

March 2021

WILD KIDS

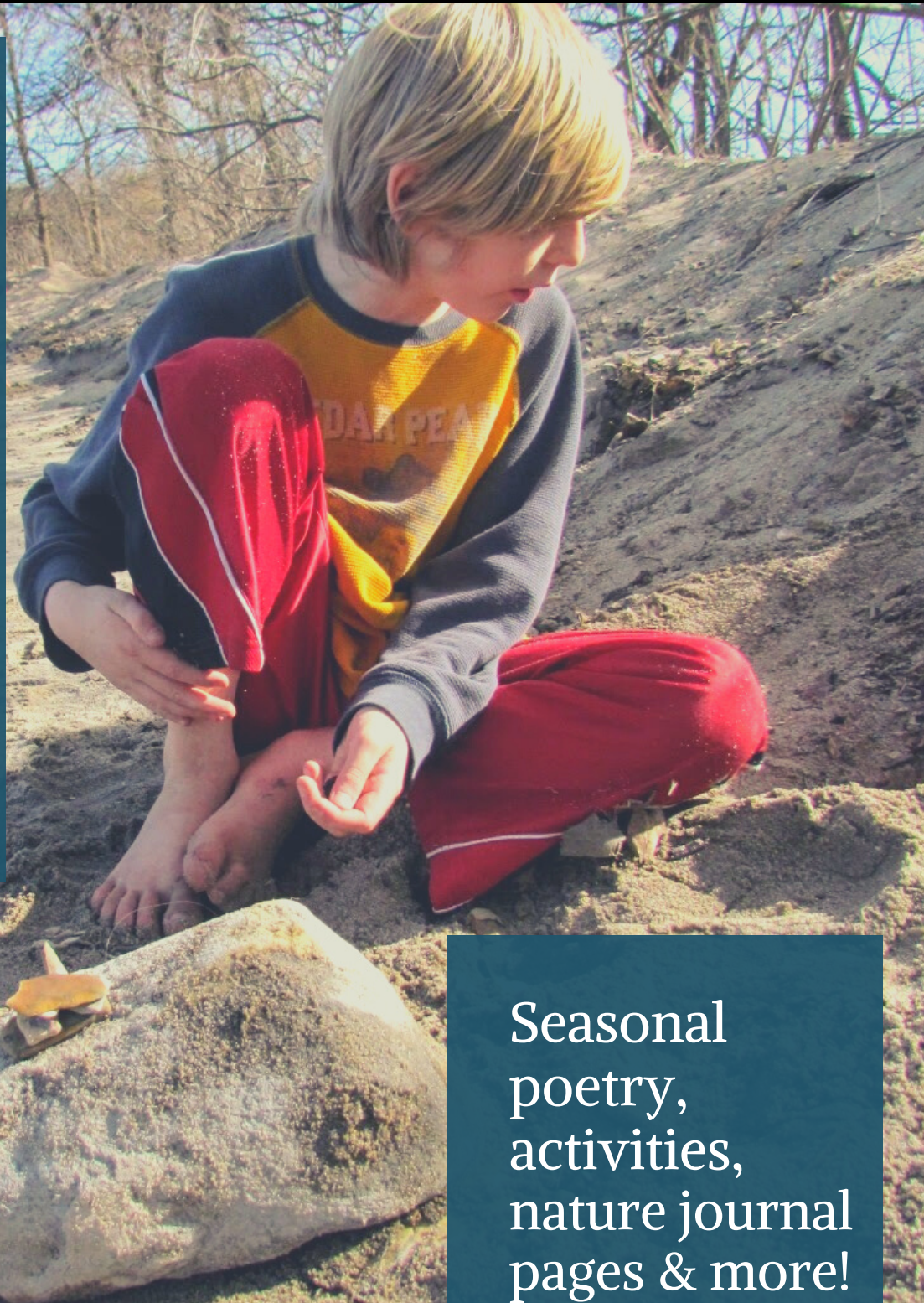
SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Edible Flower
Word Search

Use Your
Nose to be a
Better Forager

Learning
Poisonous &
Edible Garden
Plants

Bird BINGO!



Seasonal
poetry,
activities,
nature journal
pages & more!

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

What's the weather like where you are this month?

Here in Minnesota, we'll be tapping maple & walnut trees to collect the sap and boil it down into syrup soon. March here is usually a back-and-forth between warm, muddy days and returning snow storms.

There's an old saying that "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb" because it tends to be a stormy month at the start and it's nice weather by the end of it. See if that's true this month where you live.

This month in Wild Kids Magazine, we have information about using the scents of plants to help identify them, the importance of learning poisonous plants (especially in your flower gardens), an edible flower word search, a Bird BINGO game and more, with botanical coloring pages for lily-of-the-valleys and pansies, plus and all of the usual nature study pages.

I hope you find lots of ways to get outside to learn and play this month.

Have a wonderful, wild March!

Alicia



*Lily-of-the-Valley
Pretty & Poisonous*

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

Color in the circles of the ones you do!

Play dirt darts-
draw a dart
board in the dirt
or sand and then
toss small rocks
towards the
center

Have a friend
or family member
gather 10 fragrant
leaves and see how
many you can ID with
your eyes closed
(rub them to release
more scents).

Take
pictures
of flowers &
plants in season in
your garden or
neighborhood

Collect some fallen
sticks or
driftwood & use
yarn to make
windchimes (paint
them if you
like)

Gather small
rocks, sticks & other
natural items with
holes (or carefully
hammer a nail through
to make a hole) &
string them on ribbon
for a nature
necklace.

Make a wild
salad by adding
wood sorrel leaves,
violets or other
edible greens or
flowers.

Climb a tree,
rock or hill & take
photos from up
high, then lie down &
take some from
down low

Look
for rocks
in every color
of the
rainbow

Dig up a
weed from outside
& pot it to try to
grow it inside. Look
for plants in the
shade since homes
have less
sunlight

Use shells,
rocks &
sticks with
clay or play
dough

Use Your Nose

to be a better forager



Did you know that your nose can help you be a better forager? Many wild plants look similar to each other but they often have very different smells.

Experienced foragers know to use more than one identifying characteristic to positively ID wild plants.

For instance, wild ramps (*Allium tricoccum*), which are edible and very popular, look a lot like lily-of-the-valley plants (*Convallaria majalis*), which are poisonous. It could be deadly to harvest a bunch of the wrong leaves and cook them up! But if you rub a leaf of a ramp it smells strongly of garlic and onion, while lily-of-the-valley leaves don't really have a scent. Other ways of telling them apart include where they're found, how their flowers look, bloom time, roots and more, but experienced foragers often do the smell test first as an easy way to double-check that they've found ramp leaves.



**Ramps
(edible)**



**Ramps
(edible)**



**Lily of the valley
(poisonous)**



**Rub a leaf to
release its scent
(careful, some
plants can
cause a rash!)**

Plants in the mint family can also look very much alike. They have similar leaves that grow "opposite" (symmetrically on each side of a stem, like a mirror image) and they all have square stems, among other similarities.

The good news is that all the plants in the mint family are edible. But scent can also quickly help you identify which plant you have.

Lemon balm, for instance, is in the mint family but when you rub the leaves you smell a very strong lemon scent.

It often "volunteers" in gardens, popping up even when you didn't plant it. It makes a lovely tea and is also good in cooking.



Catmint (also known as catnip) is also a mint. It tends to have dustier looking leaves and to grow rather tall and scraggly. It grows as a weed in gardens, prairies, parks and more. If you rub the leaves you'll smell a mustier scent that you'll learn to recognize once you get to know it. Catmint is famous for making some cats go a little silly, but it also works well to repel mosquitoes and makes a calming tea that can soothe upset stomachs.



Spearmint also grows as a weed in many gardens, since mints are very good at spreading and "escaping" when they are planted. Rub the leaves of spearmint and you'll recognize the classic mint smell. Spearmint is great for teas and flavorings. It also soothes stomach aches.



Did you know... nearly half the spices in your kitchen come from the mint family, including basil, rosemary, lavender, marjoram, thyme, savory and sage! Wild plants in the mint family include bee balm (monarda), henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*, also known as dead nettle because it looks like nettle but does not sting), hyssop (*Agastache*), self heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), and motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca*), among many others.

Remember to just use scent when you already have an idea what a plant is. Don't rub plants to smell them otherwise. Some plants like poison ivy and nettles will cause a rash or sting!

Never eat a wild or garden plant without being 100% sure of its ID.

Bird Bingo!

How to Play: Head out into nature and see how many birds you can find. You may be able to spot some from your windows inside or even from car windows (we see wild turkeys from the highway almost every time we drive to Sioux Falls!). Make an x over the ones you spot and try to get a BINGO either across, down, or diagonally. To make it a bigger challenge, try to get a blackout by marking off every square this year. Not all of these birds may be in your area, or they may only be in your area certain times of the year. We have a blank page if you want to make your own board.



Robin



Swallow



Goose



Pheasant



Seagull



Sparrow



Eagle



Wren



Blue Jay



Crow



Woodpecker



Finch

FREE



Pigeon



Owl



Chickadee



Blackbird



Hawk



Heron



Oriole



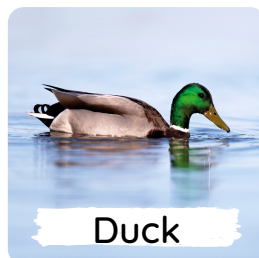
Vulture



Killdeer



Cardinal



Duck



Wild Turkey

Bird Bingo

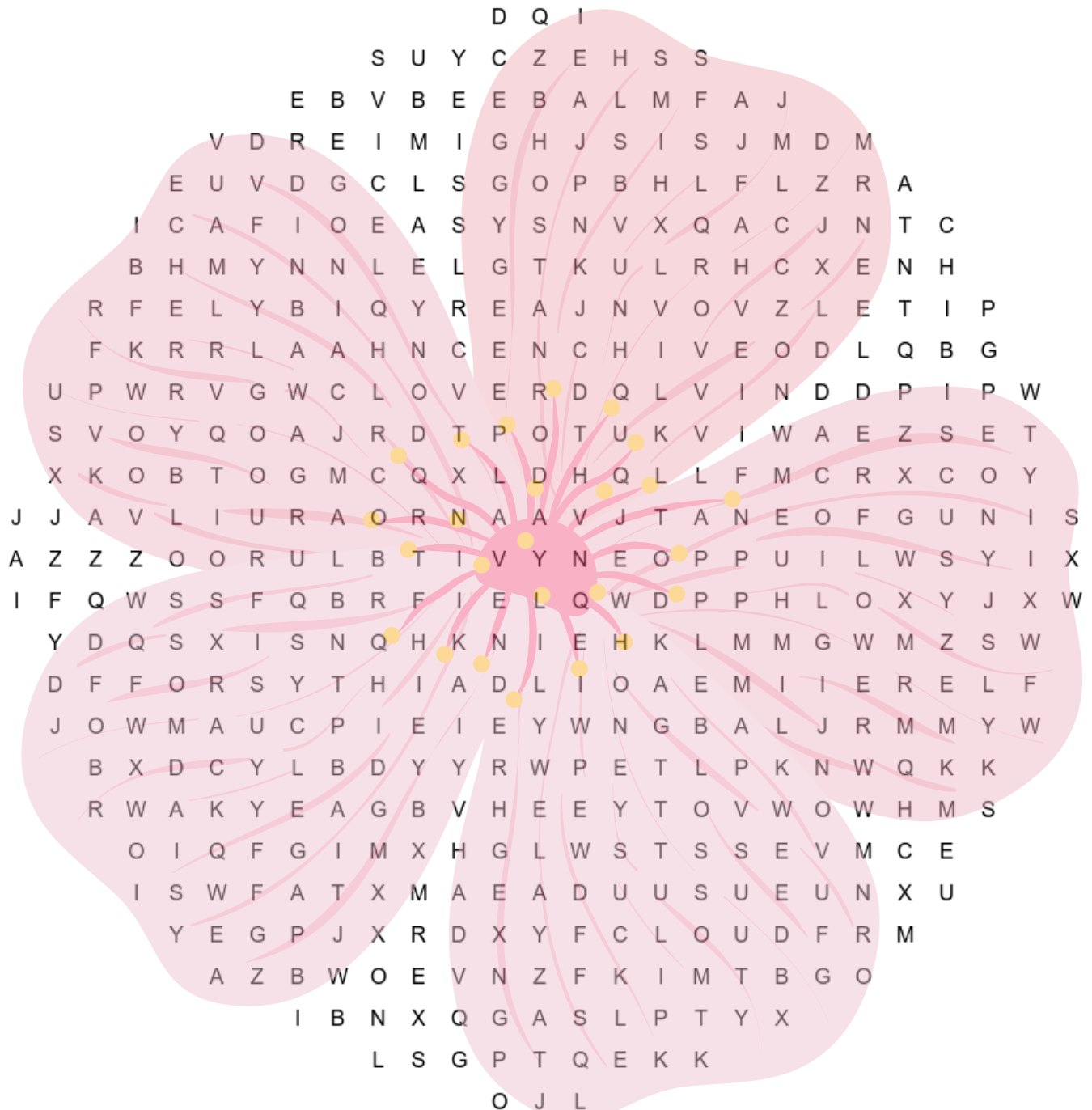
How to Play: Write down birds that are in your area this time of year, one in each square. If you need suggestions, do a web search for birds and your location and the month or season. Make an x over the ones you spot and try to get a BINGO either across, down, or diagonally. To make it a bigger challenge, try to get a blackout by marking off every square.

		FREE		

Edible Flowers

Word Search

How many can you find? 25 edible flowers are hidden below going across, down and diagonally.



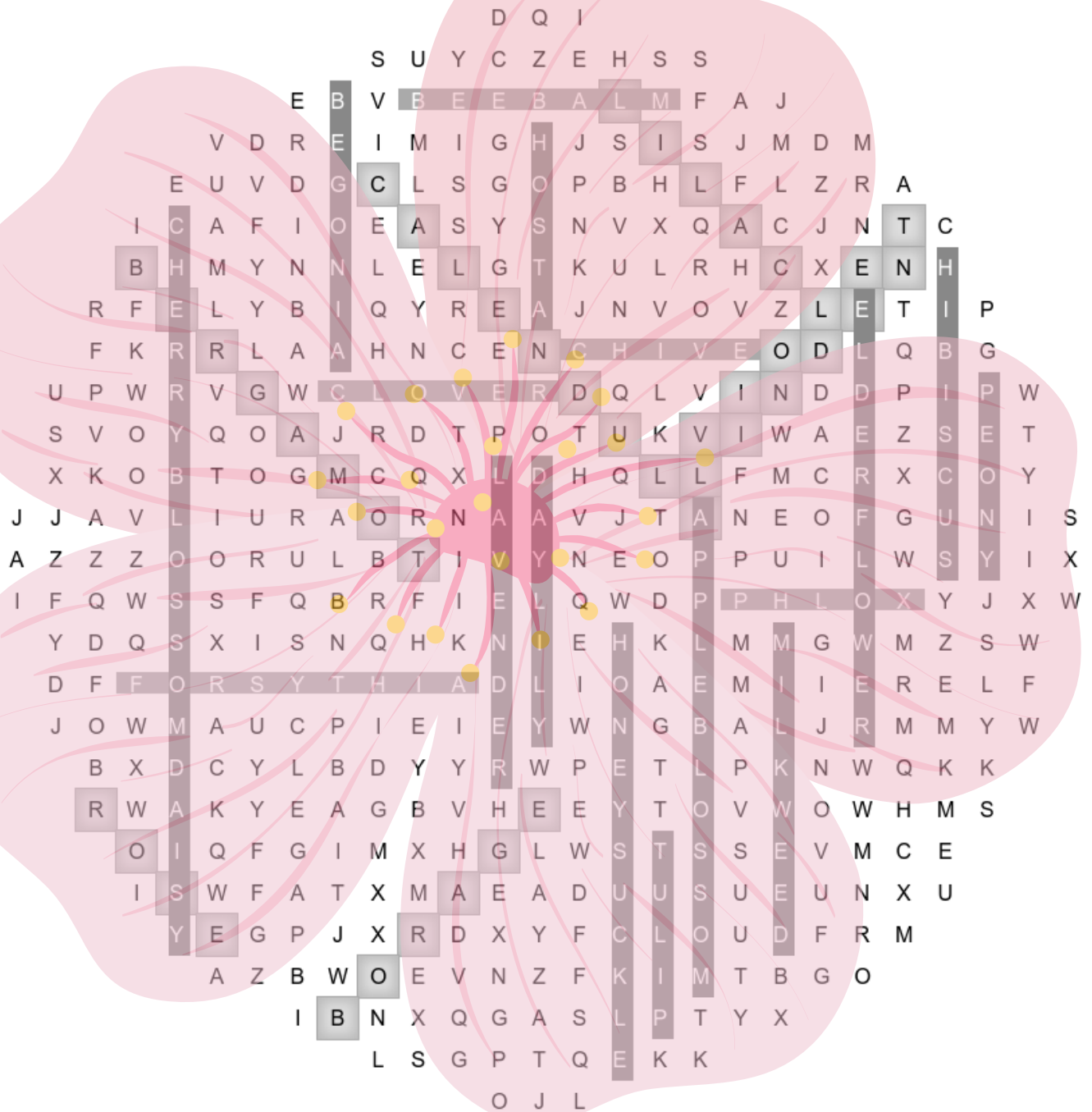
APPLEBLOSSOM
BERGAMOT
CHERRYBLOSSOM
DAISY
FORSYTHIA
HOSTA
LINDEN
PHLOX
VIOLET

BEEBALM
BORAGE
CHIVE
DAYLILY
HIBISCUS
LAVENDER
MILKWEED
ROSE

BEGONIA
CALENDULA
CLOVER
ELDERFLOWER
HONEYSUCKLE
LILAC
PEONY
TULIP

Answers on the next page

Answers



Remember, flowers from florists are usually not safe to eat because they have been treated with pesticides!

Grow your own organic flowers if you want flowers that are safe to eat. Edible flowers can be used in salads, soups, cookies, jellies, teas & more!

*Want to learn more about edible flowers?
We have links to learn more on our website*

March Poetry

*"It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold:
when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade."*

- Charles Dickens

MARCH

by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

We like March, his shoes are purple,
He is new and high;
Makes he mud for dog and peddler,
Makes he forest dry;
Knows the adder's tongue his coming,
And begets her spot.
Stands the sun so close and mighty
That our minds are hot.
News is he of all the others;
Bold it were to die
With the blue-birds buccaneering
On his British sky.

MARCH

by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1842)

The snow-flakes fall in showers,
The time is absent still,
When all spring's beauteous flowers,
When all spring's beauteous flowers,
Our hearts with joy shall fill.

With lustre false and fleeting
The sun's bright rays are thrown;
The swallow's self is cheating,
The swallow's self is cheating:
And why? He comes alone!

Can I e'er feel delighted
Alone, though spring is near?
Yet when we are united,
Yet when we are united,
The summer will be here.



MARCH

by William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878)

The stormy March is come at last,
With wind, and cloud, and changing skies,
I hear the rushing of the blast,
That through the snowy valley flies.
Ah, passing few are they who speak,
Wild stormy month! in praise of thee;
Yet, though thy winds are loud and bleak,
Thou art a welcome month to me.
For thou, to northern lands, again
The glad and glorious sun dost bring,
And thou hast joined the gentle train
And wear'st the gentle name of Spring.
And, in thy reign of blast and storm,
Smiles many a long, bright, sunny day,
When the changed winds are soft and warm,
And heaven puts on the blue of May.
Then sing aloud the gushing rills
And the full springs, from frost set free,
That, brightly leaping down the hills,
Are just set out to meet the sea.
The year's departing beauty hides
Of wintry storms the sullen threat;
But in thy sternest frown abides
A look of kindly promise yet.
Thou bring'st the hope of those calm skies,
And that soft time of sunny showers,
When the wide bloom, on earth that lies,
Seems of a brighter world than ours.

Learn Your Poisonous & Edible Garden Plants

Did you know...

There are often more poisonous plants in flower gardens than in the wild!

Some flowers, like foxglove (digitalis) can even stop your heart! Scientists used its effects on the heart to make life-saving medicine called digitalis, but it's poisonous to eat the plant.



In some cases, one part of a plant is edible and another part of it is poisonous. Rhubarb stems are healthy and tasty, for instance, but the leaves are poisonous.



In some cases, plant parts must be cooked to get rid of toxic properties, like elderberries (other parts of the elder shrub are also poisonous, like the leaves and wood).



Other plants are edible and healthy no matter what part of the plant you eat, such as violets and pansies. People sometimes "candy" these flowers and use them as edible garnishes for cakes and other desserts. People also eat the leaves in salads. They are packed with vitamins and some people eat them to stay healthy.



It's as important to learn poisonous plants as it is to learn helpful ones, especially ones that grow in your area. That doesn't mean you need to be afraid of plants, though. Lots of things are dangerous if you don't know how to be safe with them like water, fire, medicine and even vitamins.

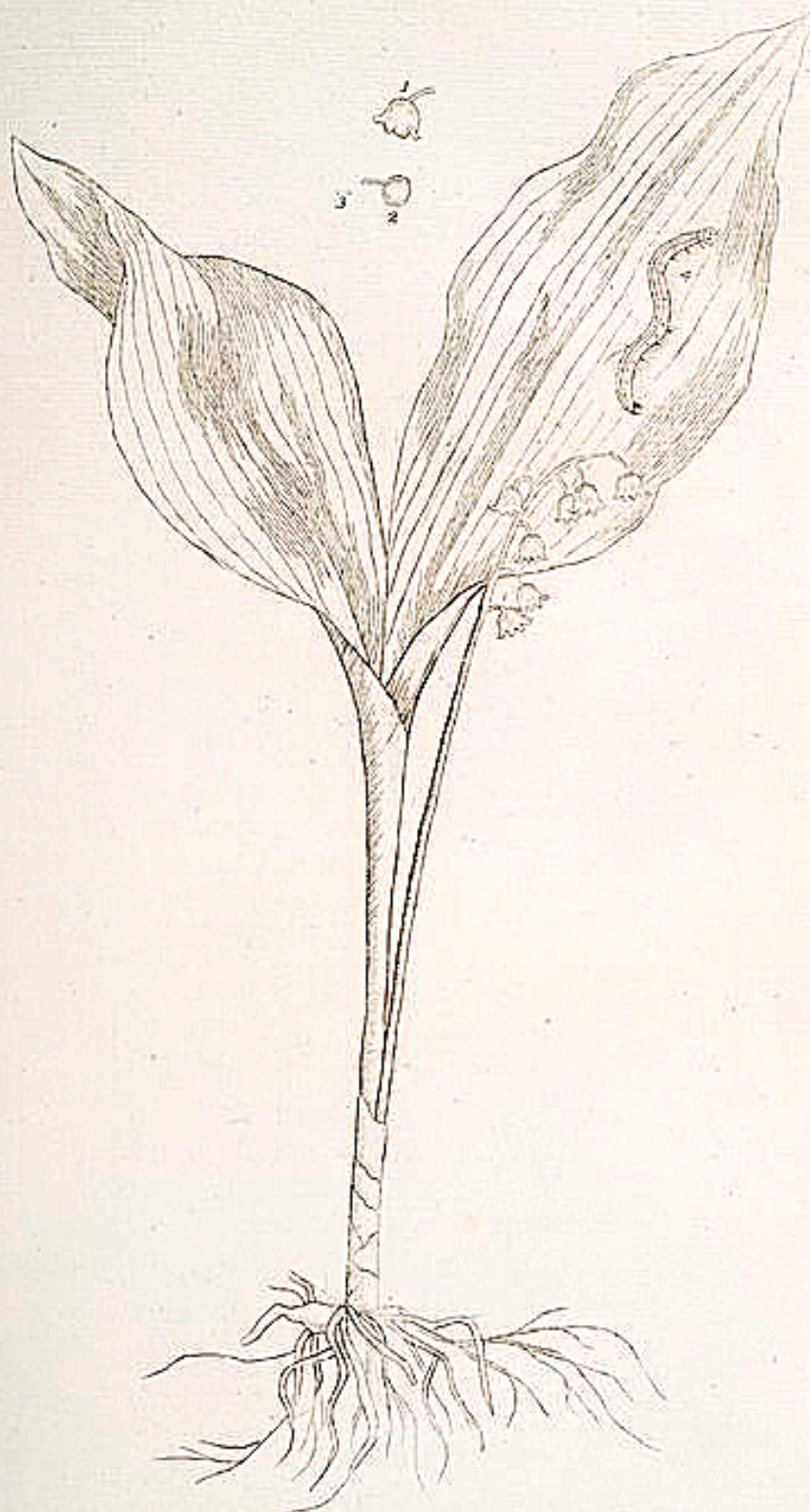


Make sure to never eat a plant before fully researching it with credible sources and properly identifying it!

LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY

(CONVALLARIA MAJALIS)

Plate 7.



Lillies of the Valley.
See Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

1. Flower
2. Berry
3. Seed
4. the Luckey

Lilium convallium

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

PANSY

(*VIOLA TRICOLOR*)

Plate 44



Heart's Ease
Pansies
Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

1 Flower
2 Flower cup
3 Seed Vessel
4 Seed

Viola tricolor

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

My Nature Journal

March

March Bird List

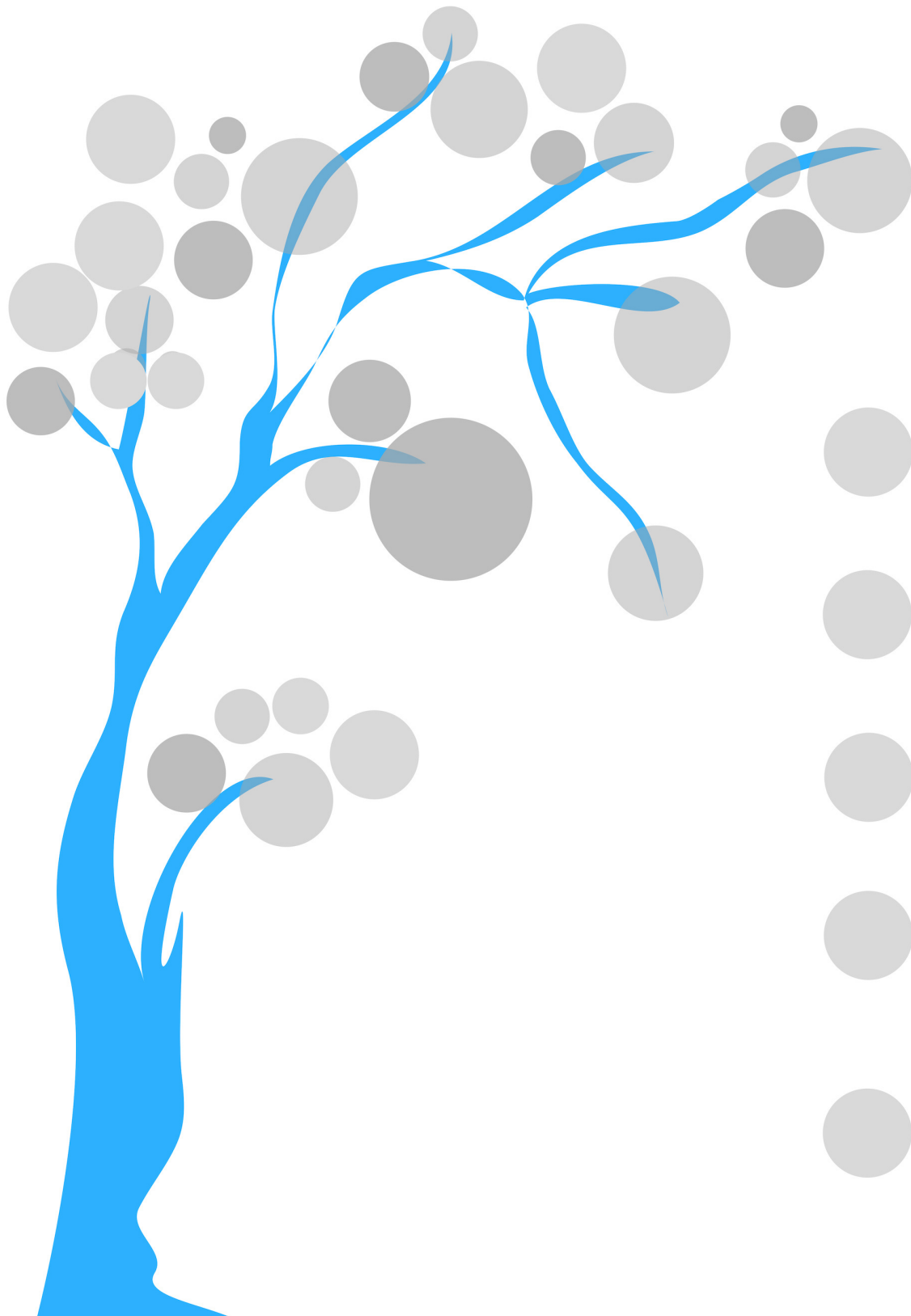
Birds spotted this month

March Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

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 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

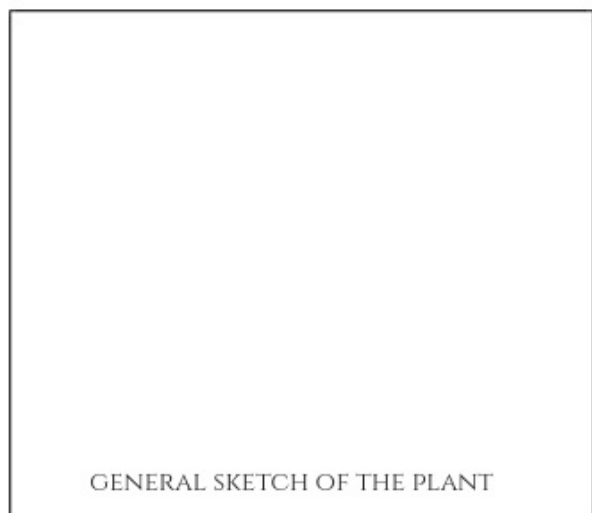
PHENOLOGY CALENDAR

Make a note or draw a picture of first birds, blooms & other signs of changing seasons

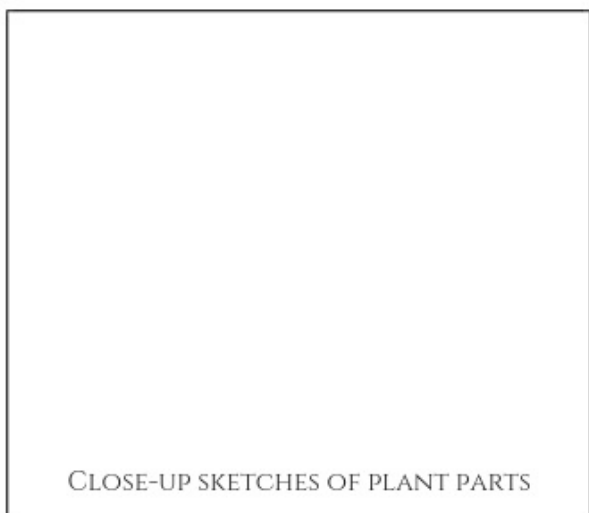
March 2021

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
SUNDAY	7	8	9	10	11	12
	13	14	15	16	17	18
	19	20	21	22	23	24
	25	26	27	28	29	30
	31					

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.