

September 2025

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Fall Foraging BINGO

Fall Herbs to Forage

How Tall is That Tree?
A Cool Way to Find Out!

Stinky Ginkgo &
Magical Quivering
Shaking Aspen Trees

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?

I am always a little sad when summer ends, even though fall is such a wonderful time of year. I like to get all the time outside that I can while the weather is still warm enough to do things like splashing in the lake and gardening.

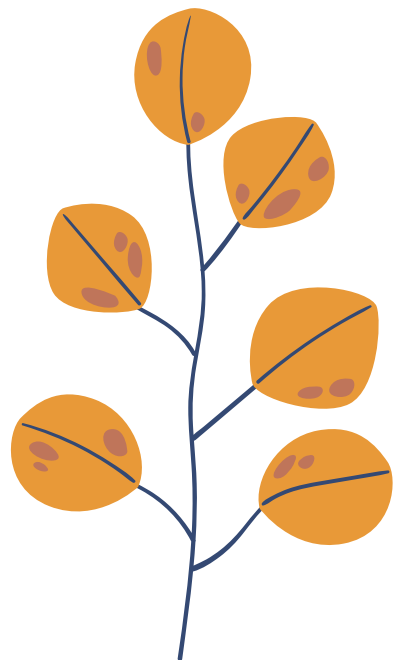
September is a busy time of year for us with things like harvesting fruits and veggies from our garden and “putting them up,” which means preserving them for the year by canning them, freezing them or drying them.

We also forage a lot of herbs this time of year that I make into medicines or dry for teas. My husband Daryl forages me lots of hawthorn berries (or haws) that I make into tinctures that I put in my morning drink to help with a blood disorder that I have. I know he loves me when he brings me hawthorn berries because the trees have long thorns and he always gets at least a little scratched up! Sometimes we dig up dandelion roots to make a tincture that helps with inflammation (swelling inside the body). We also dry elderberries for flu-fighting elderberry syrup, motherwort that helps with stress and heart problems, and lemon balm that helps some people feel more cheerful, just to name a few. We’ve got some information on common herbs that people forage in this month’s magazine.

This is also a good month to look at fall leaves, watch migrating butterflies, hike in nature and so much more!

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

Look for the full moon rising in the evening of September 7

Go geo-caching

Do leaf rubbings of lots of different types of trees and label them

Gather and label seeds for next year's gardens from veggies you grew and flowers like sunflowers & native flowers

Try to take part in Car Free Day on September 22 and get wherever you need to go by foot, bike or public transportation

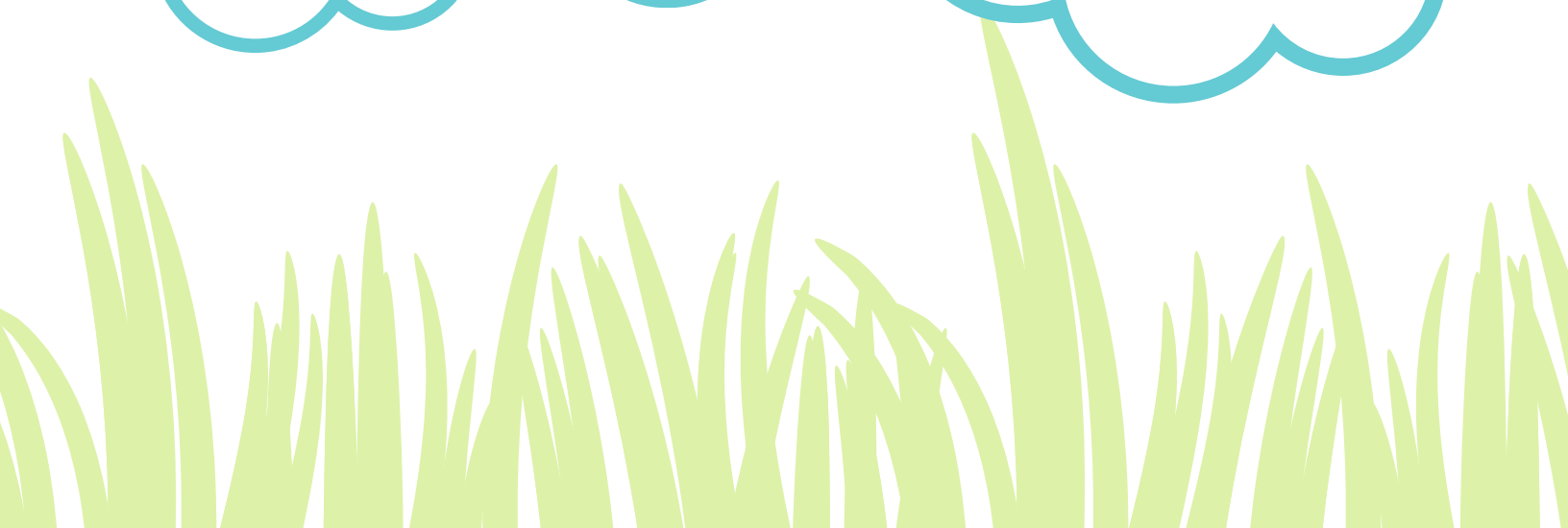
Celebrate the first day of fall (or spring in the Southern Hemisphere) on September 22

Dry some mint, pineapple weed, bee balm or other tasty edible leaves or flowers for winter teas

Gather natural items like rocks and bark to stack up and see how high you can make a tower of them

Cut magazine pages into squares of colors and put them in a bag, then pull out 3 squares each and go on a walk to try to match your colors to things in nature

Gather water in jars or bottles from three different nearby water sources like rivers, lakes, ocean or puddles – then let them sit for a day and see what settles to the bottom and how they compare



Herbs to Forage in the Fall

Fall is a wonderful time to forage herbs for teas, seasonings and medicines!

Different parts are gathered depending on the plant. For example, elderberries are good for making anti-flu syrup and mullein flowers are good for making an infused oil for earaches and ear infections.

Keep an eye out for these plants this fall and if you find lots in your area, try to research them with a grown up. There are many, many more. These are just a few examples!



Raspberry leaves
(*Rubus idaeus*)



Rose hips
(*Rosa*)



Dandelion root
(*Taraxacum officinale*)



Mullein
(*Verbascum thapsus*)



Mallow
(*Malva*)



Ginkgo leaves
(*Ginkgo biloba*)



Choke cherry bark
(*Prunus virginiana*)



Chicory root
(*Cichorium intybus*)



Yarrow
(*Achillea*)



Goldenrod
(*Solidago*)



Hawthorn berries
(*Crataegus monogyna*)



Elderberries
(*Sambucus*)

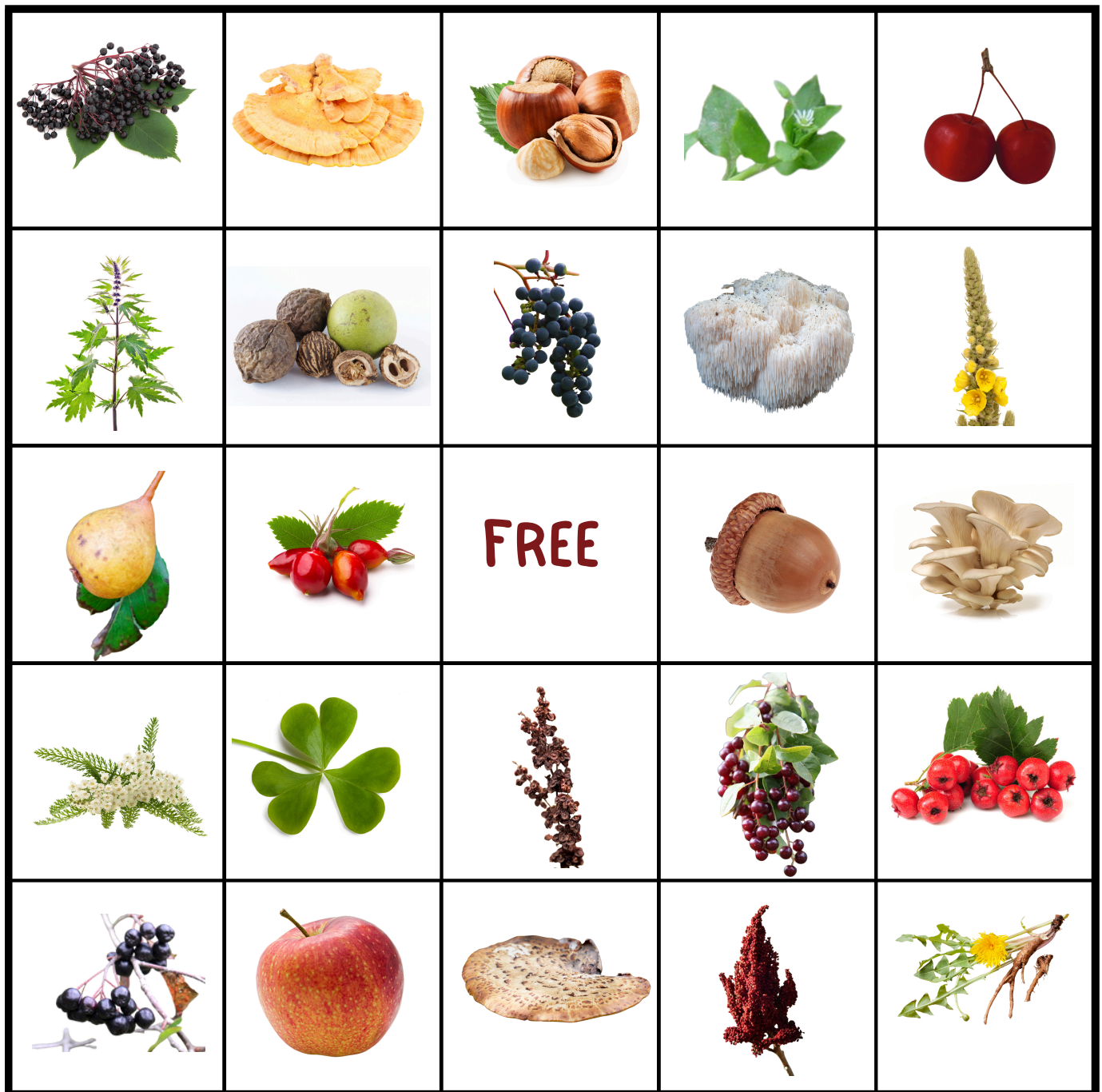
Never forage in places that have been sprayed with pesticides or herbicides!

Fall Foraging Bingo

How to Play: See how many of these wild edible and medicinal plants you can spot this fall. You might find them in parks, roadsides or even your own yard. Make an x over the ones you spot and try to get a BINGO either across, down, or diagonally.

This is just a tiny fraction of the wild edible and medicinal plants to forage in fall!
Not all of these may be found in your area, so feel free to substitute similar ones in your area.

The plants and mushrooms are: Elderberries, chicken of the woods mushrooms, hazelnuts, chickweed, crabapples, motherwort, walnuts, wild grapes, lion's mane mushrooms, mullein, wild pears, rose hips, acorns, oyster mushrooms, yarrow, wood sorrel, dock seeds, choke cherries, hawthorn berries, aronia (chokeberries), apples, dryad's saddle mushrooms (also known as pheasant back), staghorn sumac, dandelion root



How tall is that tree?

An easy way to find out!

Here's a really cool way to estimate how tall a tree is without having to climb it!

1 Face away from the tree.

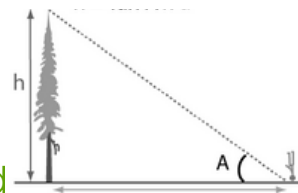


2 Spread your legs and bend over so you can look at the tree between them, and your eyes are near the ground.

3 Can you see the top of the tree? If not, move away from the tree until you can.

4 Measure the distance from you to the tree, and that's approximately how tall the tree is!

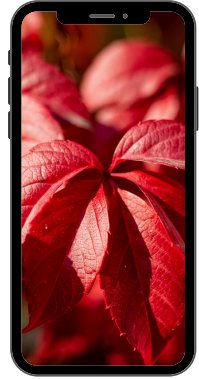
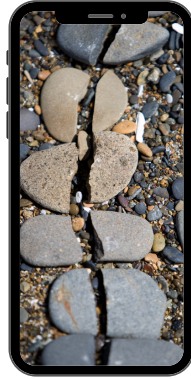
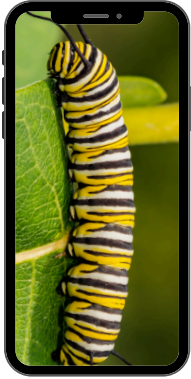
Why does it work? This uses a kind of math called geometry. The top of the tree, the bottom of the tree and your eyes at ground level make a triangle, and the angle of the tree growing up from the ground is 90 degrees, which is called a right angle. The other two angles are about 45 degrees (triangle angles add up to 180 degrees). That makes the triangle a kind of triangle called an isosceles right triangle, and it means that the two shorter sides (the distance from you to the tree and the height of the tree) are the same length. Measure one and you know what the other will be!



September

Nature Photo Prompts

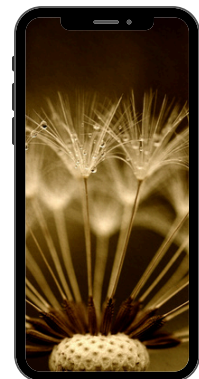
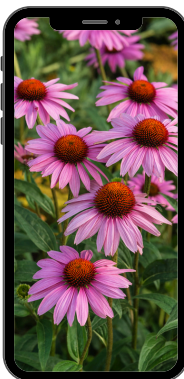
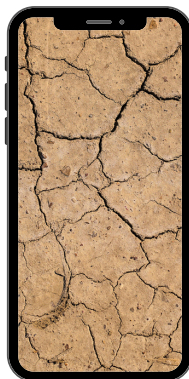
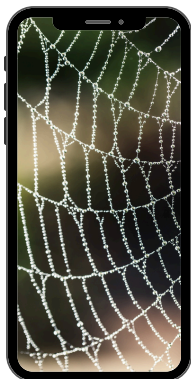
Try to head outside and take a picture each day with that day's prompt as an inspiration!



- 1 Parallel
- 2 Starts with S
- 3 Tiny
- 4 Red
- 5 Reflection
- 6 Ground
- 7 Pattern
- 8 Web
- 9 Fragile
- 10 Many

- 11 Sharp
- 12 Light
- 13 Broken
- 14 Grayscale
- 15 Colorful
- 16 Smooth
- 17 Sky
- 18 Leaf
- 19 Ground
- 20 Round

- 21 Insect
- 22 Hidden
- 23 Tracks
- 24 Edible
- 25 Invasive
- 26 Stripes
- 27 Pink
- 28 Seeds
- 29 Wet
- 30 Bumpy



Ginkgo

(*Ginkgo biloba*)



Ginkgo trees are such cool trees!

They are one of the oldest species of trees in the world, dating back to the time of dinosaurs.

Atlas Obscura says, "Seeing a ginkgo biloba tree on a city street is the arboreal equivalent of seeing a T. Rex at Starbucks. In fact, the fossil record shows that ginkgo biloba trees existed in their current form as far as the Middle Jurassic Period, or 170 million years ago."



They are originally from China and botanists thought they were extinct, but one was found in the 1700's. The seeds were brought back and planted all over the world, so they are now found all over.



This ginkgo tree in China is over 1,000 years old!

People use ginkgo leaves for medicine sometimes. Scientists are doing lots of studies to see which illnesses they might help with and how to use ginkgo safely.



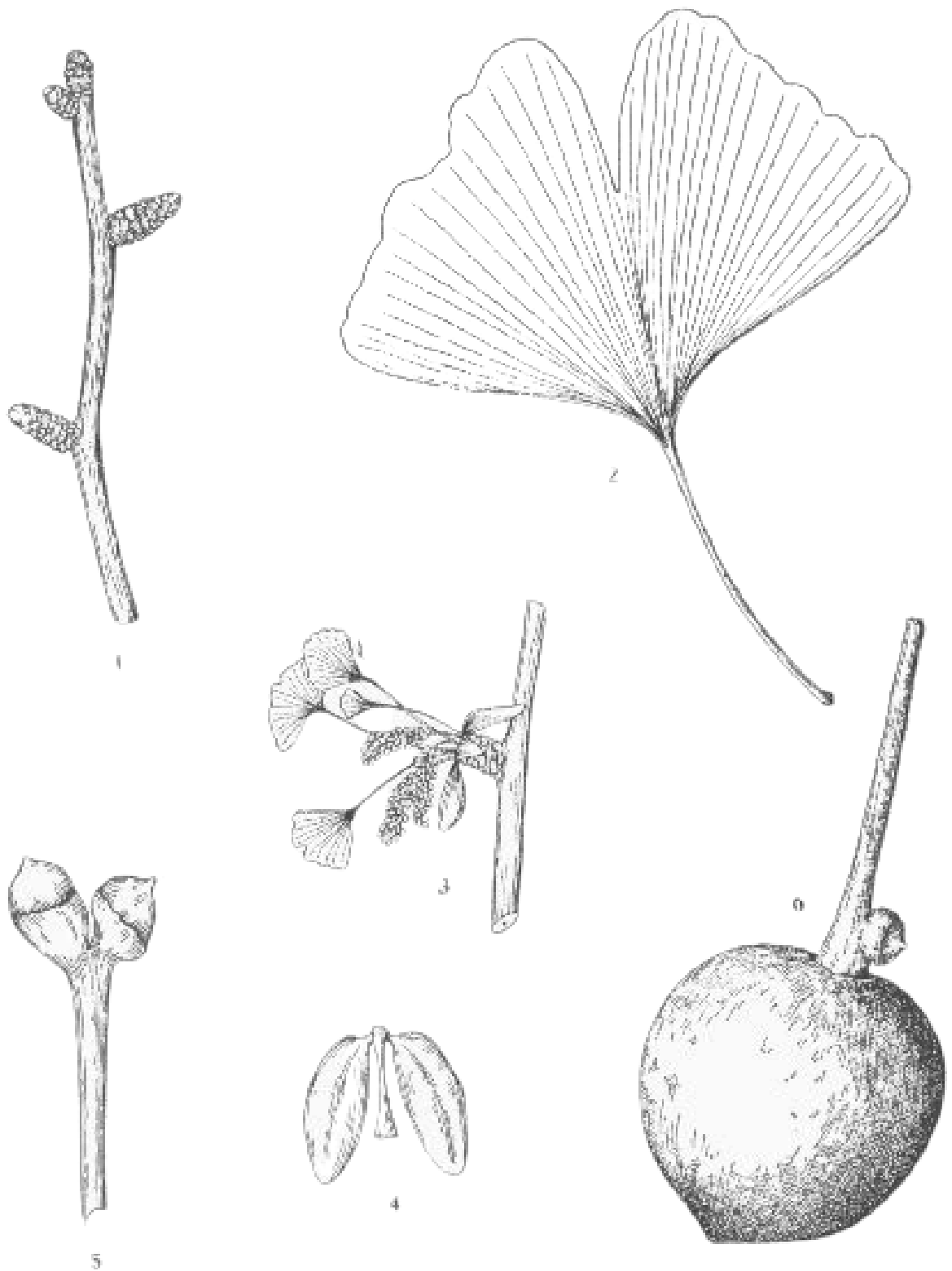
One of the weird things about ginkgo fruits is they are really stinky! People forage the nuts (which are technically seeds and not true nuts) inside them because they are tasty and healthy, but nobody likes the smell of the squishy pulp around them. Some people say it smells like vomit. The nuts have to be cooked (boiled or roasted) to be safe to eat, and you have to wear gloves to handle the pulp because it has an acid in it.



So don't gather the stinky, squishy, stinging fruits! Just admire this cool and interesting tree from afar.



GINGKO
(*Ginkgo biloba*)



Magical Quivering Quaking Aspens (*Populus tremuloides*)

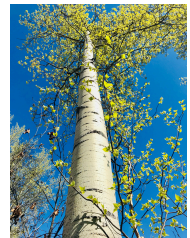
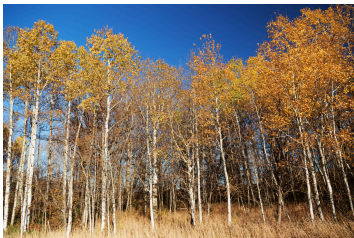
Quaking aspens are another really cool kind of tree! When the wind is blowing even a little bit, all the leaves look like they're quivering, like they're magically shaking and moving on their own. It's really cool to see.



Our son Alex was working with the Summer Youth Corps of Conservation Corps last summer, a job where teenagers can earn money living in the wild and helping protect natural places by doing things like cutting down invasive trees, planting native plants, and repairing stairs at state parks.

He says, "The first time I ever noticed quaking aspens was at SYC. Ben, my supervisor started talking about them during a break. It wasn't quivering at the time and it just looked like a tree. Then he pointed out that the cool thing about quaking aspens is that the stems are flat, which means they can twist really easily. They're designed to grow quickly in large fields, which means they're not very strong. So any strong wind would knock them down. With the flat stems, the leaves can twist a lot easier so when the wind hits them they act more like streamers than sails and the wind passes past the trees much easier."

Alex says you should cut out a leaf and stem so you can see how it works to be flat like paper instead of round and structural like most tree leaf stems. If you want to try it, print out an extra copy of our botanical coloring page on the next page and cut the leaf out to see how floppy it is.



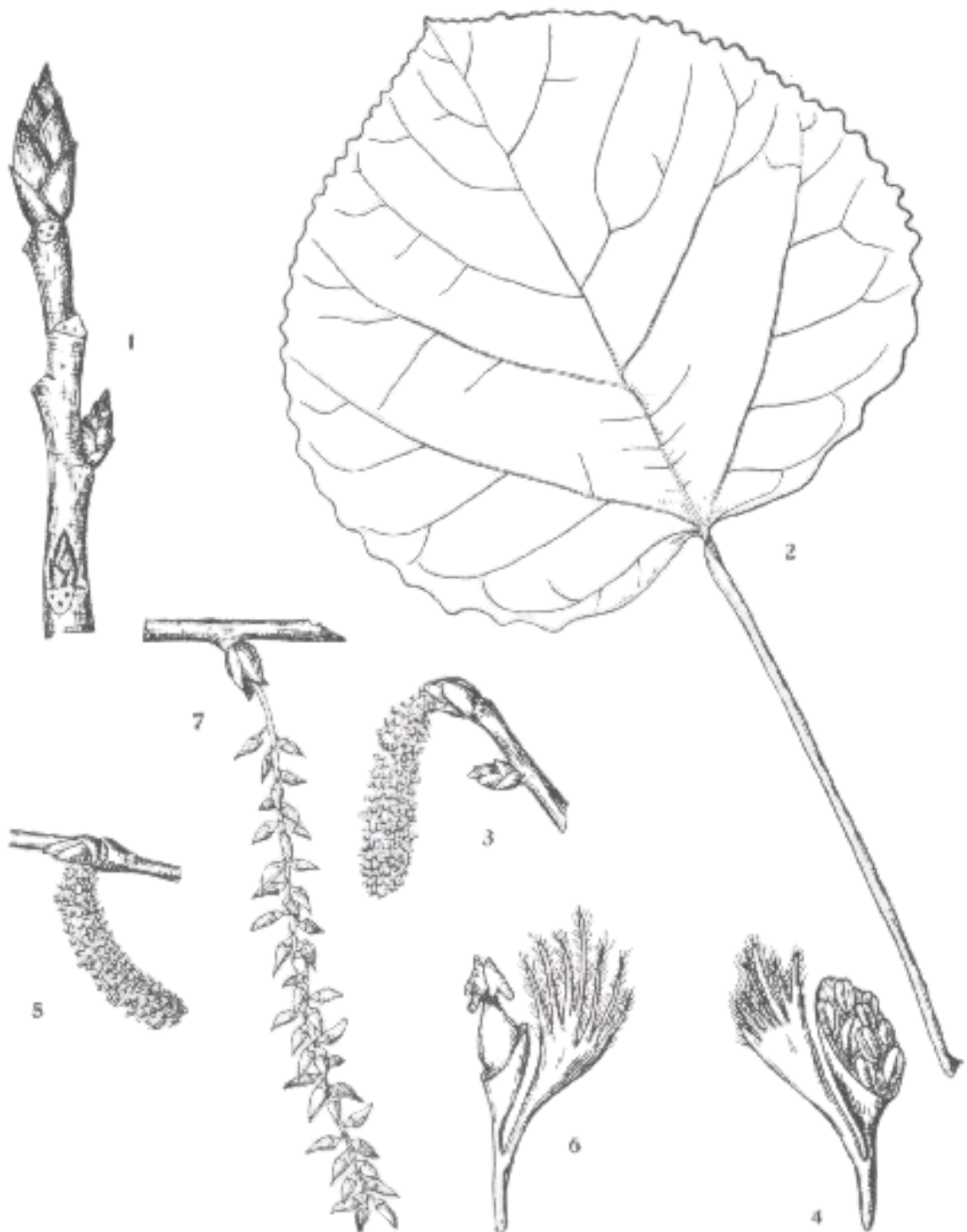
More cool facts about quaking aspens:

Quaking aspens are found in cooler regions of North America. They can grow up to 65' tall and 12-29 feet in diameter, but are usually smaller. They are one of the first trees to regrow after a fire and has the widest natural range of any North American tree. There is one in Minnesota believed to be 8,000 years old!

The Onondaga called them "nut-kie-e," meaning "noisy leaf." The rustling sound is very soothing when you're out for a walk in the woods.

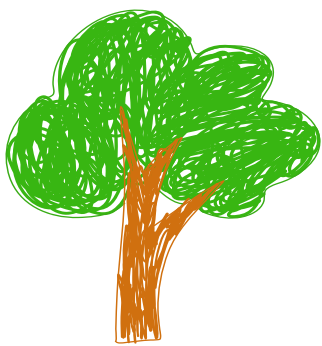
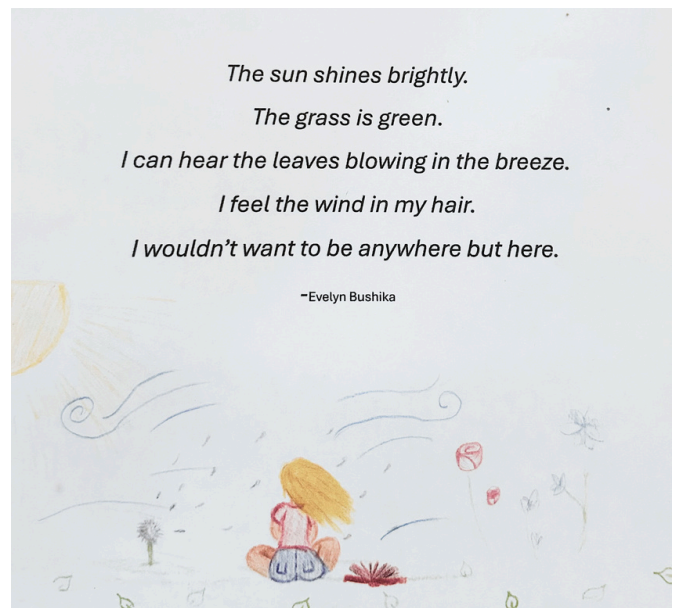
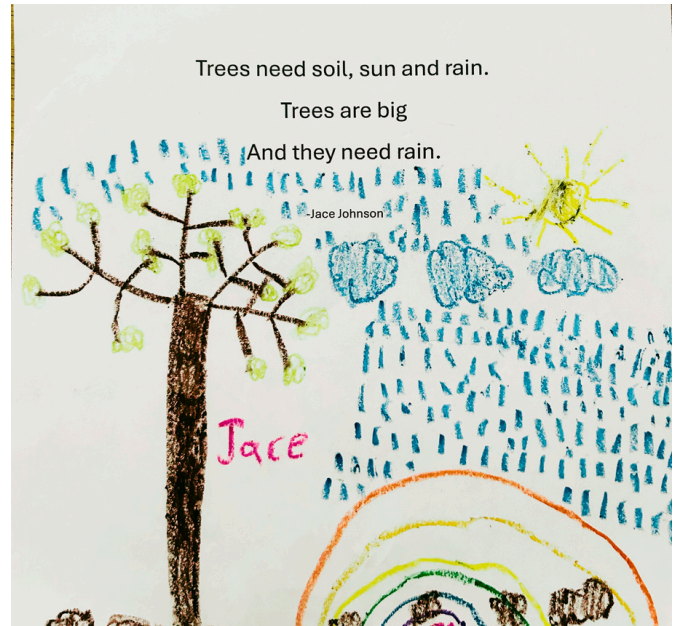
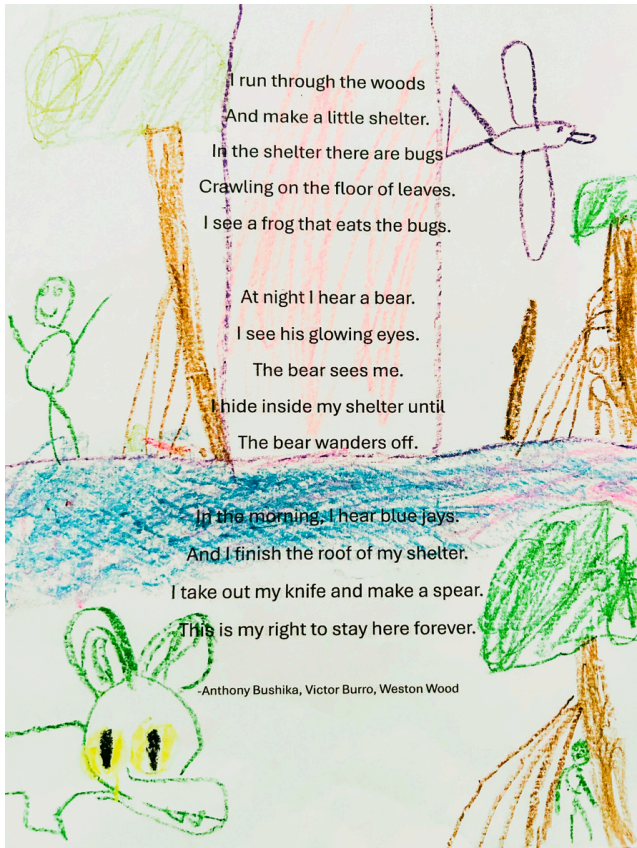
The world's oldest and heaviest organism is a quaking aspen! Since they propagate primarily through root sprouts, all trees in one area are clones of the original. "Pando", a cloned aspen community in Utah with over 47,000 stems, covers 106 acres, or over 75 football fields! Scientists believe the original seed sprouted between 8,000 and 10,000 years ago.

ASPEN
(*Populus tremuloides*)



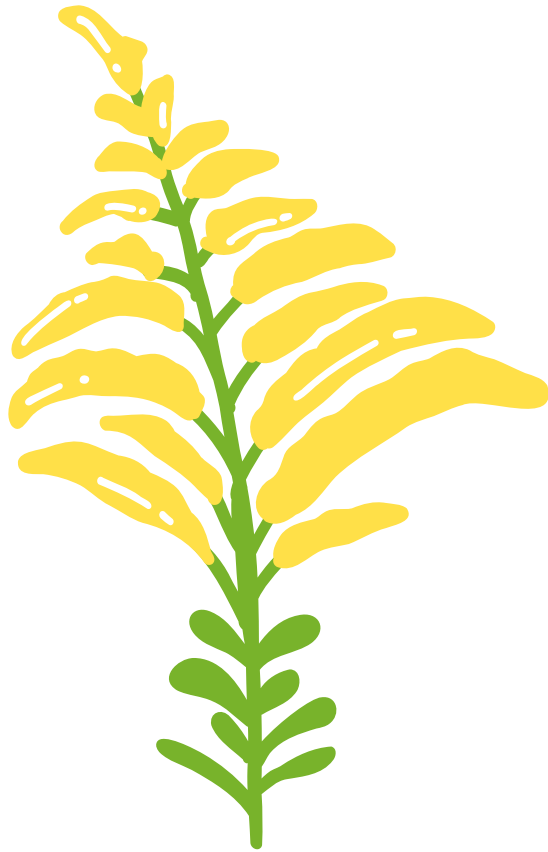
September Poetry

Thanks to our readers, Anthony, Jace and Evelyn
for submitting this month's poetry and artwork!



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 geese spotted
- Acorns falling
- Maple leaves turning gold
- Crabapples are ripe
- 7 inches of rain
- Record high temperatures
- First asters blooming
- Lion's mane mushroom spotted
- Elderberries are fully ripe
- Tamarack needles turn yellow
- Rose hips collected
- Black eyed susan (rudbeckia) seeds gathered and scattered



September 2025



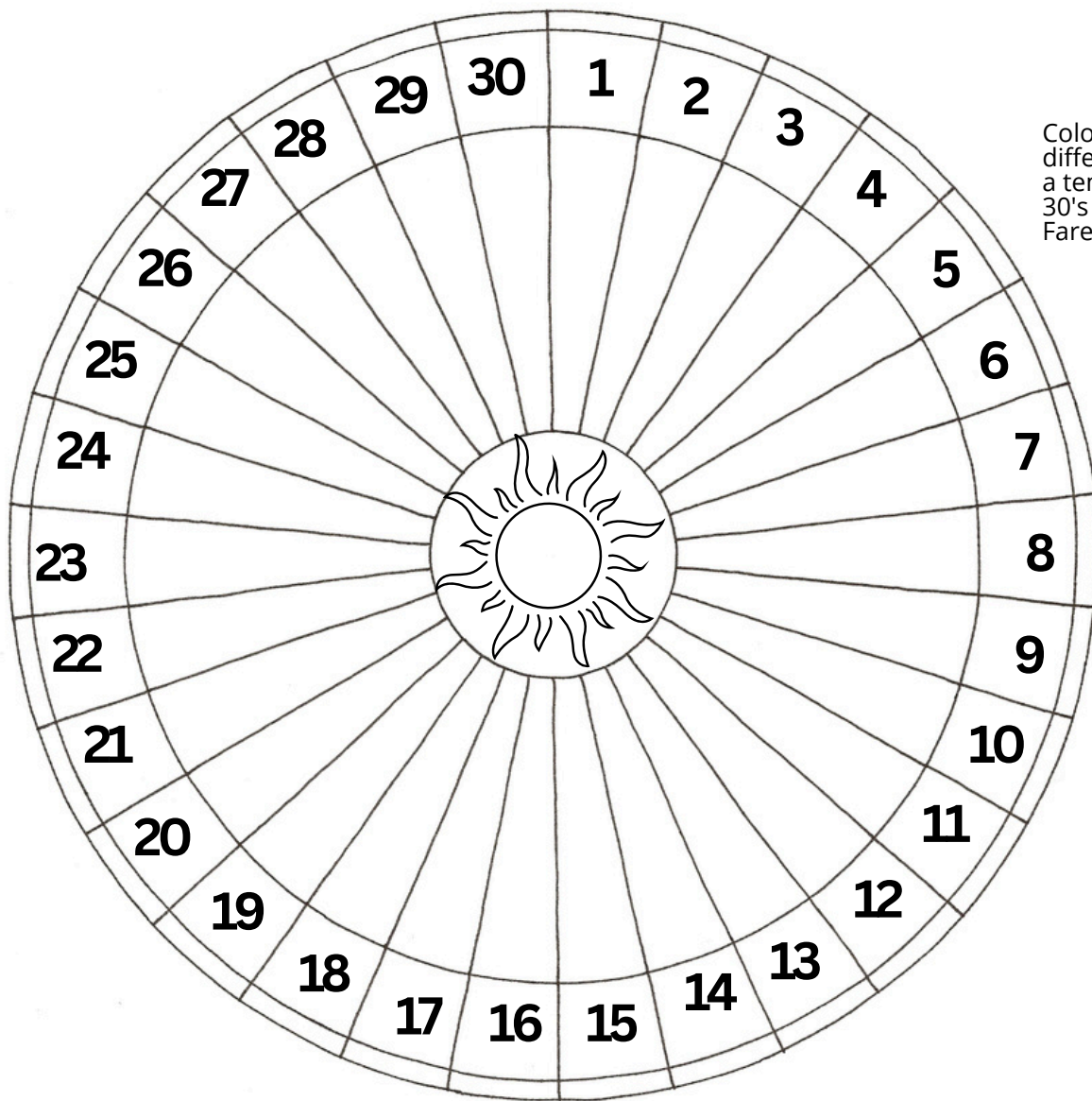
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	01	02	03	04	05	06
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

September Temperature Wheel

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

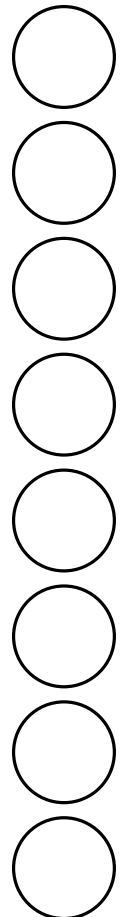
Each day at a certain time (like when you wake up, or at noon), find out what the temperature is outside. Write the temperature in that spoke of the wheel and then color that area to represent the temperature range (like blue for in the 60s).

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

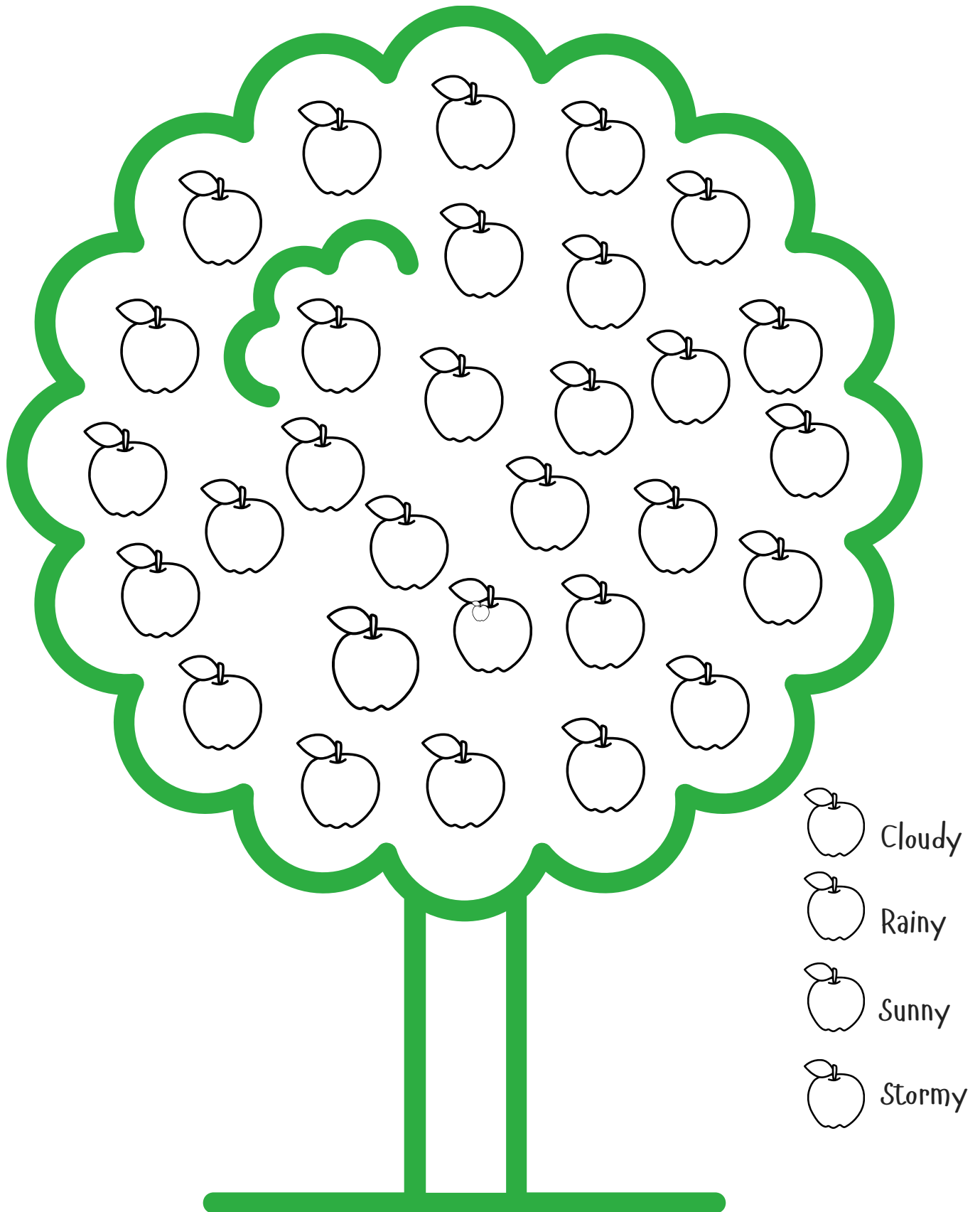


Key

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

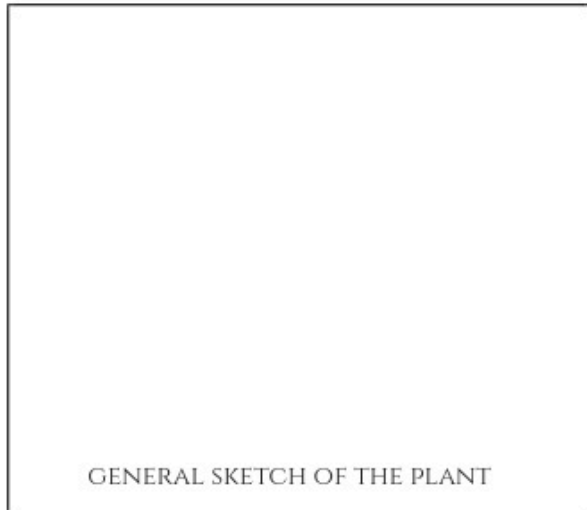
Week 1 Observations

Week 2 Observations

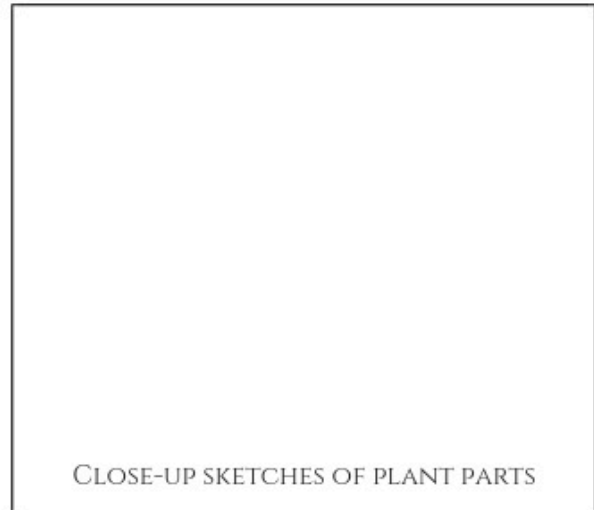
Week 3 Observations

Week 4 Observations

MY FORAGING GUIDE FOR:



GENERAL SKETCH OF THE PLANT



CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS

LATIN NAME _____

WHERE FOUND _____

PARTS USED _____

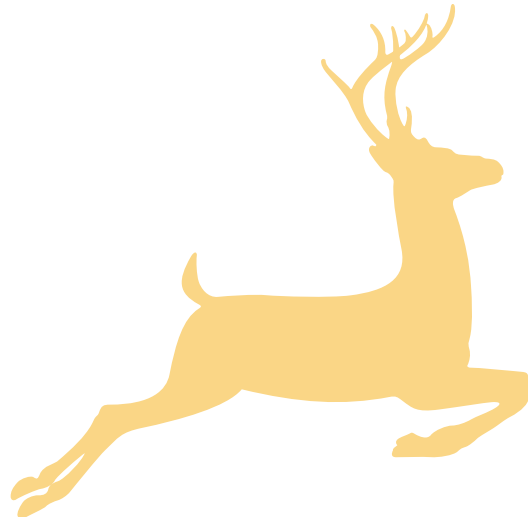
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.