

June 2024

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

**Make Inky Cap  
Mushroom Ink**

**Dyeing with  
Dame's Rocket**

**June Critter  
Challenge**

**Watch Out for  
Wisteria**

**June Phenology  
Wheel**

**Plus seasonal  
poems, activities,  
nature journal pages  
& more**



# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

*Welcome June!*

What is your favorite month? June is my very favorite month of the year, mostly because of my garden. I have so many flowers blooming this month -- shrub roses, lilies, cranesbill, dayflowers, columbine, yarrow, peonies, elderflowers, phlox and so many more. It is usually great weather for being outside too, so we can do lots of hiking, boating, foraging, rock hunting, gardening and exploring.

This year I am excited about a new project I'm working on that was funded by a grant from the Minnesota State Arts Board. I am writing a book of wild art materials you can make with wild and foraged materials, and I'll be doing lots of fun, free workshops in our community. I'll be teaching kids and their grown ups how to do things like make charcoal from grapevine cuttings, paint from crushed rocks, color changing ink from elderberries, and lots more. In this month's Wild Kids, we are making ink from inky cap mushrooms, which is really fun (and a tiny bit stinky!). I'll try to include most of my art projects here in Wild Kids so you can follow along!

Our 17 year old son Alex is off on his own wild adventure next month. He was hired for Minnesota Conservation Corps to be part of a group of teens who will live in the wilderness and spend 5 weeks helping our state parks by doing things like pulling invasive weeds, cutting down trees, repairing stone walls, and so on. He loves being outside and he's very excited. We'll miss him but we're excited for him too.

What are you hoping to do in nature this month? I hope you have a wonderful wild month!

*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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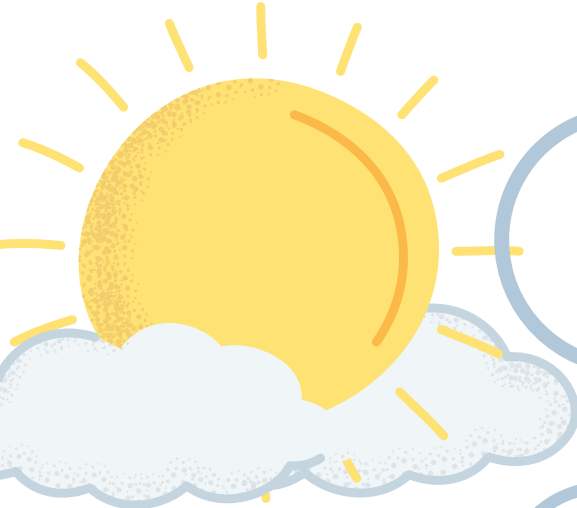
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Contact: [aliciabayer@gmail.com](mailto:aliciabayer@gmail.com)

Find past issues and more at [www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids](http://www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids).

# Go Wild in June

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



Grab a friend and play nature memory -- gather about 10 natural items like a feather, flower and pine cone, and lay them out, then close your eyes and have your partner remove one item at a time -- can you remember what's missing?

Go camping in your back yard

Lay natural items on a dark or bright piece of construction paper and leave it in the sun, then remove the items the next day to reveal their design

Start a sketch journal (even in an old notebook) of plants and flowers you find

Practice making a safe campfire with your family and then cook something over it

Look for inky cap mushrooms and make ink (we have directions in this issue)

Try to get pictures of as many different types of bugs as you can find this month

Try to include a foraged ingredient in one meal a week, like lambs quarters, wild mint, walking onions or mulberries

Put a hula hoop or rope circle on the ground and count how many different living things you can find inside it

Find a field & look for four leaf clovers -- if you find one, press it between the pages of a book to preserve it

# Make Inky Cap Mushroom Ink!



Inky cap mushrooms are called that because their caps dissolve into black ink! In the past, people used the ink to write letters and do art.



Inky cap mushrooms (*Coprinopsis atramentaria*) are very common and can be found in fields and lawns throughout Europe and North America, especially after a few days of rain.



You can make your own inky cap mushroom ink by collecting some of the mushroom caps in a jar and letting it sit on the counter for about a day. Within a couple of hours it will start to turn into liquid! Strain the "juice" through a strainer into a jar.



Warning-- it could also be called Stinky Cap mushroom because it is smelly after a day! You can add a couple of drops of essential oil to make it smell a bit better. Don't worry -- your finished art will not be smelly once it dries.



Use your ink to write letters, practice cursive with a quill pen, or to do art. Have fun!

# June Critter Challenge

**How many can you find?** See how many you can check off this month.  
Make it a photo challenge if like photography, or draw them in a nature journal.  
If some aren't in your area, look for something to substitute.



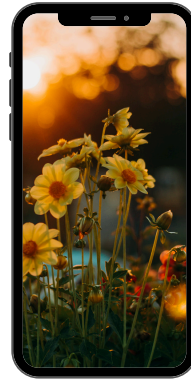
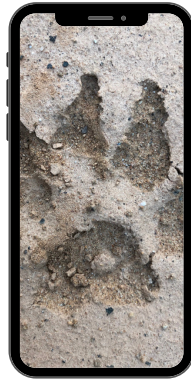
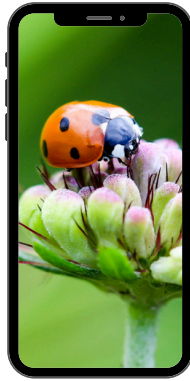
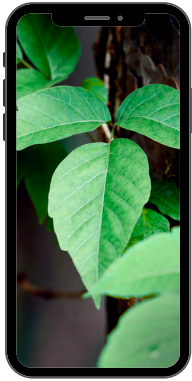
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ladybug  | <input type="checkbox"/> Bigger than a dime               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moth   | <input type="checkbox"/> Black bug                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shiny  | <input type="checkbox"/> Snail                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cricket  | <input type="checkbox"/> Carrying something               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Orange bug                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cicada                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grasshopper                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Red bug                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blue bug                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Fly                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Caterpillar                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Butterfly                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Striped bug                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Metallic bug                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Roly poly (sow bug)                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Firefly                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ant  | <input type="checkbox"/> Praying mantis                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camouflaged bug                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Slug                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dragonfly                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Centipede                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Multicolored bug                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Green bug                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wasp   | <input type="checkbox"/> Spider                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spotted bug                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Eating a plant leaf              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mosquito                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Worm                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Swimming in/on water                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bumblebee                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A really pretty or cool bug<br>(Draw it below) | <input type="checkbox"/> Invent a bug!<br>(Draw it below) |



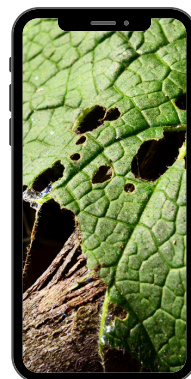
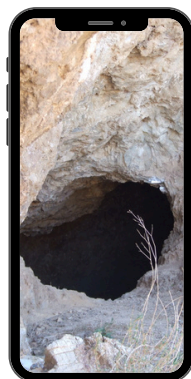
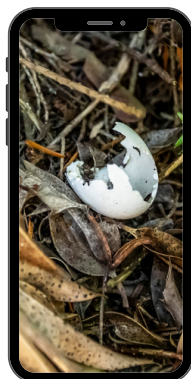
# JUNE

## Nature Photo Challenge

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



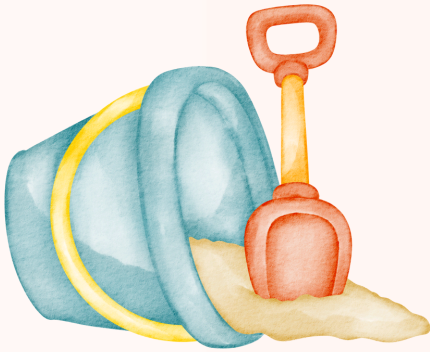
- |    |           |    |               |    |             |
|----|-----------|----|---------------|----|-------------|
| 1  | Three     | 11 | Hidden        | 21 | Spiky       |
| 2  | Sky       | 12 | Dark          | 22 | Invasive    |
| 3  | Round     | 13 | Blue          | 23 | Broken      |
| 4  | Abandoned | 14 | Insect        | 24 | Strong      |
| 5  | Bud       | 15 | Hole          | 25 | Shadow      |
| 6  | Wet       | 16 | Dirty         | 26 | Rocky       |
| 7  | Striped   | 17 | Impression    | 27 | Fragile     |
| 8  | Slow      | 18 | Big           | 28 | Eaten       |
| 9  | Pink      | 19 | Black & White | 29 | Colorful    |
| 10 | Soft      | 20 | Symmetrical   | 30 | Transparent |



# Poems for June

At the Seaside  
by Robert Louis Stevenson

When I was down beside the sea  
A wooden spade they gave to me  
To dig the sandy shore.  
My holes were empty like a cup,  
In every hole the sea came up,  
Till it could come no more.



Warm Summer Sun  
By Mark Twain

Warm summer sun,  
Shine kindly here,  
Warm southern wind,  
Blow softly here.  
Green sod above,  
Lie light, lie light.  
Good night, dear heart,  
Good night, good night.

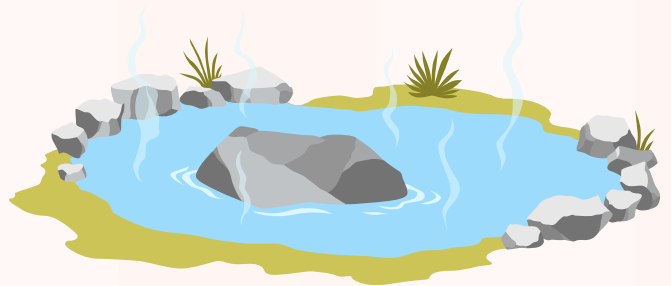


The Birds' Bath  
Evaleen Stein

In our garden we have made  
Such a pretty little pool,  
Lined with pebbles neatly laid,  
Filled with water clean and cool.

When the sun shines warm and high  
Robins cluster round its brink,  
Never one comes flying by  
But will flutter down to drink.

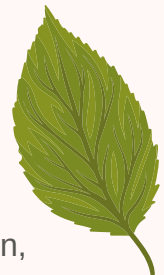
Then they splash and splash and splash,  
Spattering little showers bright  
All around, till off they flash  
Singing sweetly their delight.



The Beech Tree  
by Rose Fyleman

I'd like to have a garden  
With a beech tree on the lawn;  
The little birds that lived there  
Would wake me up at dawn.

And in the summer weather  
When all the leaves were green,  
I'd sit beneath the beech boughs  
And see the sky between.





# WATCH OUT FOR WISTERIA

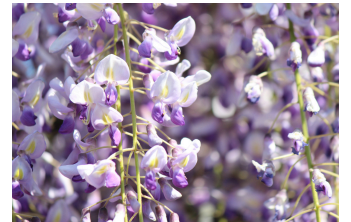
Wisteria is a beautiful flowering vine that a lot of people have planted in their gardens. Most of the wisteria in the United States is non-native, from China or Japan, and it is considered an invasive plant in many places.

## Wisteria is beautiful but it can cause a lot of problems!

For one thing, all parts of it except the flowers are toxic (poisonous) and as little as two seeds can kill a child! Wisteria is an excellent example of the fact that we often have far more dangerous plants in our yards and gardens than we find in the wild. Lily of the Valley and foxglove are two other common garden flowers that are very poisonous.

Wisteria is also very aggressive and it can cause a lot of damage. Ecosystem Gardening says it's on their Most Hated Invasive Plants list. "One of my neighbors across the street has this plant in his yard. Not only is it pulling down the arbor in his yard, it is spreading its runners throughout the neighborhood, even poking its head up through the dirt floor basements in every house on that side of the street. Needless to say, my neighbors are not happy. This plant is sprouting up everywhere, pulling down fences, arbors, backyard sheds, and even some buildings in its path."

There are native wisteria plants that do not cause problems. Here is a handy graphic from Bugwood.org to tell the difference.



### #KNOWTHEDIFFERENCE

Exotic wisterias will readily hybridize with each other and are difficult to distinguish. Native wisteria will not hybridize with exotics and maintains a lower profile.

<div style="text-align: center; background-color: white; color: black; font-weight: bold; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">INVASIVE</div> <p style="font-size: x-small; text-align: center; margin: 0;"><b>exotic wisterias</b> (<i>Wisteria sinensis</i>, <i>W. floribunda</i>, hybrids)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very aggressive growth- climbs up to 40 ft. in height;</li> <li>Seed pods velvety, covered in short hairs;</li> <li>Less cold-tolerant, blooming in Spring typically;</li> <li>Clusters of flowers growing to 20 in. in length.</li> </ul>	<div style="text-align: center; background-color: white; color: black; font-weight: bold; padding: 2px; margin-bottom: 5px;">NATIVE</div> <p style="font-size: x-small; text-align: center; margin: 0;"><b>American wisteria</b> (<i>Wisteria frutescens</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will climb, but has more shrub-like growth tendency;</li> <li>Seed pods smooth and hairless;</li> <li>Blooms slightly later in year (June-July); will sometimes bloom again in fall;</li> <li>Clusters of flowers are shorter, rounder, more compact (shaped like a pine cone).</li> </ul>
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**EDD Maps**  
find • map • track



# ASIATIC WISTERIA

(*Wisteria sinensis* and *Wisteria floribunda*)



# Dyeing with Dame's Rocket

By Daryl Hrdlicka

Dame's Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*) is a beautiful but invasive non-native plant that you'll see in ditches all over the United States. In late spring, it blooms from purple to white. It resembles Wild Blue Phlox (*Phlox divaricata*), but has only 4 petals instead of 5.

It was originally brought over to North America from Eurasia in the 1500s as a garden plant, but has since spread everywhere. It is also commonly included in wildflower seed packs. It is edible though! The young leaves can be eaten in salads or cooked, and are high in Vitamin C. The tender shoots can be cooked and eaten, and the flowers are spicy and bright.

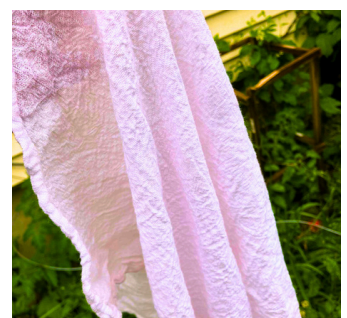
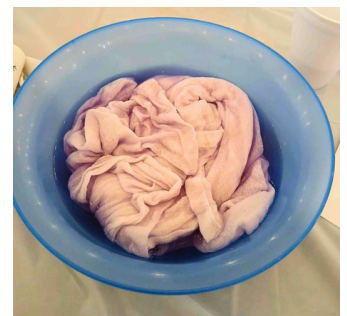
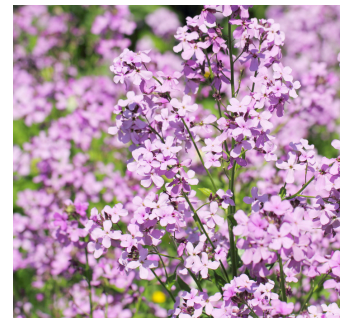
The flowers can also be used another way -- as a natural dye! To use them as a dye, pick a large amount of flowers (not leaves), put them in a metal pot, and cover them with water. It should be roughly equal amounts of flowers and water. Simmer it over a low heat for an hour and then let it sit overnight.

In the morning, strain out the flowers and save the lovely purple dye. Now you're ready to use it! Natural fibers like cotton work best for natural dyes, like a cotton tea towel.

Pour your dye into a bowl so it's about 3" deep and then add your towel or shirt. Swish it around thoroughly so the dye soaks in completely. Let it sit for 10 minutes or so. You can let it soak longer for a deeper color.

Next you'll need to add a "mordant", which is a chemical that binds the dye to the fibers so the color won't wash off. A simple one to use is standard white vinegar.

Pour it into the bowl of dye and watch it change to a lovely fuschia color as it reacts. That's it! The color should be locked in. Let it sit for 10-15 minutes and then wring it out. You can hang it to dry or put it in a dryer.



DAME'S ROCKET  
(*Hesperis matronalis*)

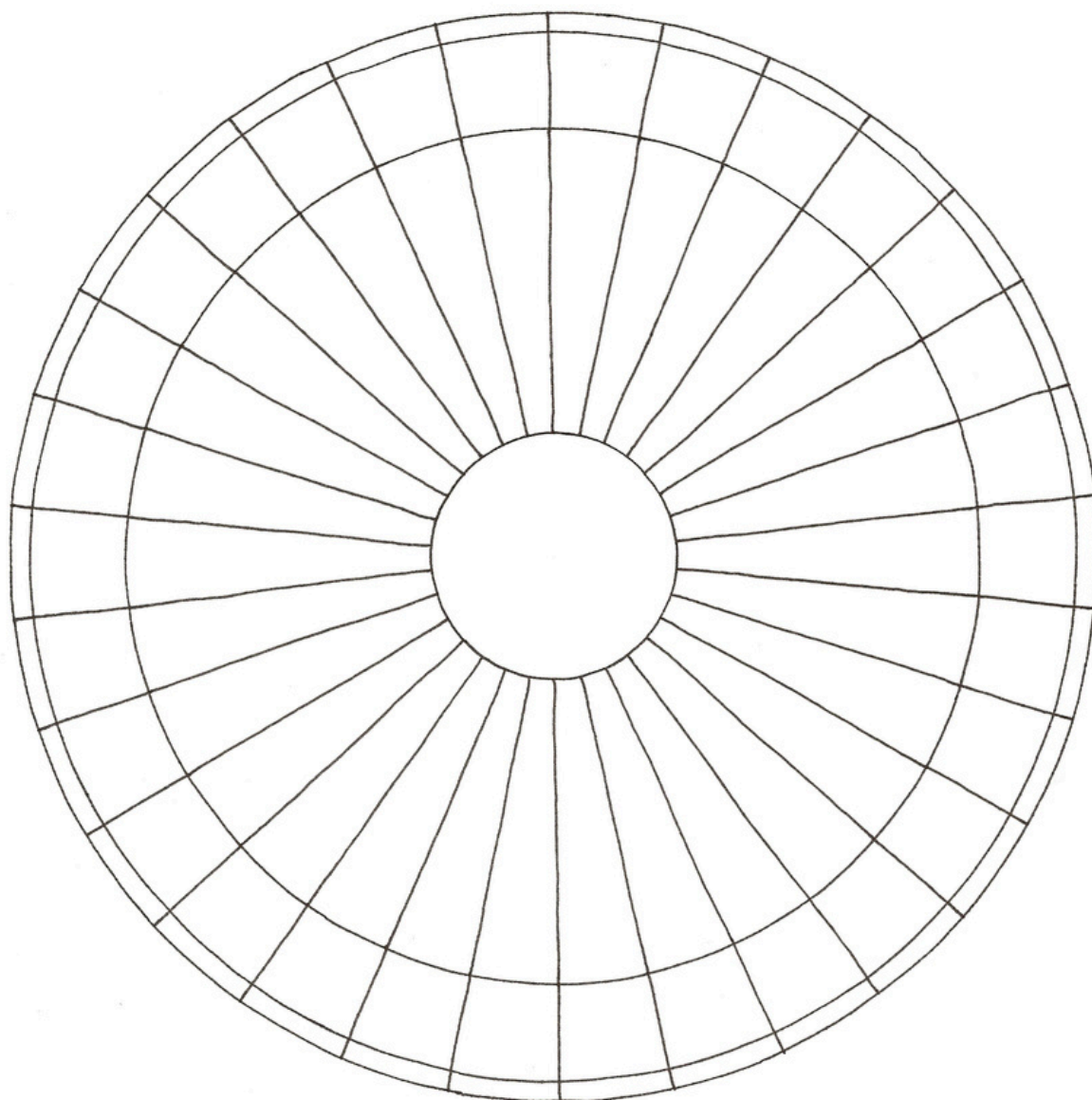


# JUNE PHENOLOGY

Make a picture record of your observations in nature this month!

Draw, paint or color things you notice in nature each day --

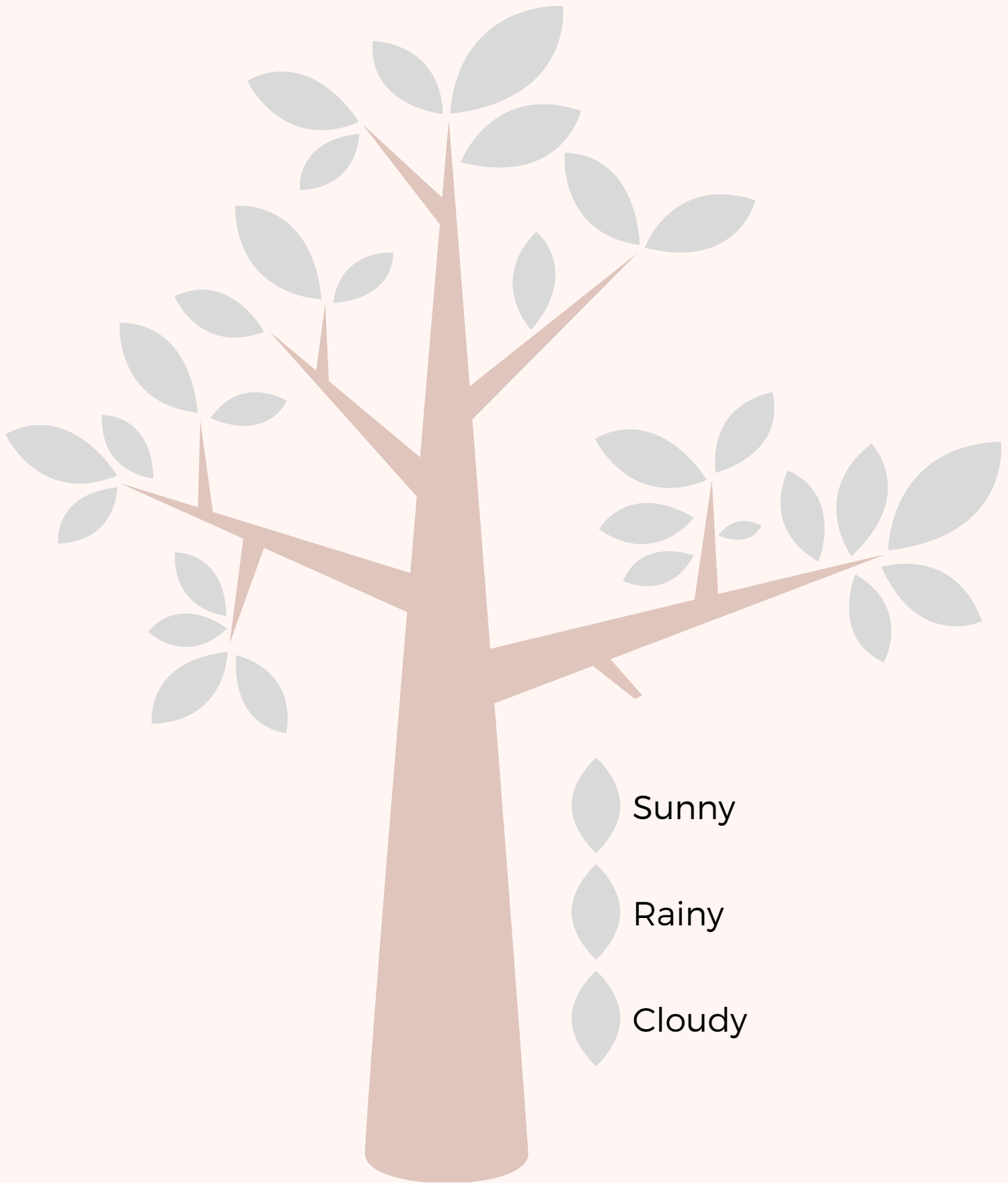
Flowers blooming, butterflies spotted, thunderstorms, garden seedlings poking up...  
Start with day 1 in the first wedge and go all around the wheel with your observations.



My Nature Journal

June

# June Weather Tree



# June Bird List

Birds spotted this month

# June Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

# JUNE 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:

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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](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)