

*April 2022*

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Container  
Gardening  
for Kids

Make a Cloud  
Spotter!

Your Foraging  
Wish List

Mushroom Jokes!

Seasonal poems,  
activities, nature  
journal pages & more



# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Happy April! What are you hoping to do in nature this month?

Here in Minnesota, we have all kinds of weather in April. Some days it's really cold and it even snows, and some days it's really warm and almost feels like summer. We also usually have lots of rain and wind. We get a little of everything this month!

We'll be putting in our spring garden this month and cleaning up the garden a bit. We leave the dead flower stalks and leaves for a while because hibernating insects aren't ready to leave their winter homes just yet, but we tidy up the yard since it always looks so messy after months of being buried in snow and leaves. I love getting out in the garden this time of year and getting my hands all dirty. The smell of wet dirt makes me as happy as the smell of cookies makes some people!

The kids and I will be watching every day for newly blooming flowers in the yard like daffodils, tulips and striped squill. We'll plant seeds for hardy spring garden plants like peas and spinach. And we'll go hiking with our dog, Moose, and riding bikes as much as possible now that the snow is gone. We'll also be out foraging for early wild foods like ramps and nettles.

In some parts of the world, you may already have wonderful wild foods like morels, elderflowers, violets and wild asparagus that we don't have yet.

What are you hoping to do, find and play in nature this month?

I hope you have a wonderful, wild month!



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](mailto:alicia.bayer@gmail.com)

Find us online at  
[magicalchildhood.com/wildkids](http://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids)

Alicia

# Go Wild in April!

## 10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Find some dried flower heads in nature and scatter the seeds someplace that needs some wildflowers

Make a cloud spotter and see if you can identify your clouds and predict the weather

Check an ID book out of the library and see what trees, bugs, birds or other nature items you can find in your neighborhood

Use nature items like rocks or shells to do math

Start a container garden -- even with just one plant

Take a picture of something from every color of the rainbow in nature -- leaves, flowers, rocks, sunsets...

Make a nature bracelet by fastening a loop of tape loosely around your wrist, sticky side up, & pressing in nature items like flower petals

Go Geocaching  
(If you never have, you can visit [geocaching.com](http://geocaching.com) to learn how)

Go for a walk in the rain

Collect one small, pretty rock every day this month and keep them in a jar to do something with at the end of the month

# MAKE A CLOUD SPOTTER!

To do: Print out the cloud spotter on the next page or draw your own on a piece of card stock or cardboard. If you print it out, you may want to print it on card stock or glue it to a piece of cardboard to make it sturdy.



Cut out the middle square. Head outside and look at the sky through your cloud spotter. See if the clouds in the center of your spotter match any of the cloud types.

What kind of weather do you predict from what your clouds are today?

This is a fun project inspired by some spotters made by jam\_potatoes on Instagram! She has other fun spotters that she's made on her page too.

# CLOUD SPOTTER!

(Cut out this square to look through)



Cirrus  
White  
feathery  
highest

Fair weather



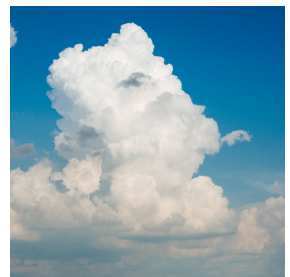
Cumulus  
Puffy  
flat bottoms  
low

Fair weather



Stratus  
Long, wide  
blankets  
low

Snow, drizzle  
or mist



Cumulonimbus  
Large, anvil shaped  
Wide at the top &  
bottom

Heavy rain, high wind,  
sometimes hail,  
tornadoes

# Start a Container Garden!



Gardening is great. It's fun to do, it gets you outside and it gets you all kinds of tasty, nutritious food. But not everybody can garden in a big garden in their back yards.

Some people live in apartments with no yard. Some people live in rented houses where they're not allowed to garden. Some people live in RVs and travel. Some people have back yards that have poor or polluted soil or are just too shady to garden in or they just aren't ready to dig up their yards for a garden. But anybody can grow a container garden!

**What is container garden?** It's just a garden planted in containers like pots instead of in the ground. People grow container gardens on balconies, roofs, driveways, front yards, back yards and even window sills.

Here are some plants that do well in containers:

Lettuce and other greens -- These grow fast and you can plant them more than once. They get bitter once the weather gets hot, so you can move them to shadier spots once the days are hot.

Herbs -- Most herbs (like lemon balm, oregano, thyme, stevia & mint) are very happy in pots.

Tomatoes -- Tomatoes grow well in big pots but might still need support like a tomato cage or staking. Cherry tomatoes are fun to eat and usually love pots.

Trees and plants that can't handle winters where you live -- Some people grow citrus trees like lemon trees in pots so they can bring them inside in the winter when it's cold. We grow lots of plants like geraniums and begonias in pots so they can live outside in warm months and live through winter inside. They even bloom in the winter inside!

Other good container plants: squash (leave lots of room for them to spread outside of the pot), peas, strawberries, beans, peppers, potatoes, onions, radishes, sweet potatoes, beets & more!

# How to plant a container garden

**Find some good containers.** Look for things that are big enough to hold your plant and its roots as it grows. The best containers have holes in the bottom so water can drain out. Plants hate "having their feet wet." If your container doesn't have holes, see if an adult can help you make some holes or you can put some big loose things on the bottom like corks or pine cones before you add the soil.

**If you're growing plants for food, make sure your container is safe for food!** If you plant in a plastic bucket, for instance, make sure it's labeled food safe and never held things like chemicals. Don't grow edible plants in things like old tires or painted antiques that could have lead paint. Old drawers made of particle board look fun with gardens planted in them, but they are made with lots of chemicals that are not good for you. **Remember that the roots will take up all the nutritious stuff in your soil and pass those nutrients on to you, but they'll also take up things like chemicals in recycled containers.**

So if you plant in a boot or a tire, just plant flowers there!

**You'll also need potting soil.** Container plants grow better with potting soil than regular garden soil or outside dirt because they use up the nutrients (the vitamins, minerals and healthy stuff in the soil) a lot faster. Remember your containers don't have all the good parts of nature that help soil naturally outside -- worms, decomposing leaves, even things like bunny poop are all constantly making the soil healthy for plants to get all their needs met. You'll want to add some compost or natural fertilizer every once in a while to your plants as they grow for that reason too -- especially if your plants are going to grow for more than one season.



**You can plant seeds or you can buy starter plants.** Seeds are really cheap but you have to wait longer for your plants to grow. Some seeds grow faster than others. Lettuce, radishes and spinach grow quickly from seeds. Tomatoes take a very long time so it's usually worth it to buy a small tomato plant. One plant will give you lots of tomatoes!

**Add a few easy flowers to your pots to bring pollinators.** Most plants need bees, flies and butterflies in order to make fruit because they pollinate the flowers. People think of fruit as just sweet foods like strawberries, but the fruit of your garden plants are the pollinated parts that develop from the flowers as they make seeds for new plants. Tomatoes, pumpkins, eggplants, avocados and zucchinis are examples of fruits of plants. The vegetable parts of your plants are things like the leaves and stems (like celery, lettuce and mint leaves).

**Your pots will need lots of water!** Remember that pots dry out faster than soil in the ground, especially pots made of materials like clay. Check their water every day and water them whenever the soil feels dry when you poke your finger into it.

**Make sure your container garden gets lots of sun.** Most fruits and veggies need a lot of sun. You can move your pots to sunnier parts of your yard or sunny window sills if needed.

Some plants like lettuce don't like the really intense sun of summer afternoons, so they may be happier someplace that gets morning sun. The great thing about container gardening is that you can move your plants around if they need more or less sun. The tag on your garden plant or seed packet will tell you how much seed each plant needs. If you live in a really hot place, your plants will need fewer hours of direct sun than those in cooler places. You'll learn how to tell what your plants need as you grow.





# Mushroom Jokes!

**Why is the mushroom always invited to parties?  
Because he's a fungi!**

**What does a mushroom sit on?  
A toadstool.**

**What made the mushroom farmer a good person?  
He had really good morels.**

**How does a mushroom car sound?  
Shroom, shroom.**

**Why do toadstools grow so near each other?  
They don't need mushroom.**

**What did the grouchy mushroom say to the loud mushroom?  
Put a cap on it.**

**How much room does a mushroom need to party?  
As mushroom as possible!**

**Why are mushroom children so good?  
They don't want to get in truffle.**

**What do you call a book about mushrooms?  
A fun-guide.**

**What do you call a fungi that makes music?  
A decomposer.**

**What kind of mushroom lives in the sea?  
Oyster mushrooms.**

**What happens when two fungi get married?  
They become fung-us!**

**What's the difference between a mushroom and a tree?  
One's a tree.**

**What did one mushroom say to the other mushroom?  
Nothing. Mushrooms can't talk.**

**Did you hear the joke about fungus?  
You won't like it, but it will grow on you!**



# What's on your foraging wish list?



Do you have a foraging wish list?

This is a great way to plan what you'd like to research and look for in the next season or the next year.

Every year, we have plants that we put on our family's foraging wish lists.

Some are plants we want to learn about and find for the first time. Almost 20 years ago, I put elderberries on my foraging wish list because I knew they grow wild all over and I didn't want to keep buying dried ones online for elderberry syrup. After I put them on our list, we looked up how to find them, where they usually grow, how to make sure they were really elderberries and when to look for them.

That year we found our first elderberries! Now they are a big part of our foraging and we get pounds and pounds of them every year that we freeze, dry, bake with and make drinks and medicines with.

Others plants on our wish lists are ones that we already have foraged and want to make sure to get more of. Our kids put morel mushrooms on their lists every year because they love them so much. We bread ours and fry them for a spring treat. Our kids always compete to see who can find the most! This year, my son Alex asked if we could gather lots of pears and apples because he likes to have home canned pears with breakfast every morning and homemade applesauce as a snack, and we've run out of jars. We usually can about 60 quarts of each, so that shows you how much Alex loves apples and pears!

(Okay, the other kids help eat them too!). Dandelion flowers are always on our kids' wish lists too, because they love them battered and fried. They dip them in sauces like ranch & barbecue sauce. We also make dandelion honey with the blossoms.

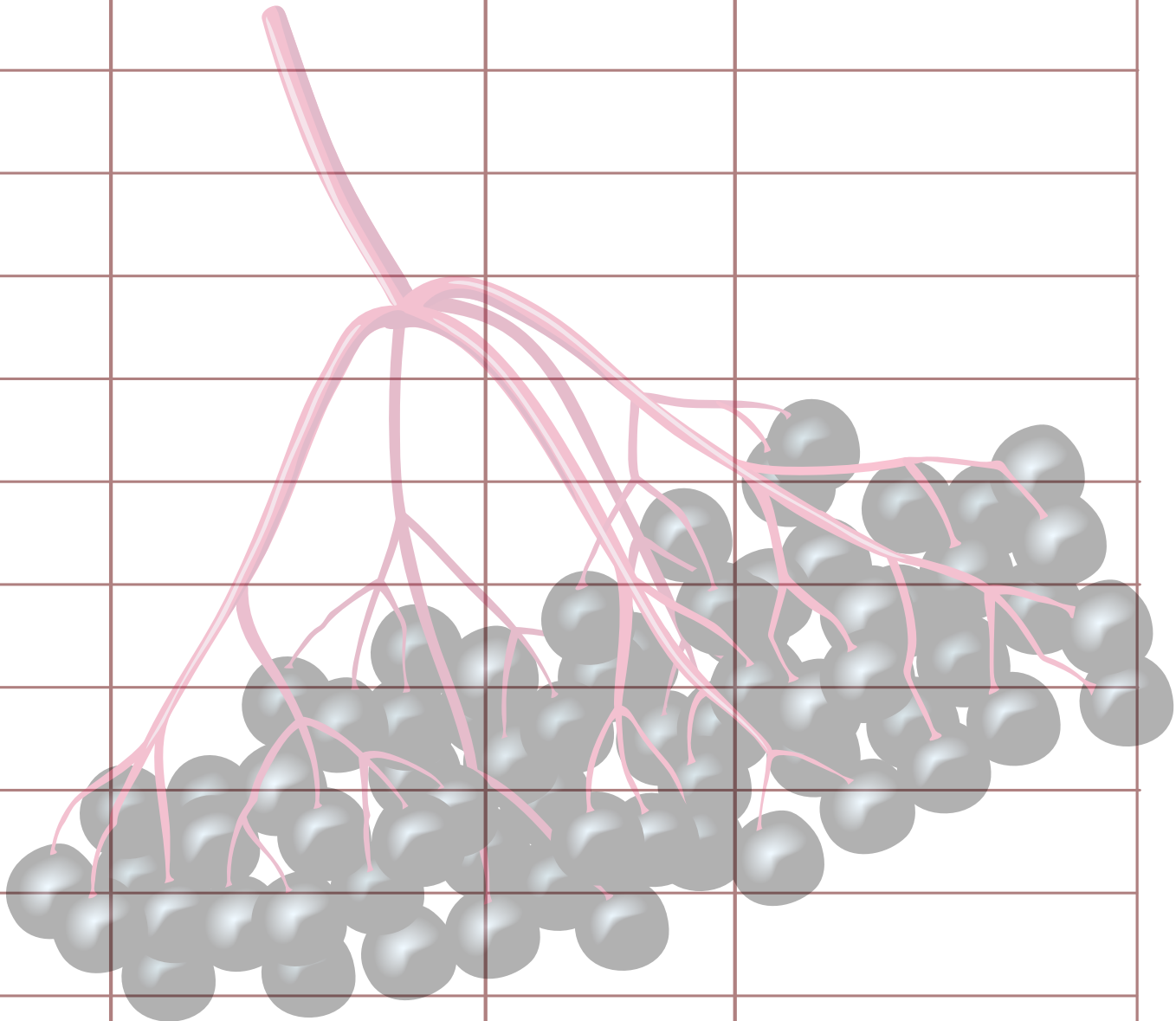
On the next page, write down some things you'd like to forage soon.

Also make notes of where and when to look for them, and what you want to use them for. Library books can help you find out more!



# My Foraging Wish List

SEASON	PLANT	PARTS USED	PLANS TO USE IT



# Poems for April

*"April hath put a spirit of youth in everything."*

*- William Shakespeare*

The Daffodils

by William Wordsworth (1770 - 1850)

I wander'd lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils,  
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,  
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine  
And twinkle on the Milky Way,  
They stretch'd in never-ending line  
Along the margin of a bay:  
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,  
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they  
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:—  
A poet could not but be gay  
In such a jocund company!  
I gazed, and gazed, but little thought  
What wealth the show to me had brought:

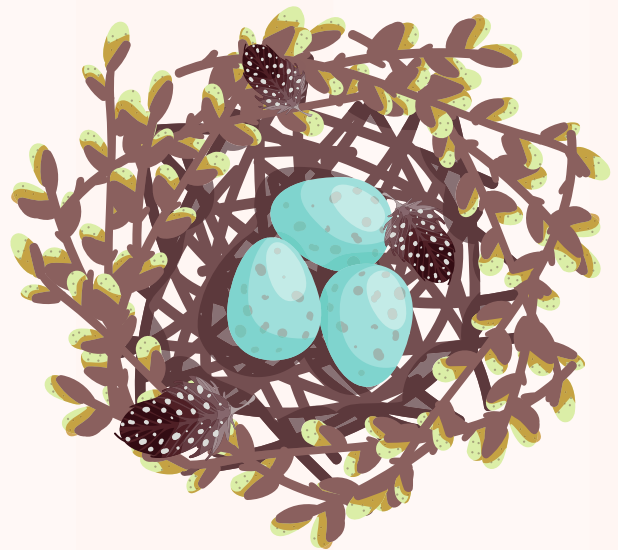
For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils.

To the First Robin

by Louisa May Alcott

Welcome, welcome, little stranger,  
Fear no harm, and fear no danger;  
We are glad to see you here,  
For you sing, "Sweet Spring is near."

Now the white snow melts away;  
Now the flowers blossom gay:  
Come, dear bird, and build your nest,  
For we love our robin best.



# PEAS



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

# CUCUMBER



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

*My Nature Journal*

April



# Phenology Calendar

Keep track of all of the firsts in nature that you see this month!  
Write in firsts like first robin seen, daffodil in bloom, nettles or ramps spotted, spring peepers (frogs) heard, and so on.

Draw a picture if you like.

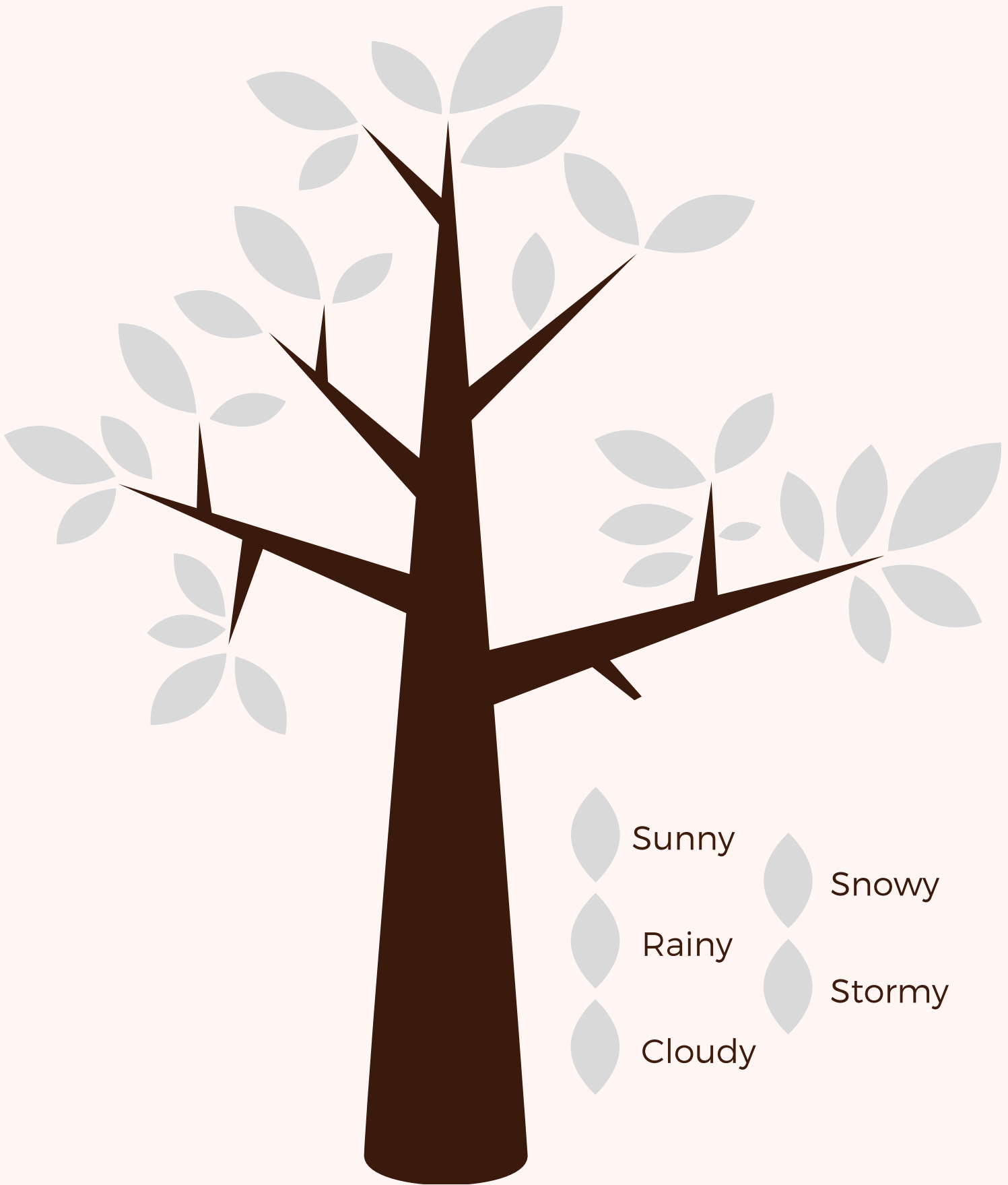


## April 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					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



# April Weather Tree



Sunny



Rainy



Cloudy



Snowy



Stormy

# April Bird List

Birds spotted this month

# April Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

# APRIL 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](http://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids) to learn more

or email photographs, artwork, letters or other submissions to [alicia.bayer@gmail.com](mailto:alicia.bayer@gmail.com)