

August 2025

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



Nature Masks

August Nature
Photo Prompts

Rowan & Kentucky
Coffee Trees

Seasonal poems,
activities,
nature journal pages
and more!

Citizen Science
Projects for August

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Hello August!

What are you hoping to do in nature this month?

We are enjoying the second half of summer here in Minnesota, and hoping to spend lots of time in the water while it's still nice and hot - swimming at the lake, boating, playing in the rain, and even splashing in puddles. I haven't been a kid for a very long time, but I hope I never get too old to splash in puddles!

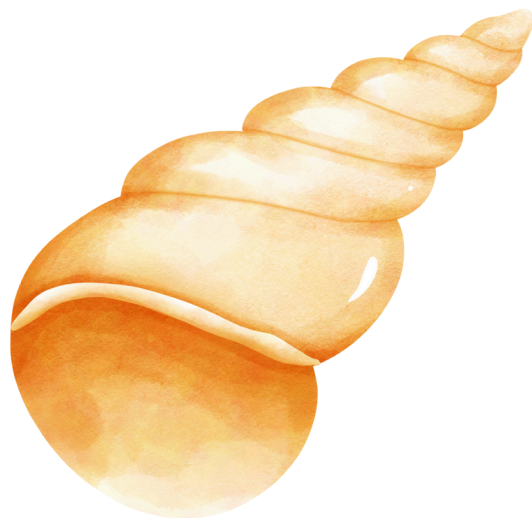
Our gardens and fruit trees really start to produce this time of year, so we'll have some work doing things like making applesauce, canning roasted tomato sauce and drying elderberries for elderberry syrup.

There are some foods that just never taste nearly as good from a grocery store as fresh from nature. Tomatoes are one example of that. The tomatoes they grow for grocery stores have to be pretty hard so they can be put in boxes and shipped thousands of miles away, and they have to grow types that can sit on a shelf for weeks. The kind you can grow in your garden might only last a couple of days after you pick them, but they will be way more flavorful, soft, juicy and delicious.

There are lots of fruits that are best from the garden or from foraging them, and some you can't even buy fresh in stores, like black raspberries, gooseberries and elderberries. August is when I love to enjoy the fruits, vegetables and mushrooms that I can't have any other time of the year because I have to grow or forage them myself. It helps me enjoy the seasons more too!

What do you love about August where you live? 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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Go Wild in August

10 Ways to Play & Learn with Nature this Month

Try to catch the full moon, which rises August 9 at 9:08 p.m. and sets the next morning at 6:27 a.m.

Go on a nature hike and look for something starting with each letter of the alphabet, in order (let yourself have 3 skips for tricky letters!)

Gather some edible (not sprayed!) leaves & flowers like mint, rose petals and lavender, and freeze them in ice cubes to put in cold drinks

Make a wild mask with nature items (we have the printables in this issue)

Collect shells, rocks and driftwood with holes in them & string them together & hang them from a stick to make an inside or outside decoration

Head someplace away from city lights and watch the Perseid meteor shower late at night -- it peaks on August 12-13 this year

Find the tiniest bottle you can find (like a recycled bottle from hotel shampoo or a tiny glass liquor bottle) and look for really special, tiny nature items to display in it

Look for a cool shadow of flowers, trees or other nature and then put paper down and trace or paint the shadow

Gather lots of small, smooth, light colored rocks, shells or other natural items and write words on them, then put them in a bag and pull some out to make a story, song or poem

Do a citizen science project -- we have some fun ones in this issue

10 Fun Citizen Science Projects to take part in this month



Kids like you can help nature and scientists

Have you heard of citizen science? That's where ordinary people help scientists by doing things like observing wildlife, analyzing photographs of constellations and even counting the insects in their houses.

There are citizen science projects for just about any place you live and for all kinds of nature topics. You can do a lot of them from your own house, while others ask you to report on nature-related observations in your area.

Here are some examples of citizen science projects that could use your help. These are just a few examples but there are thousands more!

- Project Squirrel is calling all citizen scientists of all ages to count the number of squirrels in their neighborhoods and report their findings.
- Budburst asks you to log your phenology observations (like when a tree first flowers or you notice a monarch caterpillar on a plant).
- BeeSpotter needs volunteers to go outside with a camera or smartphone and take photos of bees.
- The Creek Critters app walks you through finding and identifying the small organisms that live in freshwater streams, and generating stream health reports based your findings.
- School of Ants USA helps you build an ant catching kit to send to them to ID.
- Stream Selfie asks you to simply snap a pic of your local stream and share it!
- Sourdough for Science asks you to make a sourdough bread starter from scratch from flour and water, and then use simple science tests over 14 days to learn about your own “microbial garden” of bacteria.
- Use the Nature's Notebook smartphone app to observe one or more species in your yard or another place that you frequent.
- eButterfly helps you report information about butterflies worldwide.
- Visit the Nitrate Watch website to get a free kit containing everything you need to measure nitrate in your drinking water or local waterways.

Go to scistarter.org to learn more about each of these and find other citizen science projects you can take part in!

Nature Masks!

Head into nature and collect some nature items like flowers, leaves and feathers to decorate your own nature mask! Just print out our masks on paper or cardstock, then cut out the holes for eyes (you may need to adjust them) and glue on your nature items. To wear them, you can either attach ribbon to each side to tie or tape a stick to the inside of one side to hold it up in front of your face.



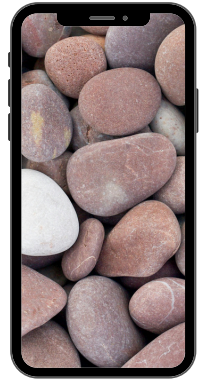
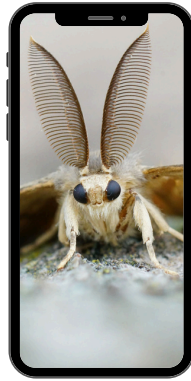




August

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

Nature Photo Challenge



1 Starts with R

2 Dotted

3 Soft

4 Three

5 Pink

6 Alone

7 Jagged

8 Bud

9 Antenna

10 Spilled

11 Hairy

12 Red

13 Oval

14 Gray

15 Smooth

16 Bright

17 Swirls

18 Bark

19 Busy

20 Symmetrical

21 Wrinkled

22 Broken

23 Moving

24 Odd

25 Edible

26 Wet

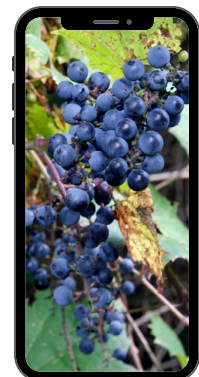
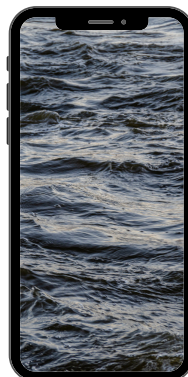
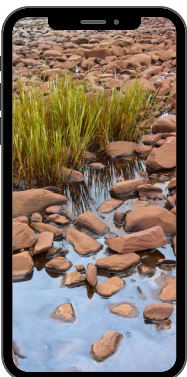
27 Green

28 Dangerous

29 Sparkly

30 Weed

31 Creeping



August Poetry

Bed in Summer

By Robert Louis Stevenson

In winter I get up at night
And dress by yellow candle-light.
In summer, quite the other way,
I have to go to bed by day.

I have to go to bed and see
The birds still hopping on the tree,
Or hear the grown-up people's feet
Still going past me in the street.

And does it not seem hard to you,
When all the sky is clear and blue,
And I should like so much to play,
To have to go to bed by day?



The Little Elf

By John Kendrick Bangs

I met a little elf-man, once,
Down where the lilies blow.
I asked him why he was so small,
And why he didn't grow.

He slightly frowned, and with his eye
He looked me through and through.
"I'm quite as big for me," said he,
"As You are big for You."

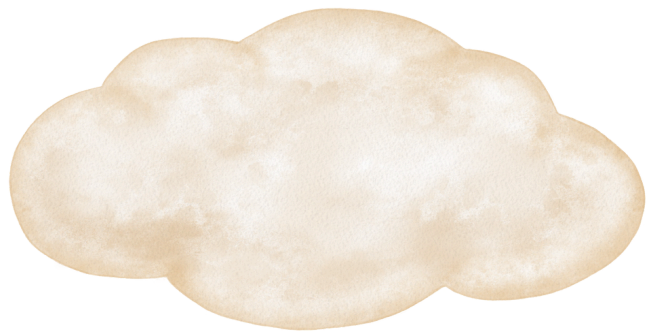
Clouds

by Frank Dempster Sherman

The sky is full of clouds to-day,
And idly, to and fro,
Like sheep across the pasture, they
Across the heavens go.
I hear the wind with merry noise
Around the housetops sweep,
And dream it is the shepherd boys,—
They're driving home their sheep.

The clouds move faster now; and see!
The west is red and gold.
Each sheep seems hastening to be
The first within the fold.
I watch them hurry on until
The blue is clear and deep,
And dream that far beyond the hill
The shepherds fold their sheep.

Then in the sky the trembling stars
Like little flowers shine out,
While Night puts up the shadow bars,
And darkness falls about.



Mountain Ash/ Rowan Tree



Sorbus aucuparia is a pretty and useful tree that's known as Mountain Ash in the United States and Rowan in the UK. It has pretty white flowers in the spring and bright red or orange berries in autumn.

Some people use the berries for jams and jellies, but they have to be cooked first to remove bitterness and toxins. A lot of foragers say they taste better after a frost. The berries were also used in the past for feeding livestock and for folk medicine, and the wood is popular for woodworking.

They are native to colder parts of Europe, Asia, and even Northern Africa, and usually grow to be 15 to 30 feet tall.

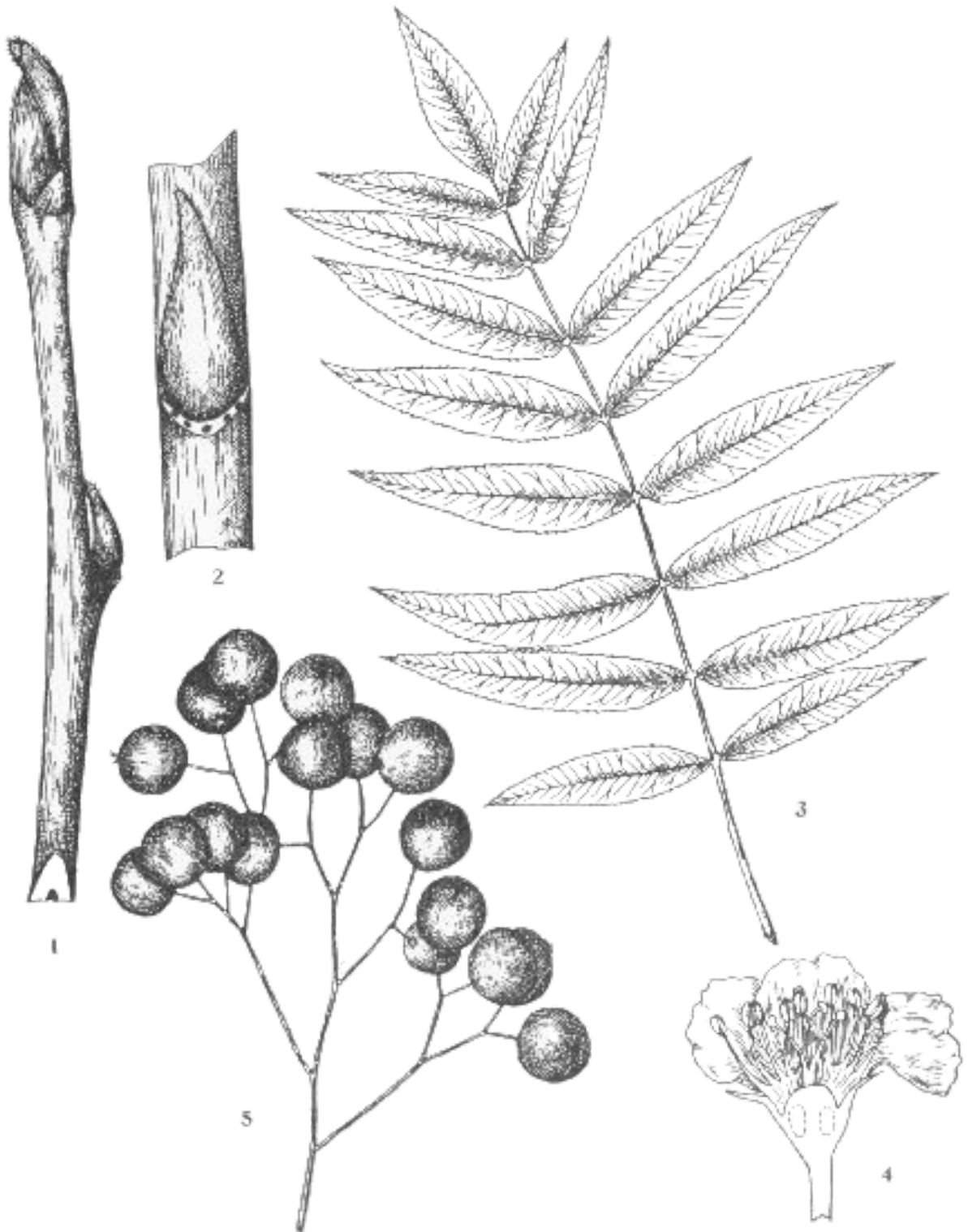
Rowan trees were considered magical trees in the old days, thought to protect people against witchcraft and enchantment. They were believed to ward off evil spirits and were commonly planted near homes for protection. In Norse mythology, the god Thor was saved by a rowan tree.

The flowers are popular with pollinators like apple fruit moths and with birds like blackbirds and thrushes. The leaves feed caterpillars that turn into moths like the autumn green carpet and the Welsh wave.

They are in the same family as roses, the Rosaceae family, not the ash family. The rose family is actually a huge family of plants, with over 2,500 species! Some of the other plants in the rose family are trees like apple, almond, peach, plum and hawthorn trees, berries like blackberries and raspberries, and plants like goatsbeard. It's a pretty cool family!



ROWAN / MOUNTAIN ASH
(*Sorbus aucuparia*, *Sorbus Americana*)



Kentucky Coffeetree

The Kentucky coffeetree (*Gymnocladus dioicus*) is a funny tree because it's actually in the pea family!

People sometimes roast the seeds from its giant pods as a coffee substitute. It's very important for them to roast them first though, since they are poisonous when they're raw. There have even been reports of the seeds falling into water and poisoning fish and livestock! In the past, some Native American tribes would put lots of the seeds into rivers in order to daze fish and make them easy to catch.

Native American tribes also used the beans as dice as games, as beads in jewelry, and as musical shakers and rattles.

Kentucky coffeetrees have separate male and female trees. This is called being dioecious. The female trees produce the large, woody pods. If there isn't a male tree nearby to fertilize the pods, they will be small and without seeds. Winter is the best time to collect the pods, once the sticky insides have dried.

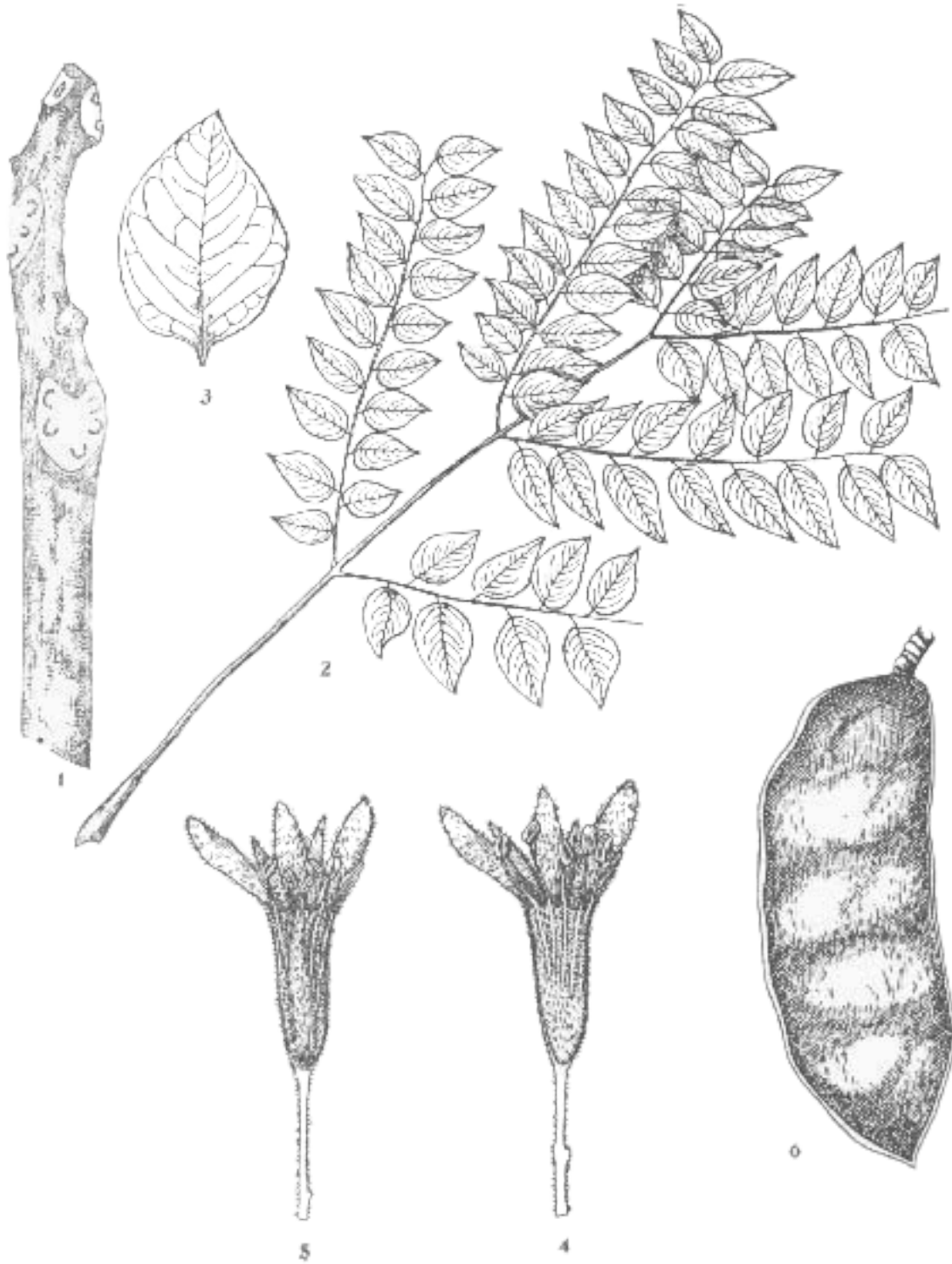
They are big trees, growing to about 60 to 70 feet tall with trunks that can be 3 feet across. The wood is strong and was once used by carpenters and cabinetmakers. They have greenish white flowers that bloom in early summer and in the fall their leaves turn yellow.

Kentucky coffeetrees are native to the United States and Canada, but they're pretty rare these days because they can only be grown from seeds that have been scarred. Scientists believe that long ago they were eaten by giant animals like mammoths that helped spread the seeds, but there are no animals alive anymore with teeth big enough to crack them open.



KENTUCKY COFFEE TREE

(S)



August 2025

Phenology Calendar

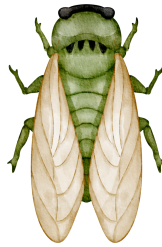
Keep track of nature observations in your area this month like extreme weather, garden harvests, foraging finds and wildlife spotted.



SUN

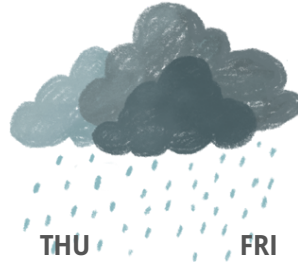


MON



TUE

WED



THU

FRI



SAT

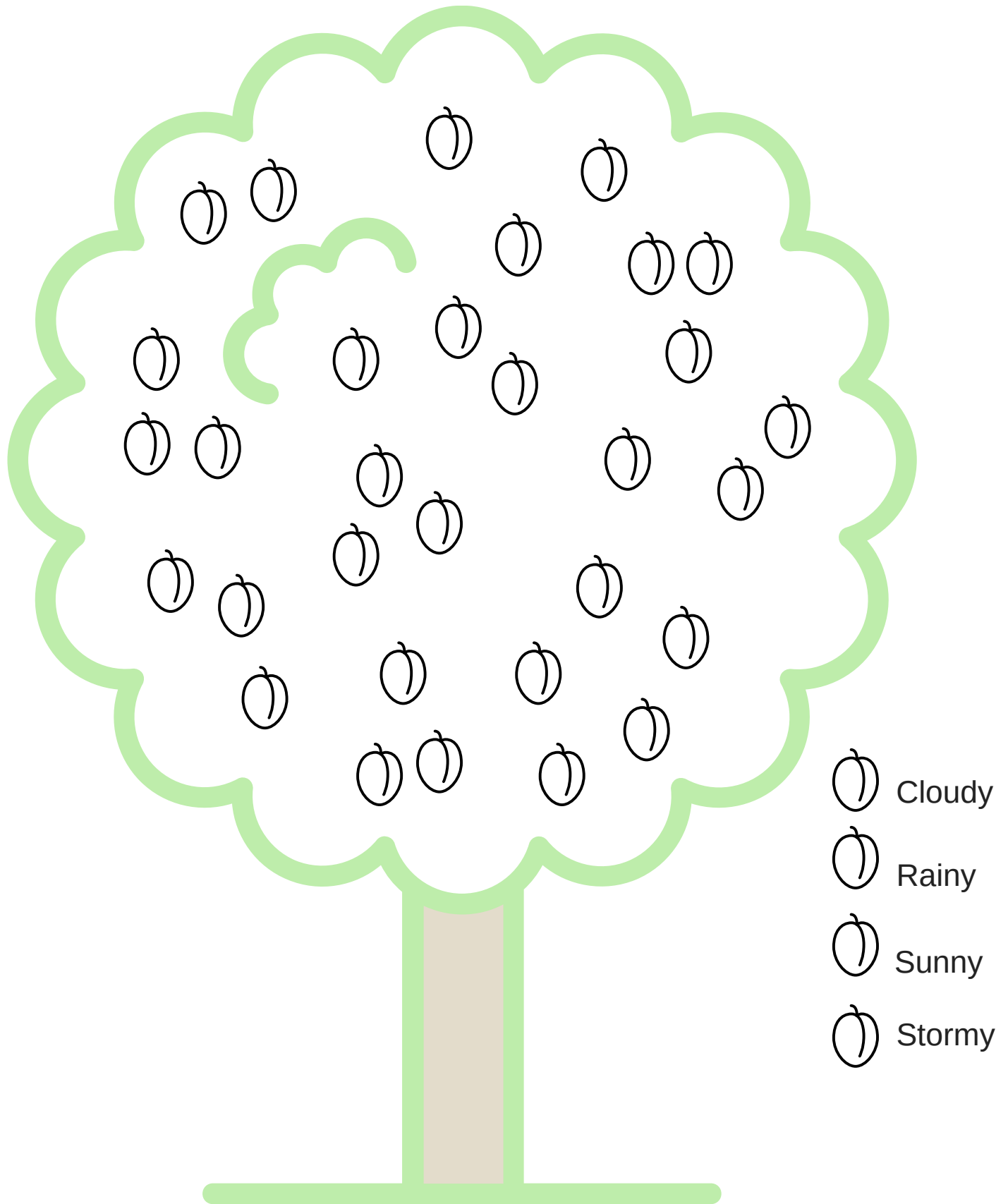
					01	02
03	04	05	06	07	08	09
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	Notes:					

My Nature Journal

August



August Weather Tree



August Bird List

Birds spotted this month

August Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

August 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!

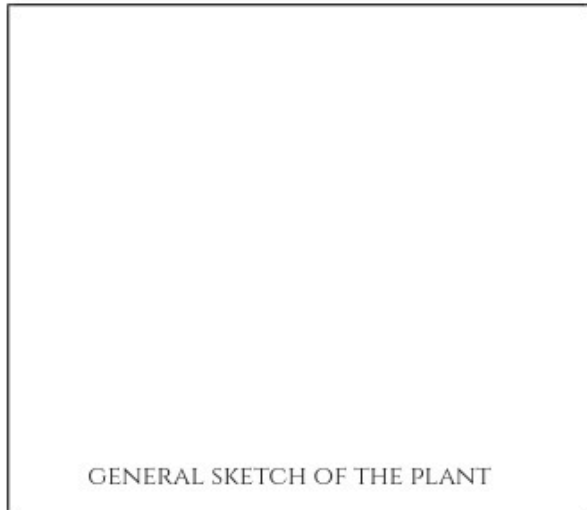
Week 1 Observations

Week 2 Observations

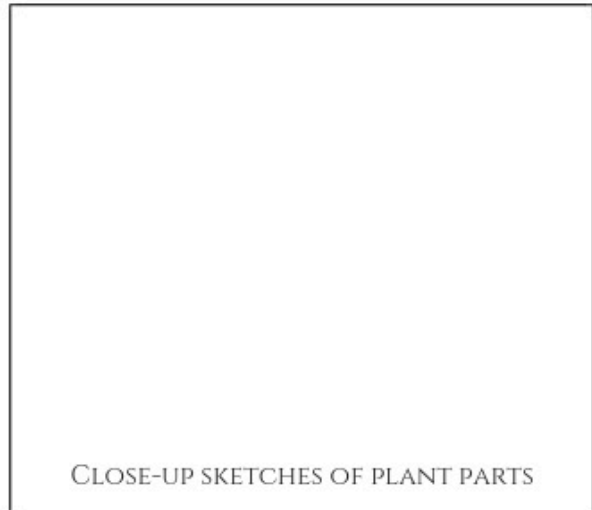
Week 3 Observations

Week 4 Observations

MY FORAGING GUIDE FOR:



GENERAL SKETCH OF THE PLANT



CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS

LATIN NAME _____

WHERE FOUND _____

PARTS USED _____

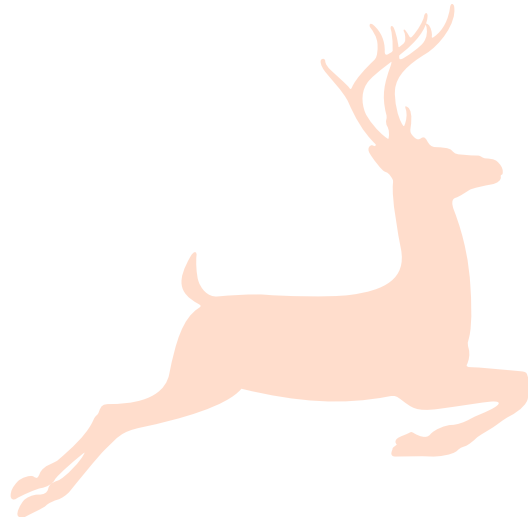
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.