

February 2022

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



Wild Relatives of
Supermarket Foods
& Garden Plants

February Bird ID
Challenge

A Trip to the
International
Owl Center

Make a
Moon Wheel

Seasonal poems,
activities,
nature journal
pages and more!

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Welcome February!

What wild adventures are you hoping to do this month?

It is very cold here in Minnesota right now. This next week it's supposed to be far below zero just about every day. On days that are dangerously cold, we stay inside and just go out long enough to do things like feed the birds and exercise our dog, Moose. His favorite winter activity is catching snowballs in his mouth! We're hoping to go sledding at a nearby park with a really big, steep hill on one of the warmer days this week. We also like to go to a nearby lake and play on it. It's so cold here that our lakes freeze solid and cars drive on them! Our kids love to run, slide and skate on the lake. Sometimes the lake makes big ridges that look like mountain ranges from big sheets of ice smashing into each other and freezing that way. Some people put ice houses on the lake and drill holes in the ice to fish in the wintertime. They bring chairs, heaters and even portable TVs inside. It's hard to believe there are still fish way down underneath!

Sometimes it's hard when we wish we could spend more time outside when it's too hot, cold or stormy. The good thing about those days is that they help us remember how great it is to be outside once we can go out again! On the really cold days I like to read books on things like foraging and gardening so I am more prepared for when I can spend more time outdoors again. If every day was the same, I think we'd all get tired of it and miss the storms and cold. What do you think?

Right now, prices have gone up on lots of food around the world. Nature can help with that, too. We have a large family and we've relied a lot on foraged and home grown foods to get tasty, healthy food over the years. This year in the magazine we'll focus on some of the best wild foods and easiest garden foods to get to know. Some of my favorite foods can't be found in any grocery store, and they're free or almost free. I'm looking forward to sharing some of our favorite ways to enjoy them, this year.

February is the month of the Great Backyard Bird Count, and we've got some fun bird activities planned for this month. I am watching the birds from my window as I type this -- but I am out of room so I'd better stop rambling!

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 February

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Color in the circles of the ones you do!

Paint a picture with watercolor paints and put it in the rain to see how it changes

Have a picnic outside (pack a thermos of hot soup or cocoa if it's cold!)

Take part in the 2022 Great Backyard Bird Count February 18-21 *

Start some seeds inside for a spring garden

Track the phases of the moon with a moon wheel (we have one in this issue)

Visit a nature center for a special program or just to explore

Try to find 10 heart shaped nature items (rocks, leaves, clouds, etc.) to draw, collect or photograph

Watch a nature cam of bears, eagles or other animals

If you have snow, make a wacky looking snow beast - no snow? make one out of sand or mud!

See if you can see your shadow on Groundhog Day (Feb. 2) -- legend (not science) says that if the groundhog does, there will be 6 more weeks of winter!

*Visit www.birdcount.org for more information

A TRIP TO THE *International Owl Center*

By Fiona Bayer, age 10

Recently my family and I went to the International Owl Center in Houston, Minnesota. It was awesome!

I got to go on an owl search to find pictures of the owls, then my family and I got to do an owl Family Feud game. My family won! We got to be right next to real owls! The owls are rescues who can't live in the wild anymore. They live with the founder of the center and come to work with her each day.

We got to learn so many things like did you know that after baby owls eat they can't support their own body weight so they sleep on their bellies?

There are so many trinkets and souvenirs like owl bags, jewelry, stuffed animals, etc. that help support the owls, too.

We got to listen to stories about owls and to learn how make owl sounds, and we got to meet real owls who live at the center. We took lots of pictures because everything was so cool.

I think owls are awesome so this trip was amazing! I hope I can go back someday.

You can visit the International Owl Center online for crafts, videos and lots of information about owls at <https://www.internationalowlcenter.org/>.

Have you visited a cool nature site? Write up a few paragraphs and send it to us with your name and age (and photos if you have them!) to be included in Wild Kids Magazine.



All in the Family

Lots of plants are related to each other. Wild plants are related to garden plants and foods we buy in the supermarket. Garden flowers are also often related to foods we eat. Some plants that don't seem anything alike are relatives or can even be the same plant that has just been bred for special traits like being especially big, sweet tasting or long-lasting.

Can you match the plants that are related to each other? **Draw a line between related plants.** Answers are on the next page. (If you want, read the next page first and then see if you can remember the answers!)



moss roses



potatoes



onions



artichokes



roses



mint



quinoa



sunflowers



blackberries

Jerusalem artichokes



thistles



crab apples



purslane



dewberries



Deadly nightshade



lambsquarters



ramps



catnip



All in the Family

Answers



Moss roses are related to purslane, which is a tart tasting plant that's crunchy and fun in salads and sandwiches. It has lots of healthy omega-3 fatty acids too!



Potatoes are in the nightshade family, just like tomatoes and deadly nightshade! Parts of these plants like potato leaves can make you sick.



Onions are related to ramps, which are a type of wild onions. People pick the leaves and sometimes the bulbs in the spring and use them in lots of dishes. In some places they are so popular they have festivals just for eating ramps in different recipes! They are slow growing so in some places they are protected so they don't disappear.



Artichokes are really just giant thistle flowers that have been bred to have a large, tasty flower head.



There are hundreds of kinds of mints, including catnip, lemon balm and peppermint. Mints have square stems and strong scents.



Quinoa is a very healthy seed from a plant related to lambsquarters (also known as goosefoot). When foraging, we usually gather the tasty leaves but you can also collect the seeds in the fall and use them like quinoa for a healthy, gluten free grain.



There are lots of fruits in the rose family, like crab apples, apples, plums, peaches and pears.



Sunflowers are related to Jerusalem artichokes, which aren't actually artichokes. People dig up these tubers and eat them like potatoes.



Blackberries are related to dewberries. There are dozens of kinds of wild berries that are similar to the ones in the grocery stores. Some of them are tastier but so delicate and short lived that you can only get them in the wild or a backyard garden.



Make a

MOON WHEEL

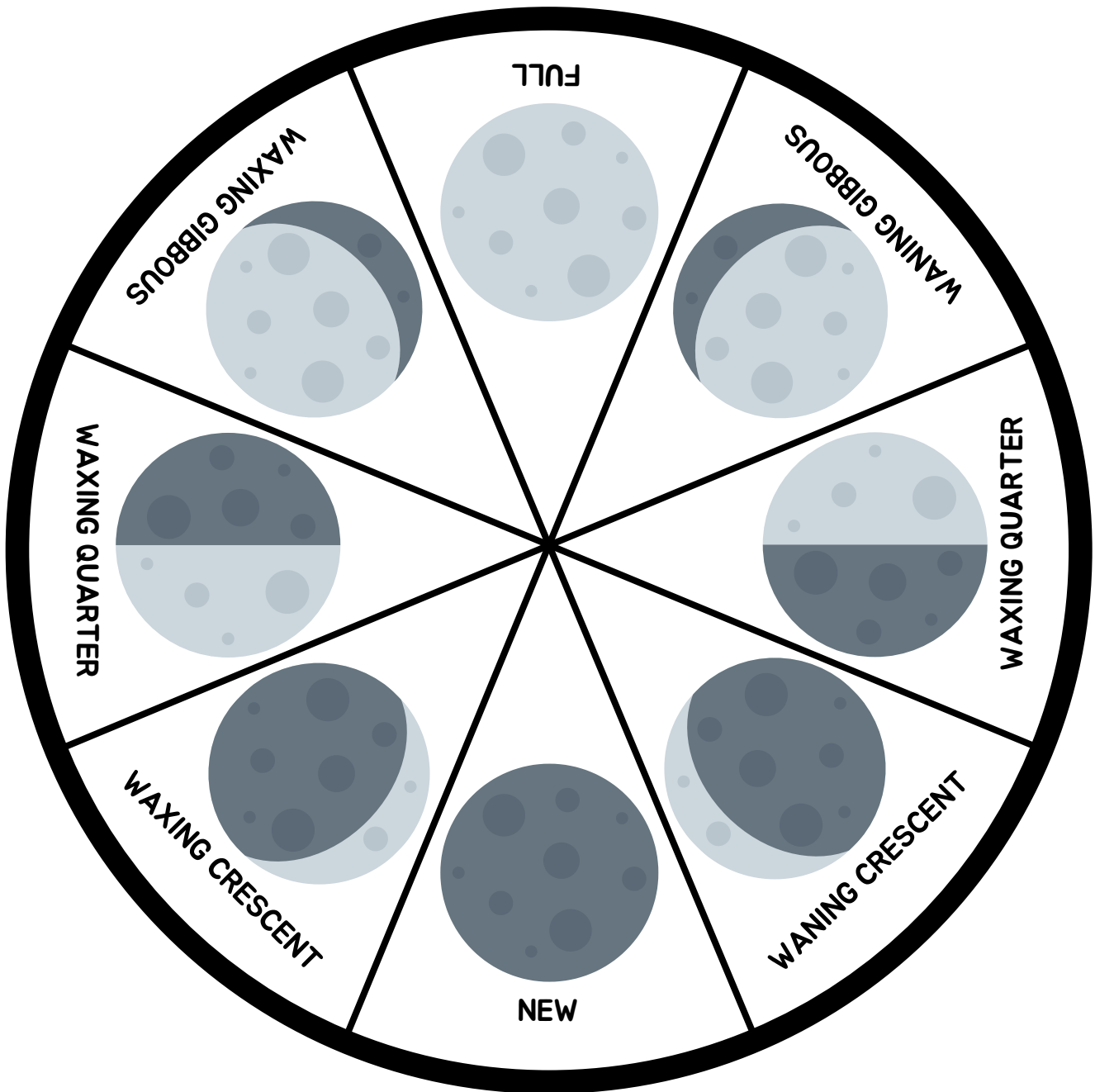
The moon revolves around the earth and reflects light from the sun that makes it look lit up. It takes almost 28 days to revolve around the earth and we call that one lunar cycle. The moon looks like it changes shape but that's just because the sun lights up different parts of it depending on where it is in the sky. February has 28 days, making it the perfect month to study how the moon changes each night. This month, look for the moon each night and use your moon wheel to track how it changes.



MOON Lunar Cycle



Cut both circles out & attach them together through the center with a metal fastener.



FEBRUARY BIRD ID CHALLENGE

EACH DAY THIS MONTH, TRY TO FIND A BIRD OUTSIDE THAT YOU IDENTIFY. IT CAN BE A PIGEON, BLUE JAY, HAWK, CROW, YOU NAME IT. USE A BIRD ID BOOK, APP OR GROWNUP TO HELP IF YOU NEED IT. HOW MANY DIFFERENT BIRDS CAN YOU FIND AND ID?



1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28		

NOTES:

PEPPERMINT

Platz 291.



Pepper-mint.

- 1. Flower.
- 2. Flower separate.
- 3. Calix.
- 4. Seed

Mentha Piperis sapore.

Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

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

WATERMINT

Plate 52



Water Mint

Eliz. Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

1 Flower
2 Cup
3 Seed

Mentha aquatica
Symbrium

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

Poetry Corner

“Why, what's the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness?”
— William Shakespeare, *Much Ado About Nothing*

The Wind
James Reeves

I can get through a doorway without any key,
And strip the leaves from the great oak tree.

I can drive storm-clouds and shake tall towers,
Or steal through a garden and not wake the flowers.

Seas I can move and ships I can sink;
I can carry a house-top or the scent of a pink.

When I am angry I can rave and riot;
And when I am spent, I lie quiet as quiet.

The Brook in February
by Sir Charles George Douglas Roberts

A snowy path for squirrel and fox,
It winds between the wintry firs.
Snow-muffled are its iron rocks,
And o'er its stillness nothing stirs.
But low, bend low a listening ear!
Beneath the mask of moveless white
A babbling whisper you shall hear—
Of birds and blossoms, leaves and light.

I'm Glad the Sky is Painted Blue
Anonymous

I'm glad the sky is painted blue,
And the earth is painted green,
With such a lot of nice fresh air
All sandwiched in between.



A Wise Old Owl
by Anonymous

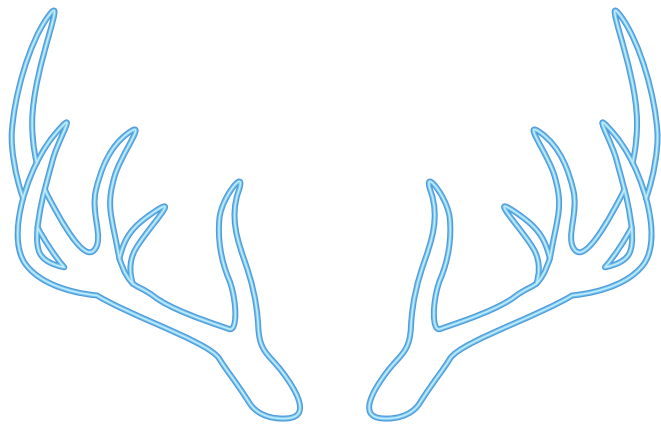
A wise old owl lived in an oak
The more he saw the less he spoke
The less he spoke the more he heard.
Why can't we all be like that wise old bird?

The February Hush
by Thomas Wentworth Higginson

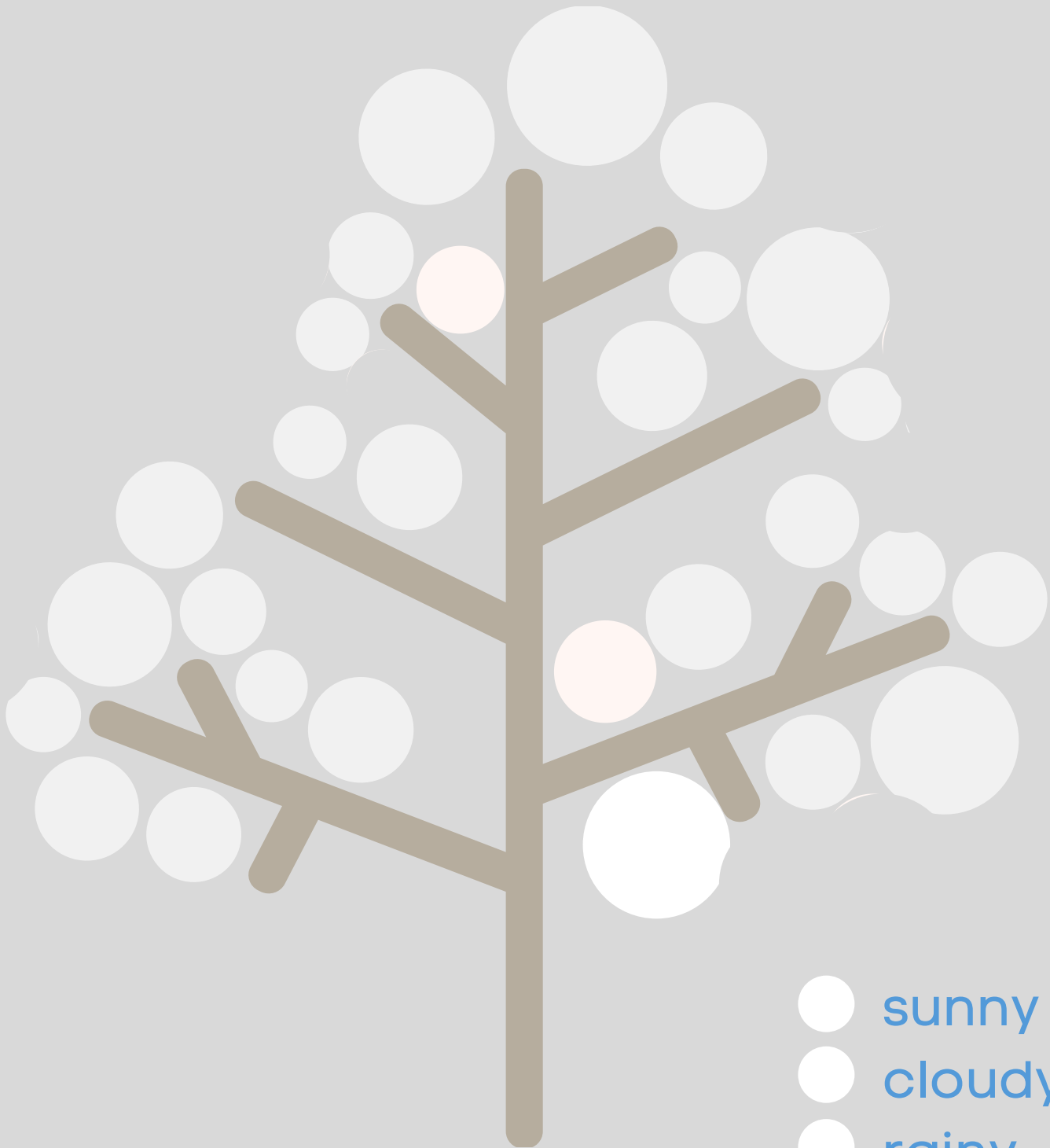
Snow o'er the darkening moorlands,—
Flakes fill the quiet air;
Drifts in the forest hollows,
And a soft mask everywhere.
The nearest twig on the pine-tree
Looks blue through the whitening sky,
And the clinging beech-leaves rustle
Though never a wind goes by.
But there's red on the wildrose berries,
And red in the lovely glow
On the cheeks of the child beside me,
That once were pale, like snow.

MY NATURE JOURNAL

February



February Weather Tree



- sunny
- cloudy
- rainy
- snowy
- stormy

February Bird List

Birds spotted this month

February Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

February 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.