

August 2022

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Wild Berry Art

Nature Life Treasure Hunt

Foraging St. John's Wort

Making Jasmine Tea

Beetle Scavenger Hunt

Make Your Own Sea Salt

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



From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Hella August!

What are you hoping to do in nature this month?

Here in rural Minnesota, we're hoping to get some camping in and do some boating soon. We like to go to the state park to rent a canoe or kayak, and we also have a little inflatable boat we like to blow up at the lake. We also do a lot of evening walks this time of year once it cools down, plus hiking, exploring parks, bike riding, swimming, bird watching, rock hunting and more.

We'll also be doing lots of foraging this month. On our to-do list for August here are apples, pears, rose hips, mullein, wild mint, nettle seeds, wild plums, dock seeds, wild grapes, elderberries, crab apples, plantain leaves (for making herbal oils and salves), pineapple weed, poke berries (for dye and ink, not for eating!), sumac, yarrow flowers, hawthorn berries for herbal remedies, and lots of wild mushrooms, just to name a few!

In our garden, the tomatoes should produce soon and the pumpkins are trying to climb all over the yard. We have lots of herbs like stevia, parsley and cilantro chugging along. Lots of plants will flower in our yard this month, too, like our shrub roses, rudbeckia (black eyed Susan) and lilies. The flowers help wildlife and also just make the yard look so pretty, and many of them are helpful for people too. Our jewelweed showed up as a weed but I leave it because the hummingbirds love the flowers and we use it for skin remedies for things like poison ivy.

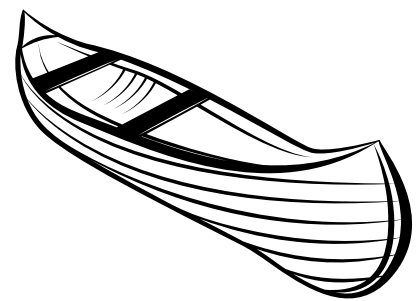
Wherever you are in the world, I hope you have a fantastic August, with lots of wild adventures!

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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Go Wild in August

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Go for a walk
in the rain

Hunt for dried milkweed
pods and scatter the fluffy
seeds in wild places to plant
more milkweed for the
monarchs

Climb a different
tree every day this
month

Look for shooting
stars (meteors) --
there are lots of them
this time of year!

Try to get a picture of
lightning (safely!) next
time it storms

Take a time lapse
video of the clouds to
watch them move and
change over time

Make wild berry art
(we tell you how in
this issue)

See how many
different kinds of
butterflies you can spot
this month

Use a feather as
a quill (cut the tip at an angle)
and draw with wild ink from
walnuts or berries with it
(careful, they stain!)

Learn a new
outdoor skill

Wild Berry Art!

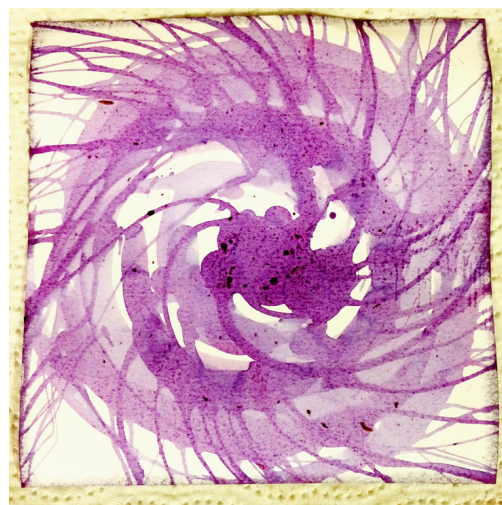
Wild berries are awesome for things like juice, jelly, natural medicine and desserts, but they're also really fun to do art with.

We use our "spent" elderberries for dyeing and crafts after we use them for cooking. What does spent mean? When you use elderberries for things like juice and jellies, you'll typically cover them with water and simmer them. After you strain them out, you can actually use those same berries again to make a weaker juice. We usually do this twice, and then we use the mostly-used-up (spent) elderberries one more time for fun stuff. (We tell you how to do that on the next page.)

You can use spent berry juice as paint, ink, dye and more. Here's how!

To do elderberry spin art...

Get your spent elderberry juice and adjust the colors as you like (see the next page for instructions). Cut some card stock or watercolor paper into small squares and put them in a salad spinner. Use an eye dropper or tiny spoon to drop a few drops of the elderberry juice on the card stock and then spin!



To do elderberry blow art...

Get your spent elderberry juice and adjust the colors as you like (see the next page for instructions). Also get some white paper (watercolor paper or construction paper work best but any paper will do) and a pipette or eye dropper and a straw.

Drop a few drops of the elderberry juice on the paper and then blow on it from various directions.

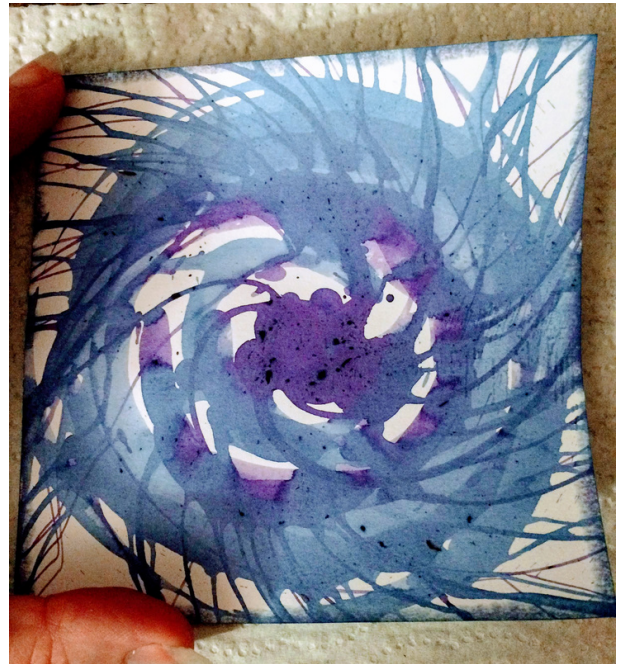
Be sure to only use a few drops at a time for best results. If you get too much of a puddle, you can blot it with a paper towel.



To make elderberry ink from spent berries:

By the third go-round of making elderberry juice (simmering fresh elderberries in water), elderberries don't really offer much taste or nutrition. They still have lots of that gorgeous color though. It fades over time, but in the meantime it's so much fun to use for art!

To use spent elderberries for ink or paint, just top them with a little water one last time, simmer a bit, and strain the liquid.



How to change your elderberry ink color:

If you want to make multiple colors, divide it into three dishes.

Elderberries are pH indicators, like red cabbage. That means that the juice changes color if you add an acid or base.

Add lemon juice to make a vibrant hot pink (or another acid like vinegar)

Add baking soda to make blue (or another base like dish soap).



Remember that elderberries stain, so do this outside or protect your work surface! Wear clothes that will be improved by elderberry dye like an old t-shirt.

What other berries can you use? You can use other wild berries like poke berries (remember that poke berries are poisonous so do not eat them!) or blueberries, blackberries, wild grapes and other dark and bright berries.

Remember to use these berries and their ink just for art and not for eating or drinking. Be safe and have fun!

From the archives because this is such a fun thing to do this time of year...

Forage Your Own Sea Salt!

Make an edible souvenir of beaches you visit!

Did you know you can make your own sea salt? People have been doing it for thousands of years.

Sea salt will taste different depending on where it's from, because it will have different minerals and trace elements like like potassium, calcium and magnesium. Pink Himalayan salt is pink because there's a little bit of rust in it!



Here's all you need to do.

1. Gather some sea water from the ocean. Be sure to get your water from a beach that is not polluted. You can check your beach's water quality online.
2. Strain the water through a coffee filter, several layers of cheesecloth, or a clean t-shirt to filter out dirt and impurities.
3. Put the seawater in a wide pan and heat it over medium-high heat, stirring often, until it gets very sludgy.
4. When it's a thick paste, turn the heat down and use a heatproof spatula to stir it while cooking out most of the rest of the water.
5. Scoop the paste onto a cookie sheet and spread it thin to dry. You can finish drying it outside in the sun, in a hot attic, in a warm oven (turn on the heat for a few minutes and then turn it off first) or you can spread it in a dehydrator. This time of year we really like using the hot car method (just put it in a car with the windows rolled up on a hot day). It's fast and uses no electricity! Your salt will finish drying out in several hours or several days, depending on your method and how humid the air is.
6. Transfer your dry salt to a small jar or salt grinder and enjoy!

One gallon of seawater will yield about 3/4 cup of sea salt.

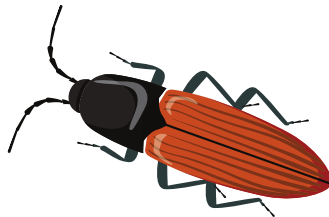
BEETLE SCAVENGER HUNT

How many can you find?

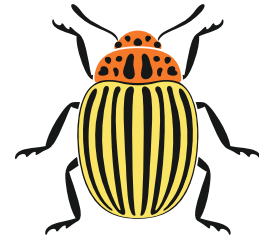
ladybug



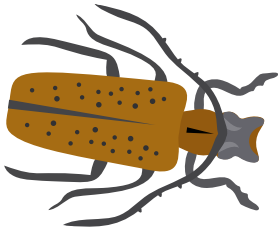
click beetle



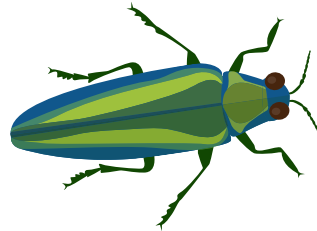
potato beetle



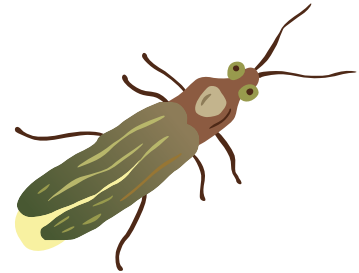
weevil



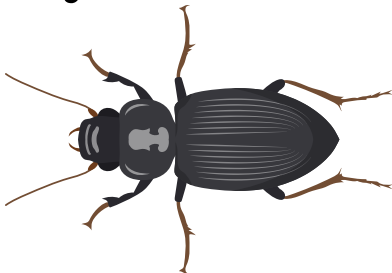
jewel beetle



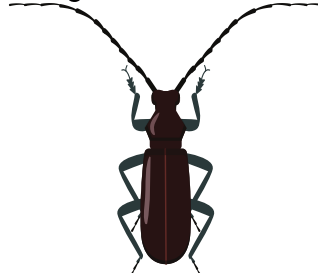
firefly



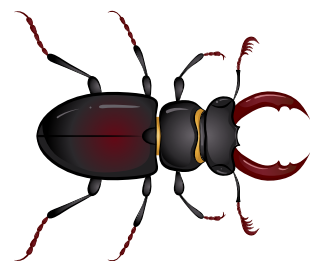
ground beetle



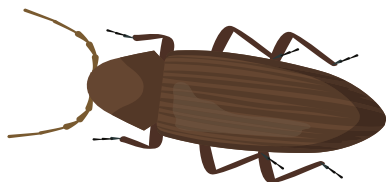
longhorn beetle



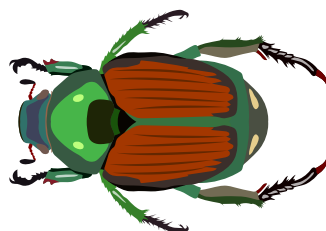
stag beetle



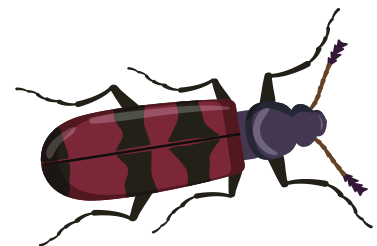
bark beetle



scarab beetle



checkered beetle



Make your own jasmine tea!

Have you ever had jasmine tea? Jasmine tea is green or black tea (*Camellia sinensis*) that has had jasmine flowers added to it to improve the taste and smell. It's our son Jack's favorite tea and you can make it at home if you have a jasmine plant or can find one where you can gather some of its flowers.



To make jasmine tea, take loose black or green tea leaves and layer fresh jasmine flowers in with them in a jar. Pick the buds or flowers during a sunny time of day after all the dew has dried. Add a weight to press it all down and let the tea sit for at least a day but up to several weeks. The lovely scent of the jasmine flowers will seep into your tea leaves and make the tea taste like jasmine!



To make your tea: Put a spoonful of jasmine tea in a cup and add boiling water. Steep for 5 minutes, strain and serve with sugar or honey to sweeten it if you like.

Note: Be sure to collect true jasmine flowers.

Sometimes other plants are called by the same name so it's important to always be 100% sure of what you're picking. You want to pick jasmine from the actual *Jasminum* species like *J. officinale*, *J. sambac*, or *J. polyanthum*. Also make sure the plant hasn't been sprayed with pesticides!



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 lots for wildlife and for everyone else to enjoy!

JASMINE
(*Jasminum*)

Plate 13



Jasmine
Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

1 Flower
2 Fruit
3 Seed

Jasminum

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*

St. John's Wort

Have you ever heard of St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*)? It is very common wildflower that grows all over the world.

Remember, "wort" sounds like a funny word but it's just an old fashioned word for herb.

A lot of people know about St. John's Wort because scientists have found that it helps some people feel better when they have depression and seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Scientists have found a lot of other ways it's useful too, including helping with nerves, gut health and pain. It is a plant to research if you want to use it that way though (like all herbs!). Sometimes St. John's Wort can interfere with the way other medicines work.

St. John's Wort prefers dry and gravelly locations in full sun. You can often find it in fields, pastures and along roadsides. Some people even find it growing wild in cities and in parking lots.

It is a sprawling plant that grows between 1 to 3 feet tall and tends to spread a lot. It is a perennial that's hardy in zones 3 to 9.

The flowers are small and yellow, in clusters at the end of the stems. They have five petals each with tiny black dots along the edges, and lots stamens. The leaves are narrow, opposite each other on the stems and rounded, with tiny dots that are very hard to see (hold the leaves up to the sun to see them better).

There is a wonderful famous herbal lady named Rosemary Gladstar and she recommends squeezing the buds and flowers to test to see if they're ready to harvest. If you rub and squeeze the flowers and there is red or purple oil, they are ready to harvest.

Some people make St. John's Wort oil to help with nerve pain, sciatica, healing scars and helping arthritis pain, among other uses. To make an oil, fill a jar with fresh St. John's Wort flowers and then cover with a good oil for skin like almond oil or olive oil. Let it sit on a sunny window for a month (shake it every so often) and then strain out the flowers and bottle the oil. Keep it in a cool, dark place.

Be sure to always properly identify any wild plant you gather & be sure to only gather wildflowers where it is legal & where there are lots to share. Also remember to always use just a little of anything the first time, in case you have an allergy.



ST. JOHN'S WORT

(*Hypericum perforatum*)



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

NATURE LIFE TREASURE HUNT



Head out into nature and see what you can find for each category. Draw them or write them in the box. We have an example for each one.

Living	Non living	Once Living
		

August Poetry

"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time."

—John Lubbock

My Love

by M. (Marie) Hedderwick Browne, 1893

I

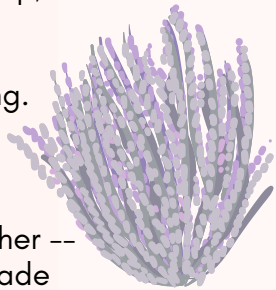
My love is not like the rose,
Nor the languid lady-lily,
Nor the pansy, pensive-faced,
Nor the drooping "daffy-dilly."

II

She's not like the pale snowdrop,
Fears of frailty in us waking,
Nor the shrinking violet,
For the shade the sun forsaking.

III

I can only liken her
To the brave and bonnie heather --
Hardy, wholesome, and not made
For a hothouse or fine weather.

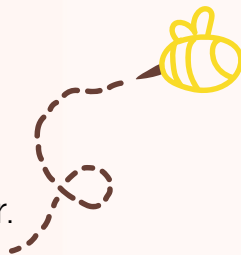


The Bee

by R.K.M., 1888

Among the daisies all astir
Observe the belted rover,
The merry little mariner
That sails the seas of clover.

Whene'er a shower falls, pellmell
Upon the seas of clover
He flies into some flower-bell,
And waits until it's over.



Renewal

by Dora Read Goodale, 1887

There's magic in the air today,
There's promise in the sun;
The very brooks begin to play,
And frolic as they run.

The hive is all astir with bees,
The slender willows shine;
The sap is mounting in the trees,
And swelling in the vine.

The swallow comes from far away
To seek her summer nest,
Whose narrow hanging walls of clay
Await the welcome guest.

At ease upon the cottage floor,
His head between his feet,
The shaggy setter guards the door,
Or dozes in the heat;

And there beneath the fitful ray
Of many a yellow beam,
His aged master, bent and gray,
Is laughing through his dream.

O, pleasure pricks in every vein,
And grief is turned to joy,
For Earth herself is young again,
And Time is but a boy!

Phenology Calendar

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



August



Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

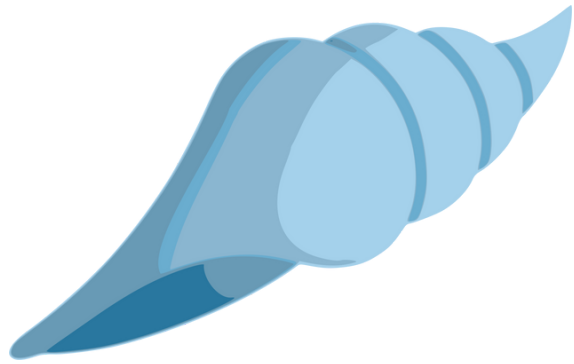
Fri

Sat

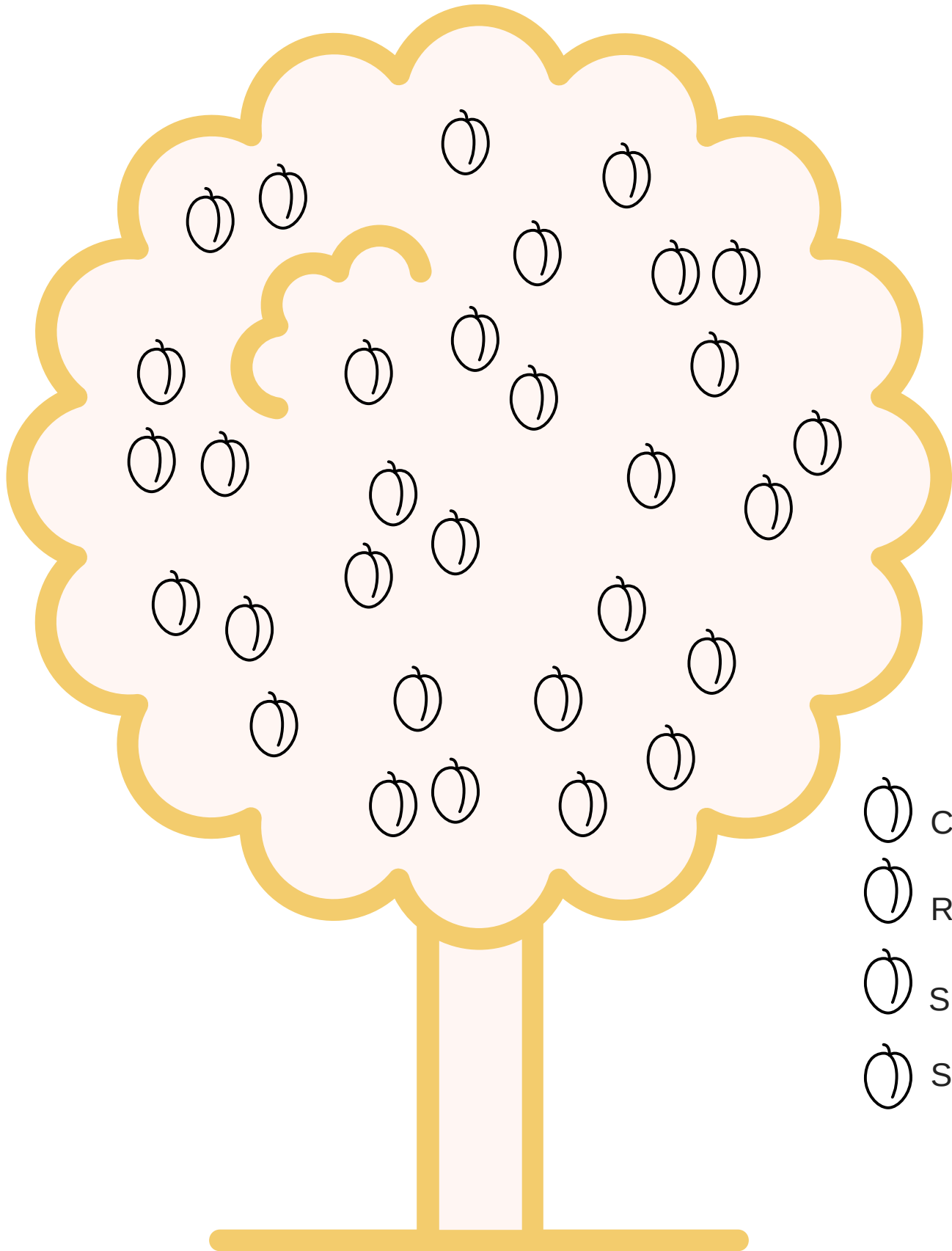
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			



MY NATURE JOURNAL

August



August Weather Tree



-  Cloudy
-  Rainy
-  Sunny
-  Stormy

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

MY FORAGING GUIDE FOR:

GENERAL SKETCH OF THE PLANT

CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS

LATIN NAME _____

WHERE FOUND _____

PARTS USED _____

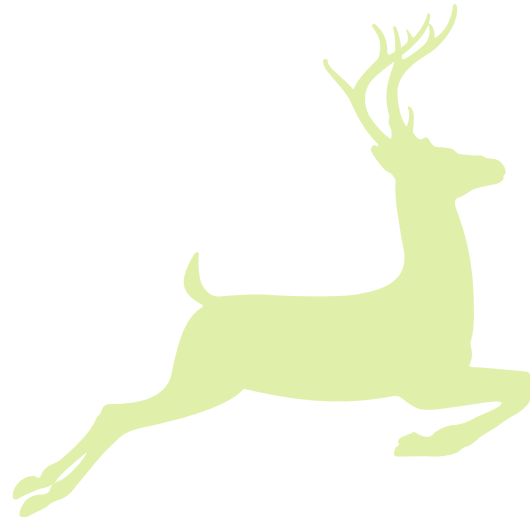
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.