

March 2024

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Invasive Plant
BINGO

March Nature
Photo Challenge

Foraging Suduko

Bird BINGO

Wild Kids Foraging
Board Game

Garlic Mustard and
Japanese Knotweed

Seasonal poetry, activities,
nature journal pages & more!



From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Happy March!

What are you hoping to do in nature this month?

March is usually a very snowy month here in Minnesota, but this winter we have had much different weather than in the past. It has been very warm and we hardly got any snow. We usually tap maple trees to boil down the sap into maple syrup in March, but the maple trees were already tapped in early February this year. We are not sure what to expect this month.

I'm excited to plant a new pollinator garden in our yard soon. Here in Minnesota we have a program called Lawns to Legumes that helps homeowners install plants and trees to help pollinators like bees and butterflies. There is a raffle you can enter to get some money to help buy the plants and our family was one of the ones chosen this year. Our yard is already very pollinator friendly but I am excited to get to expand it even more, to replace even more of our grass with native plants, and to get to talk to other homeowners who are doing the same.

Minnesota is one of several states that recently changed the laws so that cities have to let people grow these types of gardens and to let them grow tall, as long as they are managed (not just growing wild all over like grass you don't bother mowing). Florida passed a similar law recently, meaning neighborhoods can't make rules forbidding things like rain gardens and pollinator gardens. That's great news for nature and for nature-loving families!

If you have a yard you can plant in, you can see if there are ways you can make it more nature-friendly too. If not, there are still so many great ways to help nature and have fun in it.

I hope you have lots of wild adventures this month. Have a wonderful, wild March!

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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Contact: alicia.bayer@gmail.com

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

Go Wild in March

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Use a stick to write a nature haiku in the dirt or sand

Sit quietly somewhere & listen for 5 minutes to how many different nature sounds you can hear

Look up what wild edible plants can be foraged in the spring in your area and look for some

Look for four leaf clovers

Gather some softish rocks & try using them as chalk to write on larger rocks or your driveway

Go outside at dawn & dusk on the March equinox (the 20th) when the Sun will shine directly on the equator & there will be nearly equal amounts of day & night throughout the world

Find out what 5 native plants are where you live and pick your favorite

Look at the penumbral lunar eclipse on the 25th when the Moon passes through the Earth's partial shadow (the Moon will darken slightly but not completely)

Play in the mud

Watch a storm with your favorite grown up

Invasive Foraging Bingo!

How to Play: Head out into nature and see how many of these wild invasive plants you can find this year. You may find them in parks, woods or even in your own lawn. **Remember that a plant that is invasive in one place may not be considered invasive in another** but these are all plants that are invasive in much of the world and they are good to get to know. Make an x over the ones you spot and try to get a BINGO either across, down, or diagonally. Not all of these may be in your area and some of them may be very hard to find! Just challenge yourself to see how many you can locate. **All of these have uses of some sort -- for eating, medicine, food for livestock, etc. but can be harmful to the plants and animals in areas where they take over.**



FREE



Some of these may be known by other names where you live. We used common names here to save space but remember you'll be a much better forager if you learn latin names & common names!

Bird Bingo!

How to Play: Head out into nature and see how many birds you can find. You may be able to spot some from your windows inside or even from car windows (we see wild turkeys from the highway almost every time we drive to Sioux Falls!). Make an x over the ones you spot and try to get a BINGO either across, down, or diagonally. To make it a bigger challenge, try to get a blackout by marking off every square this year. Not all of these birds may be in your area, or they may only be in your area certain times of the year.



Robin



Swallow



Goose



Pheasant



Seagull



Sparrow



Eagle



Wren



Blue Jay



Crow



Woodpecker



Finch



FREE



Pigeon



Owl



Chickadee



Blackbird



Hawk



Heron



Oriole



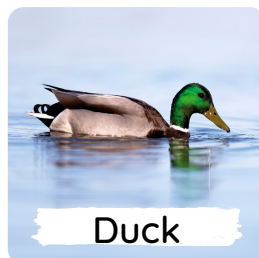
Vulture



Killdeer



Cardinal



Duck



Wild Turkey

The Wild Kids Foraging Game

Here's a fun foraging game to play together and learn a few wild plants!

Set up: Print out the game board, on card stock if you want a sturdier board. You can also laminate it or cover it with clear contact paper if you want it to last a little longer (or just make a copy each time).

Also print out the basket and the plant and mushroom icons to collect as you go.

Find a tiny pebble, a bean, a small shell, or other game piece to be each player's playing piece. Mark it with a color to tell whose is whose, if needed.

Goal: Work together to gather all 10 edible and medicinal plants and mushrooms that you need and get to the end of the trail together with them.

To play:

Roll one die (youngest player first). **For each turn, you can go forward or backwards the number you roll, or you can give the number you roll to another player and they can go forward or backward double that number.** For example, if Daisy rolls a 2, then she can go forward or backward 2 spaces, or she can give her roll to Max, who could go forward or backward 4 spaces.

Why would you give your roll to another player? This is a cooperative game, meaning all players are working together. **If any two players are ever more than 10 spaces from each other, then the player in front must go back to the start to look for everyone. Remember you want to stick together in the wild!** Everyone wins together by getting to the end of the trail with all 10 of the group's needed plants and mushrooms. You also might need someone to go back to pick up a plant that nobody landed on the first time.

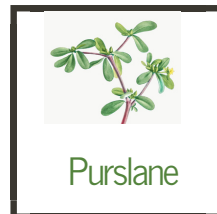
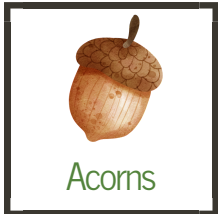
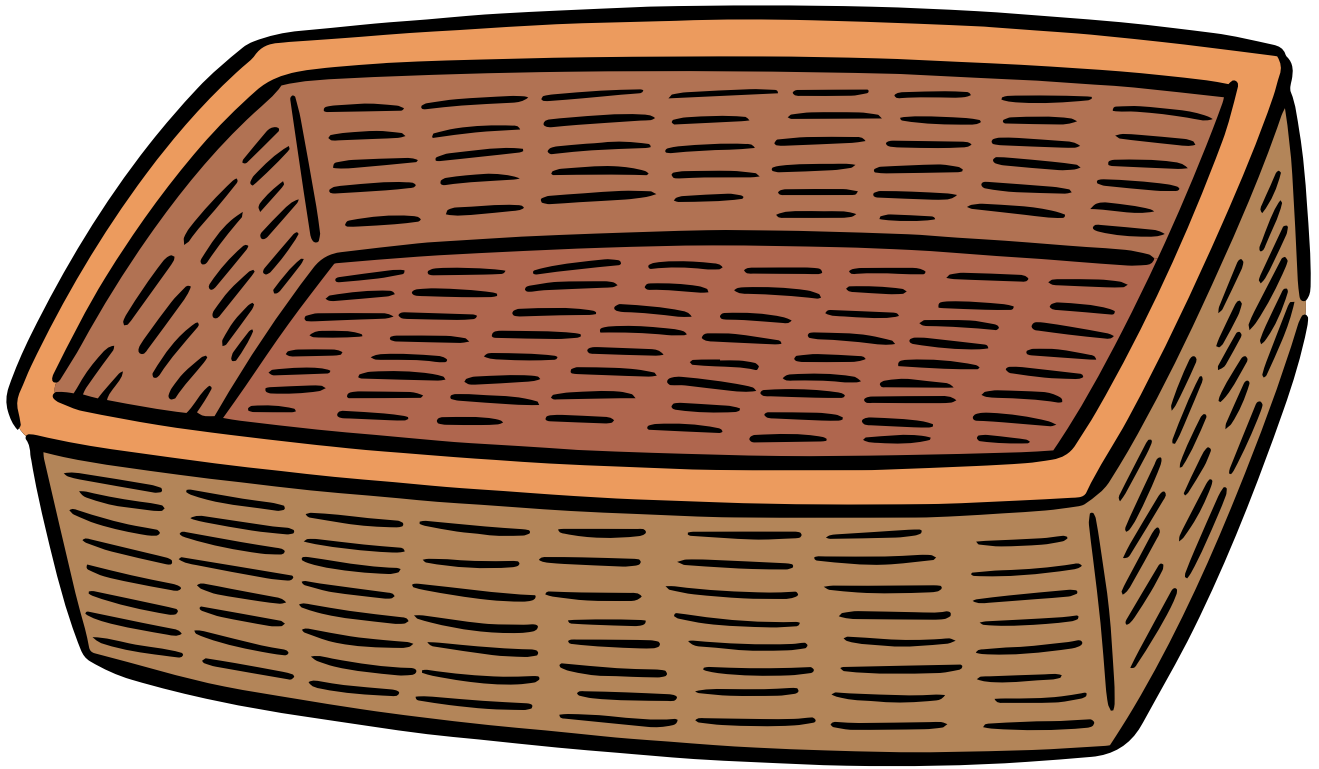
Your 10 plants and mushrooms to gather on this adventure:

elderberries raspberries jewelweed acorns oyster mushrooms
plantain nettles yarrow purslane chicken of the woods mushrooms

When you land on a space with that plant or mushroom, put the card for it in your group basket.

Always stay together as a group, never more than 10 spaces away from each other.

Winning: When all players have all 10 of their needed plants and mushrooms and get to the end of the trail together.



9



Rain starts - duck under a tree & skip a turn

Plantain

27



28 Found acorns! Gather some to leech and roast for flour

8



11 Lose your footing & go back 3 spaces

26

29

7

12

25



Ouch! Wasp sting- go back 2 spaces & find plantain to soothe it

30

6



Found oyster mushrooms. Gather some to saute for dinner



13

Forage raspberries & get energy - advance up to 6 spaces

24

31



Nettles! Pick some for soup - carefully to avoid the stings

5

14



Found jewelweed. Gather some for skin remedies

23



Found purslane. Pick some to nibble & for salads & sandwiches

32



4

Found elderberries! Gather some to dry for a flu remedy



15

Poison ivy - go back 1 space while you find & gather jewelweed

22

33

3

16

21



Found chicken of the woods. Gather some for dinner

34



Found yarrow. Gather some to use for wounds

2

17

20

35

Start

18 Find a shortcut - all players can advance together to 20



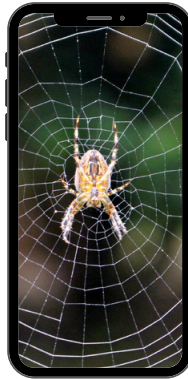
19

Finish

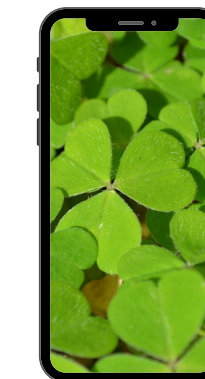
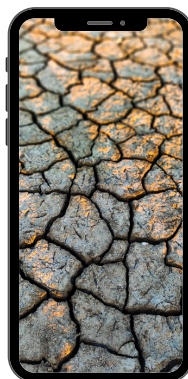
March

Nature Photo Challenge

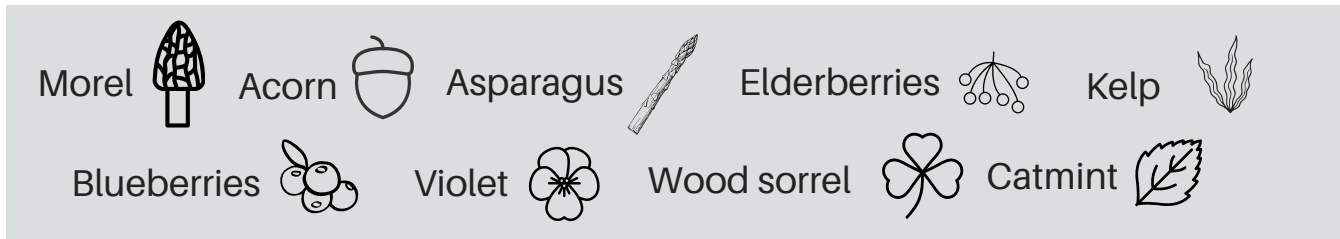
Try to head outside and take a picture each day with that day's prompt as an inspiration!









































- | | | | | | |
|----|--------|----|---------------|----|------------|
| 1 | Path | 11 | Living | 21 | Silhouette |
| 2 | Sky | 12 | Shiny | 22 | Edible |
| 3 | Sharp | 13 | Blue | 23 | Wet |
| 4 | Bird | 14 | Strange | 24 | Giant |
| 5 | Gray | 15 | Bumpy | 25 | Shadow |
| 6 | Cracks | 16 | Pattern | 26 | Many |
| 7 | Sunset | 17 | Green | 27 | Delicate |
| 8 | Tall | 18 | Tiny | 28 | Evening |
| 9 | Sign | 19 | Black & White | 29 | Fluffy |
| 10 | High | 20 | Symmetrical | 30 | Pointed |
| | | | | 31 | Ending |



Foraging Sudoku



The goal of Sudoku is usually to fill the cells with numbers from 1 to 9. In this case we have a plant or mushroom instead of a number. The same plant or mushroom can be used only once in each column, line and square. This is a good challenge for your brain and also helps you learn to draw simple common foraged items and learn to recognize them! The solution is on the back page.

March Poetry

The Flower

By Alfred Lord Tennyson

Once in a golden hour
I cast to earth a seed.
Up there came a flower,
The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went
Thro' my garden bower,
And muttering discontent
Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall
It wore a crown of light,
But thieves from o'er the wall
Stole the seed by night.

Sow'd it far and wide
By every town and tower,
Till all the people cried,
"Splendid is the flower!"

Read my little fable:
He that runs may read.
Most can raise the flowers now,
For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

A Widow's Weeds

By Walter De La Mare

A poor old Widow in her weeds
Sowed her garden with wild-flower seeds;
Not too shallow, and not too deep,
And down came April - drip - drip - drip.
Up shone May, like gold, and soon
Green as an arbour grew leafy June.
And now all summer she sits and sews
Where willow herb, comfrey, bugloss blows,
Teasle and pansy, meadowsweet,
Campion, toadflax, and rough hawksbit;
Brown bee orchis, and Peals of Bells;
Clover, burnet, and thyme she smells;
Like Oberon's meadows her garden is
Drowsy from dawn to dusk with bees.
Weeps she never, but sometimes sighs,
And peeps at her garden with bright brown eyes;
And all she has is all she needs -
A poor Old Widow in her weeds.

The Tuft of Kelp

By Herman Melville

All dripping in tangles green,
Cast up by a lonely sea,
If purer for that, O Weed,
Bitterer, too, are ye?



GARLIC MUSTARD

(*Alliaria petiolata*)

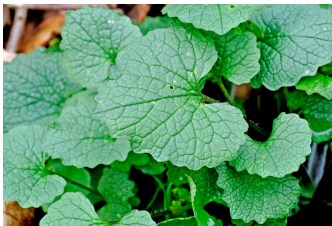
By Daryl Hrdlicka



Garlic mustard is an invasive plant found through much of the United States.

Originally found in Europe, it was introduced to the U.S. in the mid-1800s for food, medicinal purposes and erosion control. It's a member of the Brassica family, which includes cabbage, broccoli, kale, turnips, radishes, horseradish and more. It's called garlic mustard because the leaves have a garlic smell when crushed, which is one of the easiest ways to identify it.

The leaves are triangular heart-shaped, with toothed edges. The early-spring flowers are white with 4 petals. It has a biennial (two-year) life cycle. In its first year, it forms a low rosette of leaves on the ground. In its second year, it grows taller and produces flowers, and the leaves become more pointed.

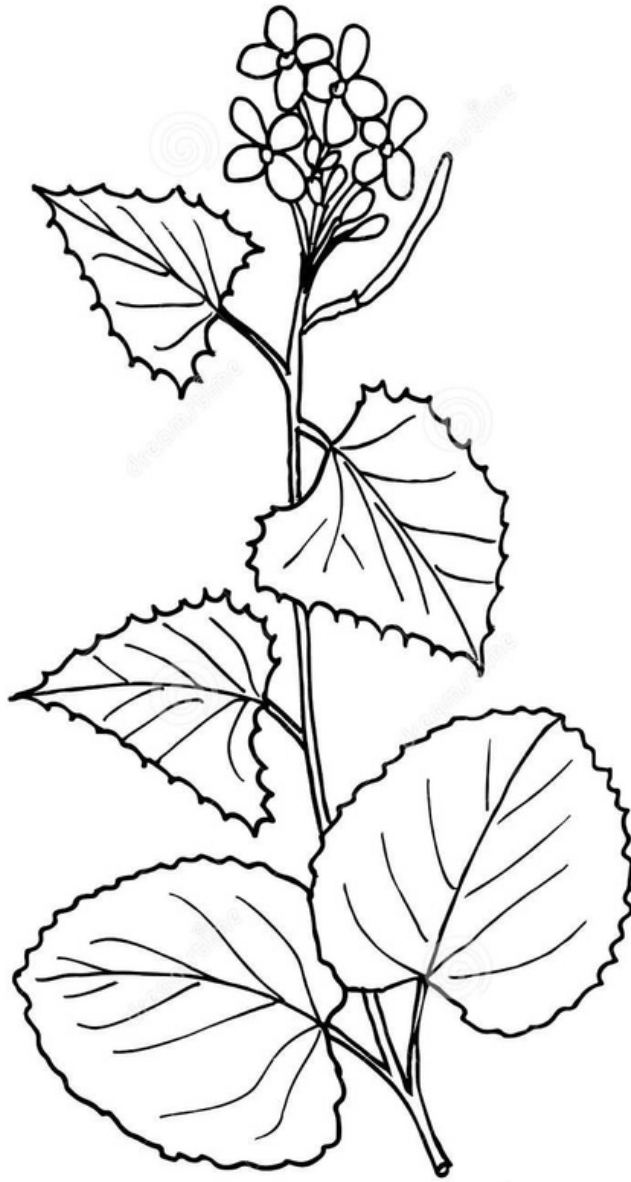


Garlic mustard is edible and is one of the oldest known spices in Europe. Traces of it have been found on pottery fragments in Germany dating back to 4,000 BCE! Today the chopped leaves are used in salads and sauces, most commonly pesto. The roots taste like mild horseradish. The seeds are sometimes used as a seasoning in France. Medicinally, it was used as a disinfectant and diuretic, and was sometimes used to treat wounds.

It's a useful plant, but unfortunately it can completely take over fields, forests, and underbrush, out-competing native plants because it emerges earlier in the spring and its roots release chemicals that affect the soil fungi, changing the biosphere. The best way to remove it is manually, by hand. You have to be careful, because if any of the root remains, it can grow back.

A good time to remove garlic mustard is after it rains, when it's easier to remove the tap root. Otherwise, use a long trowel. You'll need to dig deep to remove it. Try to pull them before they go to seed. If you pull it after it seeds, you may end up spreading it more. Do not compost garlic mustard that you pull, or you will spread it even more.

GARLIC MUSTARD
(*Alliaria petiolata*)



JAPANESE KNOTWEED

(*Polygonum cuspidatum*)

Japanese knotweed is a plant that really knows how to take care of itself! It can be a terrible problem for people and for other plants, because it grows so much and is very hard to get rid of. It grows up to three feet in a month and it can grow right through concrete and roads.



That doesn't mean it doesn't have good qualities though. It is edible and a lot of people really like cooking with it. It also has a lot of medicinal benefits. One famous herbalist even called it the most medicinal plant on the planet. Some people also use it in treatments of Lyme disease. It is also good for feeding animals like cows and horses.

Japanese knotweed tastes like a little bit like rhubarb. It is kind of lemony and crunchy. People use it in sweet recipes for syrups, crumbles, cakes and sauces, and also like a vegetable and even pickle it.



You can probably figure out from the name that Japanese knotweed is originally from Japan. It is now considered one of the most invasive plants in the world, including in Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand.

That means you can feel good about removing it and using it!

Most people who forage Japanese knotweed pick the young shoots in the spring. They are better peeled, and then you can chop them and use them in lots of recipes.

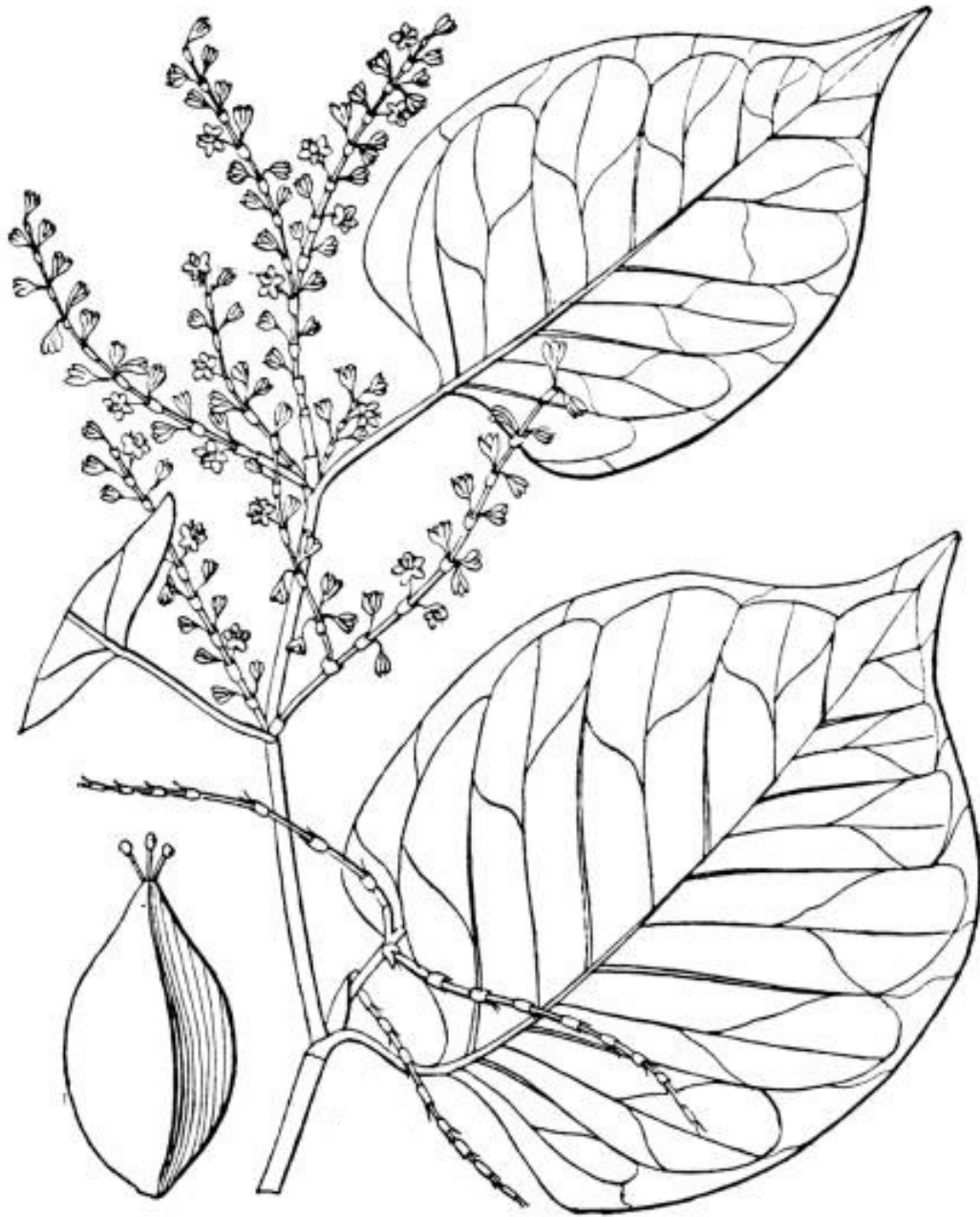


Be careful not to compost any part of Japanese knotweed that you don't use because it will grow from just tiny pieces that you might discard.

Remember that invasive plants are often sprayed with herbicides. Always be sure to gather plants that have not been treated with chemicals and that you have permission to gather even invasive species.

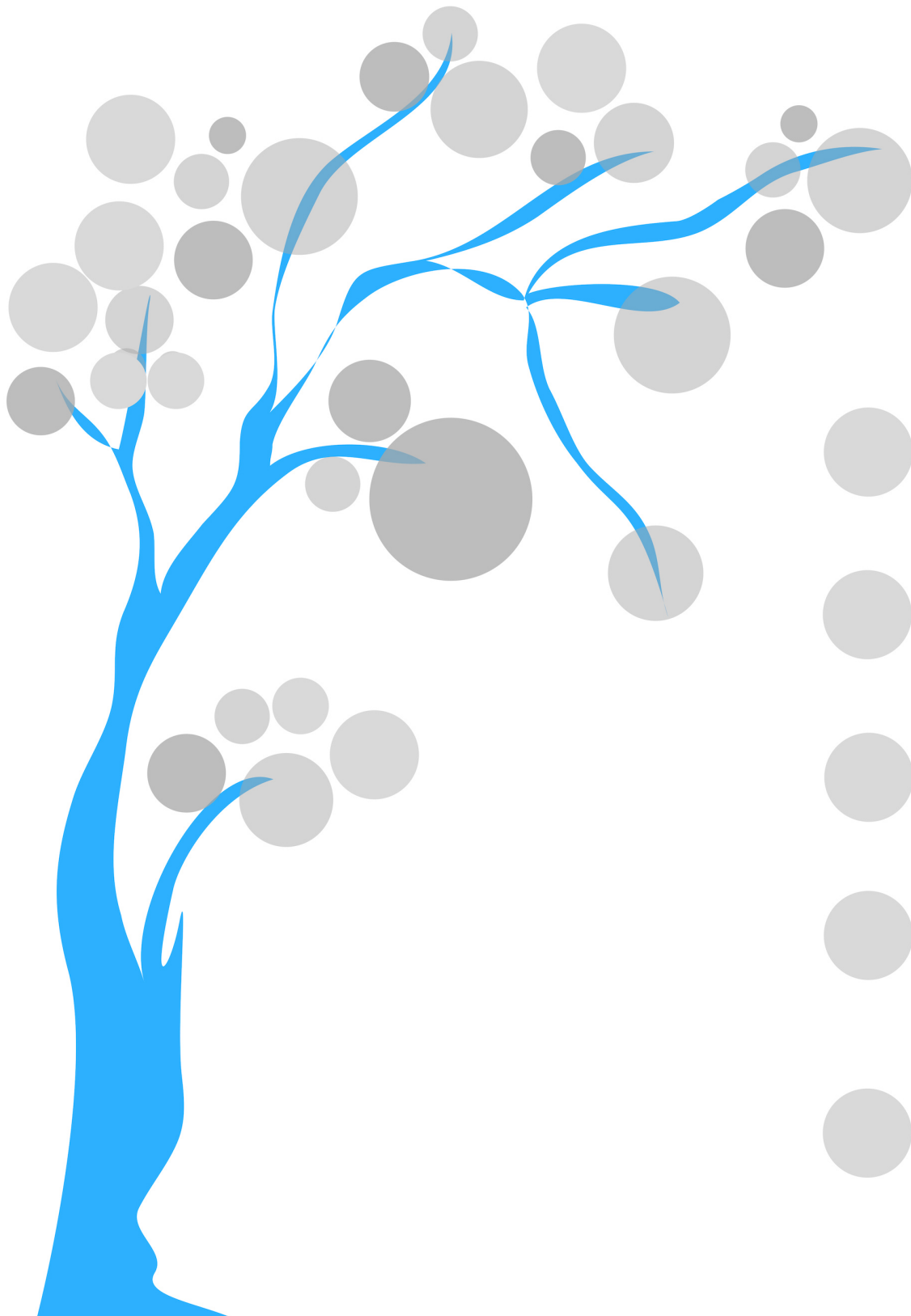
JAPANESE KNOTWEED

(*Polygonum cuspidatum*)



March Weather

Directions: Designate one color for each type of weather.
Color a leaf with one or two colors each day to show that day's weather.



Key

-  sunny
-  cloudy
-  rainy
-  snowy
-  windy/
stormy

My Nature Journal

March



Phenology Calendar

March 2024

Make a note or draw a picture of nature happenings --
first birds, flowers, weather notes & other signs of changing seasons



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						

March Bird List

Birds spotted this month

March Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

March 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 Sketches & Observations

Week 2 Sketches & Observations

Week 3 Sketches & Observations

Week 4 Sketches & Observations

MY FORAGING GUIDE FOR:

GENERAL SKETCH OF THE PLANT

CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS

LATIN NAME _____

WHERE FOUND _____

PARTS USED _____

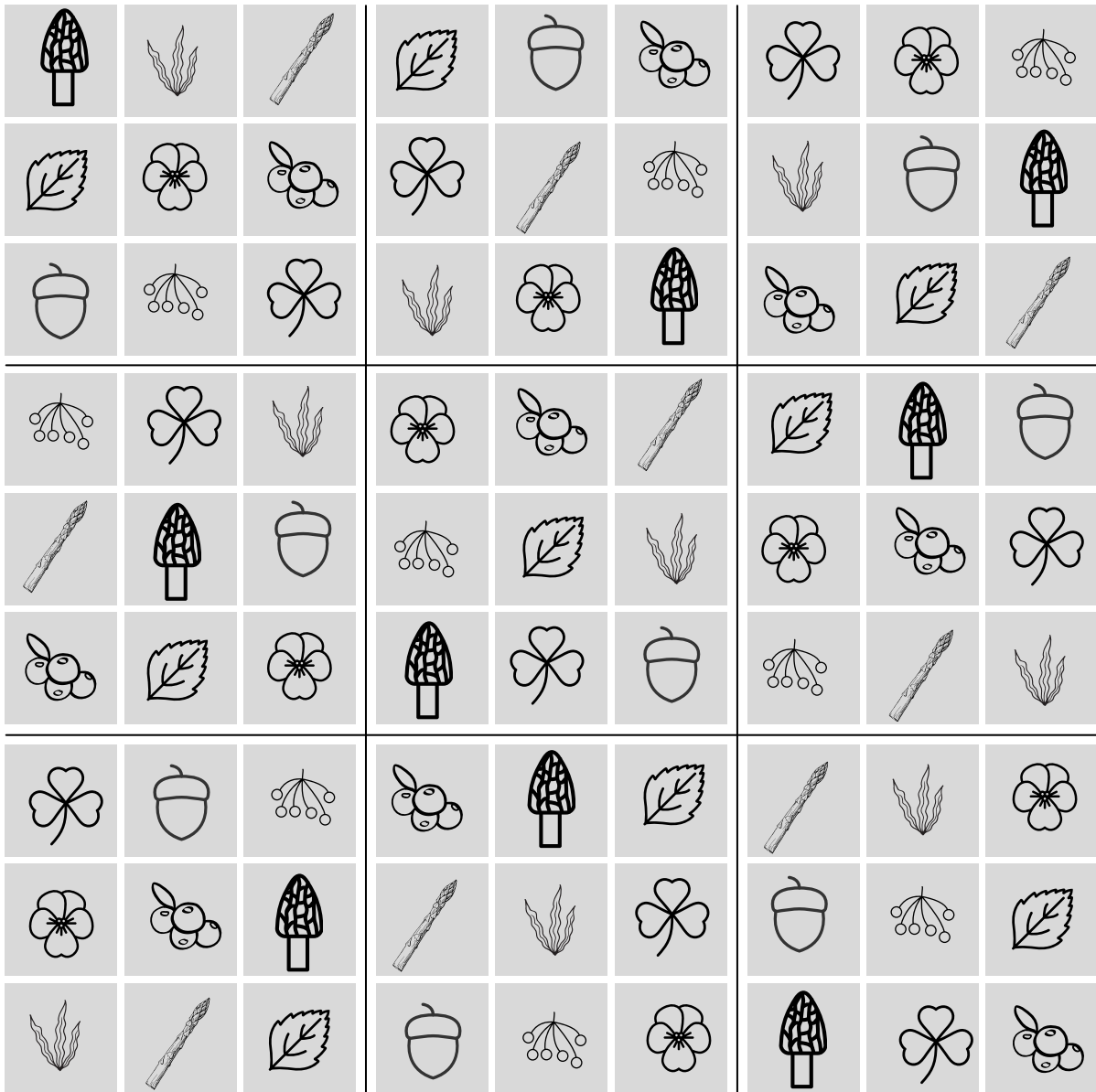
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.