

May 2022

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

**Raptor
Spotter**

**What Is
a Wort?**

**Tell the Time &
Weather with
Pimpernel Flowers**

**Outside
Hour
Tracker**

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



From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Happy May!

How are you planning on spending time in nature this month?

We'll be very busy in the garden this month, planting flowers and vegetables. We also forage some of our favorite wild foods in May, like wild asparagus, morel mushrooms, dandelion flowers (our kids love them battered and fried), violets and ramps.

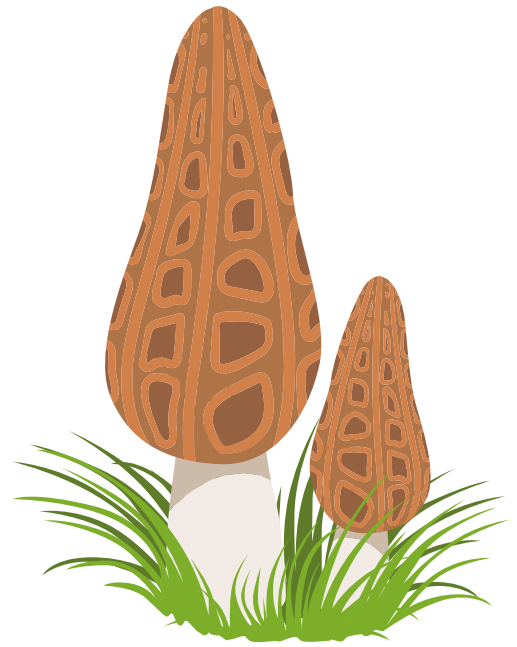
We do a lot of bird watching in May, too. My husband, Daryl, likes to go birding and a lot of our kids like to go with him. Some of them bring their cameras and take photos and others just like looking for new birds and helping to ID them. Some of the birds we see a lot are bald eagles, pelicans, red-winged blackbirds, red-tailed hawks, herons and all kinds of ducks. We have lots of lakes where we live. Minnesota is called "the land of 10,000 lakes" but we actually have even more!

This time of year we always enjoy listening to the "spring peepers" (frogs) too! May is when our grass is finally bright green again and it's warm enough to play outside in shorts again. There are baby birds and rabbits in the neighborhood and so many flowers. It's so nice to see and hear nature seeming to burst back to life after our long winters and muddy, chilly March and April.

What do you look forward to in May where you live?

I hope you find something fun to try this month and that you have a wonderful, wild May!

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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Contact: alicia.bayer@gmail.com

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

Go Wild in May

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Color in the circles of the ones you do!

Go puddle stomping -- bring your favorite grown up because they need far more puddle stomping than they get!

Learn to ID three new trees, plants, insects or birds in your neighborhood

Make a flower crown! (See the next page to learn how)

Make a set of toys from nature items like sticks, pine cones or seed pods

Set up an obstacle course outside

Start a new nature collection of rocks, bugs, shells, etc.

Draw, paint or photograph a wildflower you find (dandelions count!)

Make mud pies or mud art and decorate them with nature items

Write about your favorite thing to do in nature and send it to Wild Kids!

Find some black ants outside and put 3 kinds of crumbs near them, then watch them to see what they do

Flower Crowns

(Reprinted from the May 2019 issue of Wild Kids)

Have you made flower crowns? They're so fun and easy! Here are three simple ways to make them. We have videos and more on the Wild Kids Website, too. Go to the May 2019 issue to see those.

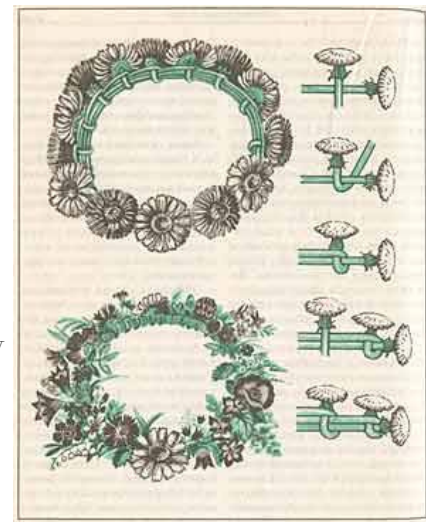


Mama Lydia used invasive wildflowers to make these lovely flower crowns with her forest fairies. She says:

These are periwinkles (Vinca spp.), I just pull a section of vine and strip off the leaves and string the flowers on it.

This is another easy way to make a flower crown.

Simply wrap one stem around the flower of the next, pull both stems to the side, and add another. Wrap that stem around the first two, pull all three stems to the side, and continue. As stems end, they will be woven into the line well enough to stay put. To finish, wrap the last flower around the first flower and the end of the chain, forming a circle.



To make split stem flower chains:

Trim flower stems to about 4 inches. Use a fingernail to make a small slit in the bottom half of each stem. Thread one stem through the slit in the next, creating a chain. Continue, adding flowers to reach desired length. To form the crown, make a second slit in the stem of the first flower, and slip the last flower through it.



Tell the time and the weather with Pimpernel!

Scientific Name: *Anagallis arvensis*

There's a famous book called *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, named after a common little wildflower that grows in most of the world.

One really fun fact about pimpernels is that they can help you tell the time of day and the weather!

In the old days, some people called pimpernel "shepherd's sundial" or "shepherd's weather-glass."

The flowers open at around 8 am each morning, and close at around 3 pm. They also close during humid or damp weather, so they can help you tell when it's going to rain!

If the shepherds (people who watched raised and watched over sheep) were out in the fields, they could tell by the pimpernels if it was after 8 or 3, and if it might rain soon.

Some people confuse pimpernel with chickweed because the leaves look a little bit similar. Chickweed is a tasty and helpful wild plant with little white flowers. Pimpernel should not be eaten and has bitter leaves. You can tell pimpernel from chickweed by the stems and the flowers. The stems are round on chickweed and square on pimpernel. Pimpernel flowers are about 1/4 of an inch big and can be red, white or blue, but wild ones are usually bright salmon. The flowers are star-shaped and have five petals.

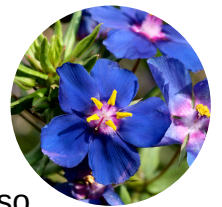
Note: Some sensitive people can get a rash from touching them.

Some people use pimpernel to make herbal medicine but this should only be done by an expert. The leaves, stems and flowers are antimicrobial (they help kill bacteria), anti-inflammatory (they help reduce swelling in the body), anti-fungal (they help kill fungi like yeast infections or athlete's foot) and an appetite stimulant (they make you hungrier).

Instead of picking pimpernels to eat or use for medicine, enjoy them as colorful wildflowers and as pretty little clocks and weather forecasters.

You can easily grow pimpernels in your garden. You can plant the seeds at the front of your garden since they are bushy and low growing. They like lots of sun and are not picky about soil. They typically flower from April to August, sometimes into October. They are annuals, meaning they live for just one year (perennials live for more than one year, even though they may seem to die in the winter).

Pimpernels can reseed themselves and come back the next year or you may need to plant more seeds. Remember that flowers often come back next year if you let them "go to seed" and let the flowers form seed heads, but if you cut the dead flowers off or pick the flowers, they can't make seeds for next year. That's one reason not to pick too many wildflowers too!



Let's learn about Raptors

Raptors are awesome birds that are often called birds of prey. There are three things that all raptors have in common.

- Sharp, curved, hooked beaks
- Strong grasping feet with sharp talons
- Excellent eye sight



Raptors include eagles, hawks, falcons, ospreys, owls and vultures.

The name "Raptor" comes from the Latin word raptor, which means plunderer (to snatch or seize.) There are almost 500 species of raptors in the world.



TRY THIS! Find a small object to represent a fish. Put it on a surface outside and back up until you can't see it anymore. Measure the distance between you and the object and multiply it by 8. That's how far away an eagle could see it!

Raptor Spotter

(Cut out this square to look through)



Hawk
Medium



Eagle
Large



Vulture
Large



Falcon
Medium



What on Earth is a Wort?



There are a lot of plants with "wort" in their names. Does that mean they'll give you warts? Nope!

Wort is an old fashioned name for helpful plants, usually plants that were used for medicine and/or food. If people thought they were helpful they would give them a name with wort in them, like motherwort and St. John's wort. If they thought they were not helpful, they often gave them a name with weed in the name like ragweed or milkweed.

Now we know that no plants are all good or all bad. Monarch butterflies would not agree that milkweed is a bad plant, after all!

There are around 200 plants with wort in their names. Worts often got their names based on how they helped people. Other times they were named based on characteristics about them like how they tasted or looked. A lot of them have been renamed, like catwort is now known as catnip. In other cases, they are still called by that name, like motherwort.

Sometimes it's easy to figure out why a wort was named what it was, like bitterwort tastes bitter. We don't know the reasons behind some of the names though. Did hornwort look like a horn to people or did they think it would help with animals' horn problems? What about dragonwort or trophywort?

Here are some examples of plants with wort in their names. Can you guess anything about them from their names?

- Liverwort
- Feverwort
- Motherwort
- Spiderwort
- Stinkwort
- Toothwort
- Scurvywort
- Birthwort
- Dungwort
- Bogwort
- Lungwort
- Honeywort
- Pepperwort
- Sneezewort

Wouldn't it be fun to get to name a plant? Next time you get to know a new plant, think about what you'd name it. Fairywort? Stinkyweed?

What would be the perfect names for your favorite plants?



Lungwort



Birthwort



Spiderwort



Motherwort

POEMS FOR MAY

The Violet
by Jane Taylor



Down in a green and shady bed
A modest violet grew;
Its stalk was bent, it hung its head,
As if to hide from view.
And yet it was a lovely flower,
No colours bright and fair;
It might have graced a rosy bower,
Instead of hiding there.
Yet there it was content to bloom,
In modest tints arrayed;
And there diffused its sweet perfume,
Within the silent shade.
Then let me to the valley go,
This pretty flower to see;
That I may also learn to grow
In sweet humility.

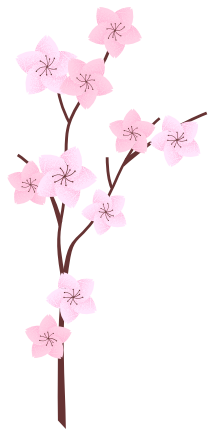


A Spring Morning
by John Clare

The Spring comes in with all her hues and smells,
In freshness breathing over hills and dells;
O'er woods where May her gorgeous drapery flings,
And meads washed fragrant by their laughing springs.
Fresh are new opened flowers, untouched and free
From the bold rifling of the amorous bee.
The happy time of singing birds is come,
And Love's lone pilgrimage now finds a home;
Among the mossy oaks now coos the dove,
And the hoarse crow finds softer notes for love.
The foxes play around their dens, and bark
In joy's excess, 'mid woodland shadows dark.
The flowers join lips below; the leaves above;
And every sound that meets the ear is Love.

植うる事 子のごとくせよ 児桜
Matsuo Basho

Try to plant
As for a child.
A little wild cherry tree.

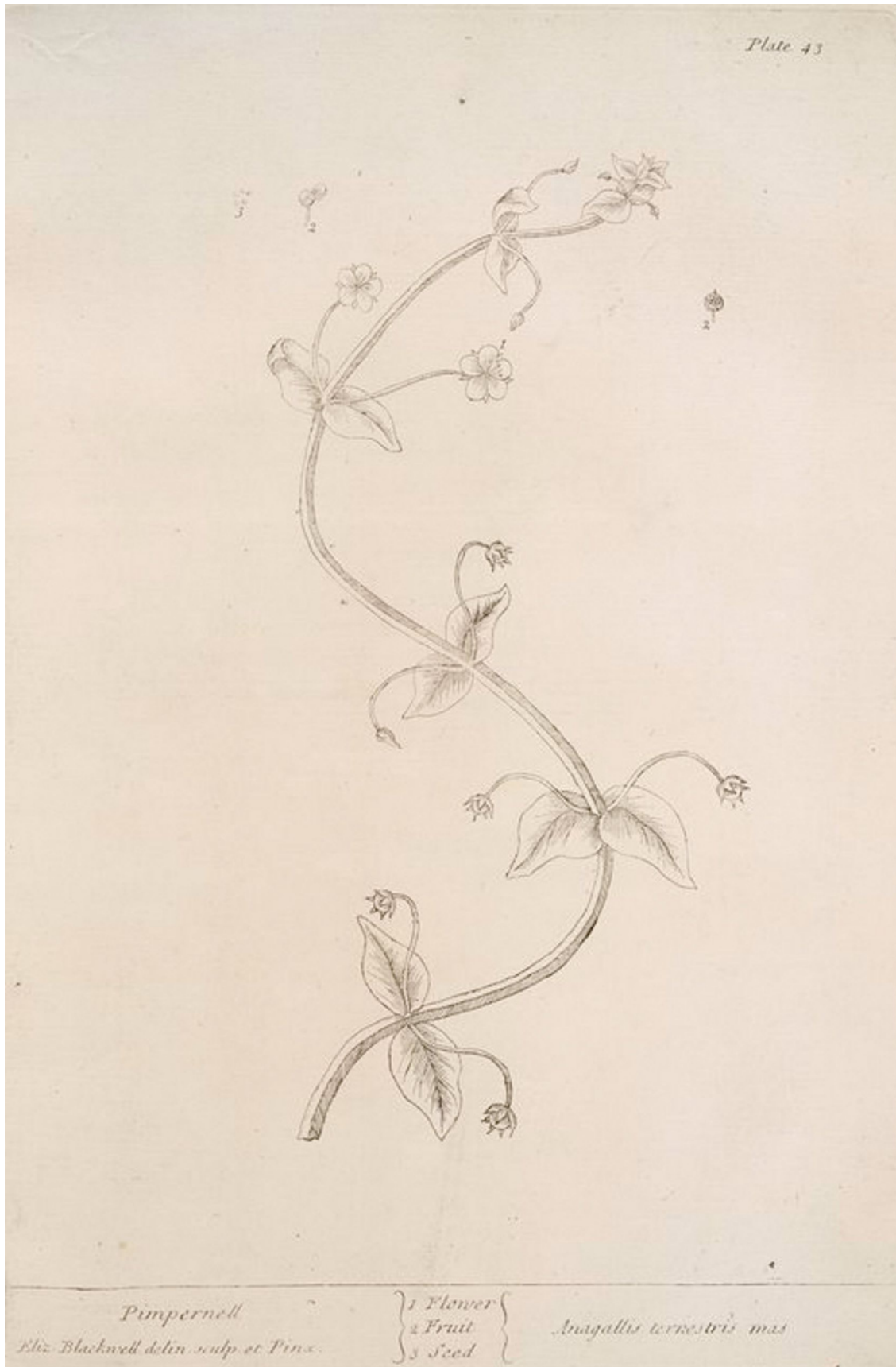


Rain
by Robert Louis Stevenson

The rain is raining all around,
It falls on field and tree,
It rains on the umbrellas here,
And on the ships at sea.

PIMPERNEL

(*Anagallis arvensis*)



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

PILEWORT

(*Chelidonium minus*)

(Now known as Lesser Celandine, *Ranunculus ficaria*)

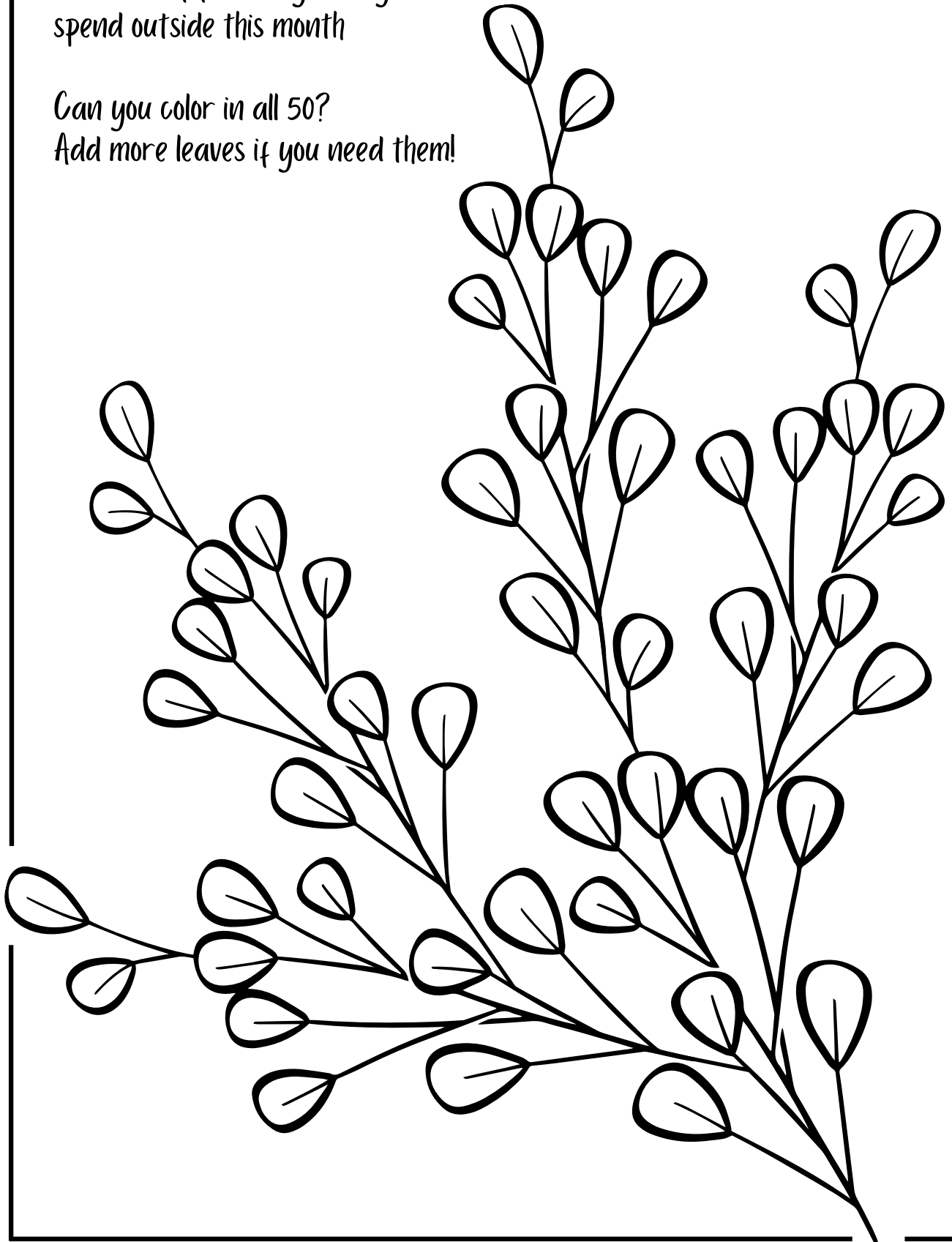


From: *A Curious Herbal: Containing Five Hundred Cuts Of The Most Useful Plants Which Are Now Used In The Practice Of Physick,*
Written, illustrated and engraved by Elizabeth Blackwell, 1737

Hours Outside

Color a leaf for every hour you
spend outside this month

Can you color in all 50?
Add more leaves if you need them!

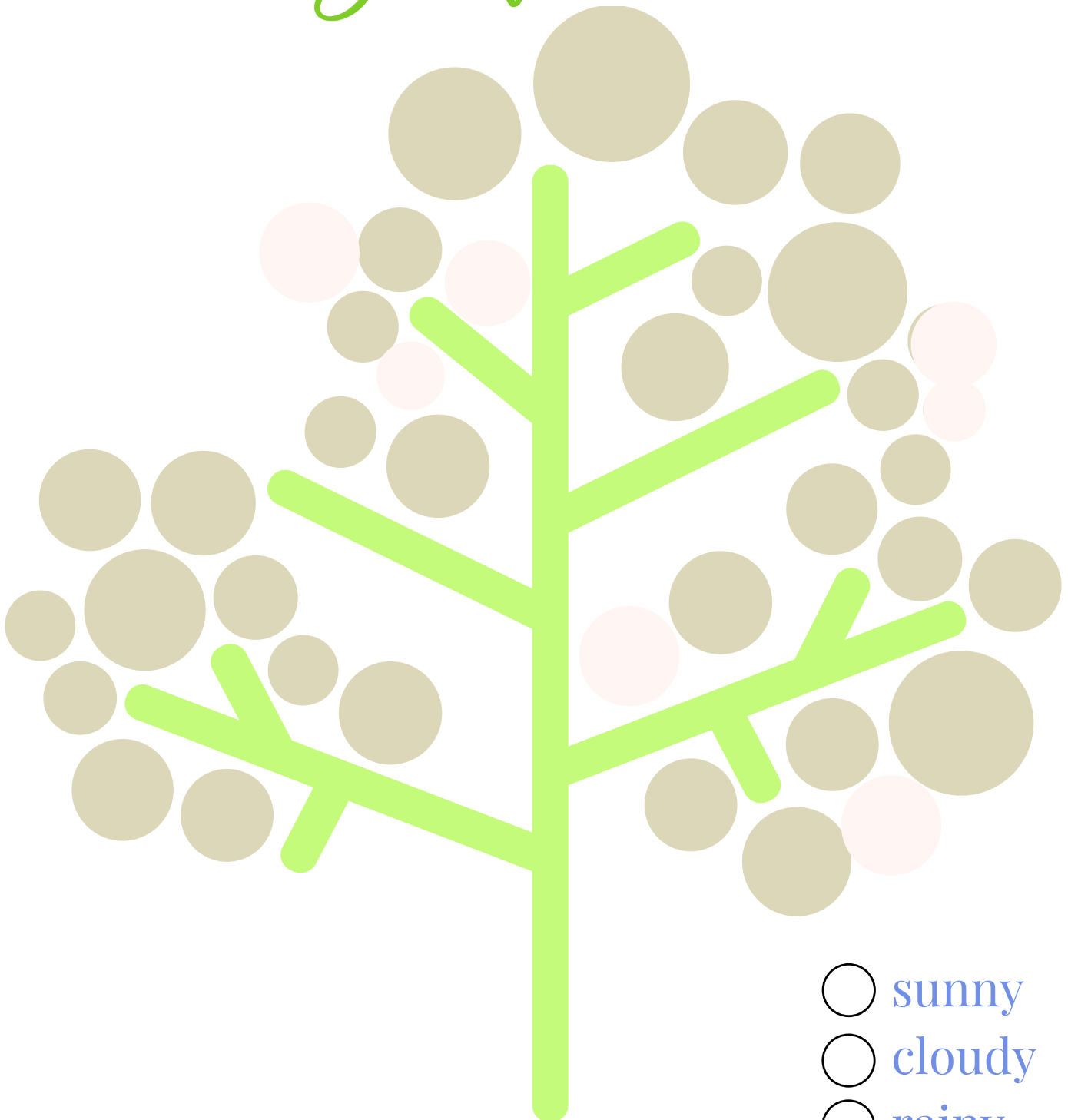


My Nature Journal

MAY



May Weather Tree



- ☐ sunny
- ☐ cloudy
- ☐ rainy
- ☐ snowy
- ☐ stormy

MAY BIRD LIST

Birds spotted this month

MAY ANIMAL LIST

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

MAY 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!

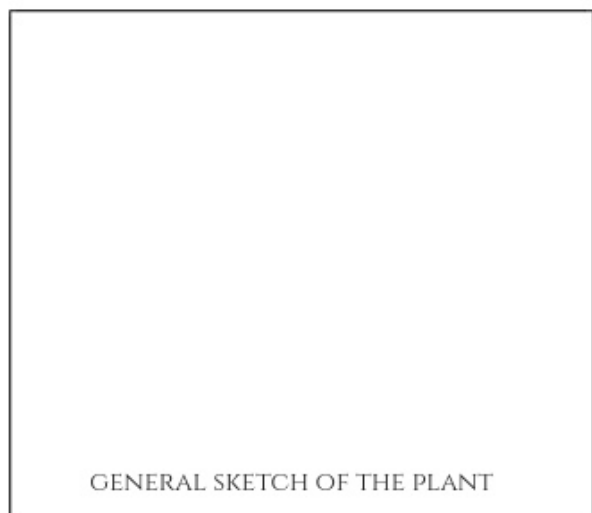
Week 1 Observations

Week 2 Observations

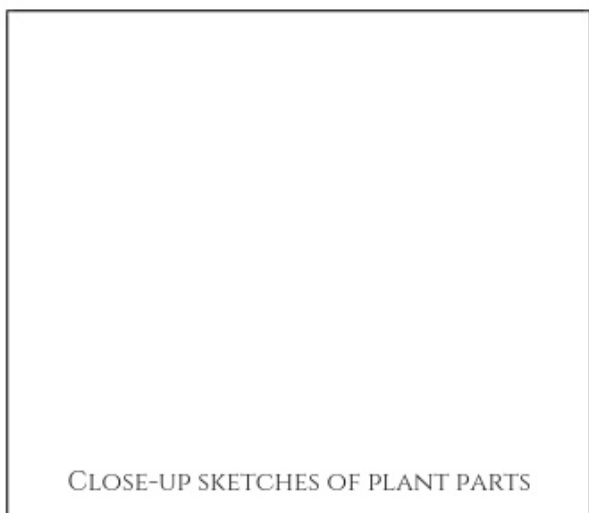
Week 3 Observations

Week 4 Observations

MY FORAGING GUIDE FOR:



GENERAL SKETCH OF THE PLANT



CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS

LATIN NAME _____

WHERE FOUND _____

PARTS USED _____

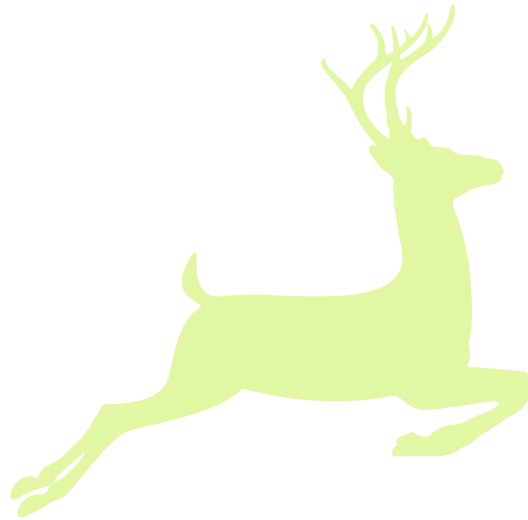
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.