

February 2021

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Why Is It Illegal to Collect Feathers?

Crayon Box Nature Matching

Learning Latin Lingo

Growing Columbines
& Wallflowers

Seasonal poems,
activities,
nature journal
pages and more!



From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Welcome February!

I hope you've been having all kinds of wonderful wild adventures in whatever part of the world you're in.

We've been having some cold weather and snow here in Minnesota, though not as much as past years. Our big dog, Moose, loves the snow and our 13 year-old son Alex loves to play in the snow with him. We've been enjoying nature with hikes at the nearby state park, bird watching, neighborhood walks, snow painting, nature photography and lots of garden planning.

We are still enjoying lots of the foods we grew or foraged last year. Our 21 year-old daughter Rhia is very good at finding wild mushrooms for us and we have lots of oyster mushrooms that we dried last year and powdered. I have some of the powder every morning in my wake-up drink (other people have coffee but I have strange concoctions of things like wild mushrooms, cocoa and macadamia nut milk!). Our canning shelves still have lots of goodies from our gardening and foraging adventures like roasted tomato sauce, pickled beets, dried elderberries and elderflower syrup. It always makes me happy to open up jars of goodies that we grew or gathered ourselves, like there's a little bit of magic in there (and lots of memories).

We recently got to try some pickled kelp (seaweed) from Alaska and it was so tasty! Kelp is large and hollow, so the pickles are shaped like big O's. They taste a lot like regular cucumber pickles except maybe a bit fishy, but not in a bad way. If you are lucky enough to live near the ocean, I highly recommend learning to forage and pickle seaweed varieties like kelp. Just make sure to forage in water that is clean and safe, just the way you forage on land that's free of pollution and contamination.

What are you hoping to do outdoors this month? Are you looking forward to doing anything out in nature soon? I hope you find lots of ways to enjoy whatever weather February brings you.

Have a wild month!

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 February

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Color in the circles of the ones you do!

Draw or write something in sidewalk chalk outside where it will make someone smile

Start the crayon box nature challenge (see next page)

Take part in the 2021 Great Backyard Bird Count February 12-15 *

Cook an outdoor meal

In honor of Valentine's Day, go for a walk looking for heart-shaped nature items

If it gets cold where you live, try to blow freezing bubbles

Find a big walking stick outside and decorate it with paint, yarn or other embellishments

Watch a nature cam of bears, eagles or other animals

Look for dried seedheads of native wildflowers in your area and take a few home to scatter in your garden or neighborhood

Sprinkle some seeds from spice jars on the soil of a house plant, barely cover and keep moist, and watch to see if any sprout

*Visit www.birdcount.org for more information

The Crayon Box Nature Challenge

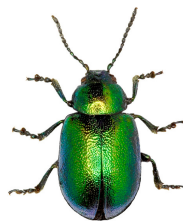
Here's a fun way to combine nature fun with art. Get a box of 64 colors of crayons or pastels and a stack of index cards. Each day, head outside with the box of crayons, an index card, and a pen.

See if you can find something in nature that exactly matches one of the shades of crayons in your box. When you do, draw the object and label it, and then add the date and the name of the color you used if there is one. Over the next few months or the year, try to find something in nature to match every color in the box.

If you can't find a match for a new color on one day, you can use the same color more than once, but try to match it up to something completely different (like a rock the first time and a flower the second).

What can you find to match? Here are some ideas:

- Plants and flowers
- Rocks
- The sky (especially during storms or sunsets)
- Lakes, oceans and rivers
- Beetles and butterflies
- Birds and feathers
- Trees and leaves
- What else can you think of?



You can keep your index card drawings in a recipe box or photo album or post pictures of them online tagged [#crayonboxnaturechallenge](#)

Learning Latin Lingo

It's important to know the Latin names of plants we forage or grow in our gardens. These are their official names and using them keeps us from confusing plants that might go by the same nickname. Try to say Latin names out loud when you see them to help remember them, and aim to learn a few each month.

Draw a line to match the plant name on the left to its Latin name.

The answers are shown later in the magazine.



plantain ●

● Oxalis acetosella



dandelion ●

● Aquilegia



rose ●

● Achillea millefolium



wood sorrel ●

● Trifolium repens



yarrow ●

● Plantago



clover ●

● Sambucus



columbine ●

● Rosa



elderberry ●

● Urtica dioica



stinging nettle ●

● Taraxacum officinale

Why Is It Illegal to Keep Feathers?

Imagine you're walking along your neighborhood and you see a pretty bird feather on the sidewalk. You pick it up and take it home to show your family. Did you know that in countries like the United States and Japan, you've just broken the law?

It sounds crazy, but yes, it is illegal to collect feathers and take them home, even if you find them lying on the ground. There's actually a really good reason though! It's to protect birds.

About a hundred years ago, many birds were hunted almost to extinction to make fancy hats for ladies.

Back then, it was very fashionable to wear huge hats that were covered in feathers. Billions of birds were killed to make these hats, until the governments in many countries stepped in and made it a law to own feathers from birds like songbirds and birds of prey.

Lots of people think it's okay to own a feather from a bird if you just found it, but that's also against the law. Why? Because many people would kill birds and then just lie and say they found them already dead. This was especially true for birds like eagles whose feathers could be worth a lot of money.

Yes, even if you find a dead owl on the road, it's a federal crime to take its feathers home. To protect these birds we are all just supposed to leave their feathers alone.

This doesn't mean that the police are going to storm your house if you bring home a blue jay's feather that you found on the street! But it does mean that it's technically against the law to own it, and that's one reason many nature books caution you against collecting feathers. That's also why if you want to buy feathers for crafts, you can only buy feathers from birds that are legal to raise on farms or to hunt, such as peacocks and some ducks, or some other birds that are not protected (see the next page for more on those).

These laws do not apply to Native American people who use feathers for religious purposes. In the U.S., the Eagle Feather Law allows the collection of Golden Eagle and Bald Eagle feathers for religious purposes by Native Americans who have certifiable ancestry and are enrolled in a tribe.

**It's not just feathers that are illegal to collect!
The law also includes eggs and nests.**



LEGAL Feathers

Here are feathers it's legal to collect and to use in crafts:



- Feathers from pet birds like parrots, doves and finches
- Feathers from legally farmed birds like chickens
- Feathers from non-native birds like pigeons, house sparrows, European starlings, peacocks, ringneck pheasants & Eurasian collared doves (as long as they are not endangered)
- Feathers from game birds like wild turkeys & pheasants (in some states you still need a hunting permit to collect some of these feathers though)
- Feathers from most wild ducks & geese (there are exceptions like mallards)
- Purchased feathers (*Search for people on sites like Etsy who sell naturally molted feathers that are ethically obtained*)
- Feathers collected by educators who have a permit to use them for educational purposes

"The possession of feathers and other parts of native North American birds without a permit is prohibited by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). This protects wild birds by preventing their killing by collectors and the commercial trade in their feathers, and extends to all feathers, regardless of how they were obtained. There is no exemption for molted feathers or those taken from road- or window-killed birds."

~U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



plantain
Plantago



dandelion
Taraxacum officinale



rose
Rosa



elderberry
Sambucus



clover
Trifolium repens



wood sorrel
Oxalis acetosella



columbine
Aquilegia



stinging nettle
Urtica dioica



yarrow
Achillea millefolium

This month's botanical coloring pages are pictures of columbines and wallflowers. Both of these kinds of flowers are pretty easy to grow in lots of areas of the world. They are native in some places and also easy to grow in many gardens. Let's learn a little bit about them.

Columbines (Zones 3-7)

Columbine (*Aquilegia*) is a perennial, meaning that it comes back year after year. It usually blooms from mid-spring to early summer.

Columbines used to be called Granny's Bonnet. The flowers come in many colors. There are over 70 species!

Columbines look dainty but they're pretty tough. They are deer-resistant and drought-tolerant, meaning they can survive even when there's not much rain. They also provide food for butterflies, bees, moths, and hummingbirds!

Sow (plant) columbine seeds directly into the ground in an area with lots of sun in the spring (if you are in a very sunny, hot area, they may like more shade). You don't even need to cover the seeds with soil. They will also self-seed, which means they will plant their own new seedlings over time.

If you cut off the "spent" (withered) flowers after they bloom, columbines will make more flowers for many weeks. This is called "deadheading." Be sure to leave some flowers at the end of their blooming if you want them to self-seed.



Wallflowers (Zones 6-9)

Wallflowers are very diverse, meaning there's lots of different kinds of them! Most wallflower plants are from the genus *Erysimum*, with some types being from *Cheiranthus*. They usually come in shades of yellow or orange, but plant breeders have made lots of new colors like pinks, purples and blues. They are usually short-lived perennials but some are annuals (meaning they only live one growing season) or biennials (meaning they live two years-- most biennials grow the first year and flower the second). People in colder zones can grow wallflowers as annuals. They will bloom all summer, especially if you deadhead the spent flowers.

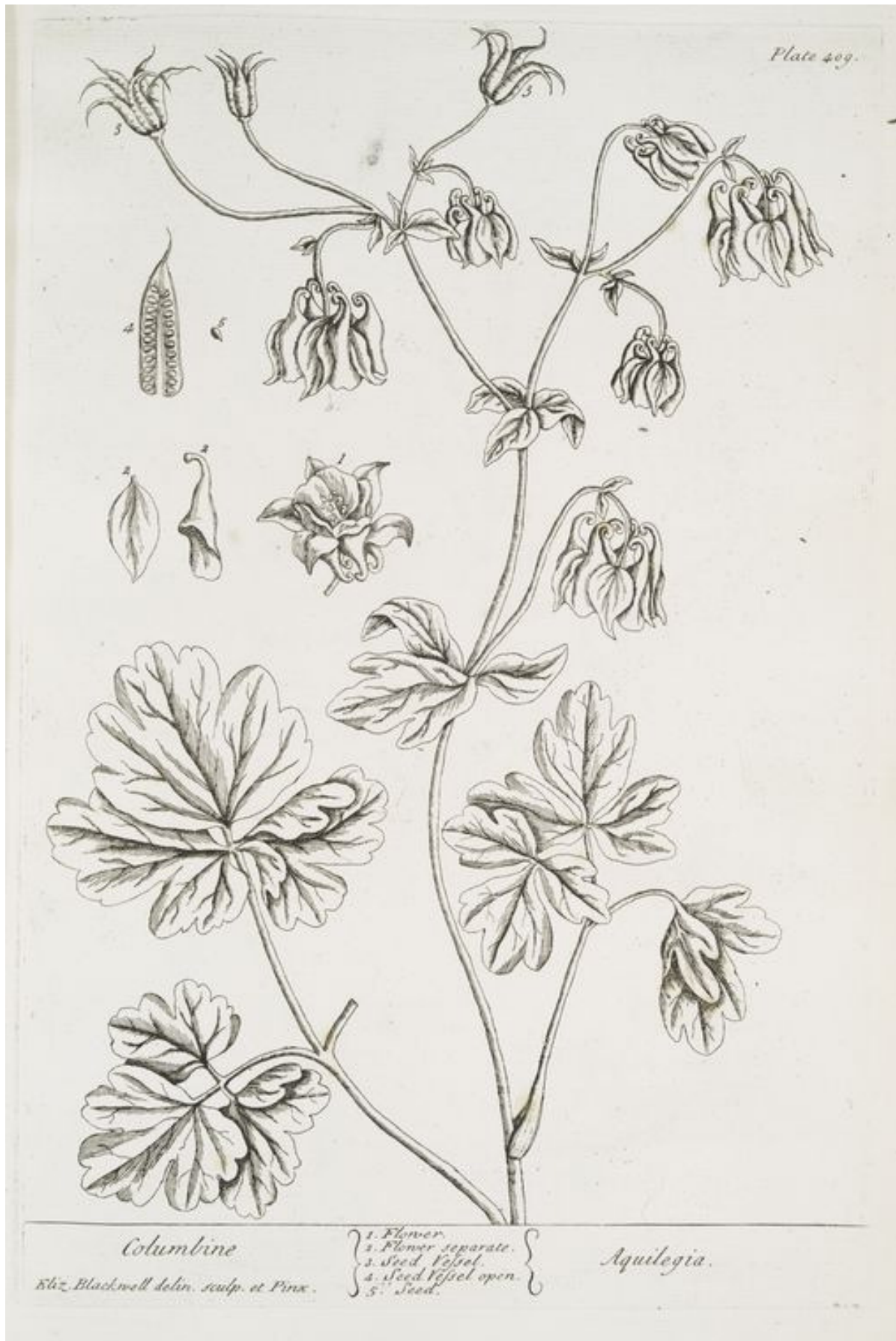
Some people used to call wallflowers gillyflowers. They are famous for growing in the cracks of walls and other places that most other flowers couldn't grow. Most wallflowers are drought tolerant. They grow 1-3 feet tall and are often grown as shrubs, though others are used as groundcovers. You can plant the seeds in autumn if you live in a warm zone or spring if you're growing them as annuals. You can start them inside for a head start, or sow them directly in your garden. They need light to germinate (sprout) so just barely cover the seeds.

Wallflowers like sunny locations or light shade.



Do you know your garden zone? In the U.S. we use numbers to show the coldest temperatures we usually get in each region because different plants can tolerate different levels of cold. Southwest Minnesota is zone 4, for example, and New Orleans, Louisiana, is zone 9. Ask a local gardener what zone you are in or look it up online.

COLUMBINE



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

WALLFLOWER

Plate 179.



Wall-Flower.

Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

1. Flower.
2. Pod open.
3. Seed.

Keiri, cheiri.

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

Poetry Corner

There's Many a Lonesome Daisy
by Annette Wynne

There's many a lonesome daisy where never a child can be,
And many a lone little brooklet is dancing away to the sea;
Yet children must stay in the city with only dull walls in view,
As if there were never a brooklet and never a daisy grew!



The Doves
by Harriet McEwen Kimball

Pretty doves, so blithely ranging
Up and down the street;
Glossy throats all bright hues changing
Little scarlet feet!

Pretty doves! among the daisies
They should coo and flit!
All these toilsome, noisy places
Seem for them unfit.

Yet amidst our human plodding,
They must love to be;
With their little heads a-nodding,
Busier than we.

Close to hoof and wheel they hover,
Glancing right and left,
Sure some treasure to discover;
Rapid, shy, and deft.

Friendliest of feathered creatures,
In their timid guise;
Wisdom's little silent teachers,
Praying us be wise.

Fluttering at footsteps careless,
Danger swift to flee,
Lowly, trusting, faithful, fearless,—
Oh, that such were we!

In the world and yet not of it,
Ready to take wing,—
By this lesson could we profit
It were everything!

The Eagle
by Alfred Lord Tennyson

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

The Woodpecker
by Elizabeth Madox Roberts

The woodpecker pecked out a little round hole
And made him a house in the telephone pole.

One day when I watched he poked out his head,
And he had on a hood and a collar of red.

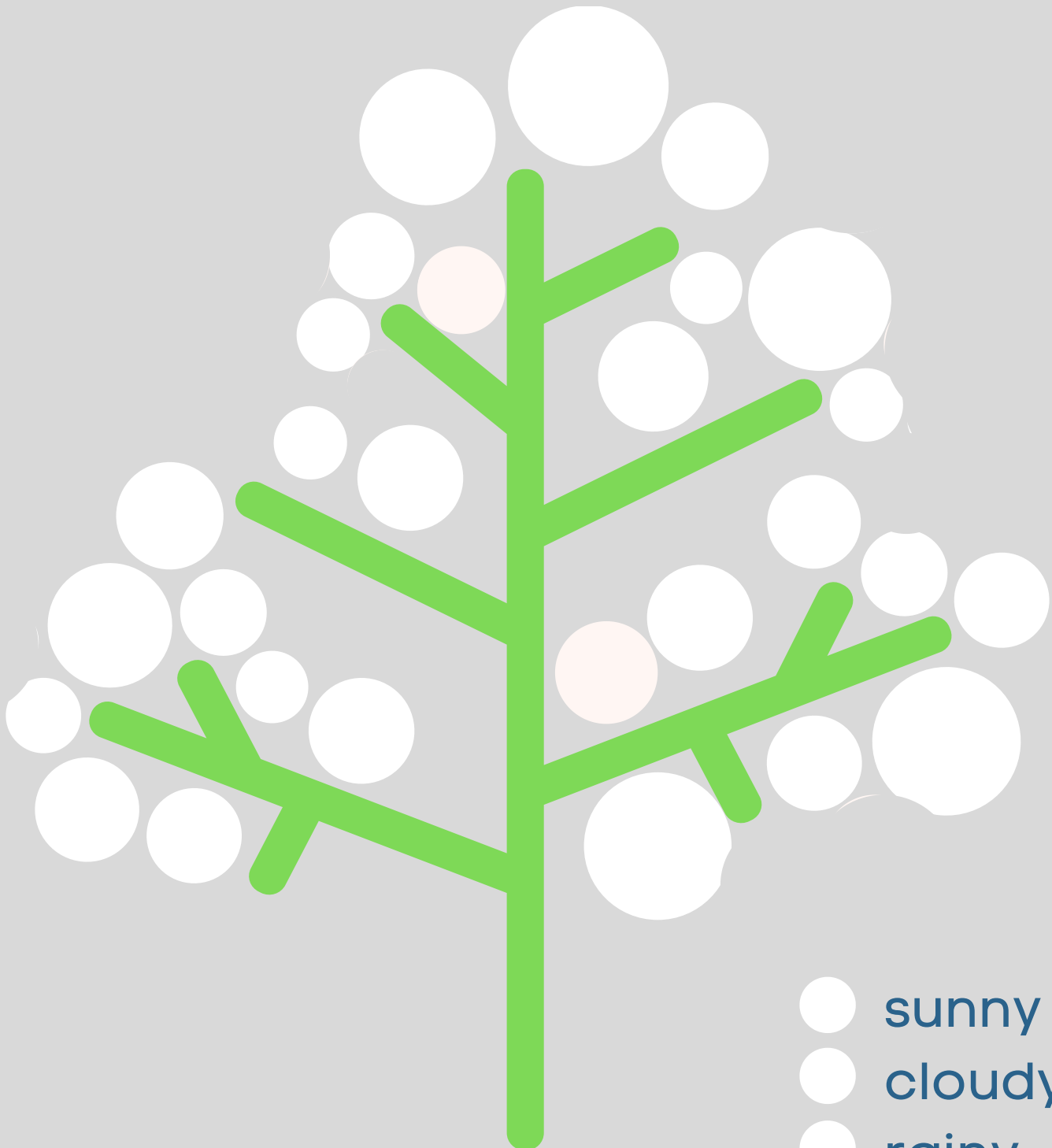
When the streams of rain pour out of the sky,
And the sparkles of lightning go flashing by,

And the big, big wheels of thunder roll,
He can snuggle back in the telephone pole.

MY NATURE JOURNAL

February

February Weather Tree



- sunny
- cloudy
- rainy
- snowy
- stormy

February Bird List

Birds spotted this month

February Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

February 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.