

September 2023

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



Foraging Fill-it-ins

September Nature Bingo

Make a Ballpoint
Feather Pen!

Learn About Beefsteak
& Lobster Mushrooms

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 do you like to do in nature in September?

My husband, Daryl, told me years ago that he read in a book that "September is the month of winds and magic." We have never found out who said that or found the book, but it's my favorite quote about September! It does seem to be a month for winds and magic, don't you think?

We love to camp this time of year and also love to hike, go boating, go mushroom hunting and rock hunting, have backyard campfires, can and freeze garden bounties like applesauce and grape juice, forage things like acorns and crab apples, pick fruits like apples and pears, plant bulbs for next spring, visit parks, climb trees, go on evening walks, do nature crafts, and swim at the lake on the days when it is still warm enough.

We spend a lot of time with friends in Nebraska, and we'll be heading there for another week this month. We love to kayak, forage, bike ride and go on long nature walks when we're down there. It's always a little warmer there than it is back here in Minnesota, so we get a little bit of extra summer before the cool days really start.

There are lots of ways that you can see the seasons change in September. Sometimes you can see birds and butterflies starting to migrate, tree leaves changing colors, flowers going to seed, and animals preparing for winter like squirrels gathering lots of nuts.

In the Southern Hemisphere, people are getting ready for spring and the return of warmer weather.

There are so many ways to enjoy nature this month, no matter where you live! I hope you have a magical September!

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

Have a safe campfire in the back yard or a local park

Plant some garlic or spring flower bulbs for next year

Go to a local nature center and see what you can do as a volunteer

Go bouldering -- find a really big rock to (safely) climb and play on

Try to have something foraged in at least one meal a week this month (even a few dandelion leaves in your salad counts!)

Celebrate the first day of fall (or spring if you're in the Southern Hemisphere) on September 23

Use water and a paintbrush to paint temporary pictures on the top of a big rock or sidewalk, then let the sun dry it and do it again (take pictures of your favorite art!)

Head to a beach or other rocky spot and make the tallest tower you can with stacked rocks (spread them out again when you're done)

Use a big feather like a turkey feather to make a ball point feather pen (we teach you how in this issue)

Play nature memory -- find about 20 natural objects (2 of each) like pebbles and small flowers. Cover them each with a large leaf & uncover two at a time to try to find the matches.



Make a Ball Point Feather Pen!



Here's a fun and easy way to make a working ball point pen out of a feather!

You'll need one large feather like a turkey feather (be sure it's one you're legally allowed to collect), one ball point pen, and a pen knife or garden shears.

Take the pen apart to remove the cartridge. Most pens just unscrew at the top or bottom.

Use the knife or shears to cut the very tip of the feather off (have an adult do this if you are not trained in knife safety). Just cut the very tip at first -- you can always cut it farther up if you need to.

Now push the cartridge into the hollow tip of the feather. You should have to push fairly hard and it should wedge itself in tightly so you don't need to do anything to keep it in place.

Now write with your new feather pen! You can even use colored pens and make many colors.

These make great gifts too!

Have fun!

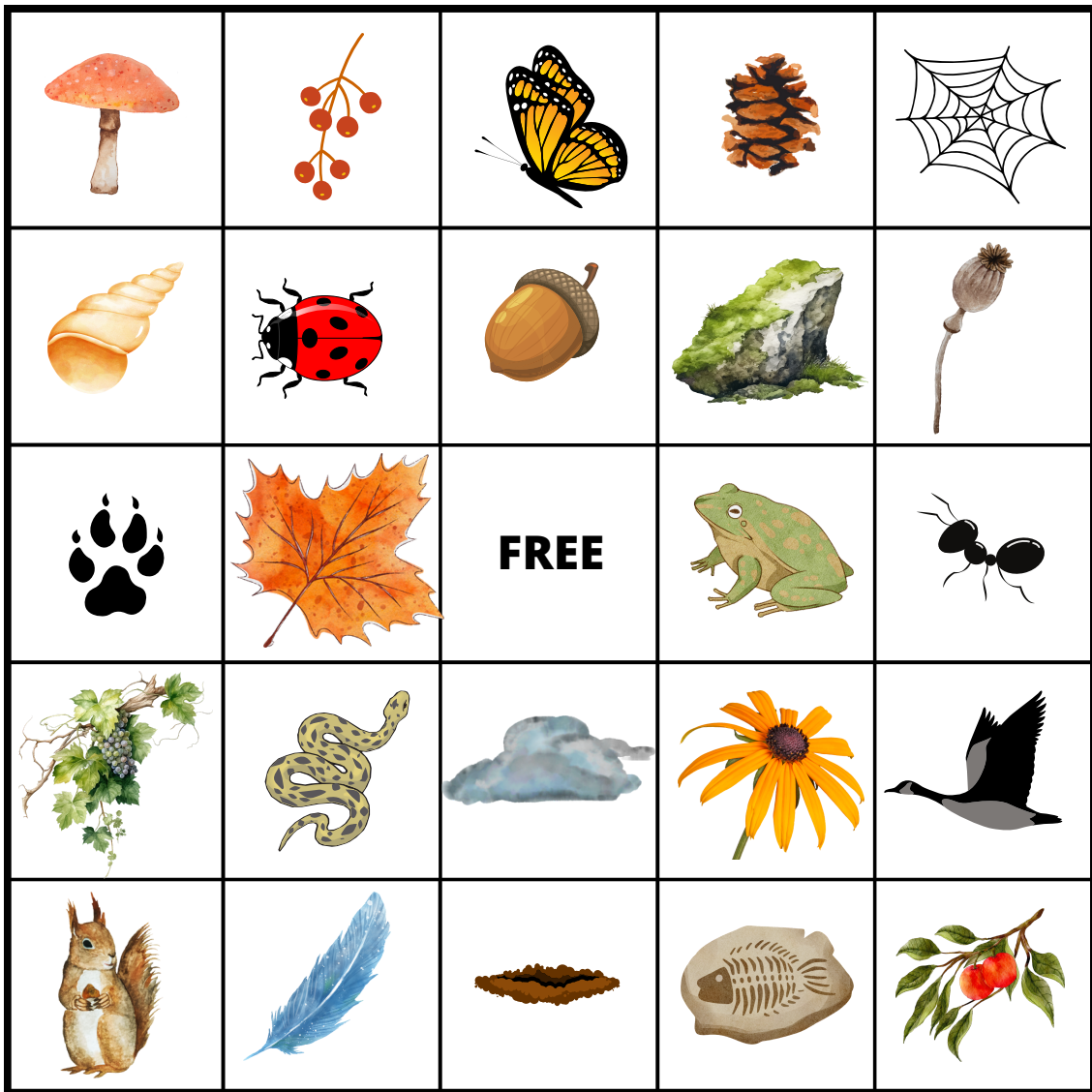


SEPTEMBER NATURE BINGO

How to Play: Head out into nature and see how many items you can find. 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 month.

The items are: mushroom, berries, butterfly, pine cone, spiderweb, shell, lady beetle, acorn, moss, seed head, animal track, colorful leaf, frog or toad, ant, vine, snake, storm cloud, flower, goose, squirrel, feather, animal den, fossil, fruit tree.

How many can you find?



FORAGING

Fill-it-ins

Do you love mad libs? Here are some foraging-based fill-it-in stories to have some fun with. Grab a friend or family member and take turns filling in the blanks with parts of speech (without looking at the stories) and then read them out loud. Have fun!

Parts of speech reminder:

- noun: a person, place, or thing (Mom, porcupine, teacup)
- adjective: a word that describes a noun (stinky, pink, angry)
- verb: a word that shows an action (slip, yell, jump) (past tense: slipped, jumped)
- adverb: a word that describes how you do an action (angrily, happily, badly)
- interjection: a short word or phrase that expresses emotion (Hey! Yikes! Wow! Gadzooks!)

Our Foraging Month

Last month, we foraged _____ different wild _____ foods. Early in the month, we gathered _____-leaf, a common weed that tastes like _____. Then we _____ some _____ berries, which are _____ and taste a little bit like _____. We also found some _____ mushrooms. You can always tell them from poisonous _____ mushrooms because they smell like _____ and have a _____ ring around their _____. We _____ picked some _____ greens that we made into a _____ soup and some _____ flowers that we used to make a delicious _____ jelly. We _____ lots of other _____ wild edible plants but my favorites were the _____ leaves that we used for tea. It made my grandma shout " _____ !" and she promised to gather some _____ fruits to make my favorite dessert ever, _____ - _____ pie. I can't wait!

My Favorite Wild Mushroom

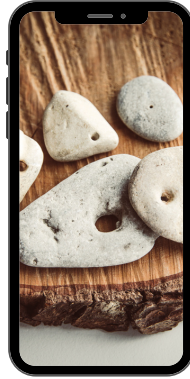
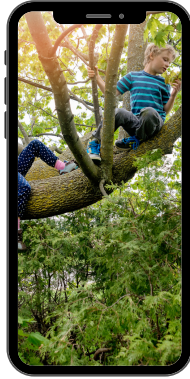
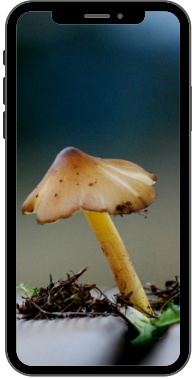
I have always wanted to learn to forage for _____ adjective _____ noun mushrooms. They look so _____ adjective and _____ adjective ! One day, we all went to _____ adjective _____ noun state park, where it's legal to forage for mushrooms. The weather was very _____ adjective and we knew there could be lots of mushrooms because it had rained _____ plural noun for days. We almost gave up hope but then I _____ adverb tripped on a _____ adjective _____ noun and fell into the _____ adjective leaves. When I was on the ground I saw a _____ adjective mushroom right there in front of me! " _____ interjection " I yelled. When I _____ past tense verb the leaves I saw there were lots more. We gathered a _____ noun full and took them home. We _____ adverb cleaned them and triple-checked their identification. They had _____ adjective stems, smelled like _____ plural noun , made a _____ adjective spore print and had no _____ adjective look-alikes. We tried just a little the first time in case we had a _____ adjective reaction, and _____ adverb stir-fried them with some _____ adjective _____ plural noun . They were _____ adjective !



September

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

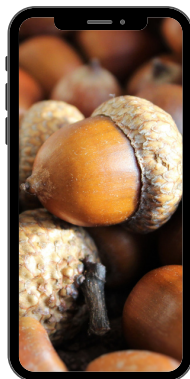
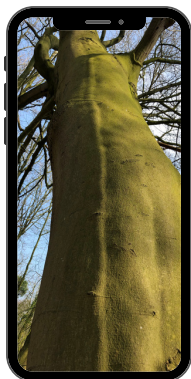
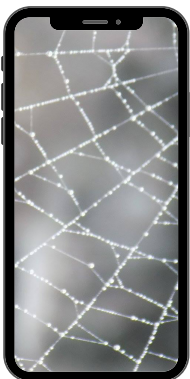
Wild Photo Challenge



- 1 Starts with S
- 2 Mushroom
- 3 Up high
- 4 Dirty
- 5 Running
- 6 Down low
- 7 Pattern
- 8 Insect
- 9 Feather
- 10 Cracked

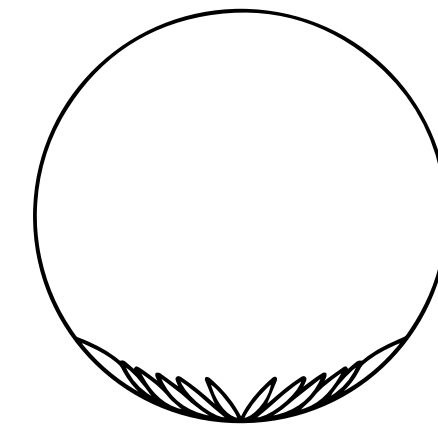
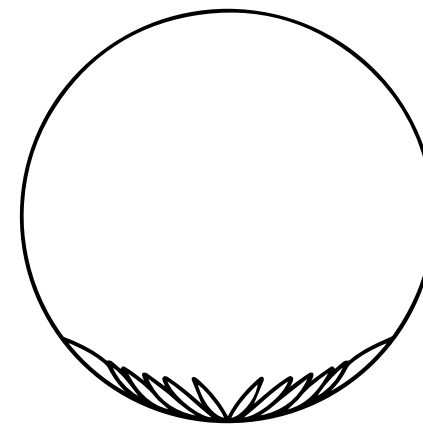
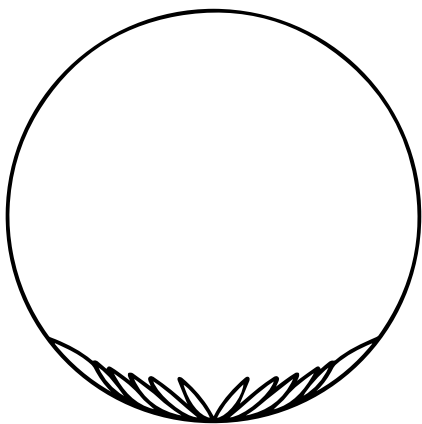
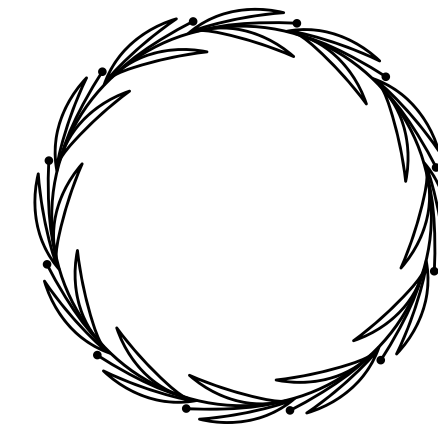
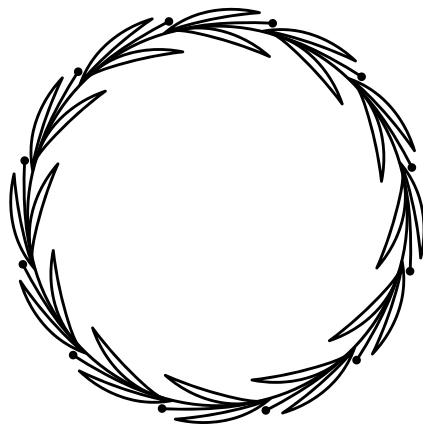
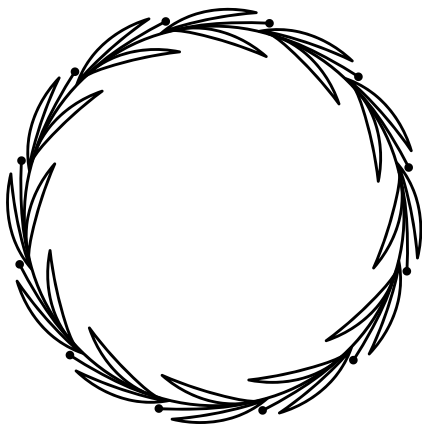
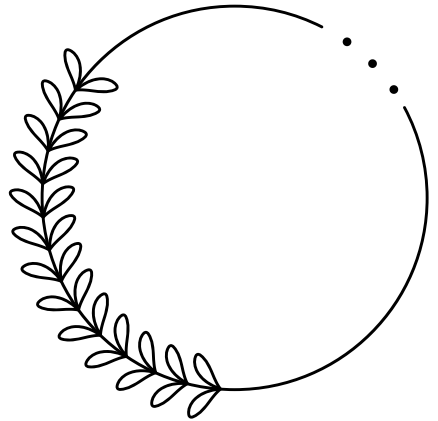
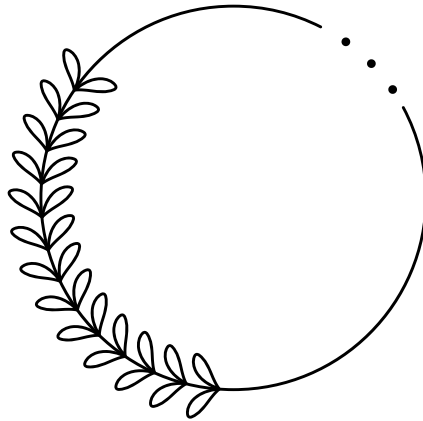
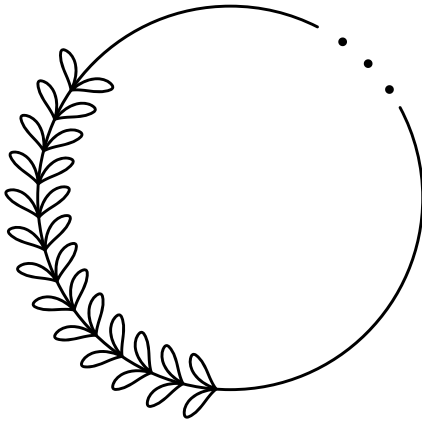
- 11 Red
- 12 Living
- 13 Colorful
- 14 Sky
- 15 Shady
- 16 Dusty
- 17 Rocks
- 18 Wet
- 19 Many
- 20 Asymmetrical

- 21 Leaf
- 22 Hole
- 23 Changed
- 24 Weird
- 25 Fuzzy
- 26 Spiderweb
- 27 Little
- 28 Edible
- 29 Rough
- 30 Pretty

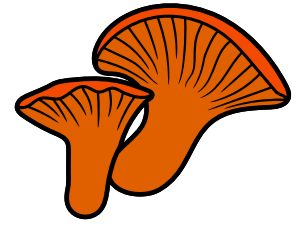


September Treasures

Head outside and try to find a nice assortment of pretty flower petals and tiny leaves. Tape them below with a piece of clear tape like packing tape over them to preserve them.



Lobster Mushrooms



By Daryl Hrdlicka

The lobster mushroom (*Hypomyces lactifluorum*) isn't actually a mushroom at all! It's a parasitic fungus that attacks *Lactarius* and *Lactifluus* (milk-caps), and *Russula* (brittle-gills) mushrooms, turning them red-orange and delicious.



The color and seafood-like flavor are why they're called lobster mushrooms. They are very meaty, and the shellfish smell gets stronger when they're dried.



The color leaches out while they're being cooked, and it can be used to dye wool, fabric, and paper.

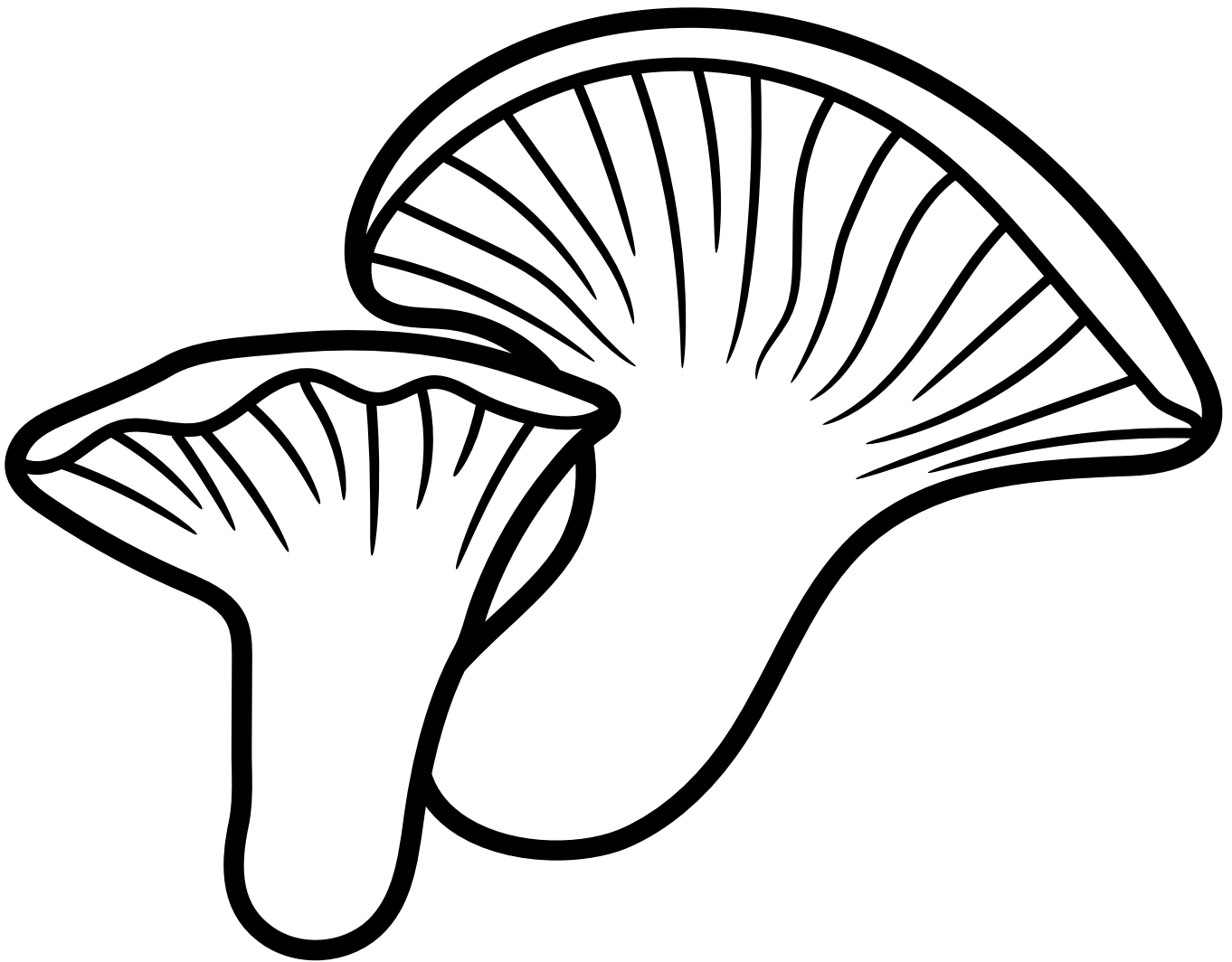
Lobster Mushroom Lookalikes: Chanterelles can kind of grow in similar shapes and have ridge-like gills, but they're softer and a different color. Some might say Jack o'lantern mushrooms or Sulfur Tufts look like them due to their colors, but those have true gills and a much different texture. Beware of other orange mushrooms with true gills, as these can be very bad for you.



Lobster mushrooms are one of the few wild mushrooms that you can find in late summer, typically growing from July all the way into wet winter months where it is mild.



LOBSTER MUSHROOM
(*Hypomyces lactifluorum*)



Beefsteak Mushroom

By Daryl Hrdlicka



The beefsteak mushroom (*Fistulina hepatica*) has a lot of other names, including ox tongue! "Hepatica" actually means "resembling liver".



It looks very similar to a slab of meat growing off the sides of trees. It is found in Europe, North America, Australia, and Africa, usually on oak or chestnut trees.

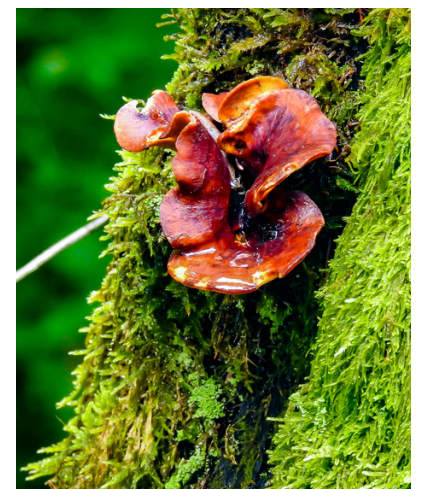


The cap is 3" to 12" wide, and it doesn't really have gills, but small cup-like structures. The younger ones are pinkish-red, and they get darker with age.

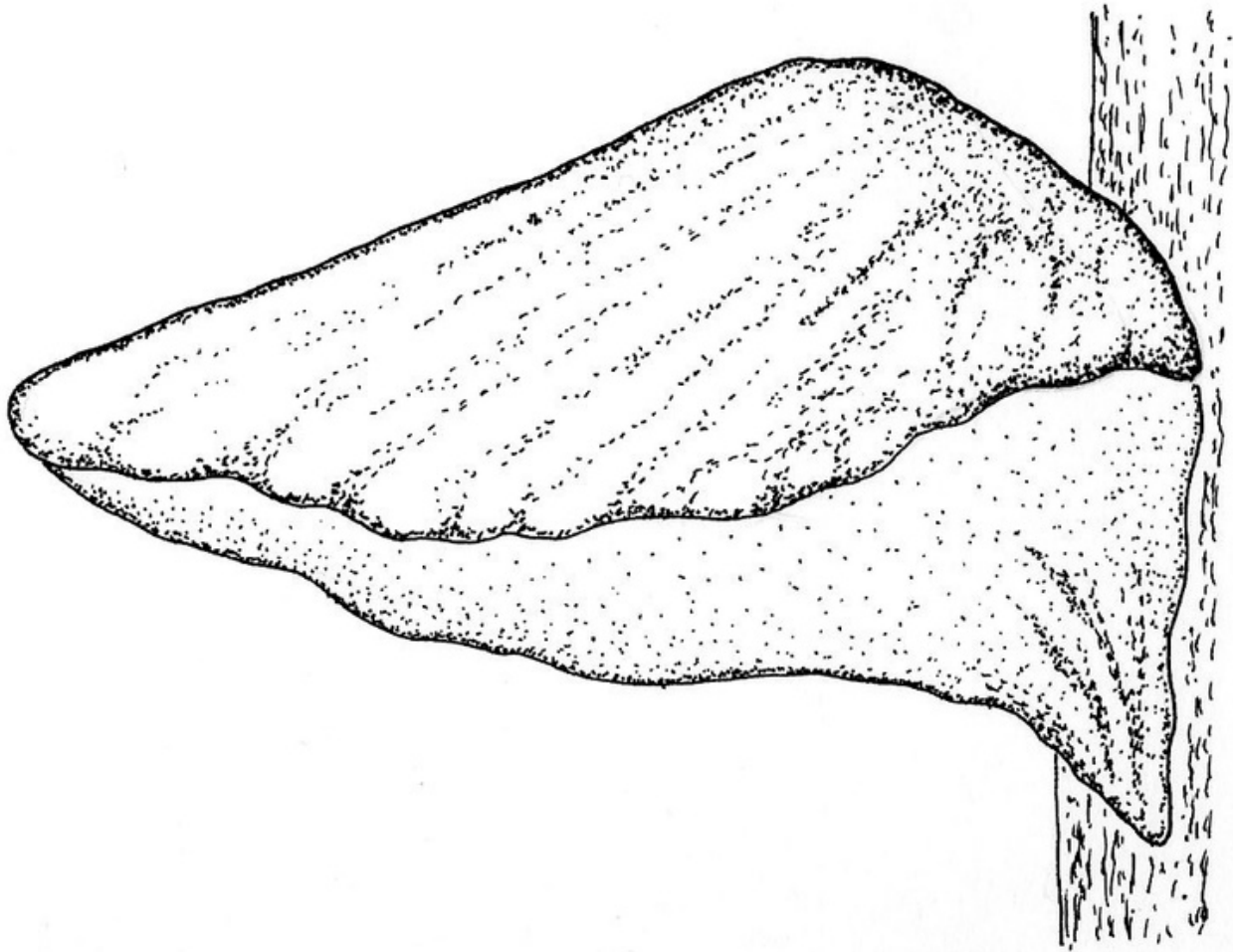


It even bleeds when it's cut, which can stain things!

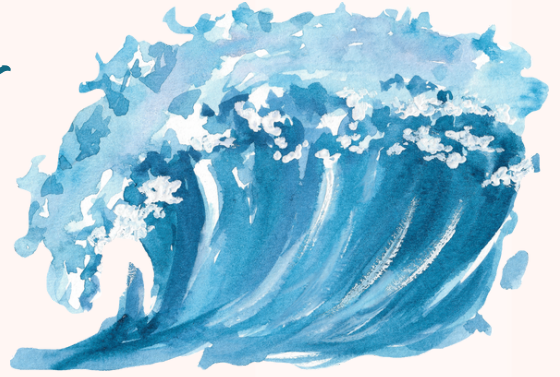
There are no mushrooms that are easily confused with beefsteak mushrooms.



BEEFSTEAK MUSHROOM
(*Fistulina hepatica*)



September Poetry



Sea-Fever
by John Masefield



I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by,
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a gray mist on the sea's face, and a gray dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.



I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant traveler life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way, where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

The Way through the Woods
by Rudyard Kipling



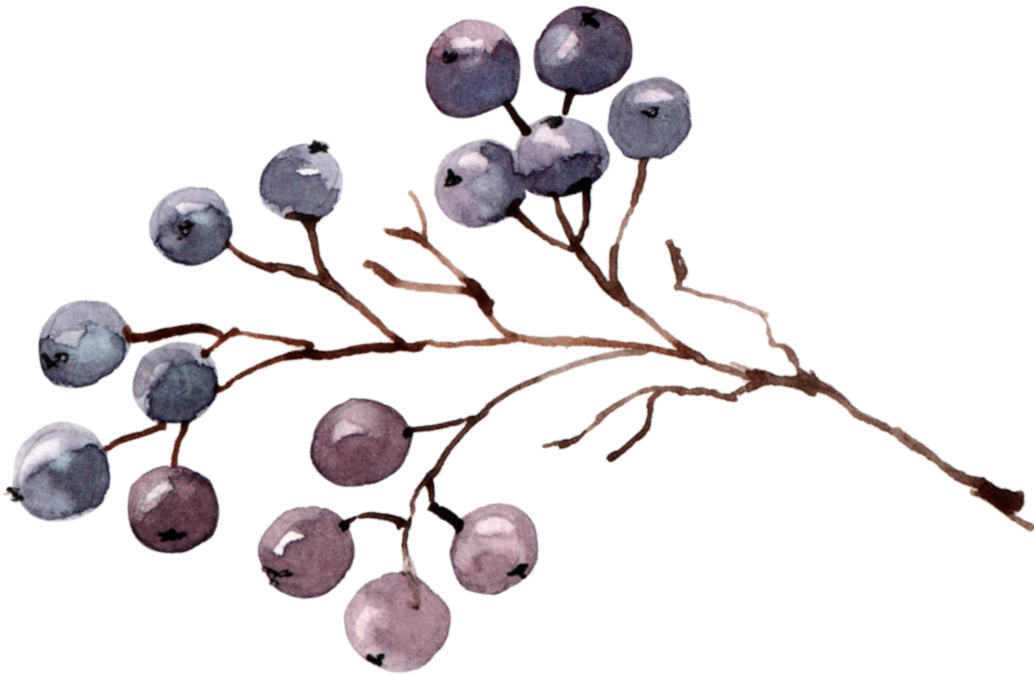
They shut the road through the woods
Seventy years ago.
Weather and rain have undone it again,
And now you would never know
There was once a road through the woods
Before they planted the trees.
It is underneath the coppice and heath,
And the thin anemones.
Only the keeper sees
That, where the ring-dove broods,
And the badgers roll at ease,
There was once a road through the woods.

Yet, if you enter the woods
Of a summer evening late,
When the night-air cools on the trout-ringed pools
Where the otter whistles his mate,
(They fear not men in the woods,
Because they see so few.)
You will hear the beat of a horse's feet,
And the swish of a skirt in the dew,
Steadily cantering through
The misty solitudes,
As though they perfectly knew
The old lost road through the woods.
But there is no road through the woods.



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 birds spotted
- Milkweeds gone to seed
- Maple leaves turning gold
- Pears are ripe
- Lady beetles moving into the house
- First asters blooming
- Oyster mushrooms in state park
- Hawthorn berries are ripe
- Acorns falling
- Rose hips are ripe
- Black eyed susan (rudbeckia) seeds gathered and scattered

SEPTEMBER 2023

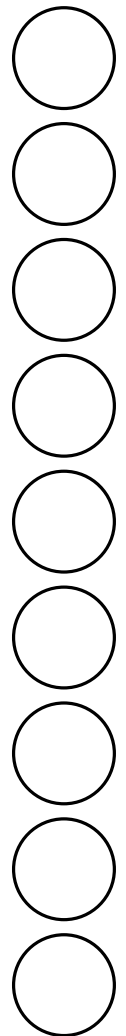
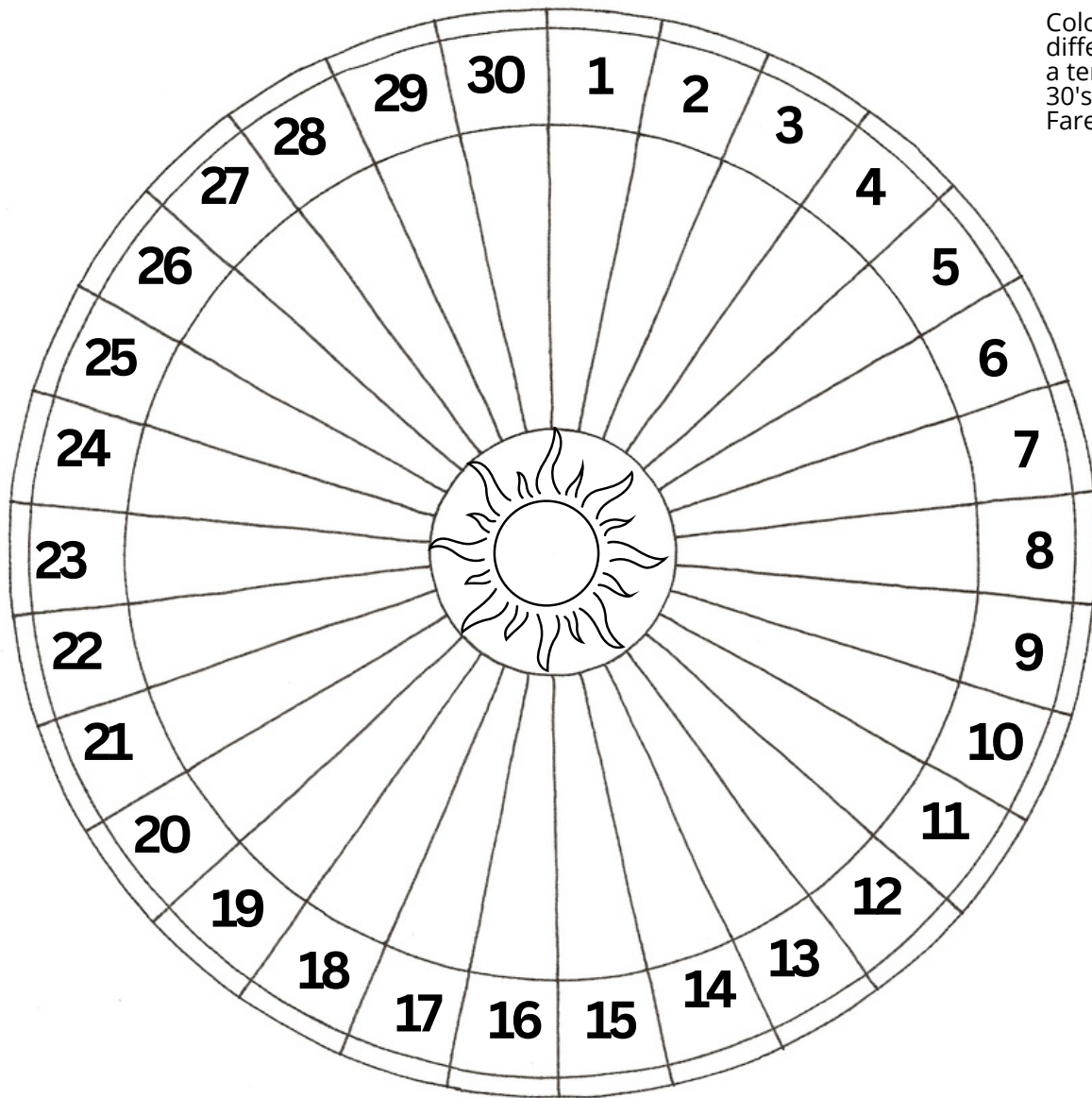
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

September Temperature Wheel

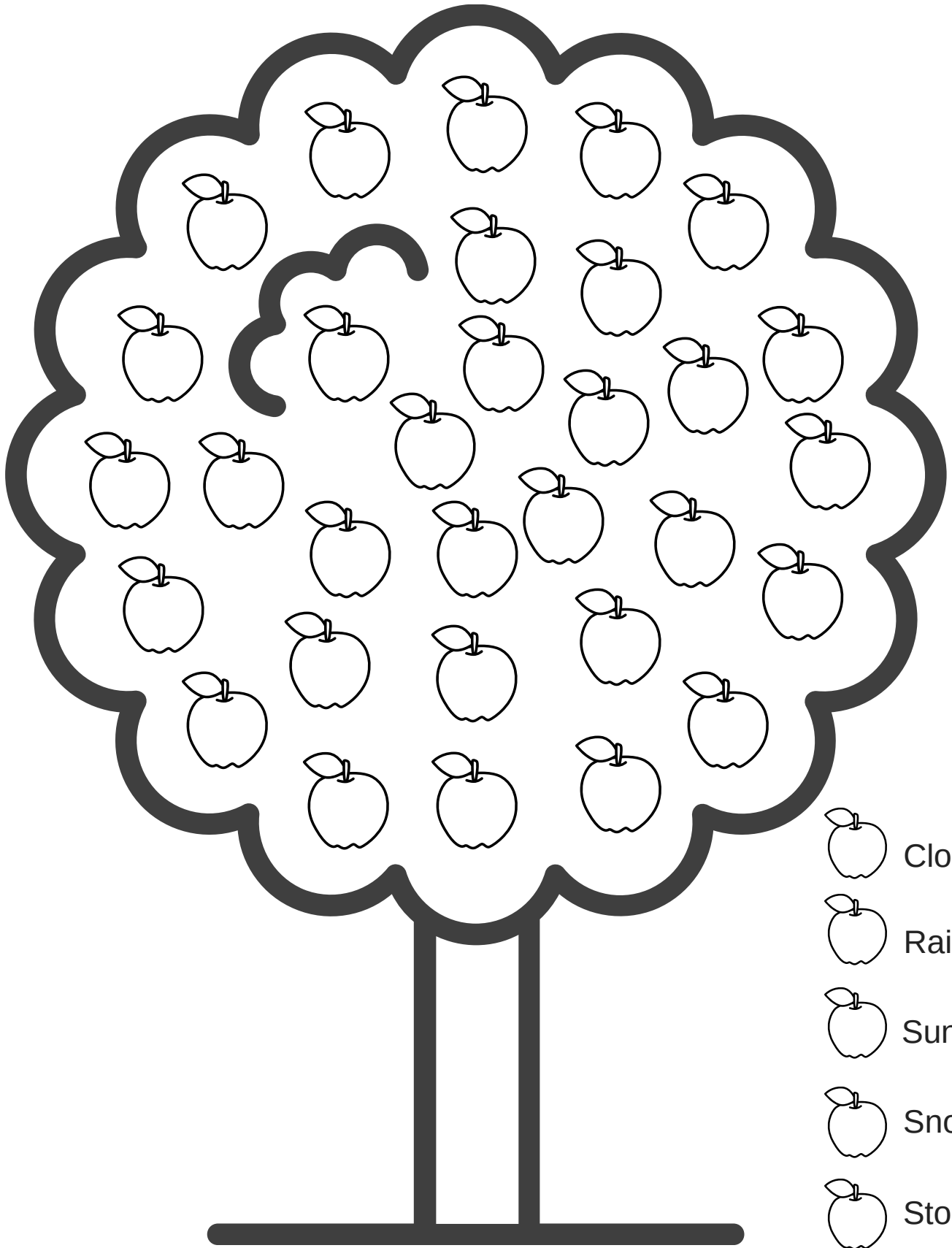
Make a picture record of the range of temperatures this month!
Each day at a certain time (like when you wake up, or at noon), find out what the temperature is outside. Then color the spoke of the wheel to represent that color.
At the end of the month, look back and see what trends you can see for the month.





Key

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



September Weather Tree



-  Cloudy
-  Rainy
-  Sunny
-  Snowy
-  Stormy

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 _____

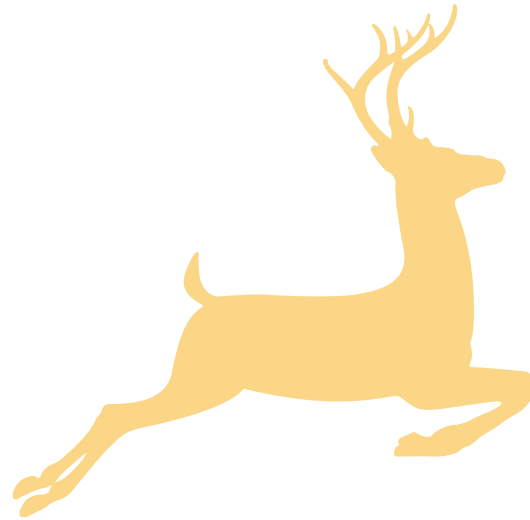
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.