

September 2024

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



Nature Paint Swatches

September Nature Bingo

Drying Herbs & Flowers

Foraging Dock Seeds

Mad About Madder

September
Temperature Wheel,
Photo Challenge &
Nature Calendar

Plus seasonal poems,
activities, nature journal
pages and more!

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Welcome September!

What are you hoping to do in nature this month?

Here in Minnesota, we're enjoying the last of the summer weather. We're going to the nearby lakes as often as we can to boat, rock hunt, swim, forage, hike and just enjoy feeling the sun and the breezes.

I have been working on a book of ways to use natural materials like plants and rocks to make art materials, and this month I am hoping to get down to Nebraska to forage some poke berries for their beautiful dye and ink. Our family has also been having fun doing things like making paintbrushes from feathers, paint from crushed rocks, dayflower paint paper (remember we learned about dayflower paint in the July Wild Kids) and even an invisible ink project with wild grapes.

We're also doing some fun foraging for wild foods and medicinal plants right now that we hope to continue into September. Some of the plants we're gathering are hops, wild oregano, sumac, acorns, wild grapes, walnuts, apples, rose hips, pears and dock seeds (we have information on gathering those in this month's Wild Kids).

I hope you find lots of fun wild adventures this 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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Go Wild in September

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Every day this month, write one line of a song or poem about nature

Plant some garlic or spring flower bulbs for next year

Record some nature paint swatches (we have a swatch sheet in this issue)

Start a fall challenge of photographing 50 different wild things (plants, insects, birds, etc.)

Look for shells and rocks with tiny holes in them and start a nature chain of them, stringing them on yarn or silk cord to hang inside

Celebrate the first day of fall (or spring in the Southern Hemisphere) on September 22

Put some small rocks in little dishes of vinegar to test if they are limestone, which will start to fizz after a little while

Arrange some rocks in a pattern on some dark paper and leave it in the sun for a day to bleach the design onto it

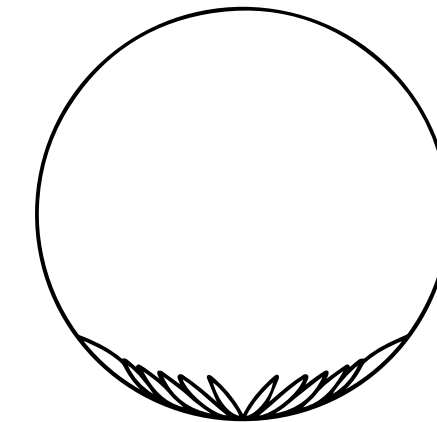
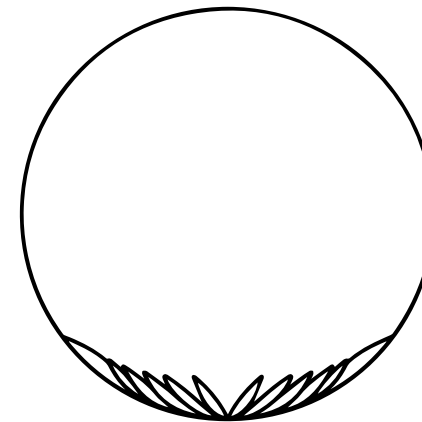
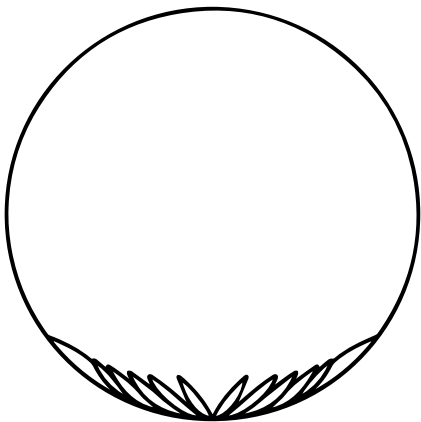
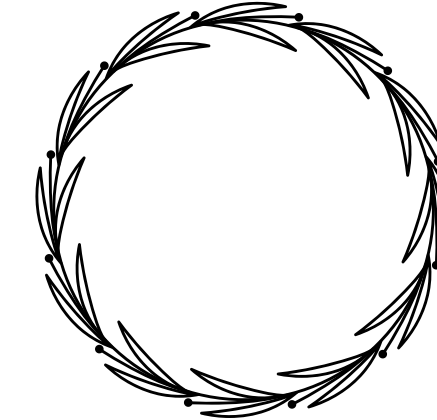
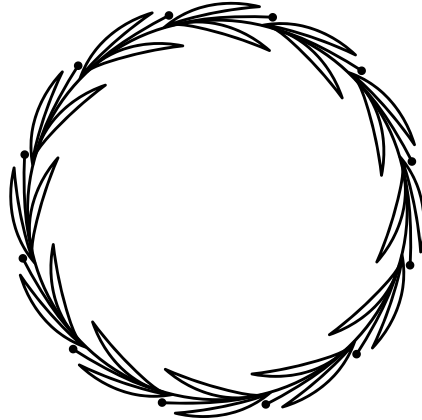
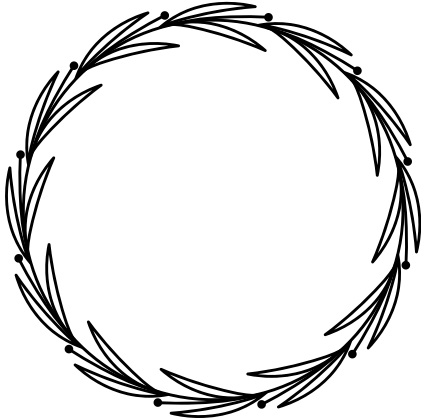
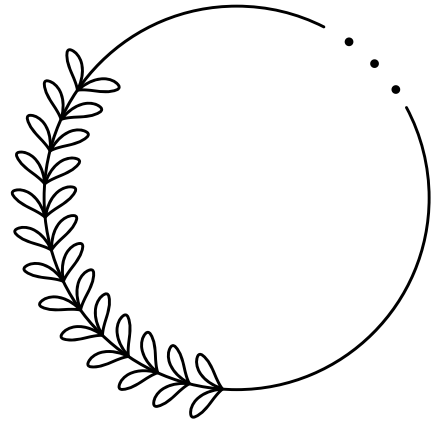
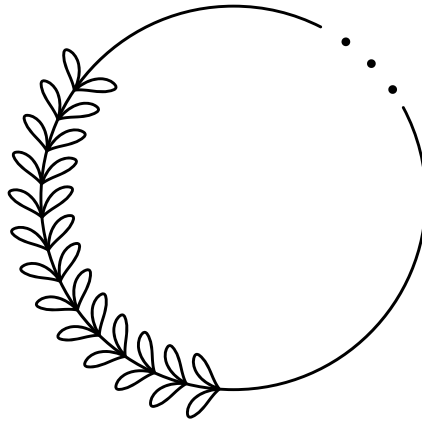
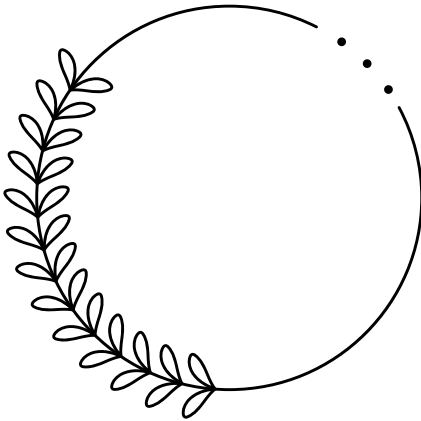
Sit outside someplace peaceful and count how many nature sounds you hear in 5 minutes

Ask friends and neighbors if you can gather some seeds from their garden flowers and scatter them in your garden (or where you'd like one) for next year



Nature Paint Swatches

Use a rock to grind up some flower petals, berries, leaves, dirt or very soft rocks and add just a bit of hot water, then paint them in the circles below with a feather or paintbrush. Label each color with what you used. and see if they change color over time.
How many colors can you make?



Drying Herbs & Flowers

(Reprinted from September 2020)



Dried herbs and flowers are so wonderful and useful! You can use them to make your own teas and spice mixes, decorations, herbal vinegars, sachets and even homemade perfumes and lotions.

There are three common ways to dry plants -- hang them to dry (we used a grapevine wreath for this example), spread them in single layers on a screen or basket, or place them in paper bags.



Whichever way you choose, you want to give them lots of air between them and keep them away from light. They might look pretty in a sunny window, but that will take lots of their lovely color, scent and taste away!

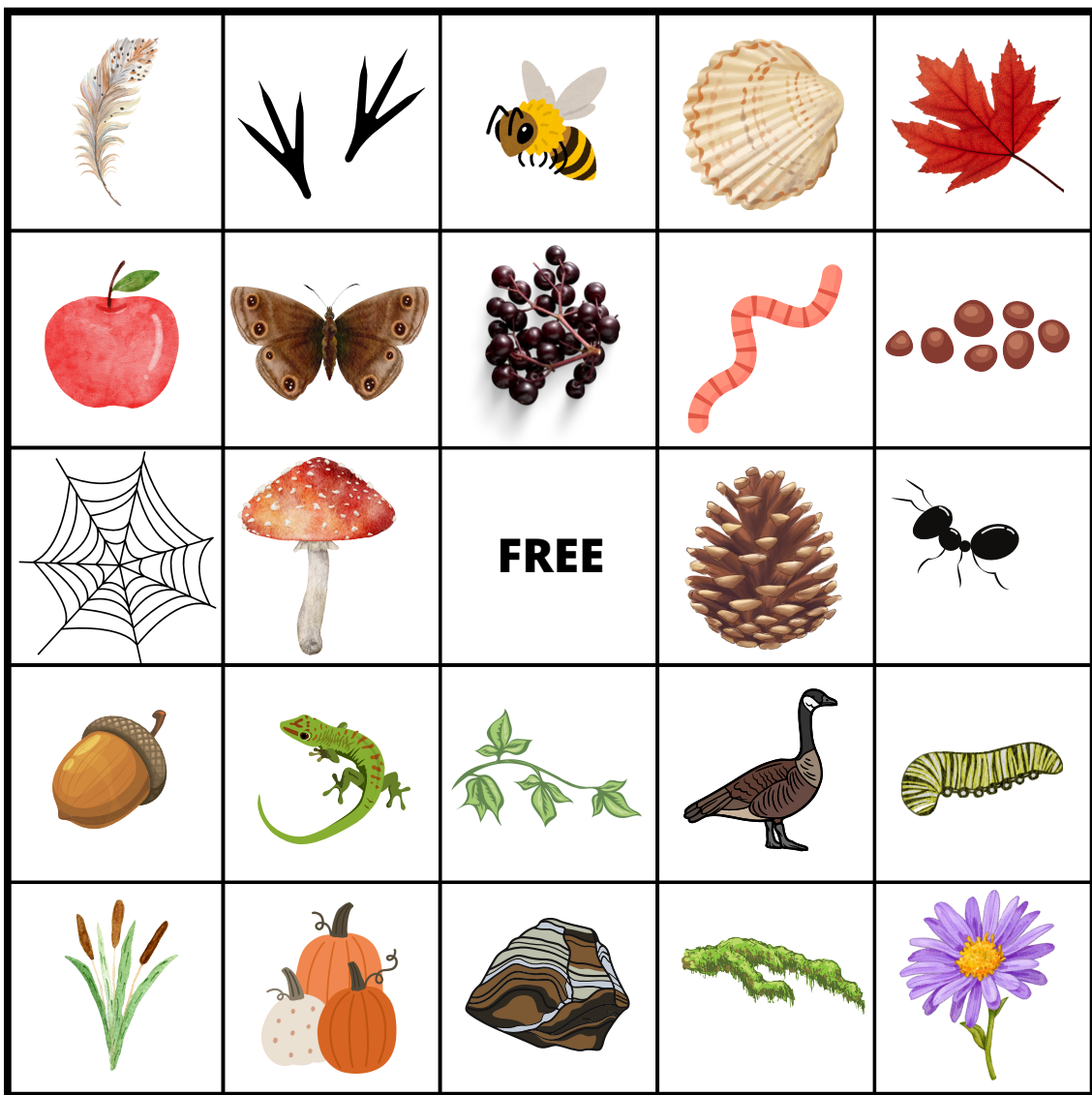
Leave them for several days and check them every so often. If it's very hot and dry, it won't take long. Be sure they have lots of air circulation. When they are absolutely crisp and dry, transfer them to an airtight container like a recycled jar and label them with the plant name and date. Store in a cool, dark place.

2024 SEPTEMBER NATURE BINGO

How to Play: Head out into nature and see how many items you can find. 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 month (not all of these may be found in your area).

The items are: feather, bird tracks, bee, shell, colorful leaf, fruit, moth, berries, worm, scat (animal poop), spiderweb, mushroom, pine cone, ant, acorn, lizard, vine, goose, caterpillar, cattail, fall vegetable, multicolored rock, moss, flower. (If you want a different card for another player, you can print out the 2023 nature bingo card).

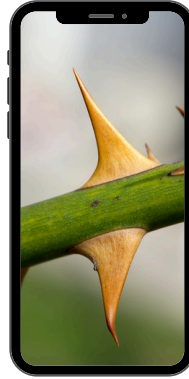
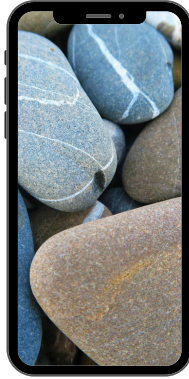
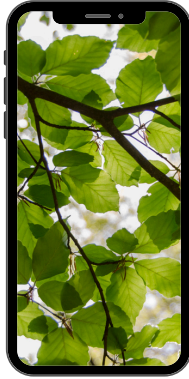
How many can you find?



September

Nature Photo Prompts

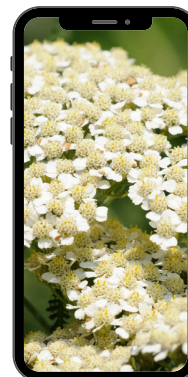
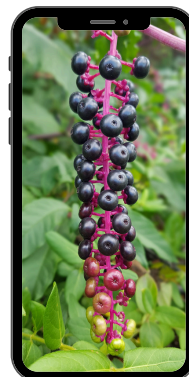
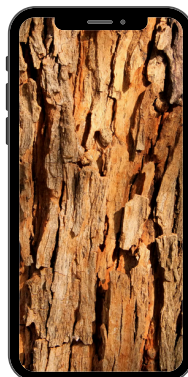
Try to head outside and take a picture each day with that day's prompt as an inspiration!



- 1 X shaped
- 2 Moss
- 3 High
- 4 Slimy
- 5 Slow
- 6 Ground
- 7 Details
- 8 Spider
- 9 Broken
- 10 Just one

- 11 Yellow
- 12 Alive
- 13 Dotted
- 14 Sky
- 15 Shadow
- 16 Polished
- 17 Sharp
- 18 Dry
- 19 Lots
- 20 Symmetrical

- 21 Bark
- 22 Hideaway
- 23 Edible
- 24 Native
- 25 Seeds
- 26 Pollinator
- 27 Big
- 28 Pattern
- 29 Stone
- 30 White



Rumex crispus

Curly Dock

Curly dock is known by lots of names, like yellow dock and sour dock. It is native to Europe, Asia, and parts of Africa but now it grows as an invasive weed all over the world.

You can often find it near fields, ditches and the edges of forests and in parks and meadows. In the fall, we like to harvest the dried seeds to use in our cooking. We just shake them into a bag and grind them up without bothering to take the papery outside (called chaff) off.

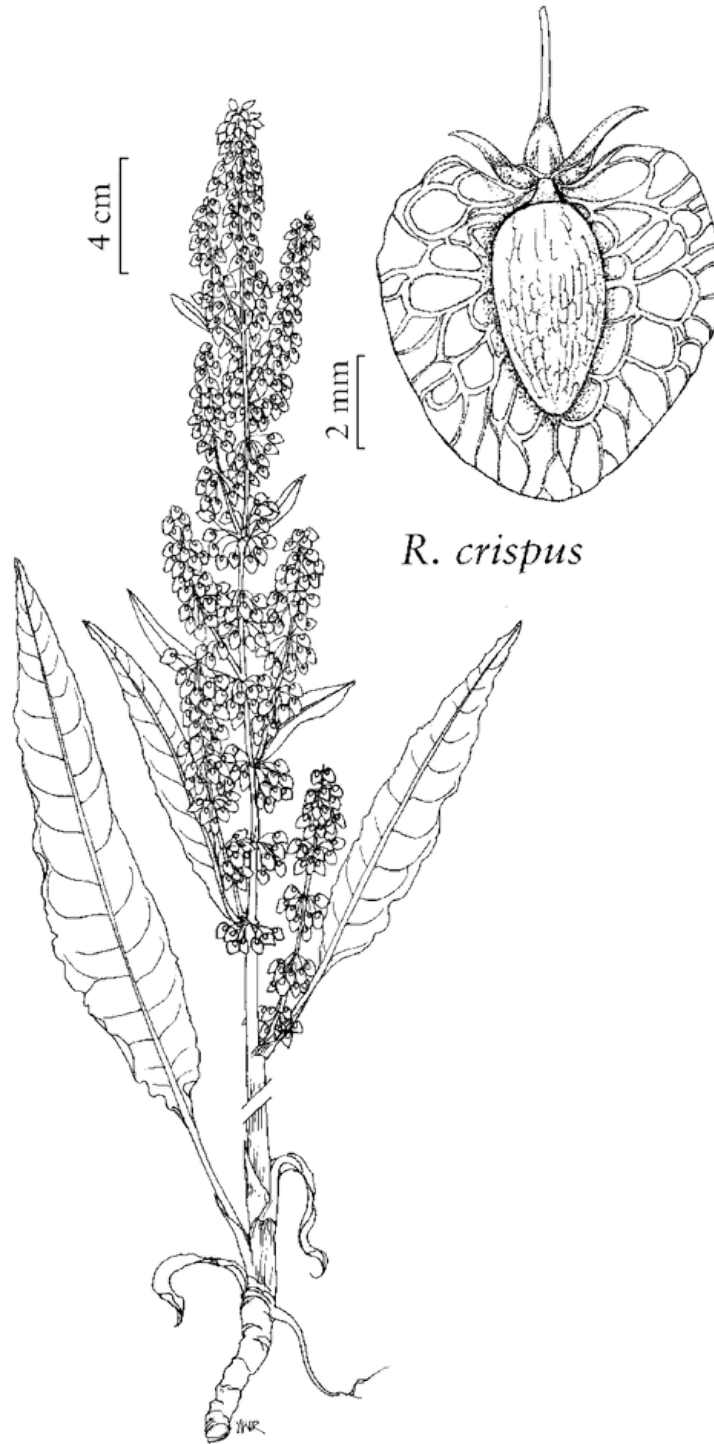
I like to roast the ground seeds in the oven at 350 for 5 minutes or toast them for a couple of minutes in a cast iron pan to make them tastier, and then I use them for part of the flour when I make things like crackers and brownies (they are best used for part of the flour in recipes with strong flavors like chocolate or garlic).

The stalk, roots and young leaves of dock are edible earlier in the year, too.

Dock has hollow stems that we also use for crafts, bee hotels and all kinds of fun uses. We've even used them for bubble blowers!



CURLY DOCK/YELLOW DOCK
(*Rumex crispus*)



Madder

(Rubia tinctorum)



Madder is a really cool plant that is native to parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. It was brought to other places like the United States because for thousands of years people used the roots to dye things red and for paint. Now it can be found as a weed all over the world.

In the olden days, people used the root to dye cloth and other things. They could mix the liquid with additives like alum, acids and iron to make a whole range of colors like purple, red and brown. Madder dye was even used to make the red robes for kings and cardinals! They have also found traces of madder dye on Egyptian mummies that are over 3,000 years old.



Madder was also used as medicine a long time ago. It was used to treat things like skin diseases, toothaches and digestive problems, and the roots have compounds that have been shown to fight inflammation, bacteria, and even cancer. Madder was once so valuable that people used it to pay rent and to settle debts.



Common madder is also used as food for livestock. The leaves and stems are high in protein and are often fed to animals in parts of Europe and Asia. It is considered an invasive species in some parts of the world because it can spread quickly and displace native plants. In other parts of the world, it is grown as a crop for its many uses.



MADDER
(*Fistulina hepatica*)





September Poetry



September
by Annette Wynne



Golden in the garden,
Golden in the glen,
Golden, golden, golden
September's here again!
Golden in the tree tops,
Golden in the sky—
Golden, golden, golden
September's going by!

September
by Esse V. Hathaway



Blaze on blaze of scarlet sumach,
Roadsides lined with radiant gold,
Purple ironweed, regal, slender,
Rasping locust, shrill and bold.

Dusty smell in field and upland,
Sky of copper mixed with blue,
Life intense as is the weather—
Let's away, just me and you!

September Days
by Helen L. Smith



O month of fairer, rarer days
Than Summer's best have been;
When skies at noon are burnished blue,
And winds at evening keen;
When tangled, tardy-blooming things
From wild waste places peer,
And drooping golden grain-heads tell
That harvest-time is near.

Though Autumn tints amid the green
Are gleaming, here and there,
And spicy Autumn odors float
Like incense on the air,
And sounds we mark as Autumn's own
Her nearing steps betray,
In gracious mood she seems to stand
And bid the Summer stay.

Though 'neath the trees, with fallen leaves
The sward be lightly strown,
And nests deserted tell the tale
Of summer bird-folk flown;
Though white with frost the lowlands lie
When lifts the morning haze,
Still there's a charm in every hour
Of sweet September days.

My Nature Journal

September



Phenology Calendar

Keep track of firsts and special events in nature this month!
Here are some examples of what you might observe:

- First frost of the season
- Migrating birds spotted
- Milkweeds gone to seed
- Maple leaves turning gold
- Pears are ripe
- Lady beetles moving into the house
- First asters blooming
- Oyster mushrooms in state park
- Hawthorn berries are ripe
- Acorns falling
- Rose hips are ripe
- Black eyed susan (rudbeckia) seeds gathered and scattered



SEPTEMBER 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
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					

September Temperature Wheel

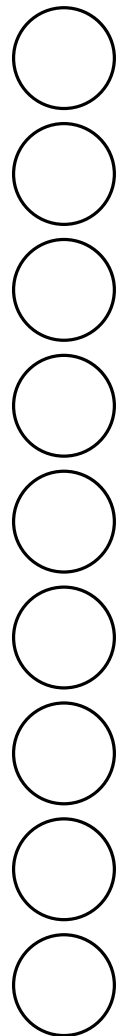
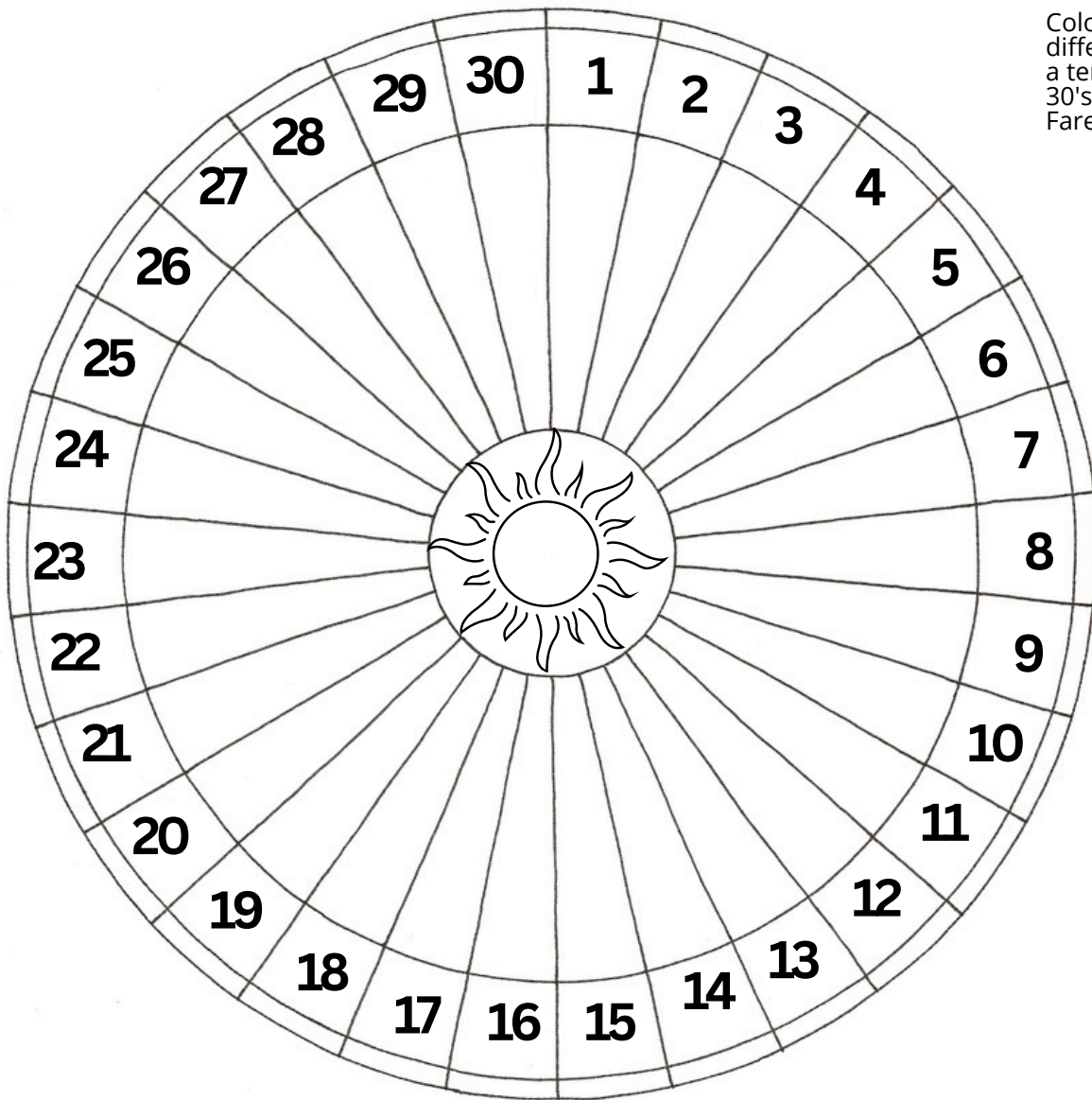
Make a picture record of the range of temperatures this month!

Each day at a certain time (like when you wake up, or at noon), find out what the temperature is outside. Then color the spoke of the wheel to represent that color.

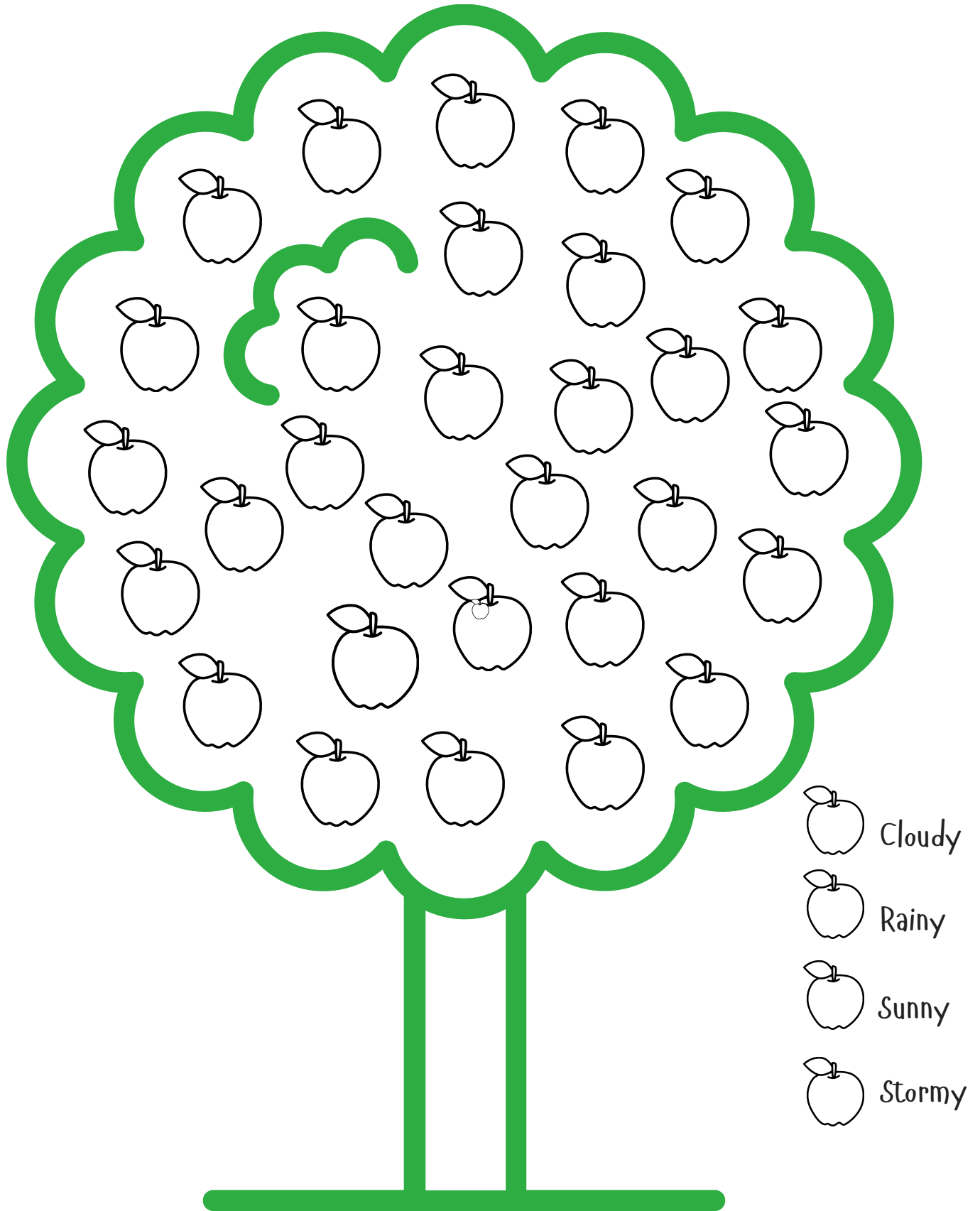
At the end of the month, look back and see what trends you can see for the month.

Key

Color each circle with a different color to represent a temperature range (like 30's 40's, etc.) -- either Farenheit or Celcius.



September Weather Tree



September Bird List

Birds spotted this month

September Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

September 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 _____

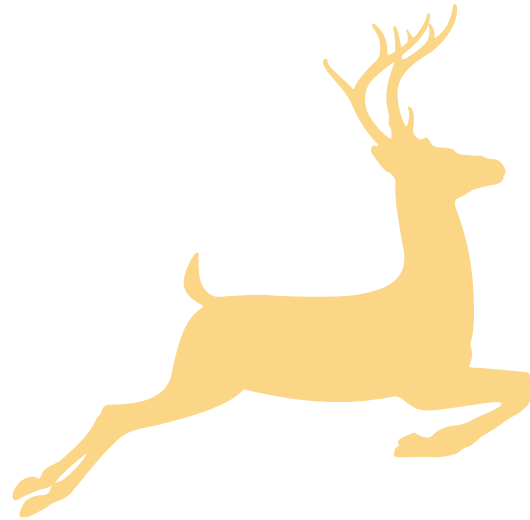
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.