythical Yarrow



Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*) is a pretty little flowering plant with a pretty impression history. It is named after Achilles, a famous warrior of Greek mythology. Legend said that Achilles' mother was so worried about anything happening to her baby boy that she held him by his foot and dipped him into the yarrow-infused waters of the river Styx to make him invincible. The only part of his body that wasn't safe was his heel where she had held him (we get the saying "Achilles' heel" from the story). According to the legends, Achilles treated his soldiers' wounds with yarrow leaves.



The Greeks weren't the only ones to use yarrow. It had a long history of use in Native American, Chinese and Ayurvedic medicine too. Doctors were still using it to treat wounds during the American Civil War.

We now know that yarrow has components that cause blood clotting and are antibacterial, so it's easy to see why so many people used it to treat wounds over the years.

Those aren't the only benefits of yarrow, though. Its list of medical benefits is long! We have links at the Wild Kids website to learn more about its use as an herbal remedy.

Yarrow grows all over the world in fields, roadsides, meadows, lawns and gardens. Besides its cool history, it's also just a pretty flower! It is easy to grow in your garden and makes great flower arrangements.



YARROW
(*Achillea millefolium*)



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

Does Your Mother Need Motherwort?



Motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*) is a plant that has been used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years. It got its name because it was sometimes used to bring on labor, recover from childbirth and otherwise help new mothers, and because it was considered very good for stress and anxiety. It wasn't just used by mothers though, it was also used to treat heart problems and many other medical conditions.

Years ago, our family bought a bunch of herbs when our little local natural foods co-op went out of business. Motherwort was one of them, and I was excited to try it. My older kids and I joked that with five kids, I needed a lot of it!

We made up a cup of it and I took one sip and made a terrible face. Even though it's in the mint family (which you can tell from the square stem) and most mints taste nice, it was about the worst tasting thing I ever drank! The kids took tiny sips and agreed.

They cheered me on to drink the rest of it and it took about a half an hour. I never made another cup. I guess I didn't have that much stress and anxiety after all.



You can find motherwort growing wild in fields, meadows and roadsides around the world. You can also easily grow it in your garden, where it has pretty pink, purple, white or blue flowers that are very attractive to bees. Nowadays some people also use the flowers to flavor craft beers.

See if you can spot motherwort in the wild this year. If you do, you'll know the cool history of this simple looking weed!



Motherwort should never be taken during pregnancy because it can cause uterine contractions and could lead to miscarriage. Remember to never use herbs medicinally except under the advice of a trained herbalist.

SEPTEMBER POETRY

The Japanese Otsukimi Festival, which means “moon-viewing” festival, celebrates the Harvest Moon of the traditional Japanese lunar calendar. During these festivals, people sometimes eat Japanese treats, watch traditional dances and recite haikus, among other activities. In honor of the Otsukimi Festival, we have some classic Japanese haikus this month, translated into English.



By Matsuo Basho (1644-1694):

Please unlock the door
let the moon into
the Ukimidou on the lake

From time to time
The clouds give rest
To the moon-beholders.

On a withered branch
A crow has alighted:
Nightfall in autumn.

Won't you come and see
loneliness? Just one leaf
from the kiri tree.

In the autumn night,
Breaking into
A pleasant chat.

By Kobayashi Issa (1763-1828)

A world of dew,
And within every dewdrop
A world of struggle.

How much
are you enjoying yourself,
tiger moth?

O snail
Climb Mount Fuji,
But slowly, slowly!

The fall moon
And a child crying
To get it.

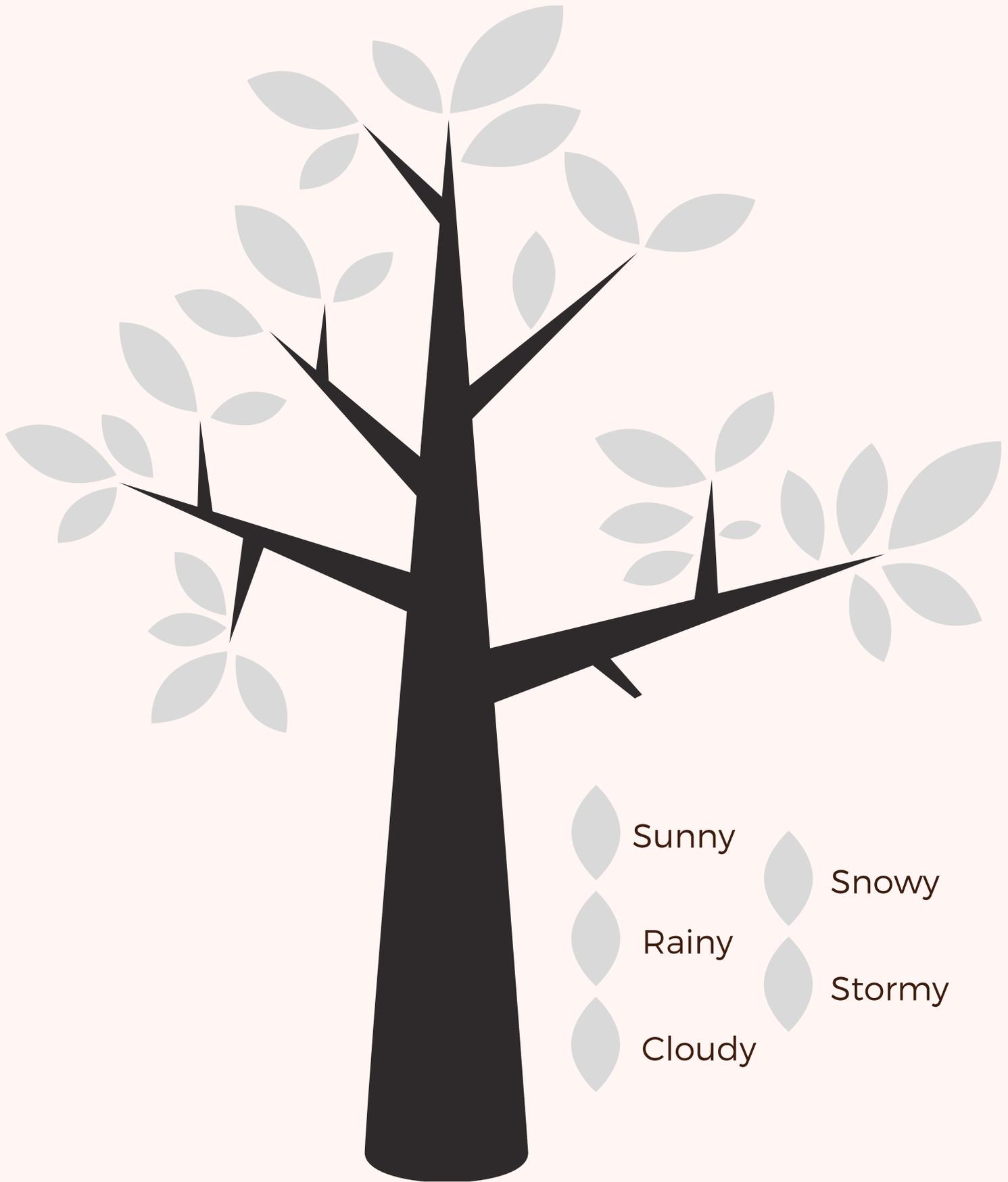
Sharing tree shade
With a butterfly...
Friends in a previous life.

Your turn! Can you write a nature haiku in honor of Otsukimi?

My Nature Journal

September

September Weather Tree



September Bird List

Birds spotted this month

September Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

September 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.