

February 2023

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



February Nature
Photo Challenge

Quiz: Which Wild
Mushroom Are You?

February Bird
ID Challenge

Lion's Mane &
Wood Ear Mushroom
Info & Coloring Pages

Seasonal poems, activities,
nature journal pages &
more!

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Welcome February!

What are you hoping to do in nature this month?

This is the shortest month of the year, so it always seems like a good month to set goals. Sometimes we have goals here of taking a nature photo every day in February. Sometimes we declare February "Use it up month" and every day of the month we do something like get to a project we haven't done yet or eat up some of the wonderful foraged and gardened foods that we put up earlier in the year.

Other years we declared February "Do Something Brave Month" and every day of the month we each tried to do a brave thing. A lot of people think bravery means doing dangerous things, but that's just being foolish. Being brave can mean trying something new even if you're afraid you won't be very good at it, or saying hi to someone you'd like to make friends with, or speaking up about something that matters to you.

Are there any ways you'd like to practice being brave this month? Are there other challenges you'd like to do? We have a nature photo challenge in this month's Wild Kids and also a bird ID challenge.

Since we're focusing on learning about mushrooms in Wild Kids this year, we have a fun quiz in this month's issue to see which wild mushroom you're most like, too.

February is a short month, so make the most of it! Have a wonderful, wild month!

Alicia



Our little corner of the world right now

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 February

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Try to find 10 heart shaped nature items (rocks, leaves, clouds, etc.) to draw, collect or photograph

Make pine needle tea (check the January 2019 issue to learn how or look at a reliable site online)

Take part in the 2023 Great Backyard Bird Count February 17-20 *

Cook an outdoor meal

Listen to sap running in a tree on a warm day with a stethoscope
**

If you have snow, make snowballs & paint them with watercolors

If it's not snowy where you are, go to a riverbank, beach or anywhere with lots of rocks and look for fossils, petrified wood and neat rocks

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

Take part in our February nature photo challenge with a different theme each day

*Visit www.birdcount.org for more information

*This works best on larger hardwood trees with smooth bark like birch and cherry.

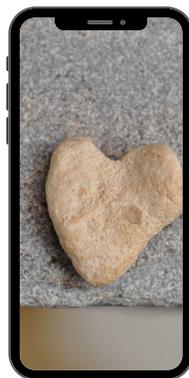
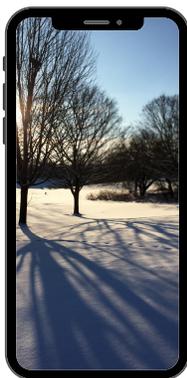
February

Nature Photo Challenge

Try to head outside and take a picture each day with that day's prompt as an inspiration!



- | | | | | | |
|----|----------|----|---------------|----|------------|
| 1 | Clouds | 11 | Insect | 21 | Silhouette |
| 2 | Cold | 12 | Berry | 22 | Edible |
| 3 | Seeds | 13 | Blue | 23 | Water |
| 4 | Bird | 14 | Heart shaped | 24 | Smooth |
| 5 | Red | 15 | Rough | 25 | Sharp |
| 6 | Tracks | 16 | Soft | 26 | Many |
| 7 | Sunset | 17 | Green | 27 | Rock |
| 8 | Round | 18 | Shadow | 28 | Stormy |
| 9 | Wildlife | 19 | Black & White | | |
| 10 | Moon | 20 | Symmetrical | | |



JUST FOR FUN(GI)...



WHAT WILD MUSHROOM ARE YOU?

Here's a fun way to learn about some wild mushrooms and also maybe learn a little bit about yourself!

Take the quiz on the following pages and circle the letters that match you best for each question. Then see which letters you had the most of to find out which mushroom "personalities" are most like yours.

We just have six types of mushrooms for our quiz but there are millions of types of mushrooms in the world. Scientists estimate there are between 2.2 and 3.8 million types of fungi in the world right now, but they really are not sure what the real number might be.

Of course mushrooms don't really have personalities, but they are all different just like people are all different and every kind has something special about it.

Now on with the quiz....



WHAT WILD MUSHROOM ARE YOU?

QUIZ

WHEN I HAVE FREE TIME, I LIKE TO...

- A. CATCH UP ON HOMEWORK OR CHORES
- B. READ OR LEARN SOMETHING NEW
- C. DO ARTS OR CRAFTS
- D. PLAY GAMES
- E. TAKE PART IN CLUBS OR SPORTS
- F. GET INTO TROUBLE



WHEN I GROW UP I'D LIKE TO BE A...

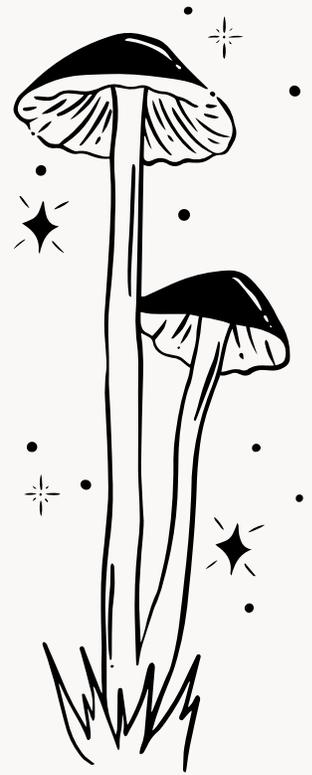
- A. FARMER OR CONSTRUCTION WORKER
- B. DOCTOR OR TEACHER
- C. ARTIST OR PHOTOGRAPHER
- D. ACTOR OR COMEDIAN
- E. PRESIDENT OR OWNER OF MY OWN COMPANY
- F. SPY OR ASSASSIN

I AM REALLY GOOD AT...

- A. FIXING THINGS
- B. TAKING CARE OF PEOPLE OR ANIMALS
- C. DRAWING, PAINTING
- D. MAKING PEOPLE LAUGH
- E. MAKING FRIENDS
- F. TRICKING PEOPLE

THE KIND OF CLOTHES I LIKE ARE...

- A. PRACTICAL AND COMFORTABLE
- B. ORGANIC AND WITH A GOOD MESSAGE
- C. UNIQUE, ONE OF A KIND
- D. FUN AND COLORFUL
- E. NAME BRAND, THE LATEST STYLES
- F. ALL BLACK OR ANYTHING WITH SKULLS

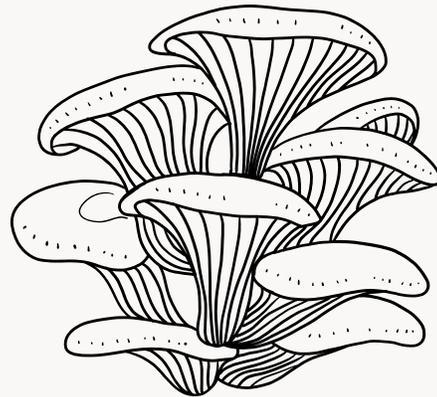


IF I COULD HAVE ONE SUPERPOWER IT WOULD BE...

- A. SUPER STRENGTH
- B. ABLE TO HEAL ANYBODY
- C. ABLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH ANIMALS
- D. ABLE TO CHANGE INTO ANYTHING
- E. MIND CONTROL
- F. ABLE TO TURN PEOPLE INTO TOADS

ONE WORD THAT DESCRIBES ME IS...

- A. DEPENDABLE
- B. CARING
- C. CREATIVE
- D. FUN
- E. POPULAR
- F. DANGEROUS



Count the number of a, b, C, d, e and f.

Which did you have the most of: _____

Which did you have the second most of: _____

See the next page to see which mushrooms you are most like!

WHAT WILD MUSHROOM ARE YOU?



PHEASANT BACK / DRYAD'S SADDLE
(CERIOPORUS SQUAMOSUS)

Pheasant back or dryad's saddle mushrooms are easy to find in the woods in all different seasons. They smell a little bit like cucumbers. People use them a lot in broths and powders. Since they can have a kind of chewy texture, they can be good cut into thin strips, breaded and fried like clam strips.

If you are a pheasant back, you are dependable and can always be counted on. You are easy to get along with and make a great friend. People might underestimate you and not realize how cool you are and how many things you're good at. You're a hard worker and are strong and helpful.



TURKEY TAIL (TRAMETES VERSICOLOR)

Turkey tail mushrooms are famous for their healing properties. They grow all over the world and are usually used as medicine through teas, tinctures and powders. They have been used for thousands of years, and are known for their multi-colored patterns.

If you are turkey tail mushroom, you are smart and caring. You can be hard to get to know but people who get to know you are lucky to be your friends. You are a natural healer and are great at listening and making people feel better. You love animals and nature, and want to make the world a better place.



ARTIST'S CONK (GANODERMA APPLANATUM)

Artist's conk mushrooms are so cool! They are often used for making artwork. People can carve them and the carved part will turn color. They are also used as canvases for painting and drawing.

If you're an artist conk, you're a creative person. You're artistic and unique. You like people and things that are different, and you don't care about fitting in with the crowd. You are naturally drawn to music, crafting or other artistic hobbies. You're interesting and have many talents.



PUFFBALL (LYCOPERDON PERLATUM)

Puffball mushrooms are so fun. They are very unique! They got their name from the way they puff out with what look like magical clouds when you stomp the old ones. Their latin name means wolf flatulence! They're not just fun though. Lots of people slice them and use them as naturally gluten free flatbreads and pizzas or use them in stir fries. Scientists have also found that the spores are antibacterial, antifungal and antimicrobial. Don't sniff the spores! It has made people sick.

If you are a puffball, you're a fun person who brightens up everybody's day. You're naturally creative and entertaining. People love to be around you and you have a good heart. You can be silly and you love to laugh. People sometimes don't realize how many hidden talents you have, too. You make the world a brighter place.



MOREL (MORCHELLA)

Morel mushrooms are some of the best loved mushrooms in the world. Lots of people hunt for morel mushrooms because they are so tasty. You can only harvest them for a little while in the spring and you can't grow them outside of the wild, which makes them even more popular. Even people who don't like mushrooms usually love morel mushrooms. People eat them sauteed in butter, in soups and casseroles, and even on pizzas. They are delicious battered and fried.

If you are a morel, you are a natural leader. You are popular and likeable. You win easily and are good at lots of things. Everybody wants to be your best friend. You'll be successful at almost anything you put your mind to!



FLY AGARIC (AMANITA MUSCARIA)

Fly agaric mushrooms are known for being magical looking and poisonous. They come in different colors and grow all over the world. They are associated with fairies and magical creatures, but if eaten can cause hallucinations and psychotic reactions or even death! Just because people can't eat them doesn't mean they're not helpful though. They quietly help nature in many ways. Stay away from these and just take their pictures if you find any.

If you are a fly agaric, people should watch out! You can be very charming if you want to but you can also be troublesome and dangerous. You are good at protecting yourself. People might be better off admiring how cool you are from a distance, but you are also fascinating, strong and always exciting to be around!

FEBRUARY BIRD ID CHALLENGE

EACH DAY THIS MONTH, TRY TO FIND A BIRD OUTSIDE THAT YOU IDENTIFY. IT CAN BE A PIGEON, BLUE JAY, HAWK, CROW, YOU NAME IT. USE A BIRD ID BOOK, APP OR GROWNUP TO HELP IF YOU NEED IT.

HOW MANY DIFFERENT BIRDS CAN YOU FIND AND ID?



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		

NOTES:

Phenology Calendar

Keep track of things you observe in nature that you see this month!
Write in observances like these or draw a picture if you like.

- Icicles melting
- Waxwing spotted at feeder
- Chickadee call heard
- Strawberry leaves poking up under the snow
- Bald eagle soaring over Lake Talcot
- 6 inches of rain in one day
- Thunderstorm
- Raspberry canes chewed down
- Rabbit tracks in back yard
- Record high temperature for this day

FEBRUARY 2023



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				

LION'S MANE

(*Hericium Erinaceus*)



Lion's mane mushrooms are so cool! They are easy to identify because of their long icicle-like "teeth" that hang down.

People love to eat lion's mane mushrooms because they soak up lots of flavors that you cook them with. Some people call them the lobster of the woods because they taste a little like seafood. Vegetarians sometimes use them as a seafood substitute.

They are tasty to eat but they also have a lot of medicinal properties that scientists have been studying. Some research shows that they help neurological (brain) illnesses like Alzheimer's Disease. One study found "significant improvement" in people with Alzheimer's who took lion's mane mushroom powder, and the improvement went away when they stopped taking it. Other studies have shown benefits related to managing blood sugar and cholesterol, helping with mood and concentration, treating depression and anxiety, helping to repair nerve damage, and even helping to treat drug-resistant cancers.

Lion's mane mushrooms are easy to ID because no other mushrooms look like them! They are pretty common and they grow in colder weather. They especially like to grow on beech trees but they'll grow on other hardwood trees like oak and maple. They generally grow on dead or dying trees, often on fallen logs. They have a white spore print.

In cool weather, look up into the trees (they are often really high up!) and see if you can spot any.



LION'S MANE
(*Hericium Erinaceus*)



WOOD EAR (Auricularia sp.)



Wood ear mushrooms are really strange and fun! They are called that because they look like ears that grow on dead or dying wood. They are also called things like tree ear, pig ear and even goblin ear!

Wood ear mushrooms are used a lot in Chinese cooking and medicine. They call them black fungus, cloud fungus, black mushroom and black jelly mushroom. The Korean name for them means "wood jellyfish" or "tree jellyfish." They are often used in soups, especially hot and sour soup, and in mushroom salad.

Wood ear mushrooms don't have much taste and they are chewy when you eat them. They are high in protein, iron and some vitamins.

Wood ear mushrooms have been used for thousands of years as medicine for different ailments. Scientists have found that they are anticoagulants, which means they keep the blood from clotting too much. Traditionally, they were used for things like lowering cholesterol, reducing blood sugar, reducing tumors and treating sore throats, among other uses.

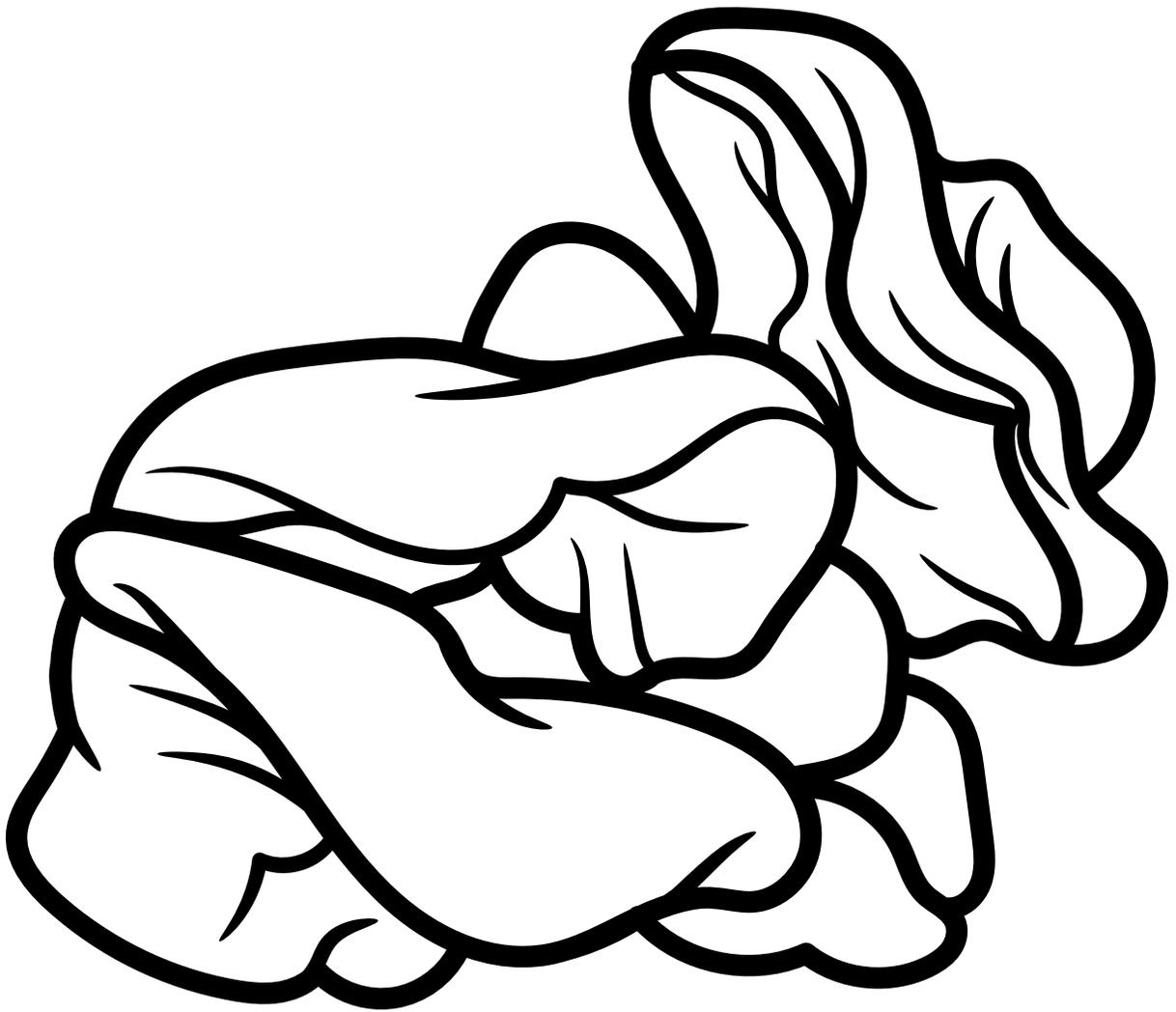
There are some other mushrooms that look a little bit like them, but none of them are poisonous. Once you see enough wood ear mushrooms and compare them to other similar mushrooms, you'll see that they're pretty easy to tell apart.

They are brown and translucent (see through) and feel rubbery. When they dry out they can look dark brown or black. If you soak the dried ones in water they will get soft again and can be cooked.

Wood ear mushrooms grow all over the United States, Asia, Mexico, Canada, Europe and other places in the world. Scientists have found that the species are a little different in different places. They like cool weather so you find them in fall and early spring in some places, and if you live someplace a little warmer you can find them in winter.



WOOD EAR
(Auricularia sp.)



Poetry Corner

"February is the closest thing we have to magic." — Unknown

The Elf and the Dormouse
by Oliver Herford

**Under a toadstool crept a wee Elf,
Out of the rain to shelter himself.**

**Under the toadstool, sound asleep,
Sat a big Dormouse all in a heap.**

**Trembled the wee Elf, frightened and yet
Fearing to fly away lest he get wet.**

**To the next shelter—maybe a mile!
Sudden the wee Elf smiled a wee smile.**

**Tugged till the toadstool toppled in two
Holding it over him, gaily he flew.**

**Soon he was safe home, dry as could be,
Soon woke the Dormouse—'Good gracious me!**

**'Where is my toadstool?' loud he lamented
—And that's how umbrellas first were invented.**



Little Things
By Ebenezer Cobham Brewer

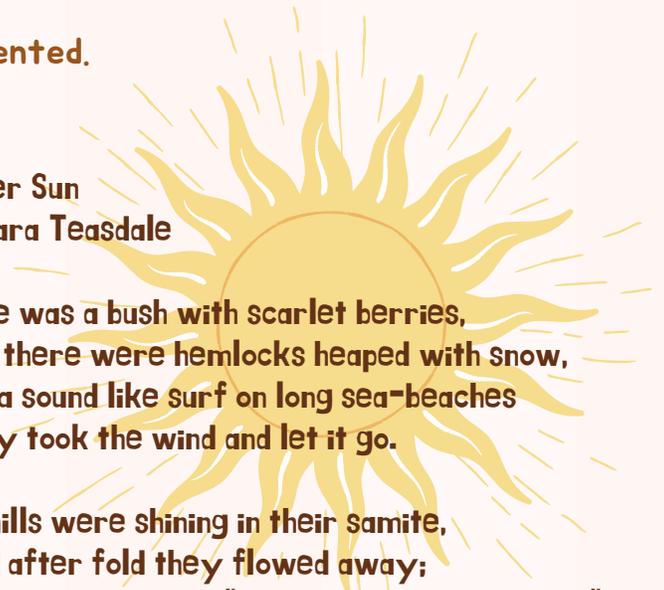
**Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.**

**Thus the little minutes,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity.**

Winter Sun
By Sara Teasdale

**There was a bush with scarlet berries,
And there were hemlocks heaped with snow,
With a sound like surf on long sea-beaches
They took the wind and let it go.**

**The hills were shining in their samite,
Fold after fold they flowed away;
"Let come what may," your eyes were saying,
At least we two have had to-day."**

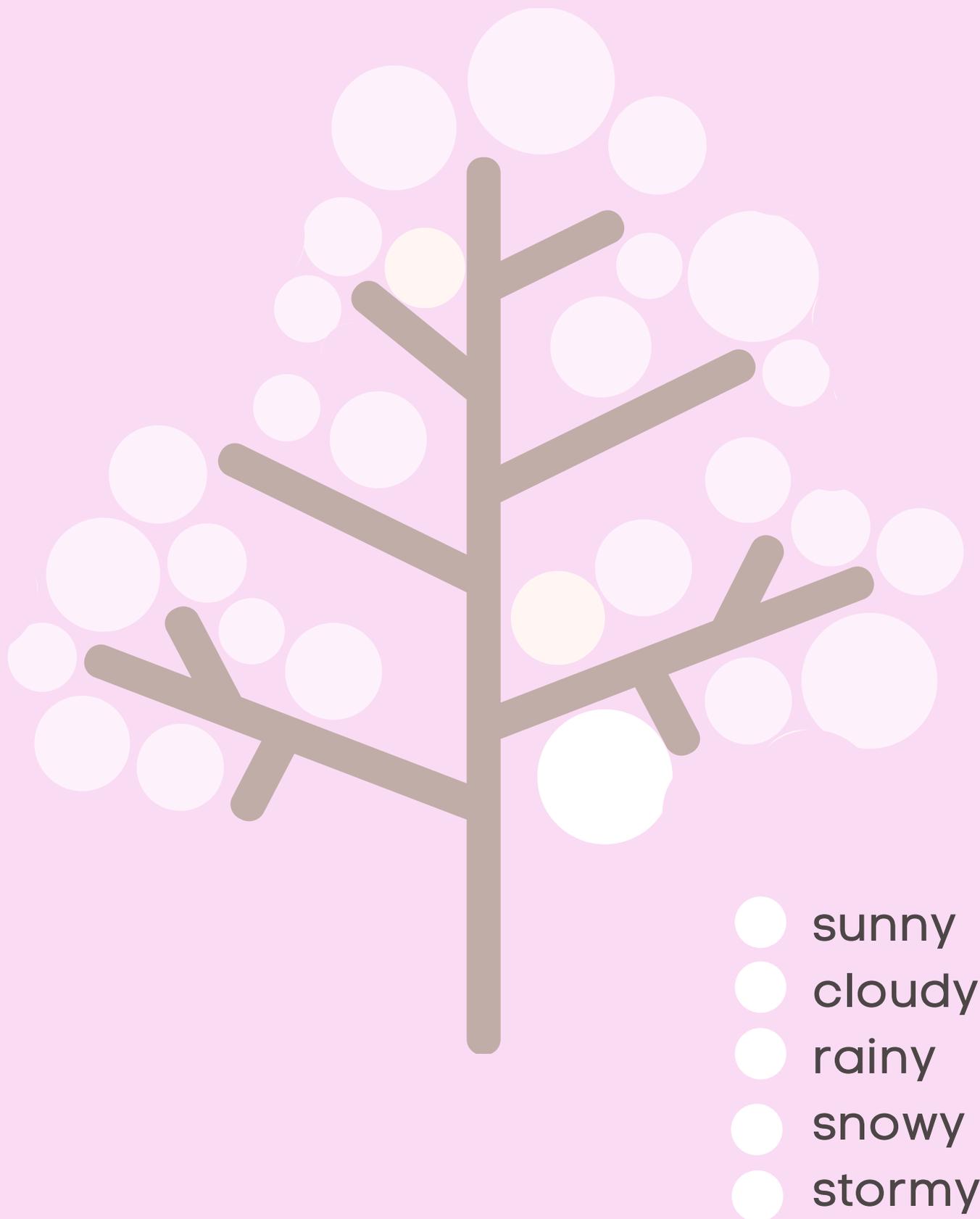


My Nature Journal

FEBRUARY



February Weather Tree



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 _____

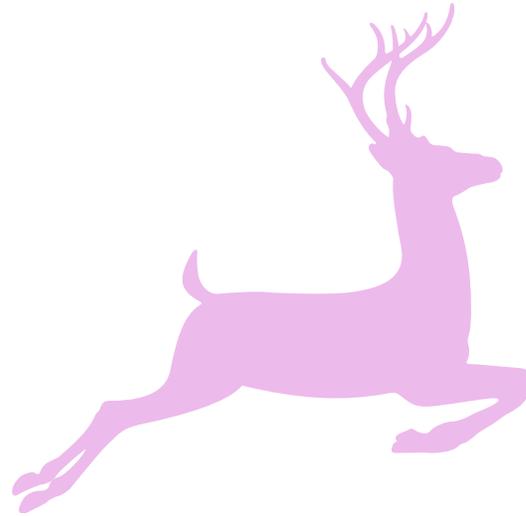
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.