

June 2021

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Foraging Mad Libs

**June Foraging
Plant Search**

Fabulous Flax

**Grow and
Share Irises**

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



From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Welcome June!

June is one of my favorite months. Here in Minnesota, everything is green and so many flowers are in bloom. We added flowers to our yard and gardens slowly over the years and I'm old enough now that they've added up! I especially love the peonies, hardy roses, irises, delphiniums and lilies. Truth be told, I love all flowers though, which is why this whole year we've been focusing on flowers in Wild Kids Magazine.

What do you like to do in nature in June?

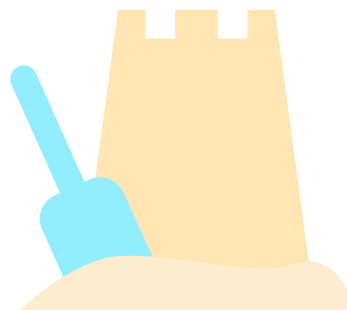
Around here, we spend a lot of time gardening in June, along with the usual foraging and nature walks. We are lucky to live near lots of lakes (Minnesota is called the land of 10,000 lakes but we actually have even more!) so we spend a lot of time at the lakes doing things like rock hunting, swimming and boating.

This time of year, the kids like to do tricks on the swing set, ride their bikes, hike, and make really muddy messes. 😊

In this month's issue, we learn about two kinds of flowers, irises and flax. We've also got some fun foraging mad libs, a June foraging find-it, ways to learn and play in nature this month, plus lots more.

I hope you have a wonderful, 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 June

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Sit someplace outside very quietly for a few minutes and see how close birds & animals will come to you

Write words on natural items like rocks or shells and arrange them into poems

Go someplace away from city lights at night and look for constellations & shooting stars

Do a plant swap with a friend or neighbor (houseplants count!)

Press some flowers between the pages of a book (flat flowers work better)

Borrow a plant or tree ID book from the library and learn some of the plants & trees in your yard or neighborhood

Make a summer bucket list of things you want to do outside

Rub the leaves of all different plants you know the names of & see how they smell -- how many could you ID just from their smell?

Arrange natural items on a piece of dark or bright construction paper and leave them in the sun all day to bleach a design into the paper

Go hiking or boating

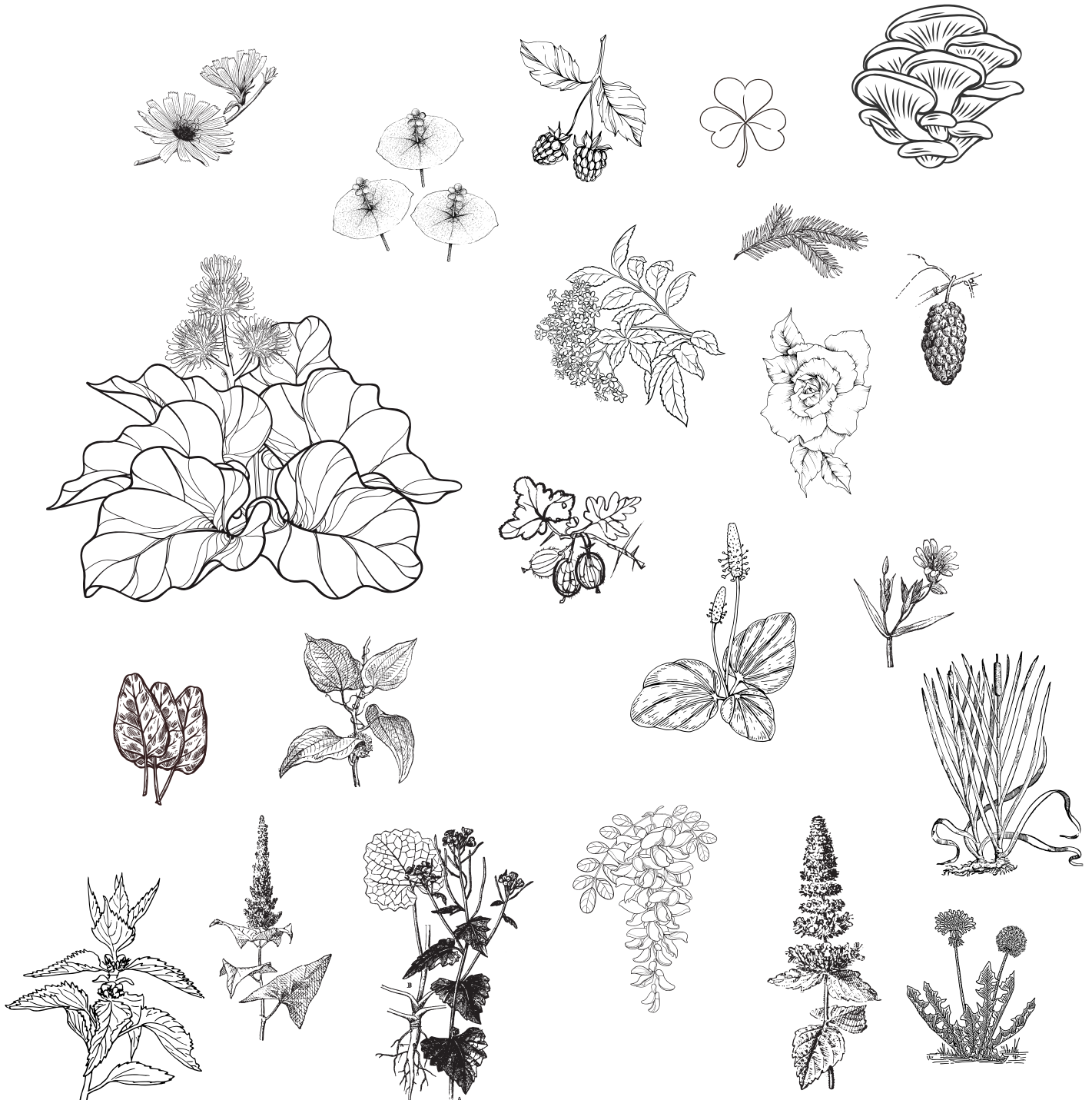
Find the June wild edible foods!

Label or color in some wild edible plants you can find to forage in June:

Elderflowers, spruce tips, dandelion, sheep sorrel, wood sorrel, chickweed, plantain, black locust flowers, smilax, garlic mustard, wild rose, miner's lettuce, oyster mushrooms, chicory, burdock, catmint, gooseberries, lambs quarters, red and black raspberries

These are just a few of the wild edible plants you can forage in June.

(plants are labeled on the next page to help you, out of order)





red and black raspberries



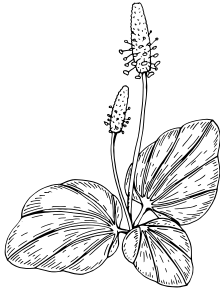
wild rose



dandelion



lambs quarters



plantain



stinging nettles



sheep sorrel



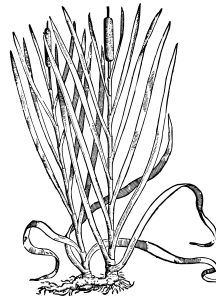
miner's lettuce



garlic mustard



gooseberries



cattails



spruce tips



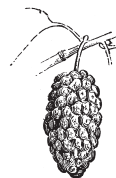
catmint



elderflowers



locust flowers



mulberry



chicory



smilax



wood sorrel



burdock



oyster mushrooms



chickweed

FORAGING

Mad Libs

Do you love mad libs? Here are some foraging-based fill-it-in stories to have some fun with. Grab a friend or family member and take turns filling in the blanks with parts of speech (without looking at the stories) and then read them out loud. Have fun!

Parts of speech reminder:

- noun: a person, place, or thing (Mom, porcupine, teacup)
- adjective: a word that describes a noun (stinky, pink, angry)
- verb: a word that shows an action (slip, yell, jump) (past tense: slipped, jumped)
- adverb: a word that describes how you do an action (angrily, happily, badly)
- interjection: a short word or phrase that expresses emotion (Hey! Yikes! Wow! Gadzooks!)

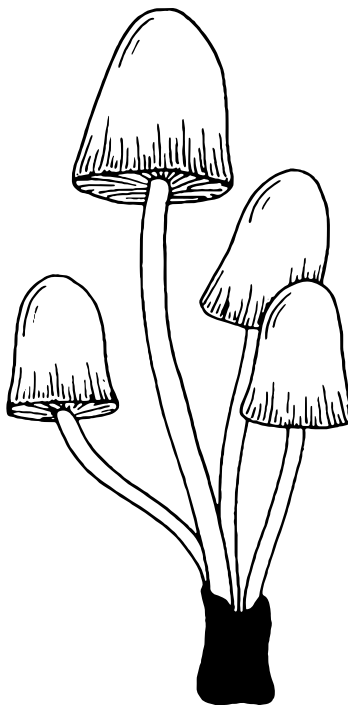


Our Foraging Month

Last month, we foraged _____ different wild _____ foods. Early in the
month, we gathered _____ -leaf, a common weed that
tastes like _____. Then we _____ some _____
berries, which are _____ and taste a little bit like _____. We
also found some _____ mushrooms. You can always tell
them from poisonous _____ mushrooms because they smell like _____
and have a _____ ring around their _____. We _____
picked some _____ greens that we made into a _____ soup
and some _____ flowers that we used to make a delicious _____
jelly. We _____ lots of other _____ wild edible plants but my
favorites were the _____ leaves that we used for tea. It
made my grandma shout " _____ !" and she promised to gather some
fruits to make my favorite dessert ever, _____ - _____ pie. I can't wait!

My Favorite Wild Mushroom

I have always wanted to learn to forage for _____
mushrooms. They look so _____
_____ and _____ ! One day,
and I went to _____ state park, where it's legal to forage for
mushrooms. The weather was very _____ and we knew there could be lots of
mushrooms because it had rained _____ for days. We almost gave up hope but
then I _____ tripped on a _____ and fell into
the _____ leaves. When I was on the ground I saw a _____
mushroom right there in front of me! " _____ " I yelled. When I _____
the leaves I saw there were lots more. We gathered a _____ full and took them
home. We _____ cleaned them and double-checked _____ their identification. They
had _____ stems, smelled like _____ , made a _____
spore print and had no _____ look-alikes. We tried just a little the first time in
case we had a _____ reaction, and _____ stir-fried them with
some _____ . They were _____ !



Color Us In!

Fabulous Flax



Flax has been used by people around the world for longer than we have recorded history. Cloth made from flax was used to wrap Egyptian pharaohs in their tombs and it was described in the bible and ancient poems with phrases like "flaxen hair." We still use it today in paints, cosmetics, food, clothes and more, but hardly anybody recognizes this awesome plant anymore.

[Bartholomew](#), an herbalist who lived thousands of years ago, wrote about making linen by soaking flax in water and then drying it in the sun before binding it in "[praty bundels](#)" (pretty bundles). Then it was "[knockyd, beten and brayd and carflyd, rodded and gnodded; ribbyd and heklyd, and at the last sponne](#)." (knocked, beaten, braided and who knows what else, before it was spun). He said that it was used for making clothing, sails, fish-nets, thread, ropes, bow strings, sheets, sacks & purses.

You can grow flax easily in all kinds of conditions. It is an annual plant, meaning that it only lives one year and then dies, but it spreads lots of seeds so it often comes back year after year even if you don't plant it again. You can often find it in the wild.

Flax Facts:

Flax is one of the only true blue flowers, but it also comes in white, red & yellow.

Botanical name: *Linum usitatissimum*

Size: 2 to 3 feet tall.

Growing: Needs full sun and regular water, found all over the world (especially cooler places)

Culinary (cooking) uses: Flax seeds are mixed with water and used as a substitute for eggs in some recipes. The seeds can be crushed as flax seed oil or ground to add to baking recipes to increase fiber and nutrition, and are also used in herbal teas.

Other uses: Flax is also used to feed livestock animals and to improve people's health since it is high in Omega 3 oils, protein, fiber and disease-fighting antioxidants. Flax oil is also called linseed oil and it's used in paint thinner, varnish and other products. Scientists say flax may help heart health, high blood pressure, mental health and more.

DIY hair gel: Flaxseed hair gel is very popular, especially for curly hair. You can make it by boiling 1/4 cup of flax seeds in 2 cups of water until it's slightly thick and slimy. Strain it through a cloth into a jar. Store it in the fridge for 1-2 weeks. We have links to more hair gel recipes and flax growing information on the Wild Kids website this month.



FLAX

(Linum)

plate 160.



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

Pretty (but Poisonous)

Iris



Remember that there are as many poisonous plants in your flower garden as in the wild -- sometimes more. That doesn't mean we shouldn't have them in our gardens, but it's important to know which ones can make us sick.

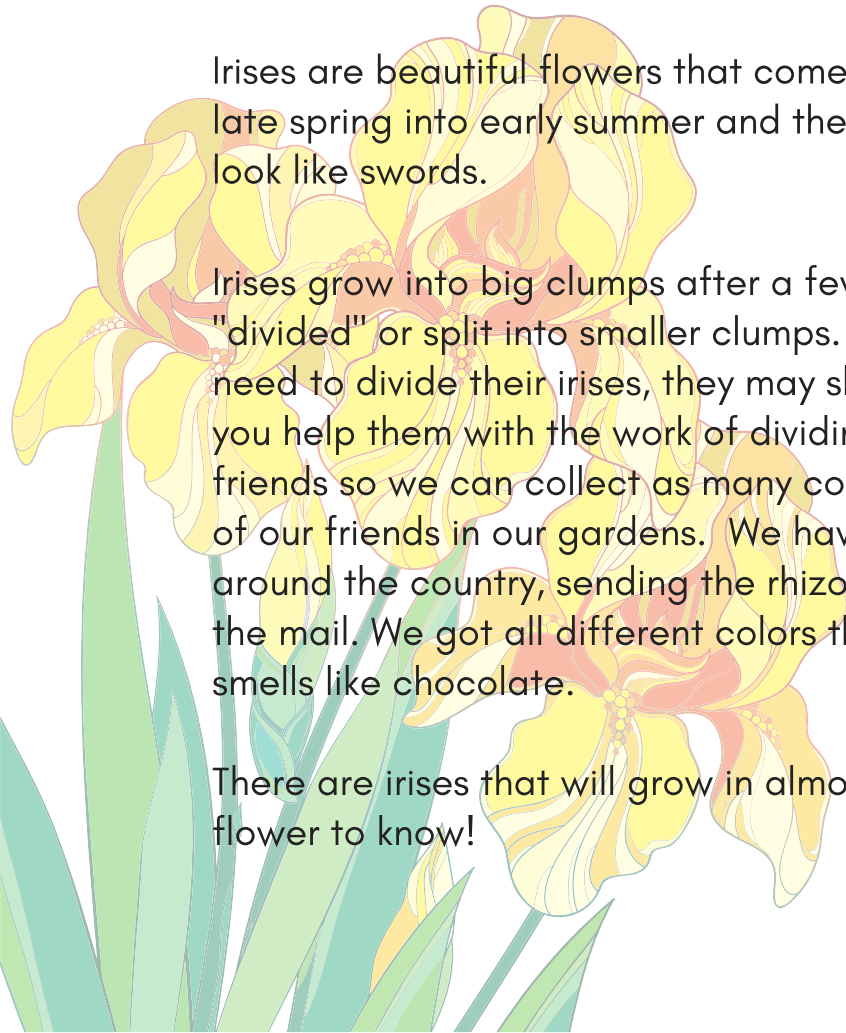
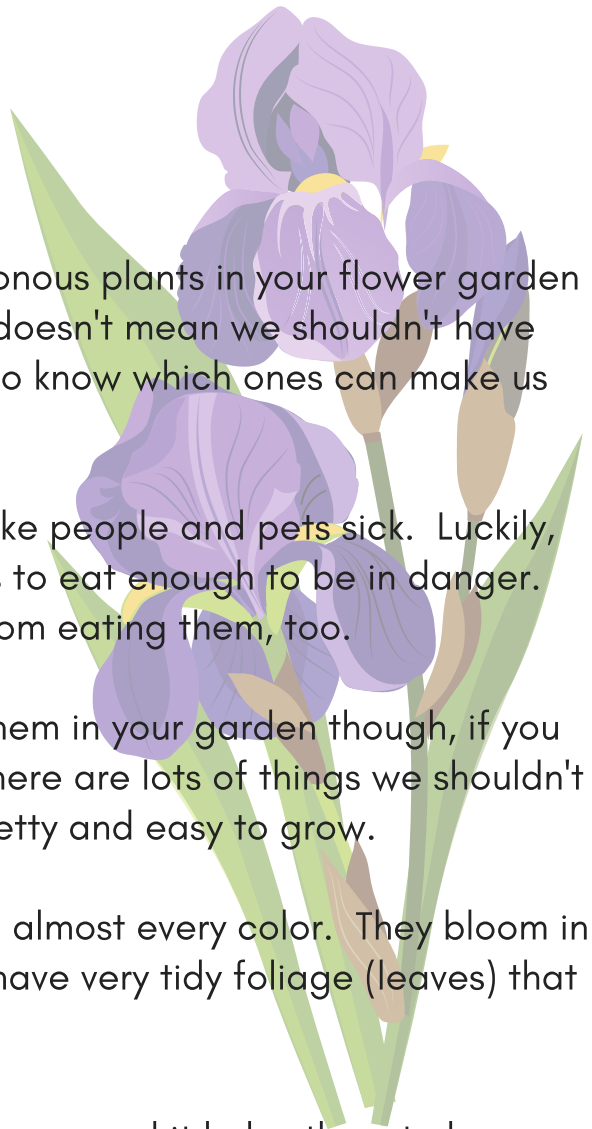
Iris roots, leaves and seed pods can make people and pets sick. Luckily, they taste really awful so nobody wants to eat enough to be in danger. Don't ever eat irises. Keep your pets from eating them, too.

That doesn't mean you shouldn't have them in your garden though, if you live in a place where irises can grow. There are lots of things we shouldn't eat in nature, after all! They are very pretty and easy to grow.

Irises are beautiful flowers that come in almost every color. They bloom in late spring into early summer and they have very tidy foliage (leaves) that look like swords.

Irises grow into big clumps after a few years and it helps them to be "divided" or split into smaller clumps. If you have friends or neighbors who need to divide their irises, they may share some with you -- especially if you help them with the work of dividing them! We like to swap irises with friends so we can collect as many colors as possible and have a reminder of our friends in our gardens. We have even had swaps with strangers around the country, sending the rhizomes (like fat, knobby roots) through the mail. We got all different colors that way. One of our swap irises even smells like chocolate.

There are irises that will grow in almost any climate. They're a great flower to know!





IRIS

(Iris)



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

Perspective

This little rock was here
(just a little bit bigger)
when grandmas sent children to the hillside
to gather fresh spring greens for dinner.

This little rock was here
(just a little bigger still)
when fathers taught children to knock off chips
of flint and quartz
to make perfect tips for spears and arrows.

This little rock was here
(just a little bigger still)
when families huddled by a new fire
and learned together how to make a world.

This little rock was here
(just a little bit bigger still)
when giant creatures traipsed
on a fresh, green planet full of life.

This little rock
waited patiently through a billion days
to fit into the palm of your hand
today.



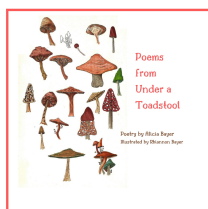
Tiny Worlds

Science books taught me
that all of the nature we touch
becomes part of us --
part of an invisible world
on our skin and in our bellies.
The more parts of nature we touch
the stronger our tiny armies become.



The places we touch
go with us,
become us...

The trip to the ocean,
the oak tree we climbed in the afternoon
the garden we planted
the flowers we picked
the driftwood we gathered
the hands we held --
all of them join our personal biome
of who we are
forever.



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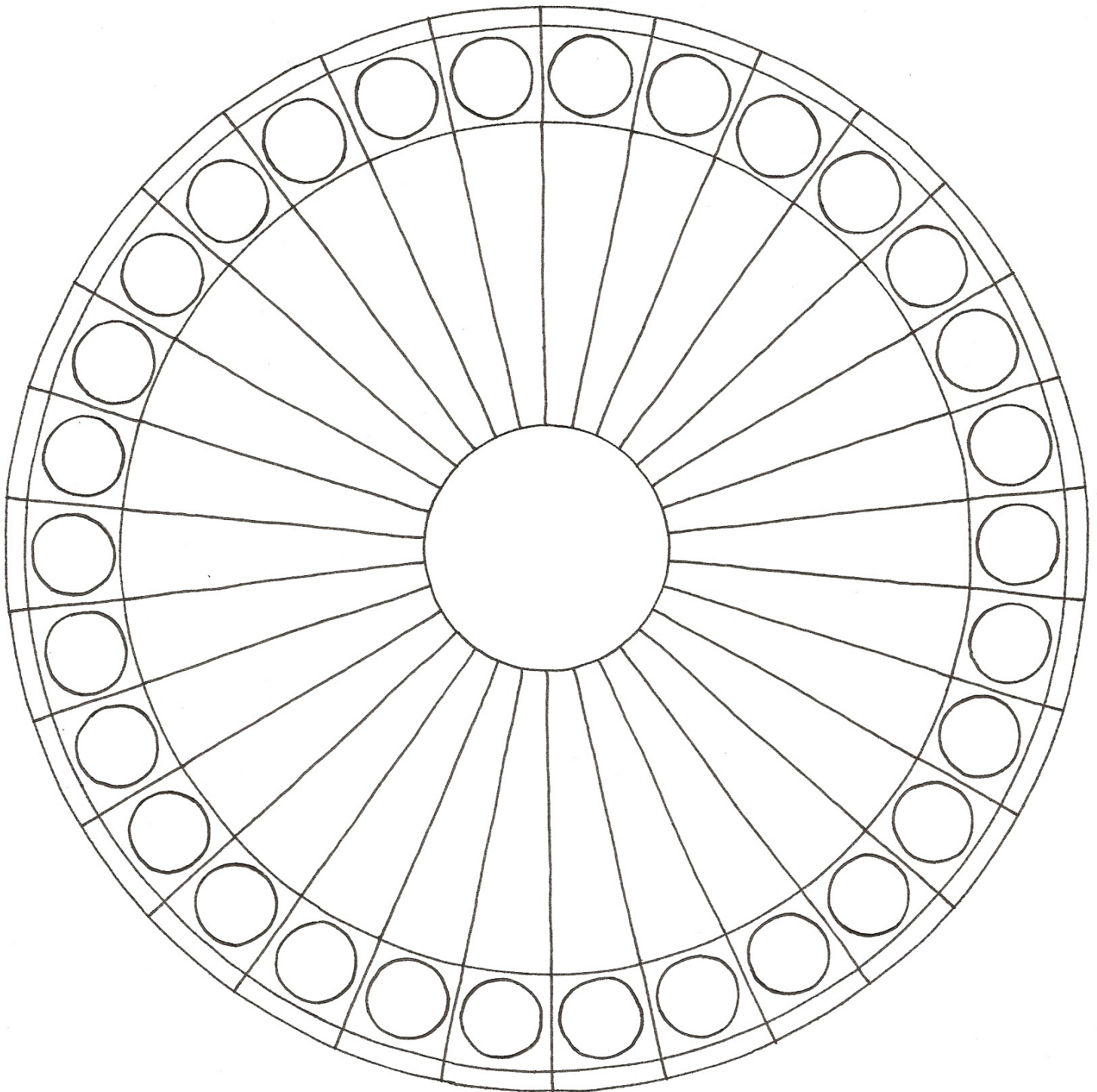
Poems From Under a Toadstool

By Alicia Bayer

Illustrated by Rhia Bayer

June Phenology Wheel

Here's a 30-day phenology wheel to use this month. Track the moon, record firsts in your yard and garden, or use it however you like to track nature observations.



My Nature Journal

June

JUNE WEATHER TREE



June Bird List

Birds spotted this month

June Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

June 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

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