

July 2024

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



**Mushroom
Spore Print
Log**

**Painting with
Asiatic
Dayflowers**

**Tansy to Keep
the Bugs Away**

**2024 Summer
Foraging BINGO**

July Phenology Calendar

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

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Hello July!

What is the weather like where you live right now?

Here in Minnesota and neighboring states, we've had a lot of wild weather lately. Towns all around us were badly flooded, and the roads all around were closed. Some of our friends were evacuated from their homes, and many people had damage to their houses. I was in Nebraska with our two youngest kids the whole time and watched it from there. It was over 100 degrees and dry where we were. We still have a lot of flooding in our area though, and our oldest daughter now has a "lakehouse," since the field behind it has been completely flooded ever since. The local communities have been great about coming together and helping protect houses and people from the flooding, and our local agencies have also done a great job keeping everyone safe and dealing with the chaos.

Have you had any wild weather lately? Be sure to talk to your family about what to do in case of weather emergencies to stay safe!

This month, our 17 year-old son Alex is leaving for Minnesota Conservation Corps, where he'll camp out and work with other kids in state parks around the state. It will be hard work but he's really excited about it. He'll be gone for five weeks and we'll miss him, but we're also looking forward to hearing all his stories when he gets back. He also will earn a nice paycheck and some great experience, and he will hopefully meet some great new friends who also love nature the way he does. One of our grown kids is in New Mexico this month, too, so it will be quieter here. I'm sure we'll stay busy with gardening, hiking, foraging, boating, swimming, and all the other wonderful things (and all the work!) we get to do this time of year.

This month I am hoping to do a lot of wild art experimentation, too. Some of the things on my list are making charcoal sticks from willow cuttings, making Asiatic dayflower ink, making paint from crushed rocks, finding natural clay, making invisible ink with wild grapes and a few other fun projects. I'll share some of the results in upcoming issues!

I hope you have a wild, healthy, happy July!

Alicia

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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.

10 Fun Ways to Learn & Play in Nature in July



Take a picture of a different bug each day this month

Whistle with a blade of grass & then try to play a song with it

Start a mushroom spore print log (we have pages in this issue)

Next time it storms, count the seconds between thunder and lightning to figure out how far away it is (every 5 seconds is one mile)

Spend a few minutes on a sunny day watching to see how many pollinators visit three different kinds of flowers -- which one is most popular?

Fill plastic bottles with water from 3 different sites near you like lakes, rivers or even puddles & label them, then wait a day and see what settles & how they look different

Try to learn to ID ten new birds, flowers, mushrooms, bugs, rocks or other parts of nature in your area

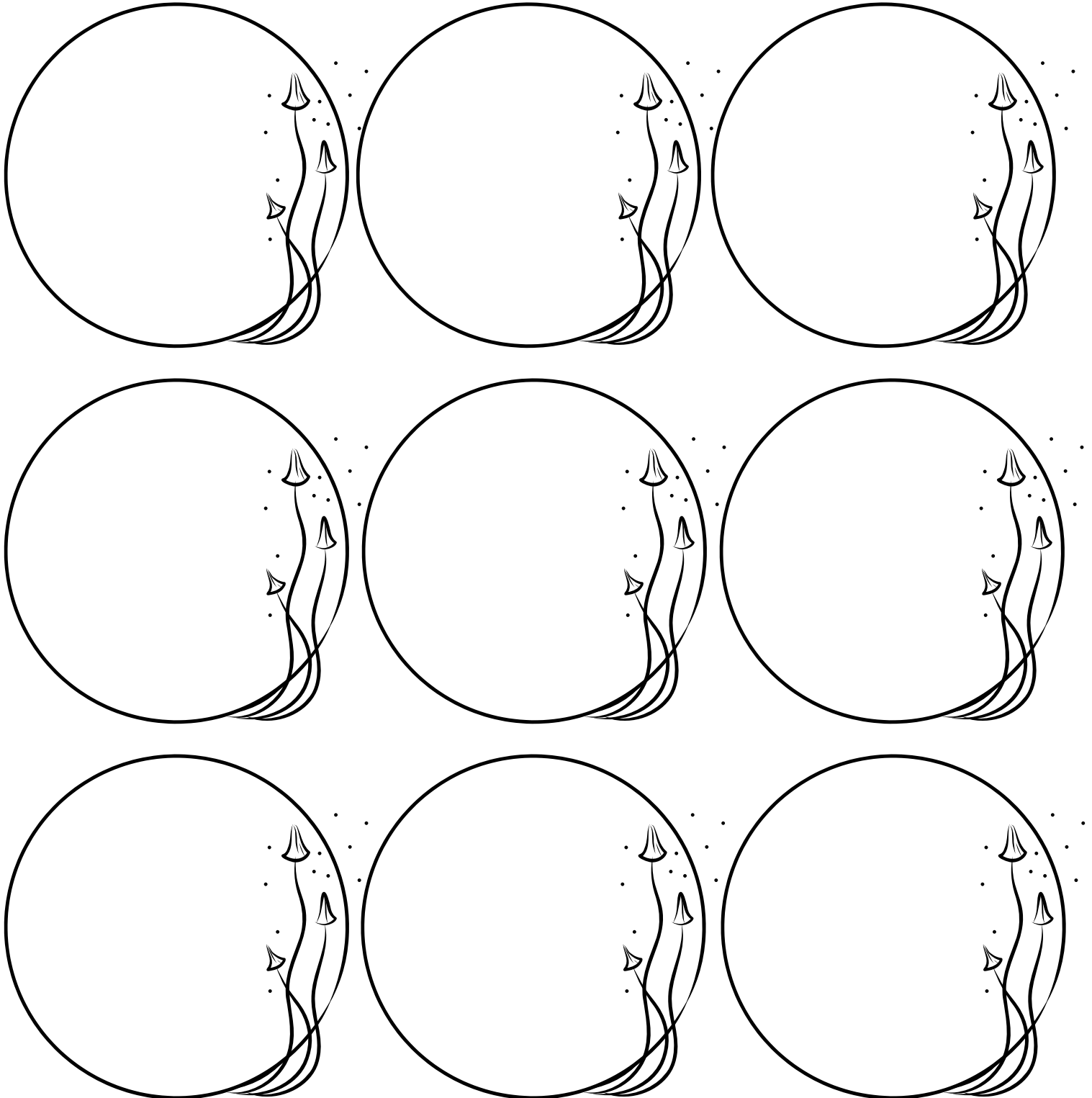
Try to make the tallest sand (or dirt) castle you can

Pull some invasive plants like bindweed or Japanese honeysuckle and try to find something cool to do with them

Write a letter to one of your local representatives about a nature cause that is important to you

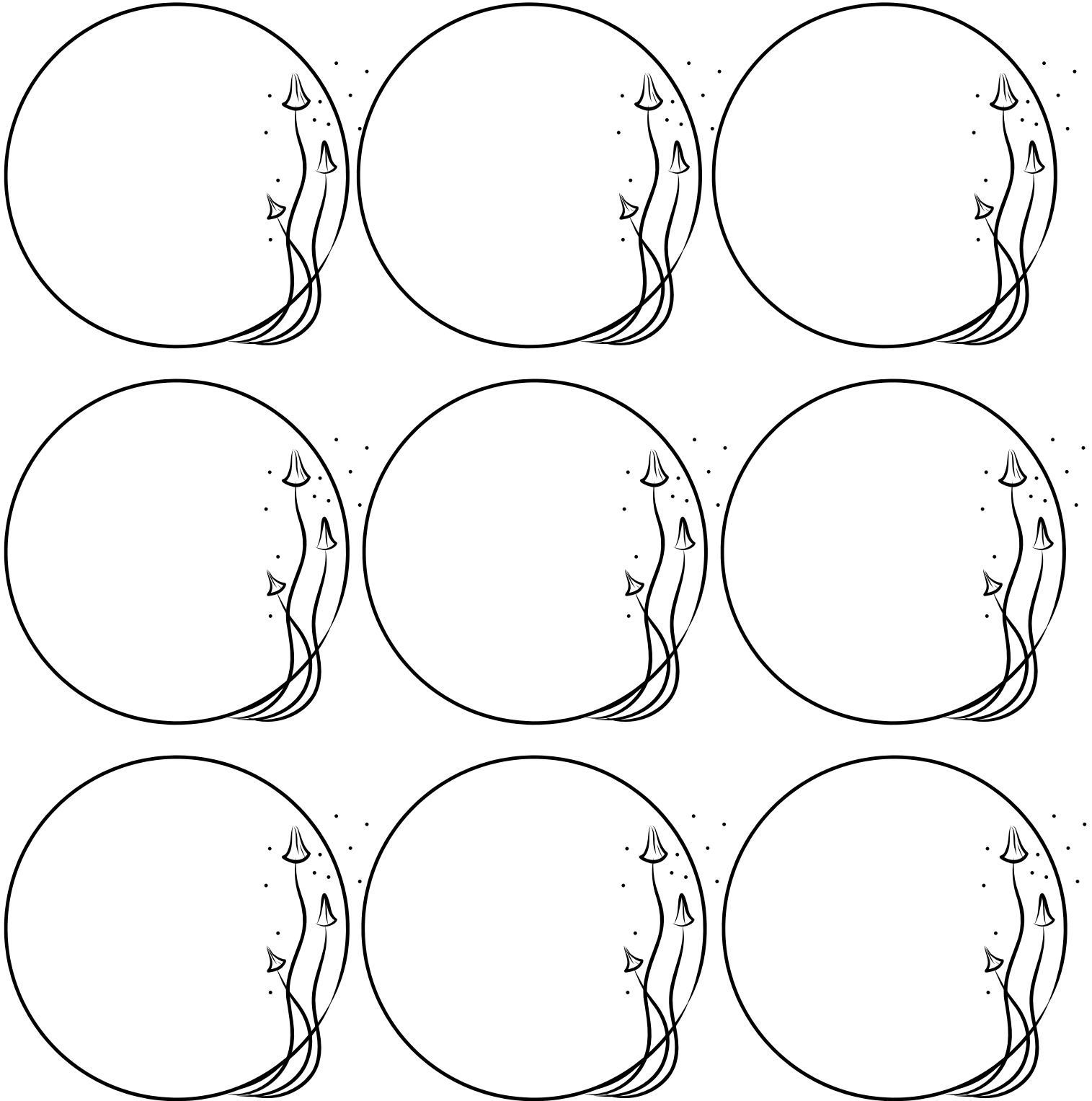
Mushroom Spore Print Log

For the next few months, try doing mushroom spore prints to log the mushrooms you find! Since spore prints come in all different colors (including white), we have some black circles for you to use too.



Mushroom Spore Print Log

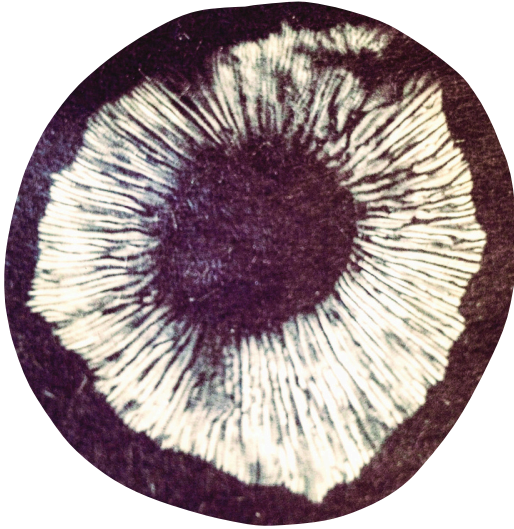
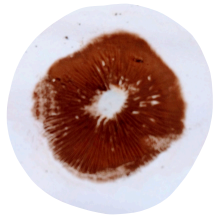
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Mushroom Spore Print Log



Making Mushroom Spore Prints



If you haven't ever done mushroom spore printing, here are the easy instructions!

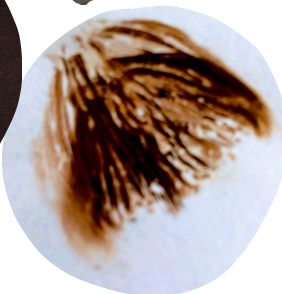
Mushroom collectors use spore prints as ways to identify mushrooms. Making spore prints is easy and so much fun.

Simply take a relatively fresh mushroom, remove the stem, and put it gills-down on a piece of paper. Since some spore prints are white, you might want to do one on white paper and one on black.



Cover your mushroom with a bowl to keep it undisturbed and leave it for a few hours or overnight, then carefully lift the mushroom to see your print. If it's rather dry or old, you can sprinkle water on the top of it.

Spore prints can be brown, white, pink or black, just to name a few of their colors. Ink caps release so many black spores that people mix them with water to make ink!



If you want to preserve your spore print, spray it gently from a distance with artist's fixative or hair spray.



Caution: Some mushrooms are very, very poisonous! Do not eat the mushrooms you make spore prints with and wash your hands when you are finished. Never eat any mushroom if you are not 100% sure what it is.

2024 SUMMER FORAGING BINGO

How to Play: Head out into nature and see how many of these wild plants you can find this spring. You may be able to find them in parks, woods, public spaces or even in your own lawn. 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 there are lots more out there. How many can you find?

If some of them are new to you, take time this month to learn more about them!



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!

July Poetry

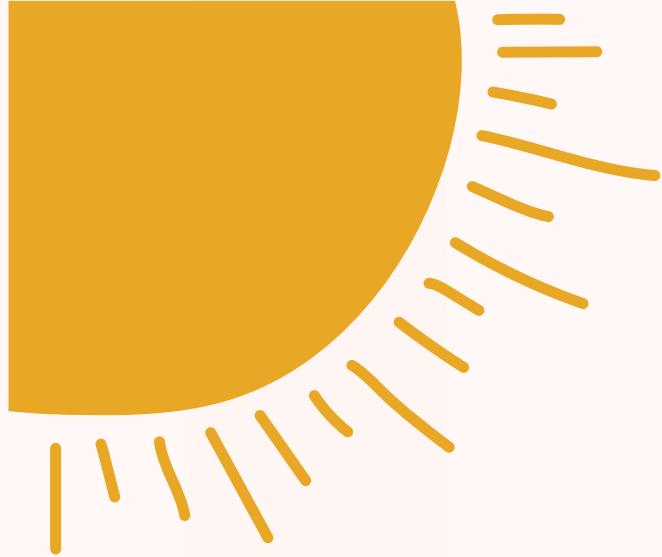


Summer Song
By William Carlos Williams

Wanderer moon
smiling a
faintly ironical smile
at this
brilliant, dew-moistened
summer morning,—
a detached
sleepily indifferent
smile, a
wanderer's smile,—
if I should
buy a shirt
your color and
put on a necktie
sky-blue
where would they carry me?

In the Mountains on a Summer Day
By Li Bai (born in 701, well over a thousand years ago!)

Gently I stir a white feather fan,
With open shirt sitting in a green wood.
I take off my cap and hang it on a jutting stone;
A wind from the pine-trees trickles on my bare head.



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.



Asiatic Dayflowers



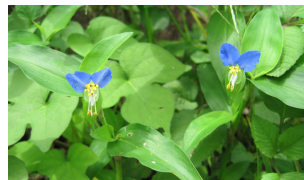
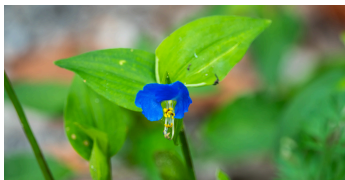
Have you ever known one of those people who other people either loved or hated? Asiatic dayflowers are that kind of plant!

They are considered an invasive species in much of Europe and North America, meaning they push native plants out and don't support the local birds, animals & bugs that depend on native plants.

You can tell from Asiatic dayflowers' name that they come from Asia. They were brought to other continents because they are pretty, edible, and can be used for medicine. Like lots of other invasive plants, they grew really well and started to take over some areas.

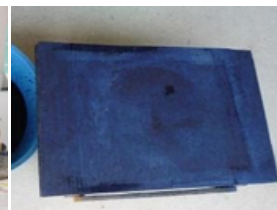
The good news is that since they are invasive, you don't have to feel at all guilty for picking them to use them for all kinds of cool things! (As long as you have permission to pick them, of course!)

Asiatic dayflowers showed up in our yard as a weed a few years ago. I often let new plants grow to find out if there is something I like about them (there almost always is!) and I was happy to see their pretty blue flowers when I did. I was even happier when I found out that they could be used for painting and so many other things. I keep them in a little area where they can't do harm, away from the many garden areas we have for native plants, pollinators, birds, vegetable gardening, etc.



Asiatic dayflower stems, flowers, leaves and seeds are all edible. Some people like to saute the leaves in butter (they cook down to a small amount the way spinach leaves do). The flowers are used as edible garnishes in some parts of the world, too.

My favorite thing about Asiatic dayflowers is that people use them to make paint! In Japan, people smash the blue petals, wring out the dye with a cloth, and then soak it onto homemade paper to dry. They sometimes do this many times to get the paper really soaked with dye. Then if they want to paint with it, they cut a tiny, tiny, tiny piece of the paper (like the size of a Tic Tac candy sometimes!) and put it in a small dish of water to make blue watercolor paint. They paint with that liquid watercolor. This process is called aobanagami 青花紙.



ASIATIC DAYFLOWER
(*Commelina communis*)



Tansy Kept the Pests Away



This year we're focusing on ways to use invasive plants and tansy is another invasive plant that can do a lot of harm but can be useful for some things.

Tansy (*Tanacetum vulgare*) is native to parts of Europe and Asia. It has become an invasive plant in many places in the world, including all over North America.

Some people plant tansy in their gardens but that's not a good idea for many reasons. It spreads a lot and takes over gardens. It's also poisonous to people and animals, and a few people can get a rash from touching it.



Many states in the United States have tansy on their list of invasive plants to get rid of. If you come across tansy in your property or someplace where people want to get rid of it, you can help by pulling it or cutting it down.

One cool thing about tansy is that throughout history a lot of people used it to keep pests away.

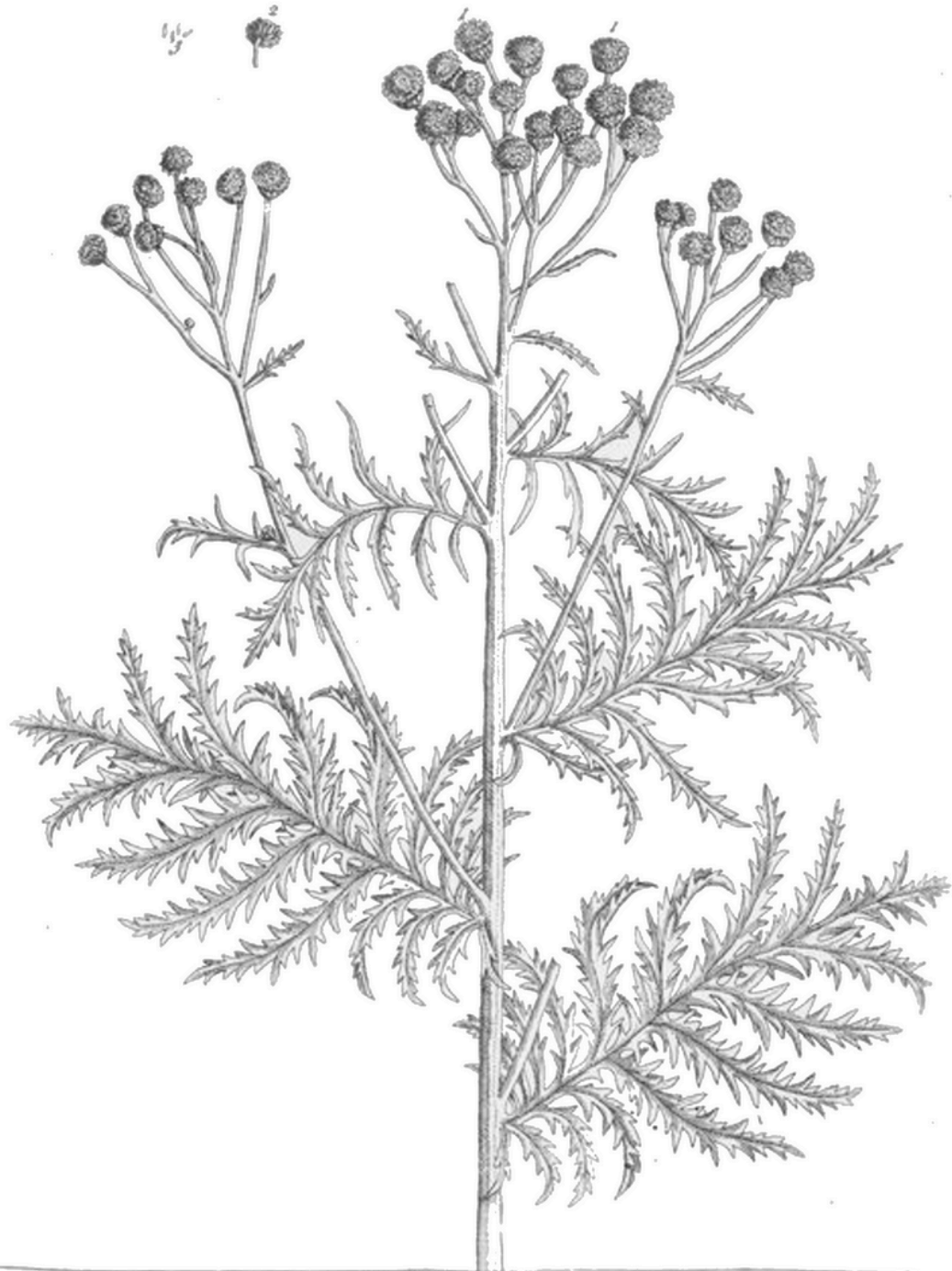
Tansy has a very strong smell, and it's a smell that a lot of bugs and animals really don't like! In the Middle Ages, dried tansy was scattered across floors to keep pests out of houses. People also hung it from rafters to keep flies and moths away, and packed it between bed sheets and mattresses to repel bugs.

Even today, people use tansy to keep bugs away. They dry the leaves and flowers and scatter them around the outside of their houses or in their lawns to repel ants. Some people also use fresh tansy this way. Some people hang bunches of tansy from doorways or ceilings to keep flies away. Some gardeners also plant tansy alongside potatoes to repel the Colorado potato bug. One study found tansy reduced the potato bugs population by 60–100%!

TANSY

(*Tanacetum vulgare*)

Plate 464.



Tansie. } 1. Flower.
} 2. Calix.
} 3. Seed.

Tanacetum.

Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

Phenology Calendar



Keep track of all of the firsts in nature that you see this month!
Write in firsts and interesting nature observations and draw a picture.

Examples:

- First apples ripe
- First sphinx moth spotted
- First garden tomatoes harvested
- Fireflies spotted
- Temperate over 100° F
- Over 1" of rain
- Foraged wild raspberries
- Hummingbird spotted
- First hollyhock blooms
- Milkweeds in pod stage
- Turtle spotted sunning on log
- Double rainbow



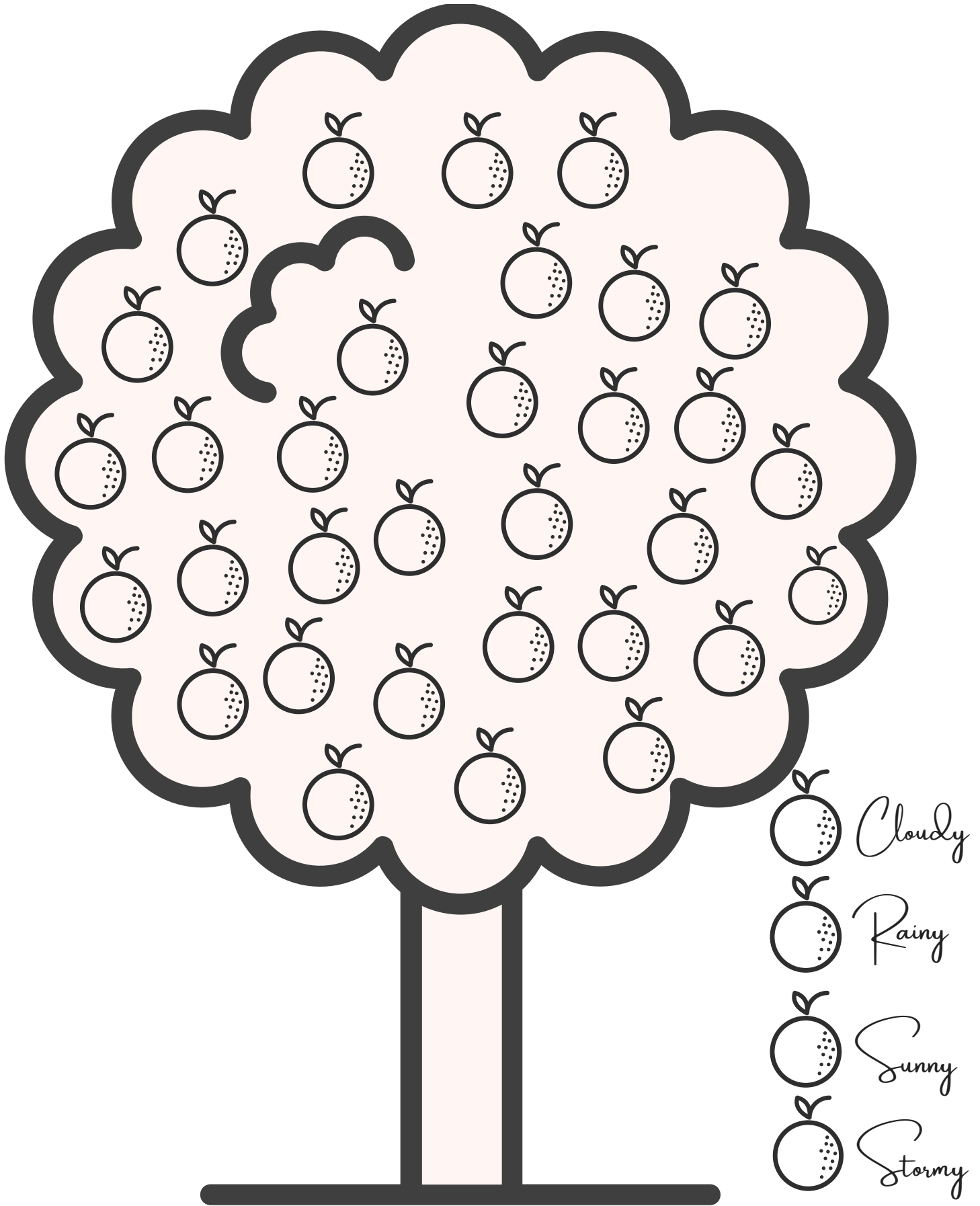
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

NOTES:

My Nature Journal

July

July Weather Tree



July Bird List

Birds spotted this month

July Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

July 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.