

August 2021

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Bugs 101

Design an
Insect!

Nature
Color
Scavenger
Hunt

Wild
Poppies &
Vervain

Seasonal poems,
activities,
nature journal
pages and more

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Hello August!

I hope you and your family are happy and well.

Have you been foraging any wild edible or medicinal plants recently? Here are some of our family's favorite wild plants to gather in August:

- elderberries
- acorns
- wild grapes
- crab apples
- chicken of the woods mushrooms
- choke cherries
- nettle seeds for tinctures
- mullein
- mint

There are so many more, too!

In the garden, our tomatoes are getting ripe. We like to eat cherry tomatoes right off the plants. Grocery store tomatoes just can't compare to garden tomatoes! Other plentiful garden crops right now are green beans, cucumbers, broccoli and zucchini. Lots of people have so many zucchinis in their gardens this time of year that they sneak into their neighbors' yards to leave some on their front steps in the night! We always take all we can get, since there are so many tasty things we can make with them.

Are you foraging for anything lately or growing anything in your garden? What are you hoping to do in nature this month?

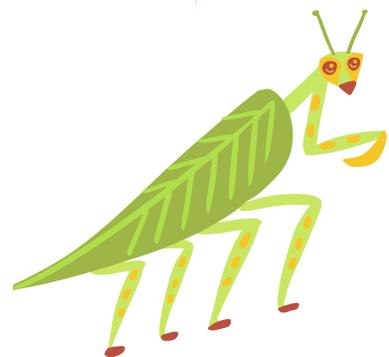
Wherever you are in the world, I hope you have a fantastic August, with lots of wild adventures!

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

Go Wild in August!

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Explore a cave -- they're nice and cool year round!

See how many different kinds of insects you can spot. Draw them and write down when and where you saw them.

Make a homemade obstacle course outside

Have a concert using nature items for instruments -- blades of grass for whistles, seed pods for rattles, etc.

Look for fun seed pods that have fluff to scatter like milkweed and cattails -- make wishes when you release them!

Make a homemade game out of natural materials like shells or rocks and make up your own rules on how to play it

Go on a nature walk after dark and see what kind of wildlife you can see or hear

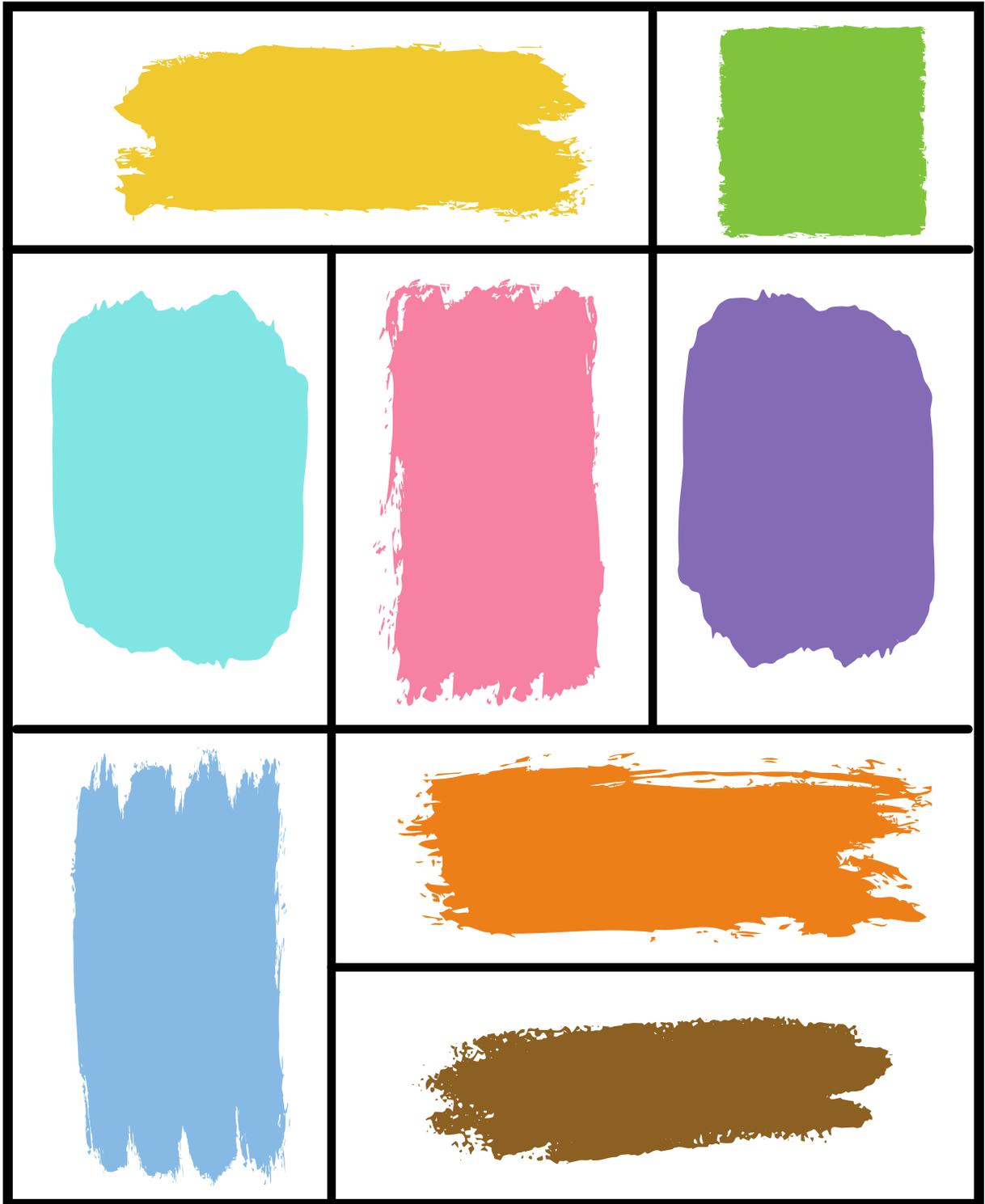
Chart the high temperatures of each day this month and see what the pattern is

Use wild berries to make ink and use a feather quill to write a poem or letter with the ink

Play in the mud and invite a grown up to join you -- they forget how fun it is!

Nature Color Scavenger Hunt

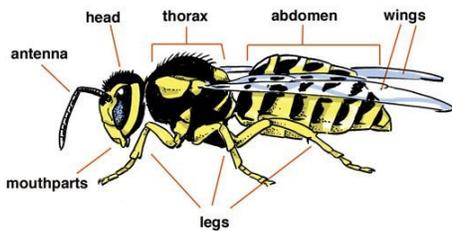
Mark off each color as you find it in nature



Insects 101

Did you know...

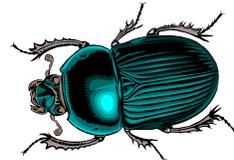
- Insects are arthropods, invertebrates with jointed legs. They make up about 75% of all animals on Earth! Other arthropods are lobsters and spiders.
- There are between six and ten million different types of insects, in thousands of shapes, colors and sizes.
- Most insects can fly.
- All insects have three parts to their bodies: the head, the abdomen, and the thorax.



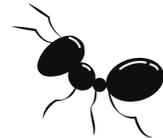
Copyright Leeds Museums and Galleries | MyLearning

- They have two antennae on their head and have six legs.
- Insects are invertebrates, which means that they do not have a backbone.
- Insects are cold-blooded, meaning their body temperature changes depending on how warm or cold the air around them is.
- Insects are divided into 32 groups. The largest group is the beetle. 1 out of every 4 insects is a beetle.

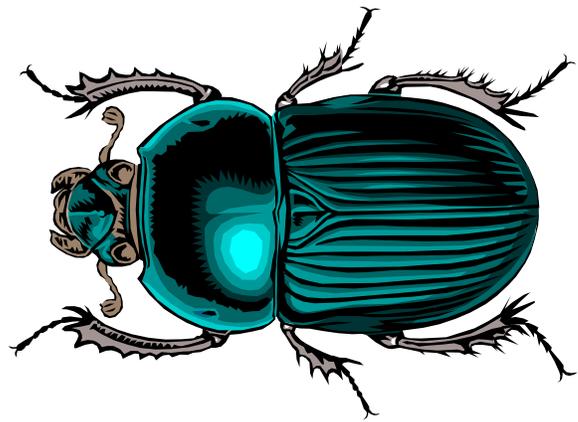
- Most insects hatch from eggs.
- Spiders are not insects.



- Only about 1% of the insects on earth are harmful to people. The majority are beneficial and necessary for pollinating crops, feeding wildlife and more.



Decoding Insects



The colors, shapes and markings on bugs all help them survive.



Many patterns and shapes are camouflage, like those of a dead leaf mantis



Intensity of colors like blue can show health & age in some species like damselflies, to impress mates & intimidate rivals



The leaf katydid also uses mimesis & looks just like a leaf



Some insects have stingers to paralyze their prey, like this cicada killer



Some caterpillars have urticating hairs that cause painful stings



Many insect species are darker in colder places to help them stay warm



Some bugs warn predators that they taste bad or are poisonous with their bright colors



Scientists have found that the yellow stripes on the *Vespa orientalis* can turn solar radiation into energy!



Some flies like this hoverfly look like bees so predators stay away from them



The shell of the ironclad beetle can withstand being crushed with 39,000 times its own weight!



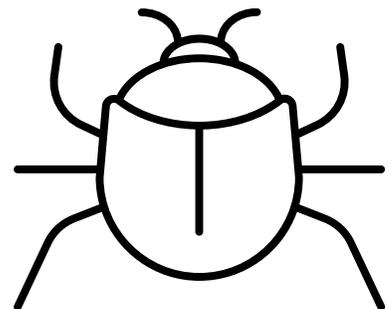
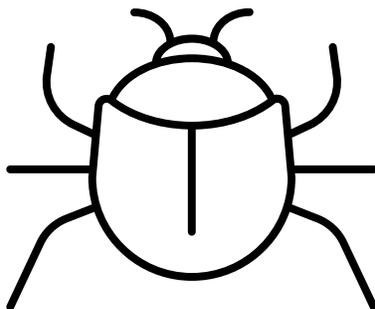
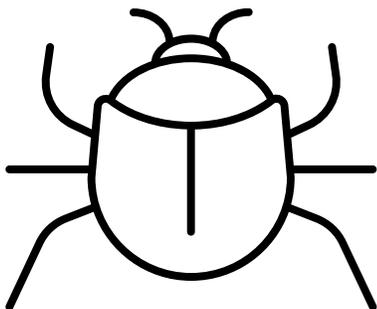
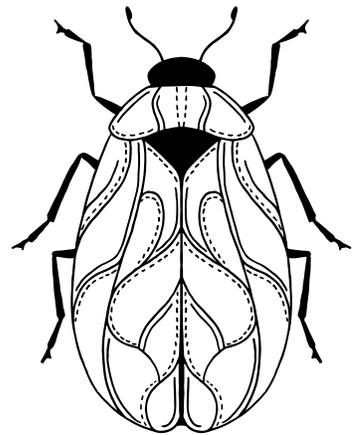
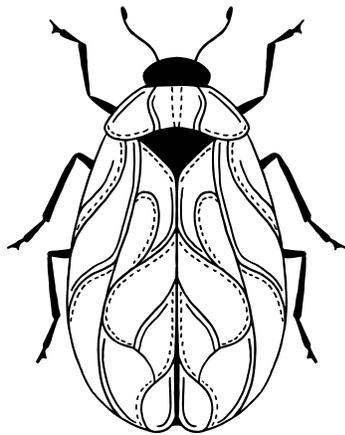
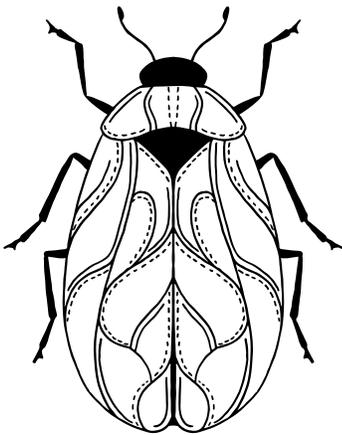
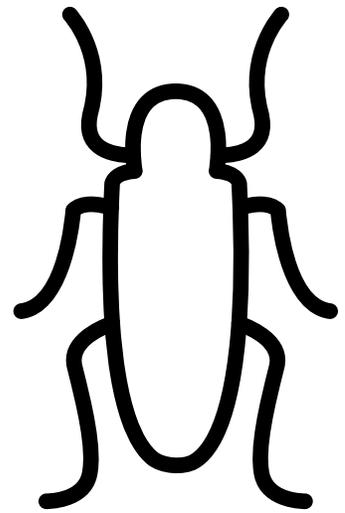
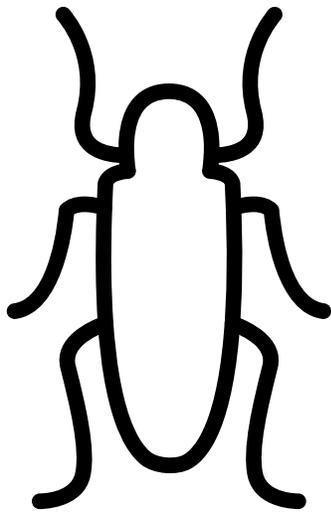
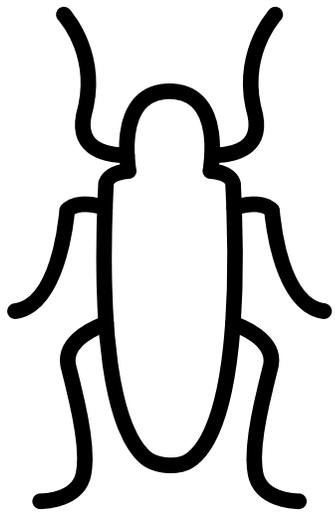
Insects can use iridescence to flash colors to startle, warn, confuse or attract other insects or predators



What can you guess about this insect based on its colors and markings?

Design a Bug!

Now that you know how colors and markings can help bugs, you can design a few of your own. How do their colors and marks help them? You can name your new species if you like!



What's that Wildflower? Vervain



If you've ever noticed a spiky purple flower growing alongside the road or in ditches and fields, you might have seen vervain. It's a common perennial (meaning it lives for more than one year) that has blue to violet flowers on stiff spikes that come out in branches from a grooved stem. It likes to grow in moist sites in gravel or heavy soils like meadows, stream banks, ditches, roadsides and the edges of woodlands. Bumblebees love vervain and are needed to pollinate it. It blooms July through September and likes sunny places.

Some people use vervain medicinally. It is very bitter so most people don't like it as a tea. They use it in a tincture, which is where dried leaves or other plant parts are soaked in alcohol for about a month and strained out. When people take tinctures they take just a few drops because they're very concentrated.

Vervain tinctures are most often used for tension and for stomach problems and headaches related to stress. Vervain also used to be used as a bitter, which is a liquid that people take a little bit of before eating to help with digestion. There are other things that vervain is used for too. The leaves are sometimes used as a poultice (a soft, wet paste made of leaves that's put on the body to help with things like wounds, rashes or stings) to help heal wounds and hemorrhoids. The dried flowers were even used for nosebleeds. In ancient times it was considered a plant that helped just about everything!

In the past, some people have used blue vervain as food. The seeds could be roasted and ground into flour and the leaves could be made into a tea or tossed into salads and stews. The roots were also used in cooking. The flowers can be eaten too, and are pretty on top of salads. Remember, vervain is bitter though. That means it's good for your stomach but not necessarily the tastiest to eat!



Reminder: it's good to learn about wild plants but just enjoy them from a distance until you know them really well. Remember to never eat a new plant or food without a grown up present and always be 100% sure of what it is. Also remember that it's possible to be allergic to new foods and plants so just try a little bit the first time. Don't use plants for medicine without learning all about how to do it safely with a grown up. Also remember to leave most of them for wildlife and for everyone else to enjoy!

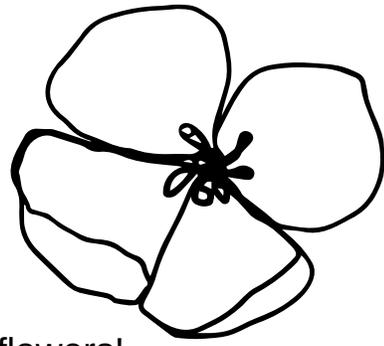
VERVAIN
(*Verbena officinalis*)



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



Poppies



Poppies are very misunderstood flowers!

Some people think it's illegal to grow or pick any poppies. Some people think they are full of dangerous drugs. But you've probably eaten parts of poppy flowers! Have you ever heard of poppy seed muffins? Those are made with the seeds of these pretty flowers.



There are 200 species of poppies in the world. Some species of poppies contain narcotic alkaloids, substances that can be used to relieve pain and make people sleepy. The opium poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) has this effect and has been used to make medical pain relieving drugs like morphine and codeine, along with illegal drugs like opium and heroin. Other poppies also can have pain relieving properties, although much less.

Poppies are also famous as a symbol of war veterans, because of a famous poem, *In Flanders Fields* by John McCrae. In the poem, the author talks about how fields of red poppies grew over the graves of the first World War. The poem became famous and people started selling artificial poppies to remember the soldiers who died and to raise money for veterans' causes. Today, many people still wear paper poppies on Memorial Day.

There are lots of varieties of wild poppies, including California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*), which are the state flower of California but also grow elsewhere. A lot of people think it's illegal to pick them, but it is legal as long as you're picking somewhere where it's legal to pick wildflowers. They are quite common and have no special protections or laws. They tend to grow in big patches and don't mind rocky soil or droughts. Sometimes they cover entire hillsides!



California poppies are yellow to orange. Other poppies are red, white, pink and even purple. California poppies are edible and the flowers can be used fresh in salads or in baked goods. We have a link to make a simple but tasty poppy seed cake with lemon drizzle on the Wild Kids Magazine website this month, if you'd like to try it, either with wild poppy seeds (like the author) or ones you get from the grocery store.

Be sure to always properly identify any wild plant you gather and be sure to only gather wildflowers where it is legal and where there are lots to share.



POPPY

(*Papaver*)



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

August Poetry

"In August, the large masses of berries, which, when in flower, had attracted many wild bees, gradually assumed their bright velvety crimson hue, and by their weight again bent down and broke their tender limbs."

- Henry David Thoreau

Summer Evening, 1848
by John Clare

The frog half fearful jumps across the path,
And little mouse that leaves its hole at eve
Nimbles with timid dread beneath the swath;
My rustling steps awhile their joys deceive,
Till past,--and then the cricket sings more strong,
And grasshoppers in merry moods still wear
The short night weary with their fretting song.
Up from behind the molehill jumps the hare,
Cheat of his chosen bed, and from the bank
The yellowhammer flutters in short fears
From off its nest hid in the grasses rank,
And drops again when no more noise it hears.
Thus nature's human link and endless thrall,
Proud man, still seems the enemy of all.

Two butterflies went out at noon
by Emily Dickinson

Two butterflies went out at noon
And waltzed above a stream,
Then stepped straight through the
firmament
And rested on a beam;
And then together bore away
Upon a shining sea,
Though never yet, in any port,
Their coming mentioned be.
If spoken by the distant bird,
If met in ether sea
By frigate or by merchantman,
Report was not to me.

The Butterfly and the Bee
by William Lisle Bowles

Methought I heard a butterfly
Say to a labouring bee:
"Thou hast no colours of the sky
On painted wings like me."
"Poor child of vanity! those dyes,
And colours bright and rare,"
With mild reproof, the bee replies,
"Are all beneath my care."
"Content I toil from morn to eve,
And scorning idleness,
To tribes of gaudy sloth I leave
The vanity of dress."

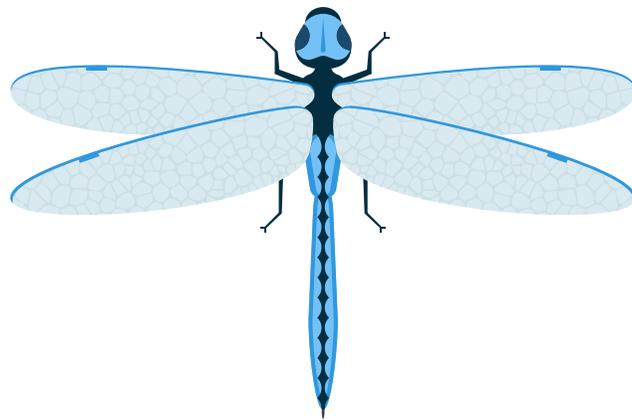


A Caterpillar's Apology
for Eating a Favorite Gladiolus
by Charles Dalmon

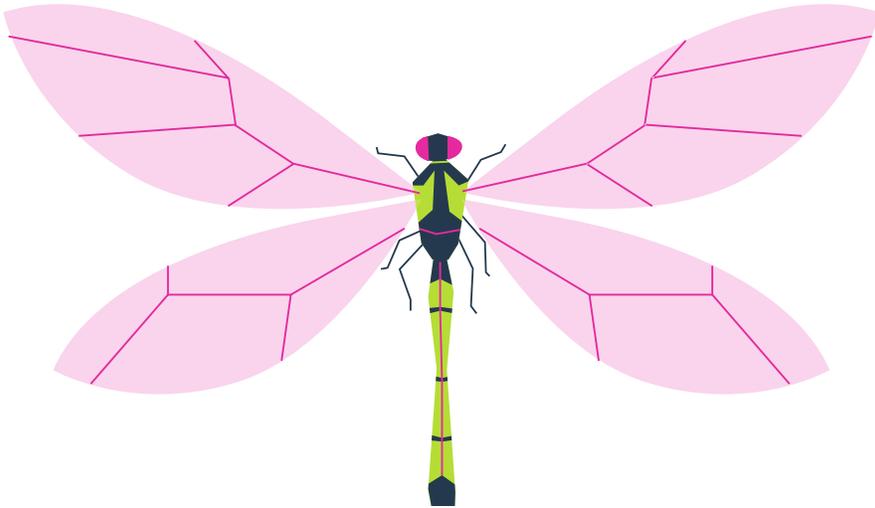
Confuse me not with impious things;
But wait for the appointed hour
When you should see your vanished flower
Reborn resplendent in my wings!

My Nature Journal

August



Phenology Calendar



Keep track of nature observations in your area this month, such as extreme weather, garden harvests, foraging finds, and wildlife spotted.

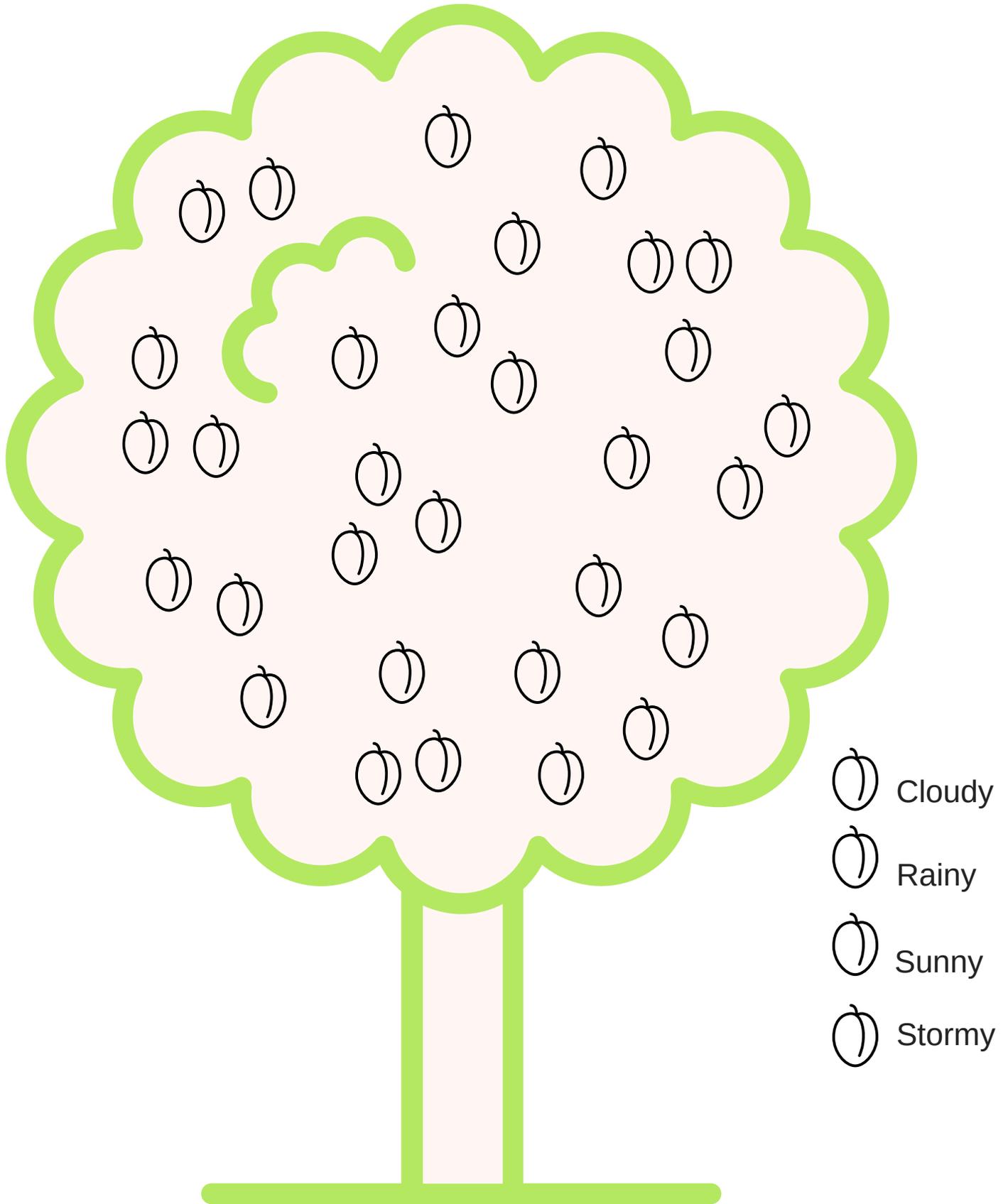
Write them on the date you observe them and draw a picture if you like.

August

2021

<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	31				

August Weather Tree



August Bird List

Birds spotted this month

August Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

AUGUST NATURE NOTES

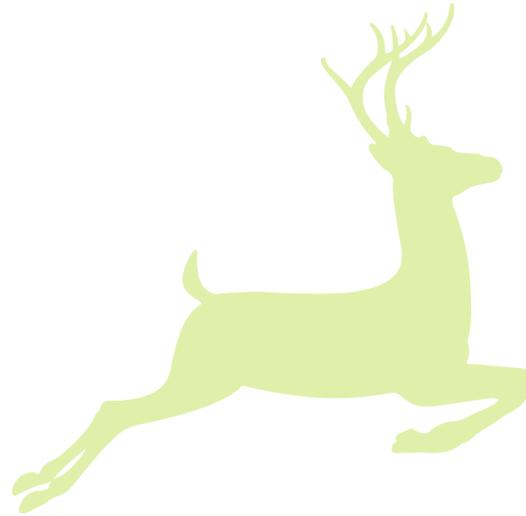
Record any interesting discoveries here -- plants you identify, foods you forage, outdoor activities, cool nature projects, nature books read, or just notes about what it's like outside this week!

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.