

March 2025

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Foraging for
Wild Clay

Foraging
Redbud
Blossoms

Making
Phenology
Wheels

Tree BINGO

10 Reasons
to Love Cherry
Trees

March Nature
Photo Challenge

Seasonal poetry, activities,
nature journal pages & more!

From the editor

Happy March!

What are you hoping to do in nature this month?

March is always different from year to year (and day to day!) here in Minnesota, and we never know what kind of weather to expect. One thing I love about March is that it's officially the start of spring here in the Northern Hemisphere (which includes countries like the United States, Canada, Russia and all the countries in Europe). That's also when we start having more daylight than darkness.

Last year, some of our family members went to Arkansas during March and it was fun to see how different nature looked there than back home. We also had fun seeing all the different plants they had to forage than ours, and seeing different birds and flowers.

We went hiking with friends of our kids when we were down there and we noticed native redbud trees in bloom all over with their pretty pinkish-purple flowers. We have information about redbud trees in this month's Wild Kids. See if you can spot any where you live! We also have information about cherry trees, which are some of my favorite trees in the world. We have a cherry tree in our front yard that we planted about 10 years ago and it is always full of birds, butterflies and bees. I love its cheerful white flowers in the spring and we make all kinds of wonderful things with the cherries in the summer, like ice cream and cobbler. The birds like the cherries as much as we do, though, so it's a bit of a race to see who gets them as they ripen!

What parts of nature make you especially happy this time of year?

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

Alicia



*March in
three
different
years where
we live*



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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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

Watch the lunar
(moon) eclipse on
the 14th

Go on a walk
and play our
tree Bingo

Start a
mud travel journal --
paint or stamp your
thumbprint with some
wet dirt at each place
you visit & your own yard
(it will be different colors
at different
spots)

Collect one small
nature item each day
in a jar or dish

Make a phenology wheel
for March (we have a
blank one and example
in this issue)

Go outside
at dawn & dusk on the March
equinox (the 20th) when we
start having more daylight than
darkness in the Northern
Hemisphere

Forage
for early spring wild
edibles in your area
like ramps,
dandelions or cattail
shoots

Play music with something
natural outside to the
beat of nature sounds you
hear & try to make a song
from it

Go puddle
jumping

Watch the partial
solar (sun) eclipse
on the 29th

LET'S FORAGE FOR WILD CLAY!

Did you know you can find clay in nature to do crafts with? People have been making things like pots, jewelry, tiles and dolls out of clay for thousands of years.



You can find natural clay anywhere you find soil, but it's especially easy to find in places with a lot of exposed soil like riverbanks, fields, hiking trails and hillsides. We've even found it on our street when the city dug a very deep hole to fix a pipe under the road. We could see the layers of different kinds of soil and could tell that there was a clay layer a few feet down.



To find wild clay, look for soil that looks more smooth and shiny (or sometimes cracked) that feels like thick, sticky mud. You might find gray, brown, red or even white clay. It can be all different colors, depending on what minerals are in the soil. Red clay usually has a lot of iron in it, while white clay is often made of kaolin, a special type of clay that people also use to make facial beauty masks.



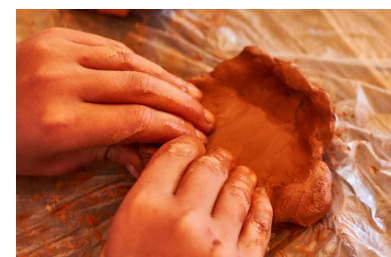
Good crafting clay should feel soft and stretchy when you touch it. You can test it by taking a small piece and rolling it into a ball. If it holds its shape and doesn't crumble, that's a great sign.



You can add a little water to your clay if it is dry, and then squeeze it and take out any rocks, twigs and leaves. Keep kneading it and adding tiny bits of water until it feels smooth and holds together well. If your clay is very dry, you can soak it for a few days.



Once you've made your creation, you can leave it to dry in the air. This can take many weeks, and you might want to cover it with a damp cloth to keep it from cracking. To make clay items last, people "fire" them either in a kiln or buried in a specially made campfire. There are a lot of different ways that people can do this but they're pretty complicated even for grown-ups who haven't done it before.

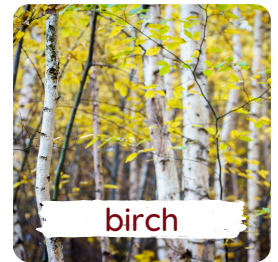


We just air dry our clay creations or make them temporary fun and then reuse the clay, but we're hoping to experiment with making clay fire pits and maybe a solar kiln this year. I'll let you know how it goes!



Tree Bingo!

How to Play: Head out into nature and see how many of these tree you can find this month. Make an x over the ones you spot and try to get a BINGO either across, down, or diagonally. You might need an ID book or a grown up to help you ID your trees, and remember they look different at different times of the year. 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.



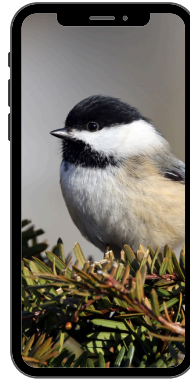
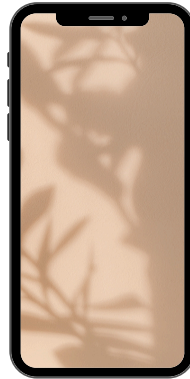
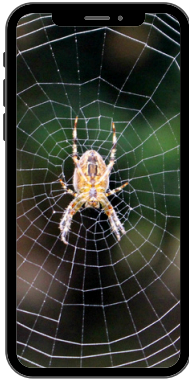
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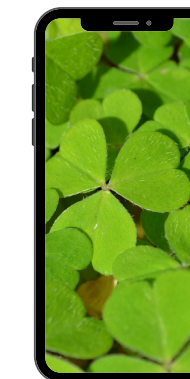
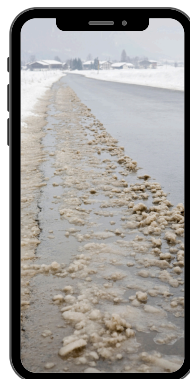
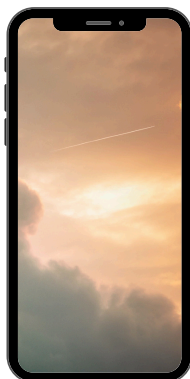
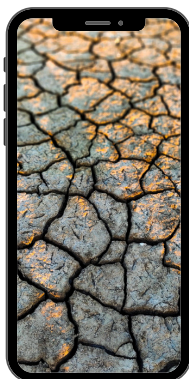
March

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 |



10 Reasons to Love Cherry Trees



They support all kinds of pollinators like bees and butterflies



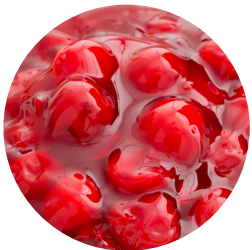
Native black cherries are a host plant for over 450 species of moths and butterflies



They have beautiful flowers in the spring



People can make medicine from the bark



You can make pies, jam, ice cream and other goodies with the cherries



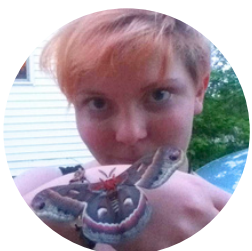
The cherries are a favorite fruit for many bird species



Birds visit them all year to feast on all the insects they support



There are native cherry trees for lots of locations

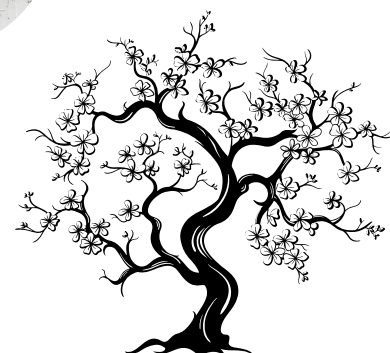


Cherry trees are a host plant for cecropia moths, the largest moths in North America.



They are easy to grow in lots of climates

Here is a cecropia moth we raised from a caterpillar and fed cherry leaves from our front yard tree. She overwintered in a cocoon in our house until the next summer when she emerged and we released her.



CHERRY
(Prunus sp.)



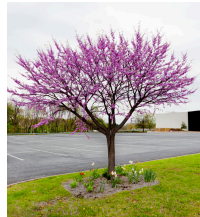
REDBUD

(*Cercis* sp.)



The redbud is a beautiful, helpful tree that's native to many parts of the United States and the world. Not only is it pretty, but it's also edible and great for wildlife.

Redbud is in the Fabaceae family, which is also called the legume or pea family. It's sometimes called the Spicewood Tree or the Judas Tree.



One of the nice things about Eastern redbud, a redbud that is native to much of the United States, is that it's one of the first trees to flower in the spring, as early as March in some places. You can sometimes see it flowering even when there's snow on the ground!



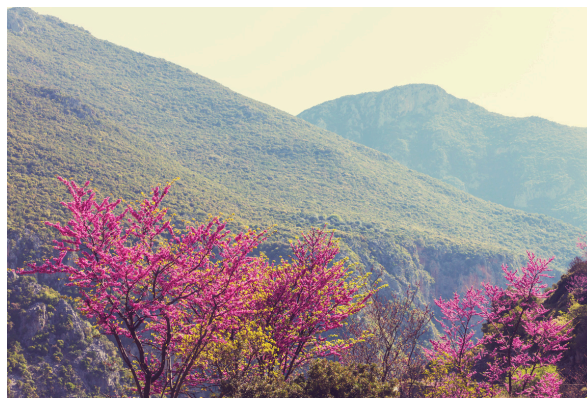
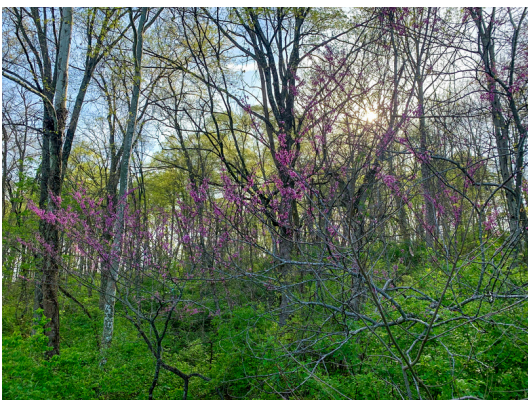
Eastern redbud is native to the eastern United States from Pennsylvania to Florida, over to Nebraska, and down through Texas and parts of Mexico.

People have been using Eastern redbud trees for food and medicine for many years.

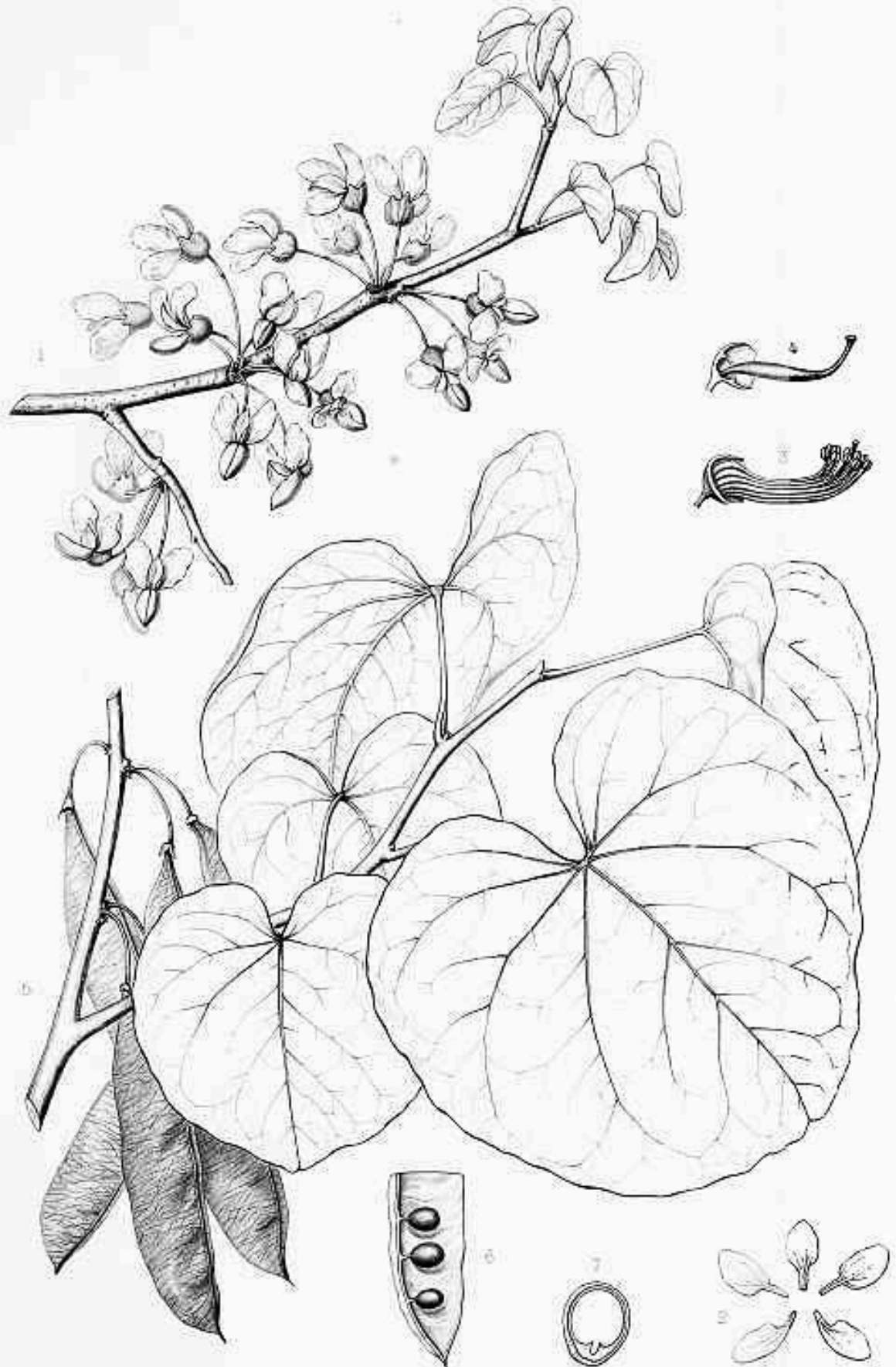
People eat the flowers (which are very high in vitamin C) in things like syrups and cakes, the soft new leaves in early spring (raw or cooked) and the flower pods (steamed like pea pods when they are young, tender and under 2 inches). In parts of Appalachia, people used the green twigs to season wild game like venison and opossum (which is why it's called Spicewood tree in some places). People also traditionally used the bark for medicine.



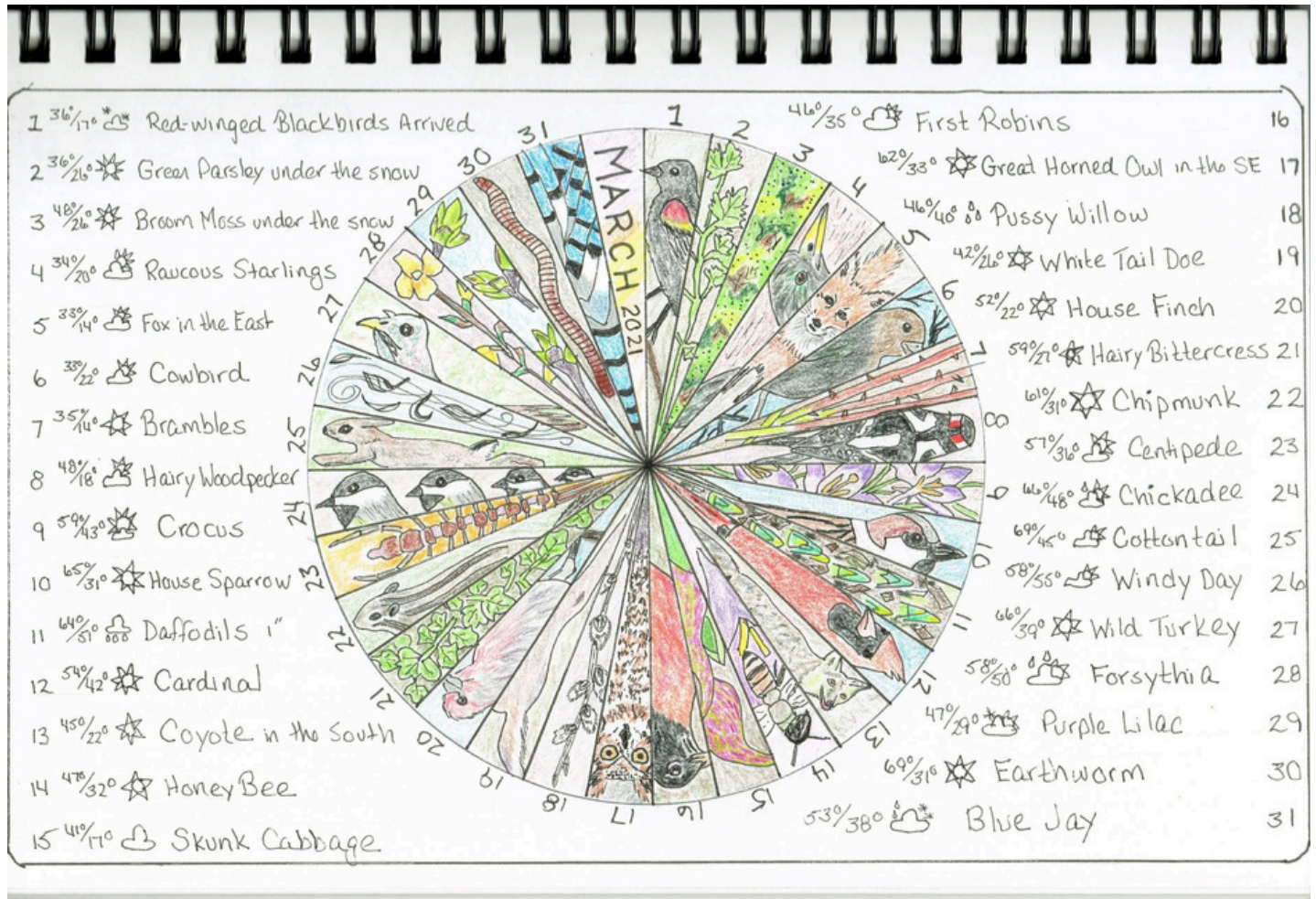
Eastern redbud trees are also wonderful for pollinators so it's a great tree to plant for ourselves and nature.



REDBUD
(*Cercis* sp.)



Make a Phenology Wheel



Have you tried making a phenology wheel yet? We've had a few in Wild Kids and most months we have phenology calendars too.

This phenology wheel is by Susan Levy, a retired elementary children's librarian in Pennsylvania. She said that doing it allowed her to see more of nature's workings in her backyard than she otherwise would have.

"I live in Rockwood, PA on a small farm. Each day I looked for flora or fauna to add to the wheel for that day. I also added the weather for the day. I was so surprised at some of the things I saw and heard. I know I would have missed some of them if I hadn't been looking so intently to do this project!"

When you do a phenology wheel, you can make it as simple or full as you like. You can use drawings like Susan did, or you can do things like color the day's section with the color of the sky that day or just a word to describe something you noticed in nature that day. You can put in the temperatures or the weather or anything you like. Make it your own!

March Phenology

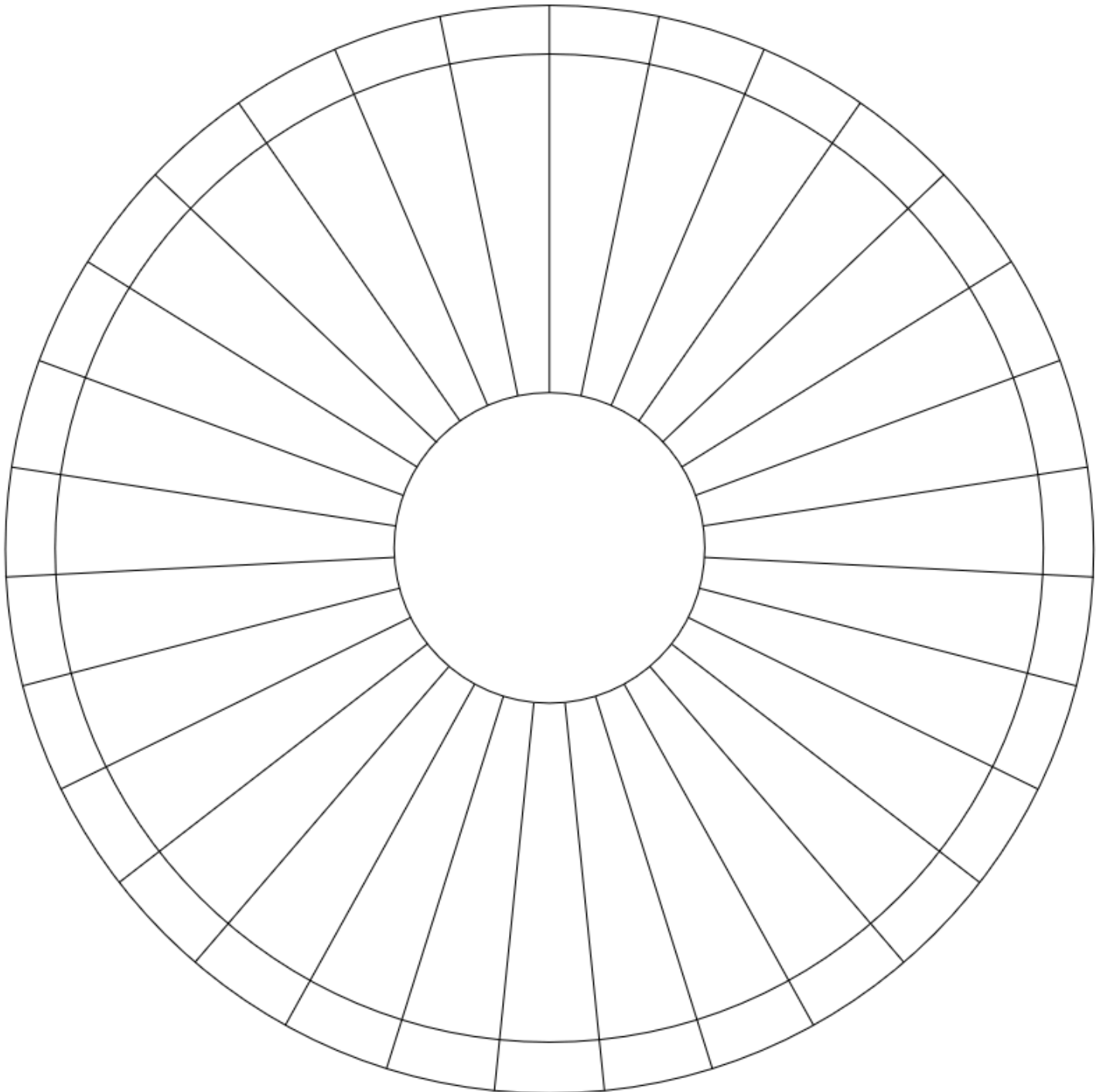
Make a picture record of your observations in nature this month!

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

Flowers blooming, a worm spotted, thunderstorms, trees budding...

Start with day 1 in the first wedge and go all around the wheel with your observations.

There are 31 spaces in this wheel, one for each day of the month.



March Poetry

THE FEELING By Enid Blyton



Inside of me there's a Feeling lives,
That wakes when I see a rose,
Or the snow, or sunshine, or daisy fields;
It wakes for a time — and then goes.

When I suddenly see the rainbow shine
Right over the sky so wide.
And the sun shine gleams thro' the pouring rain,
I get that Feeling inside.

When I get out of bed on a winter's morn,
And look thro' my window pane,
And find the snow on the trees and fields,
I get the Feeling again.

When a great big wave comes sweeping up
On a stormy and windy tide,
And crashes against the rocks in spray,
I get the Feeling inside.

I once told Nannie just how I felt,
But I'm not going to tell her again.
She didn't know at all what I meant,
She called my Feeling a pain.



From "At Home"
by the Wilcox Silver Plate Co, 1880

"Tell us all about it, please."
"just a field -- a group of trees,
With a river flowing by
And low hills against the sky.



"Then upon the other side,
Upright easel, canvas wide.
Sheaf of brushes, wet and dry,
And a little artist -- Guy.

"He has only Just begun,
And so little yet is done,
I should find it hard to tell
If he does it ill or well.

"Let us leave him till it's done,
Artists don't like lookers-on,
Somewhere near we'll find a seat,
And perhaps some meadow-sweet."

THE JOLLY WIND By Enid Blyton



Hurrah! says the wind, as he sweeps along,
Three cheers for the sun to-day,
Just look at him shining away in the sky!
Do come along, children, and play!

I'll fly your kites on the top of the hill,
And I'll spin the old weather-cock round !
I'll send your boats sailing away down the stream,
Till bump! they have all come aground!

Come along while I turn the old windmill about,
And hear how it groans and it creaks;
Just see how I tweak off your bonnets and caps,
And hear all the laughter and shrieks!

I'll make you run faster than ever before,
I'll spin you around and about!
Oh, hurry up, children, and come out of school,
Hurrah! says the wind, with a shout!

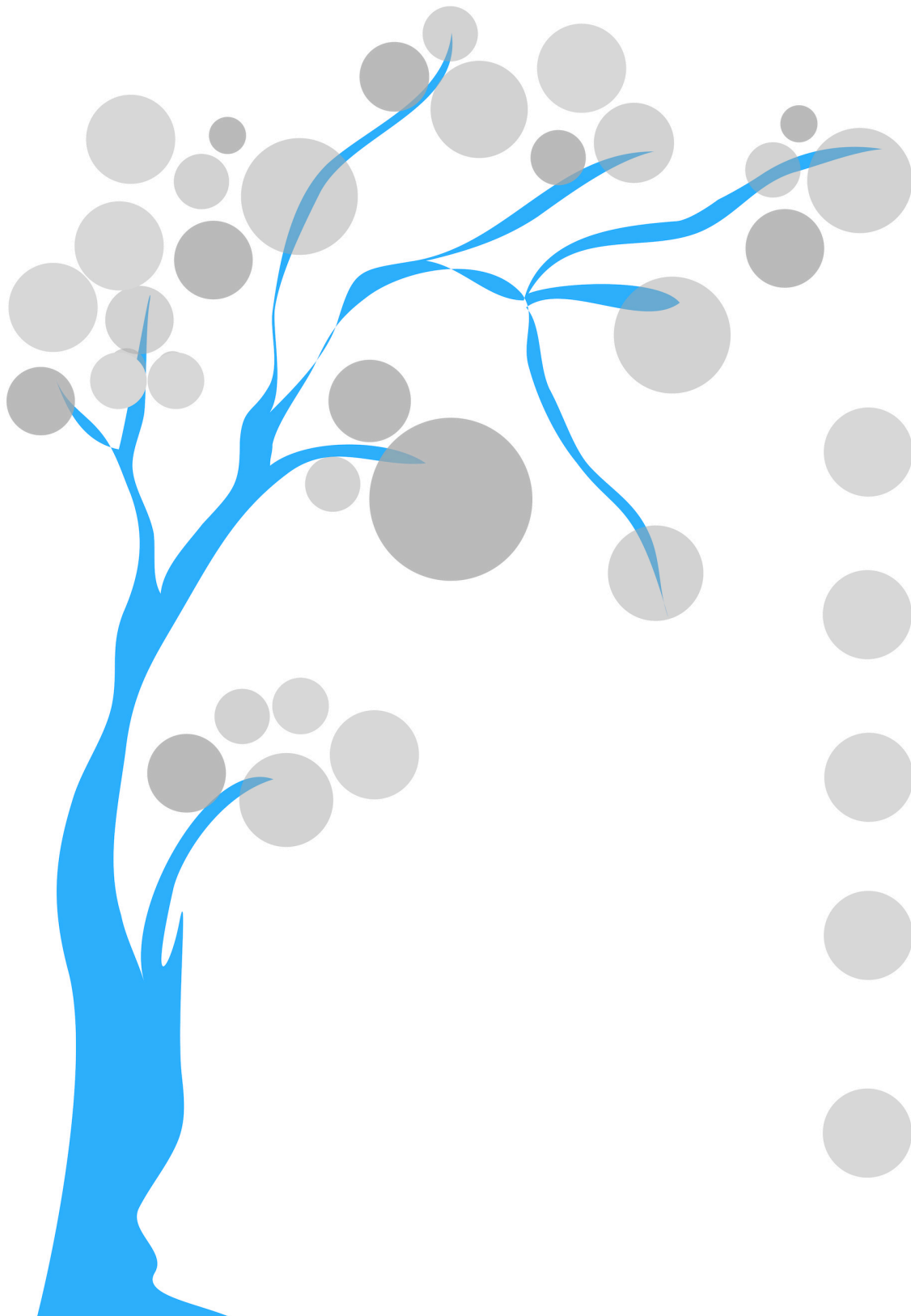
My Nature Journal

March



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

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 _____

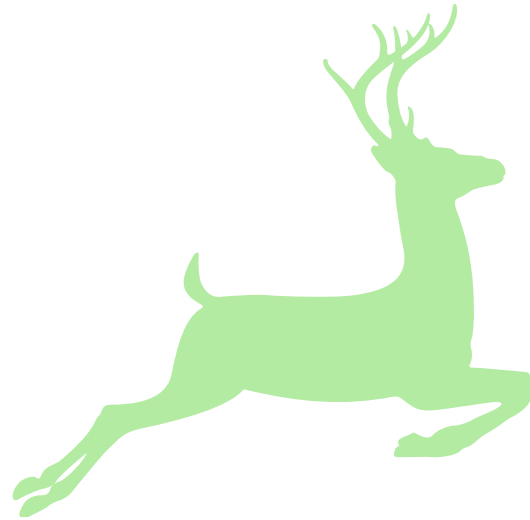
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.