

*October 2024*

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

**Trees & Their  
Leaves Memory  
Game Cards**

**October Nature  
Collection Challenge**

**Battling Buckthorn**

**Mulberry Mayhem**

**Ways to Learn &  
Play in Nature  
This Month**

**Plus seasonal  
poetry, activities,  
nature journal  
pages & more!**



# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

## Happy October

What have you been doing in nature lately?

I hope you and your family have been safe from the recent storms in the United States, Poland, Austria, Mexico and other regions around the world. Storms can be powerful and scary but it helps to talk to your grown ups about how to stay safe and to look for ways to help people afterwards. Our local school raises money to donate after disasters and our former principal always helped make it fun. One time he made a bet with another local school that the principal from the school that raised the least money would cut a hole in the ice and jump in and swim in the freezing water in the middle of the winter! In the end, both principals did the “polar bear plunge” because the kids at both schools raised so much money to donate.

I’m writing this issue of Wild Kids Magazine from the guest room at my son Jack’s house across the street from our house. My computer is not working and so I’m using one here. I love my view from here -- I am on the second floor facing a window and there are all kinds of tall trees to look at. They are just starting to turn golden and lose some of their leaves. I can also see a squirrel’s nest way up high in one of the trees out there. You can tell their nests because they are usually made of lots of leaves wedged into the places where several branches come out from the main tree trunk, very high up (like in the picture above).

We have lots of fun stuff about trees in this issue. We have a matching game of trees and their leaves, plus information on two invasive tree, buckthorn and white mulberry, and lots of other fun stuff.

I hope you have lots of wild (safe!) adventures this month and enjoy October!

*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 October

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

Decorate a shelf or windowsill with nature items you find like shells, seed pods & pine cones

Play leaf and tree memory match (we have the cards in this issue)

Use a magnifying glass, microscope or micro camera setting to look at things like sand & seeds

Go for a walk, hike or bike ride someplace you've never explored before

Take part in our October nature item collection challenge

Get some paint sample cards and go out in nature to see how many colors you can match

Make leaf art -- collect lots of colors of leaves and arrange them in a pattern on the ground

Make an outdoor game with acorns or other nature items

Do crayon rubbings of lots of kinds of leaves from your neighborhood & see how many you can ID

Watch a sunrise or sunset

# Learn to identify some common trees and their leaves



## Tree and leaf concentration cards

### How to:

Print out the cards on the following pages (use card stock if you want them to be more durable) and cut them out.

Print each page on its own piece of cardstock, with the other side blank.

Turn all the cards face-down and take turns turning up two at a time and trying to make a match of the tree to its leaf.

If you make a match, you get to go again.

You can also play with just one player!  
Just see how quickly you can find all the matches.



Note: Not all leaves will look like the ones shown. Some trees like mulberries have differently shaped leaves on the same tree, and some varieties of trees like oaks have somewhat differently shaped leaves from type to type.

# TREES & LEAVES MATCHING MEMORY CARDS



**BIRCH**



**MAPLE**



**APPLE**



**ELM**



**SYCAMORE**



**BUCKTHORN**



**WILLOW**



**ELDERBERRY**



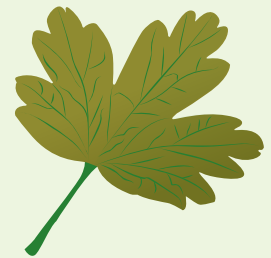
**MULBERRY**



**MAGNOLIA**



**OAK**



**HAWTHORN**



**POPLAR**



**LILAC**



**HORSE  
CHESTNUT**



**COTTONWOOD**

# TREES & LEAVES MATCHING MEMORY CARDS



**ELM**



**APPLE**



**MAPLE**



**BIRCH**



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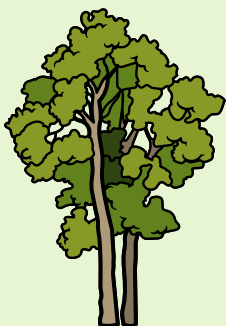
**OAK**



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**POPLAR**

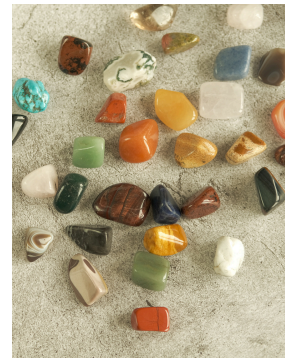
# October

Try to head outside each day and collect a nature item that goes along with that day's theme. Display your collection in a basket, on a nature table, or in a nature jar.

## Nature Collection Challenge



- |    |             |    |              |    |         |
|----|-------------|----|--------------|----|---------|
| 1  | Orange      | 11 | Red          | 21 | Leaf    |
| 2  | Tiny        | 12 | Round        | 22 | Hole    |
| 3  | Symmetrical | 13 | Colorful     | 23 | Changed |
| 4  | Shiny       | 14 | Black        | 24 | Weird   |
| 5  | Insect      | 15 | Thin         | 25 | Fuzzy   |
| 6  | Cracked     | 16 | Sharp        | 26 | Fragile |
| 7  | Pattern     | 17 | Green        | 27 | White   |
| 8  | Flower      | 18 | Nut          | 28 | Edible  |
| 9  | Feather     | 19 | Dried        | 29 | Rough   |
| 10 | Seed        | 20 | Asymmetrical | 30 | Pretty  |
|    |             |    |              | 31 | Spooky  |



# Battling Buckthorn

Common Buckthorn trees (*Rhamnus cathartica*) are a real problem in many parts of the world. These trees grow very quickly and crowd out all of the native plants and trees that wildlife needs.

Friends of the Mississippi says: *“To us humans, a glen full of buckthorn just looks like a lush sea of bright green leaves. But to butterflies, bees and insect-eating birds, it's the equivalent of a barren desert.”*

*While birds (and sometimes mice) do eat buckthorn berries, it's often because it's the only available seed source. But buckthorn berries are not a good food source. They're low in protein and high in carbohydrates and produce a severe laxative effect in some animals. For smaller birds, the laxative effect can even be strong enough to result in death.”*

Our son Alex worked in Minnesota's Conservation Corps for five weeks this past summer, and one of his jobs was to cut down invasive buckthorn. There was so much of it! After they cut down all the buckthorn trees they could find, they planted native plants and trees to try to establish them again.

Some people use buckthorn berries (**which are poisonous for people**) to make ink. They gather them and simmer them with a tiny bit of water or vinegar, and then mash them with a potato masher and strain out the ink. You can also just mash them and use the fresh ink that way. Buckthorn ink looks purple when you first make it, and then a few minutes later it turns green. People also add different things to it to change how acidic or alkaline it is to change its color too, to make a whole range of colors just from those berries. **If you ever use buckthorn berries for ink, make sure you don't accidentally spread any berries to new areas.** They easily sprout where they are dropped and would create even more invasive trees.

Some people also use buckthorn to make walking sticks and canes. We sometimes volunteer at a nature center that uses the buckthorn trees that they cut down to make carved walking sticks that they sell in their gift shop. In most places, people just try to get rid of it though!





BUCKTHORN  
(*Rhamnus cathartica*)



# Mulberry Mayhem



By Daryl Hrdlicka



Mulberries are delicious summertime treats, and very easy to forage! But there's one kind that's native (red mulberry - *Morus rubra*) and one that's invasive (white mulberry - *Morus alba*).



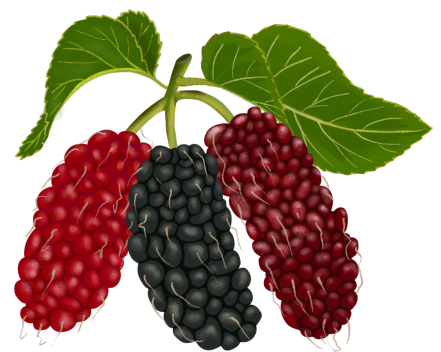
White mulberry, originally from China, was introduced in the United States in Colonial times, when they were trying to start a silk industry. It can now be found in every "lower 48" state except Nevada and into Canada.



While native red mulberries are dark red to black when they're ripe, sometimes white mulberries can be as well -- even though they are called white mulberries! The tree on the right is an invasive white mulberry tree even though it has dark berries. You can tell red and white mulberry trees apart by their leaves - red mulberry leaves are larger, dull, and rough - but it can be hard to distinguish if you only see one tree.



Invasive white mulberries can be found in disturbed areas, and they freely crossbreed with native mulberries and displace them. It's also thought that they spread a root disease which native mulberries have no defense to.



If you want to plant mulberry trees, look for the native red mulberries. If you want to forage the fruits, all of them are tasty!

# WHITE MULBERRY

(*Morus alba*)



The Mulberry Tree  
The Black Mulberry and the White Mulberry  
Morus nigra vulgaris

# October Poetry

## I LOVE A TREE

by Samuel N. Baxter

When I pass on to my reward,  
Whatever that may be,  
I'd like my friends to think of me  
As one who loved a tree.

I may not have a statesman's poise,  
Nor thrill a crowd with speech,  
But I can benefit mankind  
If I set out a beech.

If I transport a sapling oak  
To rear its mighty head,  
'Twill shade and shelter those who come  
Long after I am dead.

If in the park I plant an elm,  
Where children come to play,  
To them 'twill be a childhood shrine  
That will not soon decay.



Of if I plant a tree with fruit,  
On which the birds may feed,  
I've helped to foster feathered friends,  
And that's a worthy deed.

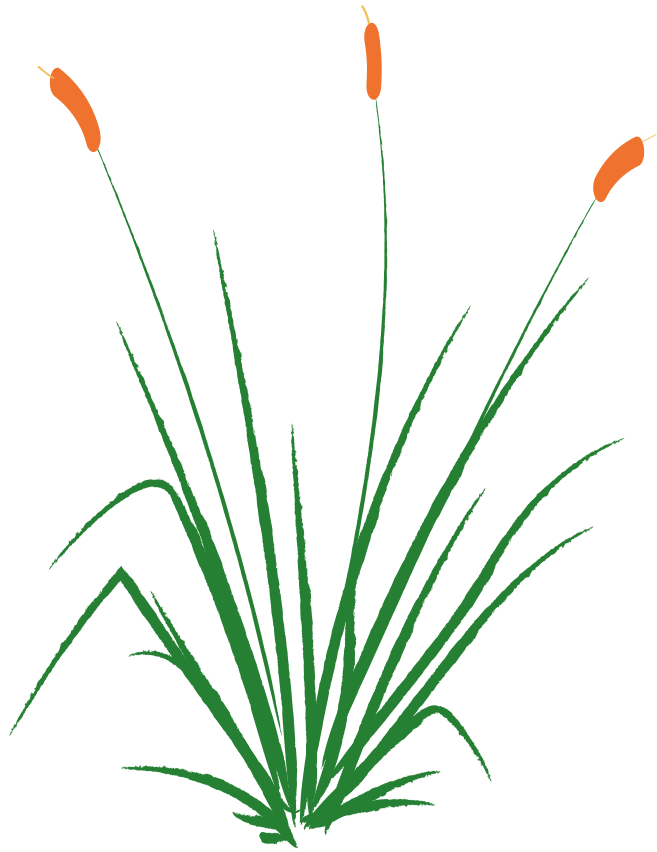
For winter, when the days grow short  
And spirits may run low,  
I'd plant a pine upon the 'scape;  
'Twould lend a cheering glow.

I'd like a tree to mark the spot  
Where I am laid to rest,  
To me 'twould be an epitaph  
That I would love the best.

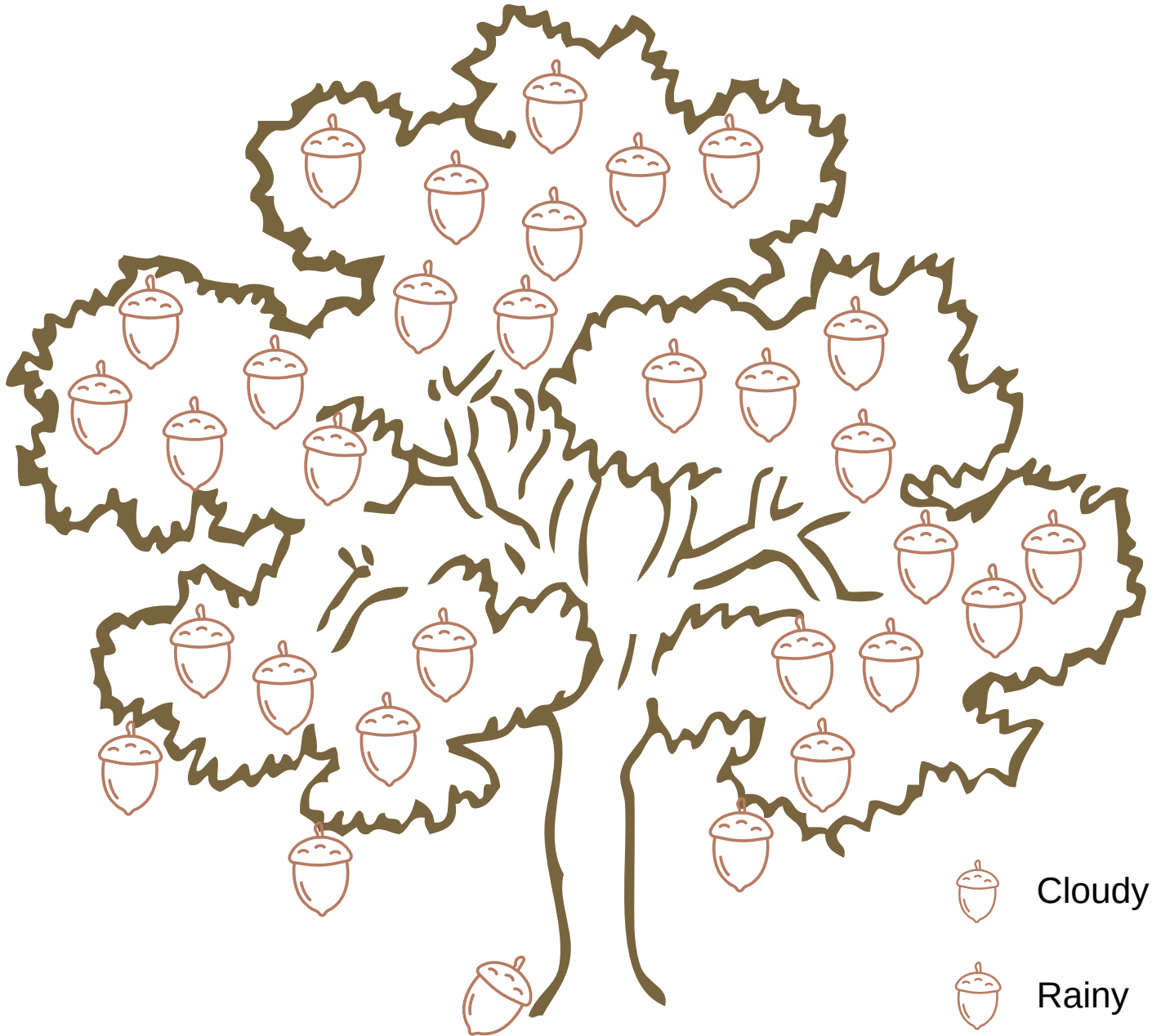
And though not carved upon a stone  
For those who come to see,  
My friends would know that resting here  
Is one who loved a tree.






My Nature Journal

October



# October Weather Tree



-  Cloudy
-  Rainy
-  Sunny
-  Stormy
-  Snowy

# *October Bird List*

Birds spotted this month

# *October Animal List*

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

# October 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:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

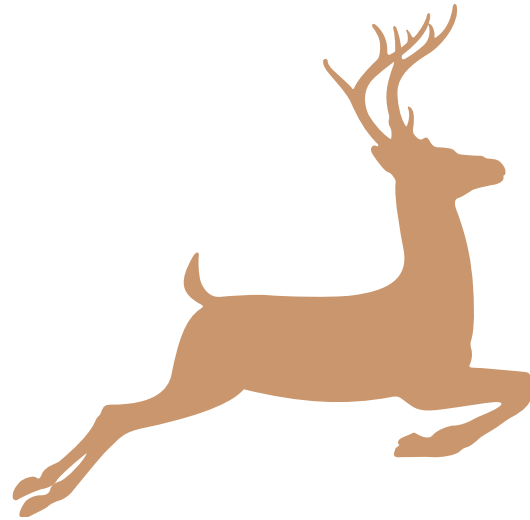
WARNINGS: \_\_\_\_\_

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](https://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids) to learn more.