

December 2019

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



**Botanical
Gift Tags**

**Winter
Foraging**

**Solstice
Fun**

**Seasonal poetry,
activities, nature
journal pages &
more**

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Happy December!

This issue marks our 12th issue, rounding out one full year of Wild Kids!

In this issue, we have:

- ~ Fun ways to celebrate the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year for those of us in the Northern hemisphere.
- ~ Information on winter foraging and all of the wild plants you can still find when the weather gets cold.
- ~ Coloring pages for spruce and chestnuts, two very timely wild plants for December.
- ~ Botanical gift tags of all 24 Elizabeth Blackwell coloring pages you did in Wild Kids Magazine this year.

We'll also look back at some of the things we learned about this year. And as always, there's seasonal poetry, ways to go wild and play with nature this month, and nature study pages.

If you look in the nature journal pages, I've also added a page for kids to record all of the plants they foraged in 2019 if they did any foraging.

A note to the folks in the Southern hemisphere: I've tried this year to include information and fun to work for everyone, but that was especially tricky for me here in snowy, cold Minnesota this month. Please forgive the focus on winter activities and enjoy a little peek into our cold weather fun. I promise to work at incorporating more Southern hemisphere fun in the future. Perhaps it's an excuse for a trip to Australia to do some research? :)

Here's wishing you a wonderful, wild December, no matter where you are!

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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Find lots more links, information and fun to accompany this month's themes at
www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids

Go Wild in December

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

String
cranberries for
the birds

Watch for
meteor
showers

Go for a walk
in the rain or
snow

Gather
evergreen
clippings for
decorations

Make ice
suncatchers
to hang
outside

Leave some
brush and leaf
piles to be winter
wildlife shelters
in your yard

Have a hot
cocoa breakfast
picnic

Sketch
outside

Root some
fresh herbs
in water to
pot up

Celebrate the
solstice (we
share some
ideas in this
issue)

Solstice Fun

Celebrating the shortest day of the year



December 21st is the winter solstice for people in the Northern Hemisphere.

That means that it's the shortest day of the year in terms of sunlight, or the longest night of the year (and the first day of winter). That also means that it marks the start of when the days start getting longer, with a little more sunlight every day after the solstice.

Here are some fun ways to celebrate the solstice:

- **Decorate an evergreen tree with treats for the birds like peanut butter and bird seed pine cones, strings of cranberries and orange halves**
- **Gather fallen sticks, pine cones, seed pods and other natural materials to make decorations for your home or your Christmas tree**
- **Make nature art outside with rocks, shells or other natural items in a spiral or sun shape**
- **Have a campfire outside**
- **Read books about the solstice**
- **Spend the night by candlelight (or part of it, like dinner)**
- **Go stargazing**
- **Bake cookies shaped like the sun, moon or stars**
- **Go on a night walk with lanterns or flashlights**
- **Make a big spiral outside (in the snow, dirt or sand, or with materials like trimmed evergreen branches) and walk around and around in it**
- **Make an ice lantern**

How to make an ice lantern:

Fill a large bowl or bucket with water. Put a smaller bowl or can inside, and weigh it down with some rocks. If you like, tuck berries or pine boughs in the water. Place outside or in the freezer to freeze. Unmold (run under cold water very briefly, if necessary) and put a candle inside.



Winter Foraging

Even in the winter time there are wild plants to forage for multiple uses! Here are some to look for.

Roots

If the ground isn't too frozen to dig, this is a great time to forage roots like burdock and dandelion.



Greens

You can forage greens even in the snow, as long as they are still fresh and growing. Good greens in winter include chickweed, sorrel and wild mustards.

Berries and dried fruits

Rose hips, crab apples and some berries persist well into wintertime, as long as the birds haven't found them. These can be nice for teas and can be a great source of vitamin C to keep winter colds at bay.

Evergreen needles

As we learned back in January, evergreens like spruce and pine can be used for healthy teas and more. These are also loaded with vitamin C to keep you healthy. Just be sure to positively ID them and stay away from poisonous yew.

Seeds and nuts

You can often still forage seeds like dock and lambs quarters (also known as wild quinoa) for things like crackers, and to gather nuts like acorns for flour if you leach out the bitter tannins. Chestnuts are also popular this time of year!

Seaweed and sea salt

If you live near the coast, this is a great time to gather seaweed or to make sea salt, which we learned how to make in the July issue.

Remember that wildlife relies on all of these plants too!

What did we learn this year?



This issue marks 12 months of Wild Kids Magazine!
I hope you had fun exploring along with us.
Here's some of what we learned this year.



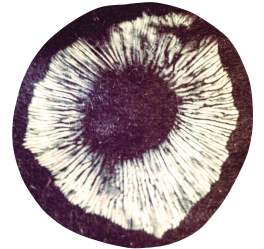
Identifying....

- Wild roses
- Pine
- Mullein
- Burdock
- Wood sorrel
- Nettles
- Dandelions
- Clovers
- Wild asparagus
- Chickweed
- Gooseberries
- Mulberries
- Raspberries
- Purslane
- Mints
- Elder
- Plantain
- Apples
- Walnuts
- Acorns (oak)
- Hazelnuts
- Hawthorn berries
- Chestnuts
- Spruce

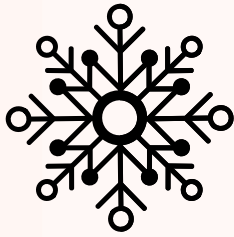


How to....

- Make a natural shelter
- Whistle with an acorn cap
- Make flower crowns
- Make plantain oil
- ID animal tracks
- Make a toad house
- Raise monarch butterflies
- Make spore prints
- Do citizen science for nature
- Make perfume from flowers and plants
- Beat the heat outside
- Make homemade playdough with natural dyes
- Make a moss terrarium
- Make sea salt
- Outsmart bugs
- Play, eat and craft with flowers
- Tap trees for syrup
- Make shrunken apple heads
- Make a wild wreath
- Blow bubbles with natural materials
- Stay happy and healthy with nature



What else did you learn this year?



December Poetry

*"Sit by me before the hearth,
For fire is the only fruit of winter."
- Khalil Gibran*



A December Day
By Robert Fuller Murray

That's no December sky!
Surely 'tis June
Holds now her state on high
Queen of the noon.

Only the tree-tops bare
Crowning the hill,
Clear-cut in perfect air,
Warn us that still

Winter, the aged chief,
Mighty in power,
Exiles the tender leaf,
Exiles the flower.

The December Rose
By Edith Nesbit

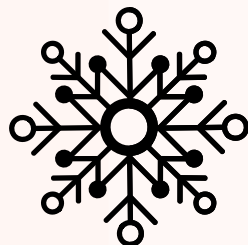
Here's a rose that blows for Chloe,
Fair as ever a rose in June was,
Now the garden's silent, snowy,
Where the burning summer noon was.

In your garden's summer glory
One poor corner, shelved and shady,
Told no rosy, radiant story,
Grew no rose to grace its lady.

What shuts sun out shuts out snow too;
From his nook your secret lover
Shows what slighted roses grow to
When the rose you chose is over.

In Drear-Nighted December
By John Keats

In drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy tree,
Thy branches ne'er remember
Their green felicity:
The north cannot undo them
With a sleety whistle through them;
Nor frozen thawings glue them
From budding at the prime.
In drear-nighted December,
Too happy, happy brook,
Thy bubblings ne'er remember
Apollo's summer look;
But with a sweet forgetting,
They stay their crystal fretting,
Never, never petting
About the frozen time.
Ah! would 'twere so with many
A gentle girl and boy!
But were there ever any
Writhed not at passed joy?
The feel of not to feel it,
When there is none to heal it
Nor numbed sense to steel it,
Was never said in rhyme.



Botanical Gift Tags



TO:
FROM:



TO:
FROM:



TO:
FROM:



TO:
FROM:



TO:
FROM:



TO:
FROM:

Botanical Gift Tags



TO:
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TO:
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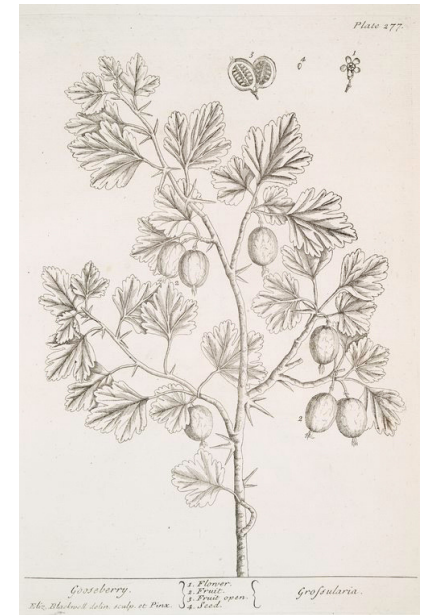
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Botanical Gift Tags



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CHESTNUT

Plate 350.

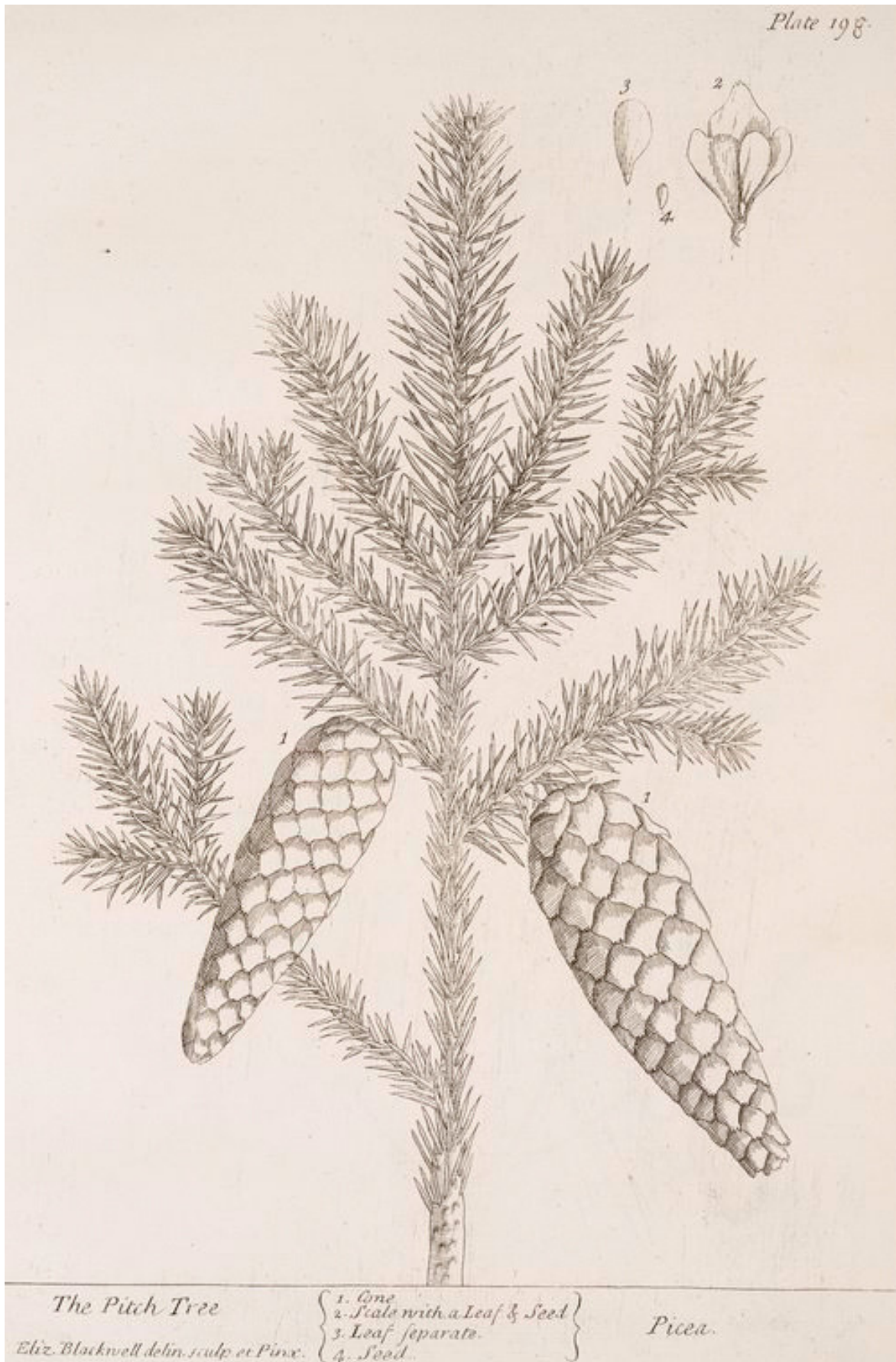


Chestnut. } 1. Catkin. 4. Shell. } *Castanea.*
Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Fove. } 2. Flower separate. 5. Kernel. }

From: *A Curious Herbal: Containing Five Hundred Cuts Of The Most Useful Plants Which Are Now Used In The Practice Of Physick,*
Written, illustrated and engraved by Elizabeth Blackwell, 1737

SPRUCE

Plate 198.



The Pitch Tree

{ 1. Cone
2. Scale with a Leaf & Seed
3. Leaf separate.
4. Seed. }

Picea.

From: *A Curious Herbal: Containing Five Hundred Cuts Of The Most Useful Plants Which Are Now Used In The Practice Of Physick,*
Written, illustrated and engraved by Elizabeth Blackwell, 1737

December Weather Tree



My Nature Journal

December

December Bird List

Birds spotted this month

December Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

December 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



Foraging Records

2019

Fruits

Greens

Roots & Vegetables

Nuts & Seeds

Mushrooms

Herbs & Spices

Medicinal Plants

Misc.





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.