

May 2024

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



**Bug
BINGO**

**Make a
Wire-
Wrapped
Stone
Pendant**

Poison Ivy 101

**Learn About Ground
Ivy & Wild Parsnip**

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

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Happy May!

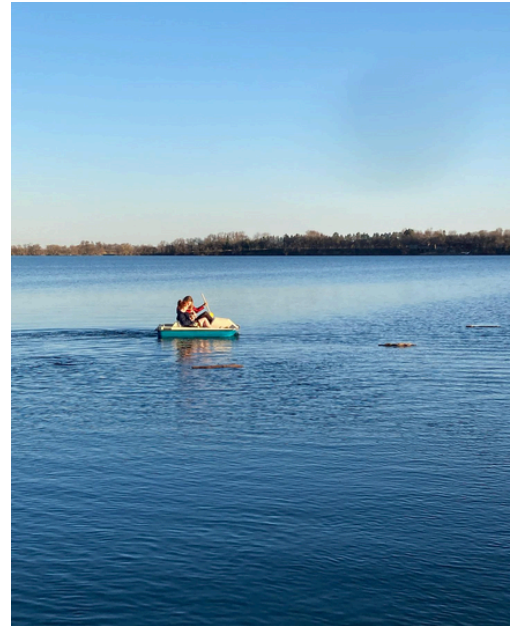
How are you planning on spending time in nature this month?

This is always a busy time of year for our family! We have three kids who have birthdays this week! This is also the week when our local school's student-run greenhouse opens and we like to buy lots of plants to support them. And it's such a wonderful time to be in the garden and foraging.

We have a new way our family is having fun in nature right now, too. Our city has "large item pickup" this week where you put big things by the curb that you want to get rid of and pay a small fee for the city to pick it all up and take it to the dump. We always put our items out really early in case someone in town can use what we are getting rid of, and other people do the same. Someone put an old paddle boat by the curb to get rid of it and we happily took it before it went to the dump. It needed some work but we fixed it up and now we are all having lots of fun using it! The first thing we did was to buy life jackets, because even if you are a good swimmer it is very, very important to always wear a life jacket when boating. We can't wait to have some wild adventures in our new (old) paddle boat!

What about you? What fun things are you hoping to do soon in nature? I hope you find lots of wonderful ways to play and learn in nature 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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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

Start a mud journal -- paint a swatch of mud in a notebook for everyplace new you visit

Gather some pretty stones or shells & wrap them in wire to make pendants (we have the directions in this issue)

Carve a picture in the dirt outside your home & see how long it takes for nature to erase it

Play Bug Bingo (see the next page)

Gather violets & make color changing violet sugar

Make May Day baskets of fresh flowers (dandelions count!) and leave them on your neighbors' doors

Whistle with a blade of grass and try to play a tune (notice how different sizes sound different!)

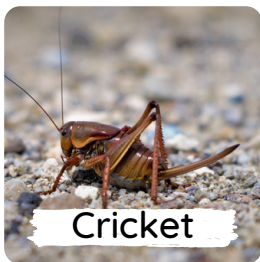
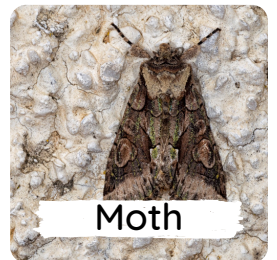
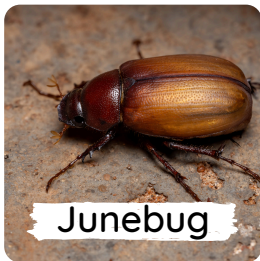
Try to go outside and touch a different (safe) thing in nature every day this month

Go for a walk in the rain

Find something in nature to help -- a worm stranded in a puddle, a plant that needs water, etc.

Bug Bingo!

How to Play: Head out into nature and see how many bugs you can spot (safely from a distance -- to protect you and them). Make an x over the ones you find and try to get a BINGO either across, down, or diagonally. Not all of them may be in your area, but most of them are common in many places.



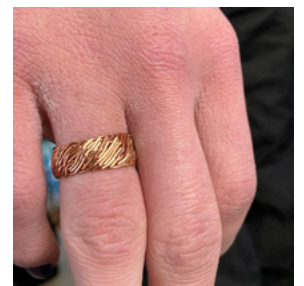
Make a Wire-Wrapped

Stone or shell pendant

Here's a fun way to reuse wire from broken electronics to make pretty jewelry and gifts from things you find in nature.



Our son Alex likes to take apart anything broken that can't be fixed, and then to use the insides for new things. He found out that broken fans have lots of copper wire in them and he made rings for himself and his friends with some of the wire.



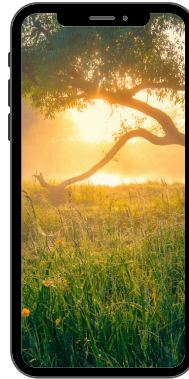
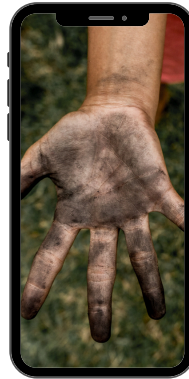
You can also use the wire to wrap things like pretty rocks or shells that you find. These make lovely presents for Mother's Day and they're also fun to hang in windows or on your wall.

Simply find a pretty stone or shell and wrap it a few times with your wire. Make a loop at the top and then thread it on some silk cord or onto a chain from an old necklace. Presto! A lovely wild keepsake!

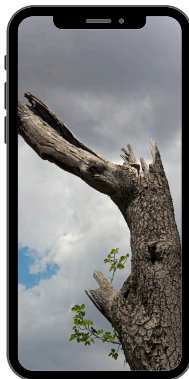
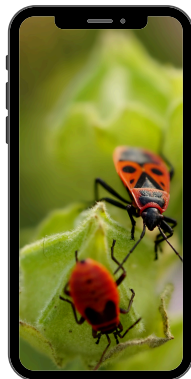


May Nature Photo Challenge

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



- | | | | | | |
|----|----------|----|------------|----|-----------|
| 1 | Clouds | 11 | Insect | 21 | Shadow |
| 2 | New | 12 | Cracked | 22 | Edible |
| 3 | Seeds | 13 | Blue | 23 | Water |
| 4 | Bird | 14 | Broken | 24 | Smooth |
| 5 | Puddle | 15 | Rough | 25 | Sharp |
| 6 | Flower | 16 | Soft | 26 | Busy |
| 7 | Dirty | 17 | Green | 27 | Rocks |
| 8 | Light | 18 | Shadow | 28 | Stormy |
| 9 | Wildlife | 19 | Colorful | 29 | Pink |
| 10 | Hole | 20 | Non-native | 30 | Sparkling |
| | | | | 31 | Wispy |



Finding the Good in Every Plant Ways Poison Ivy Helps Nature



It's easy to think of plants as bad or good, but even plants like poison ivy can have benefits. Poison ivy is awful for people but helps a lot of nature.

Poison ivy is native to the United States and many birds and animals rely on it for food. About 85% of people are allergic to poison ivy and will get a painful rash, but birds and animals are not bothered by it. Some of the birds and animals that rely on poison ivy for food are black bears, white tailed deer, muskrats, wood rats, quail, mockingbirds, woodpeckers, chickadees, bluebirds and catbirds.

Poison ivy also helps control erosion and it doesn't crowd out other plants in the area the way invasive plants can. It has been used to make inks, varnishes, dyes and even medicine. It has been used to treat skin disorders, paralysis and arthritis. Scientists have also found that poison ivy could be used to treat sewage to clean water.

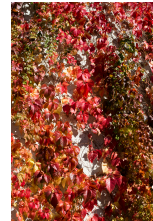
Poison ivy is in the same plant family as pistachios and mangoes! The reason poison ivy causes a rash is because it has something called urushiol in it, and that confuses the cells in our skin. The urushiol doesn't actually burn or cause a rash but our skin cells get confused and attack themselves. This is called an autoimmune reaction, where our bodies cause harm to ourselves even though something is actually harmless. There are lots of other examples of autoimmune reactions where our immune system gets confused, like Celiac disease (against gluten inside our bodies), type-1 diabetes, lupus and multiple sclerosis. Even the lucky people who don't react to urushiol can eventually develop a reaction to it, so it's best to stay far away from poison ivy!

Stay safe from poison ivy

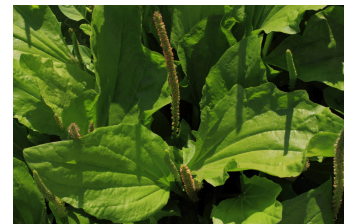
Here are some ways to keep yourself safe from poison ivy when you're out in nature.



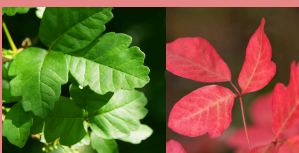
- Learn what poison ivy looks like and avoid touching any plant that might be poison ivy. A folk saying is “Leaves of three, leave it be.”



- If you do touch any (or think you might have), wash your skin really well with **COLD** water. You can use soap like dish soap but avoid any soap that might have oil in it, because oils can spread the urushiol even more on your skin.
- Put your clothes in the laundry as soon as you can and wash them so the urushiol isn't spread to other people or other parts of your body.
- Don't burn poison ivy! The smoke can be very dangerous.
- Many people swear by jewelweed and plantain leaves to keep from getting a rash when they touch poison ivy. These plants usually grow nearby and people will rub the leaves on their skin. Some people simmer jewelweed leaves and freeze the decoction in ice cube trays to use if they ever are in contact with poison ivy or develop a rash.



Not just poison ivy! Here are some other plants that can cause a painful rash.



Poison oak



Nettles



Poison sumac



Giant hogweed



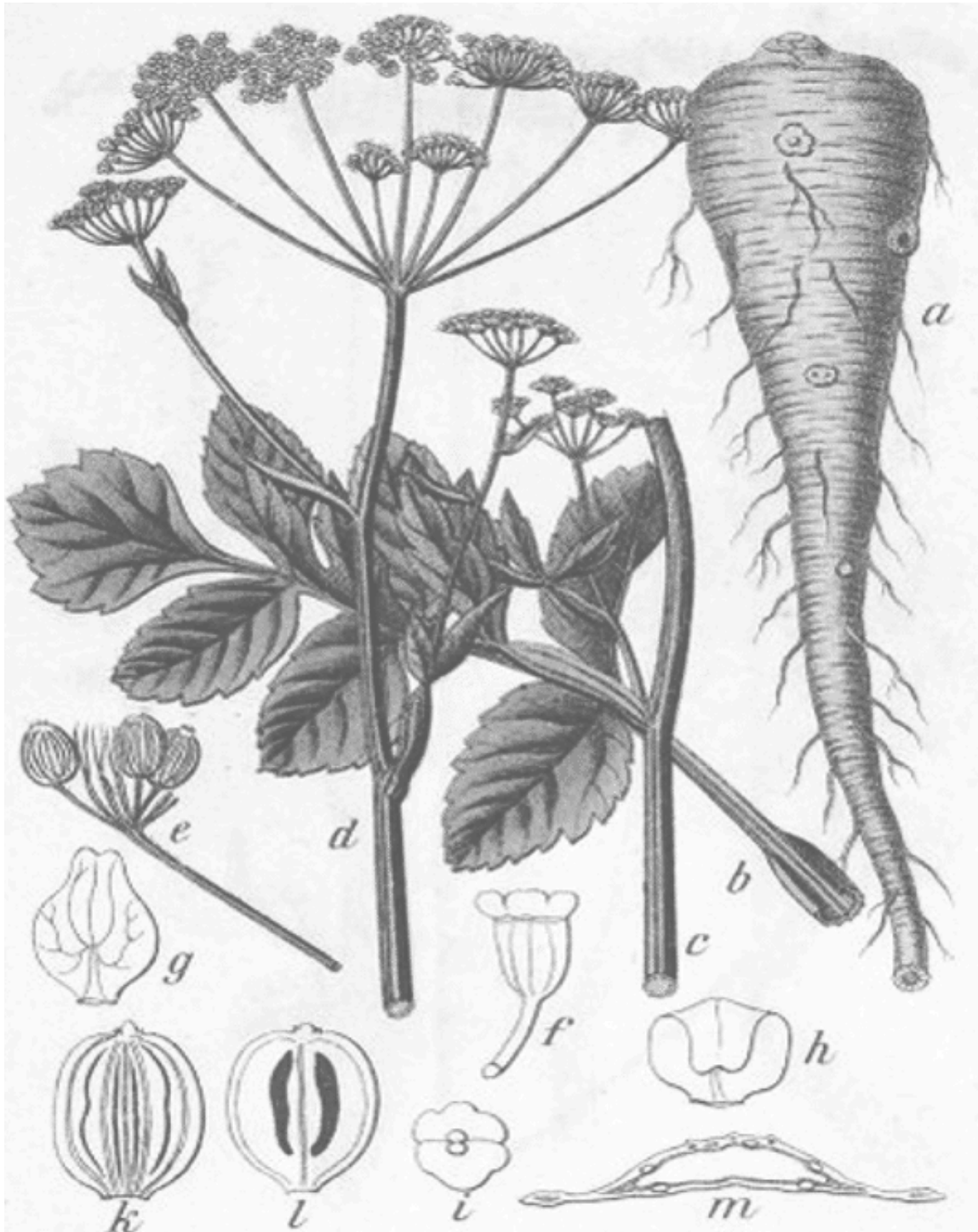
Wild parsnip



Leadwort

WILD PARSNIP

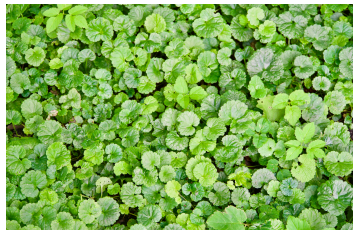
(*Pastinaca sativa*)



Creeping Charlie/ Ground Ivy



Lots of plants share common names, and “Creeping Charlie“ is a name that people call all different plants. *Glechoma hederacea* is called Creeping Charlie sometimes and also called Ground Ivy, which is what we’ll call it here.



Ground ivy is not related to ivy plants. It’s called that because it has ivy-like runners that creep along the ground -- which is where it gets its other common name, Creeping Charlie.

Ground ivy really likes to take over lawns if the grass is bare in places. A lot of homeowners dislike it for this reason and it’s considered an invasive, non-native plant in much of the United States and all over the world. It can also take over woodland areas. Some people like it in their yards because it’s a nice ground cover and a good source of nectar for pollinators like bees.

Like many non-native plants, it was probably brought over by European settlers a long time ago because they used it for food and medicine. They also used it to make beer and ale, which is where it got another one of its names -- ale ivy.

Ground ivy is in the mint family. It has a strong scent if you scrunch up the leaves. It is edible and you can eat it raw or cooked. People sometimes put it in salads or add it to soups, stews, omelets and stir fries. Like other plants where we eat the leaves, the older and bigger they get, the stronger they can taste. If you don’t want a strong, minty taste, pick the little young leaves. You can also use it to make a minty tea.

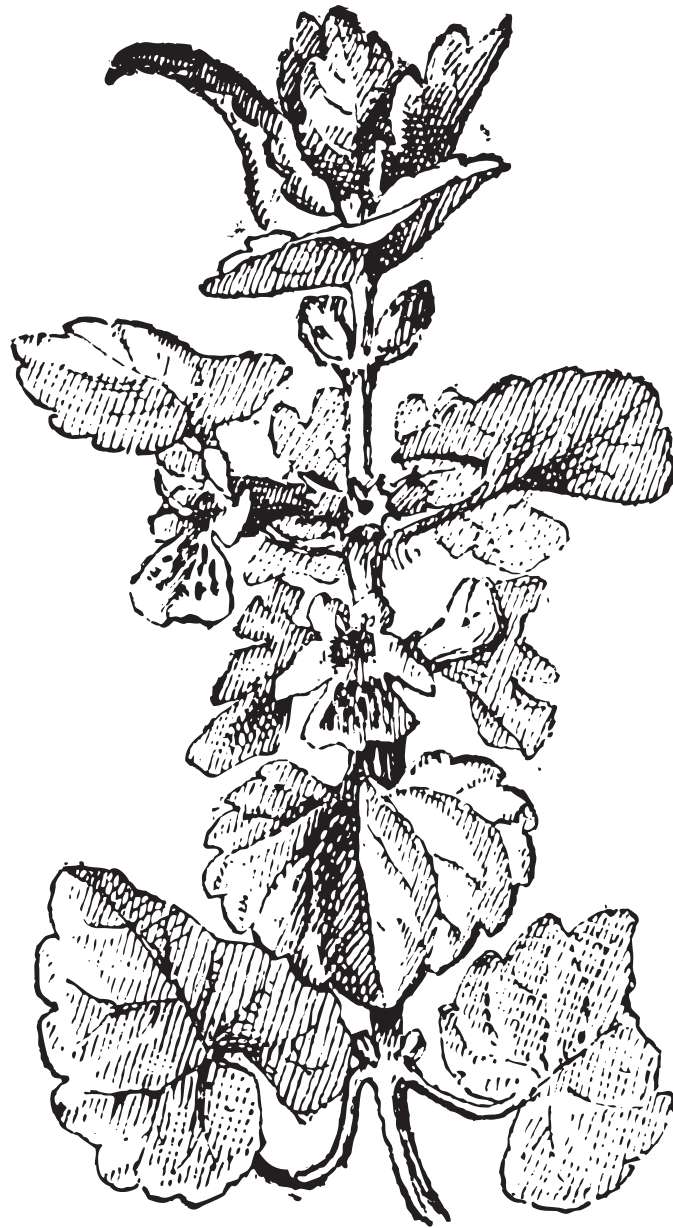
People have used ground ivy for medicine for a long time and now scientists are finding out that it may help with a lot of illnesses like bronchitis, cancer, stomach problems, migraines and skin problems. It is also very high in vitamin C, which is probably one reason it helped keep people healthy in the old days when they drank it as tea. People who have epilepsy, kidney problems or who are pregnant should avoid eating ground ivy or drinking the tea.

Ground ivy gets confused with two other plants that like to take over lawns, purple deadnettle and henbit. Those plants are also edible and medicinal.



CREEPING CHARLIE/ GROUND IVY

(*Glechoma hederacea*)



Poems for May

Who Could Stay Lamenting
--Minnie Aumonier



Take a million Bluebells,
Trees of newest green,
Gayest April Sunbeams
Dancing in between.
Here and there, a Primrose,
Moss, and Ivy spray,
Add to these the perfume
Of the early May.



WHO
COULD
STAY
LAMENTING

Take the misty blueness
Of the distant dells,
Take the purple shadows,
Hiding more Blue-bells.

What a balm for heart-ache!
What a cure for care!
Who could stay lamenting
With Blue-bells everywhere?

May Day
- Sara Teasdale

A delicate fabric of bird song
Floats in the air,
The smell of wet wild earth
Is everywhere.

Kind Hearts Are The Garden
- Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Kind hearts are the gardens,
Kind thoughts are the roots,
Kind words are the flowers.
Kind deeds are the fruits.
Take care of your garden
And keep out the weeds,
Fill it with sunshine,
Kind words and Kind deeds.

Red small leaves of the maple
Are clenched like a hand,
Like girls at their first communion
The pear trees stand.

Oh I must pass nothing by
Without loving it much,
The raindrop try with my lips,
The grass with my touch;

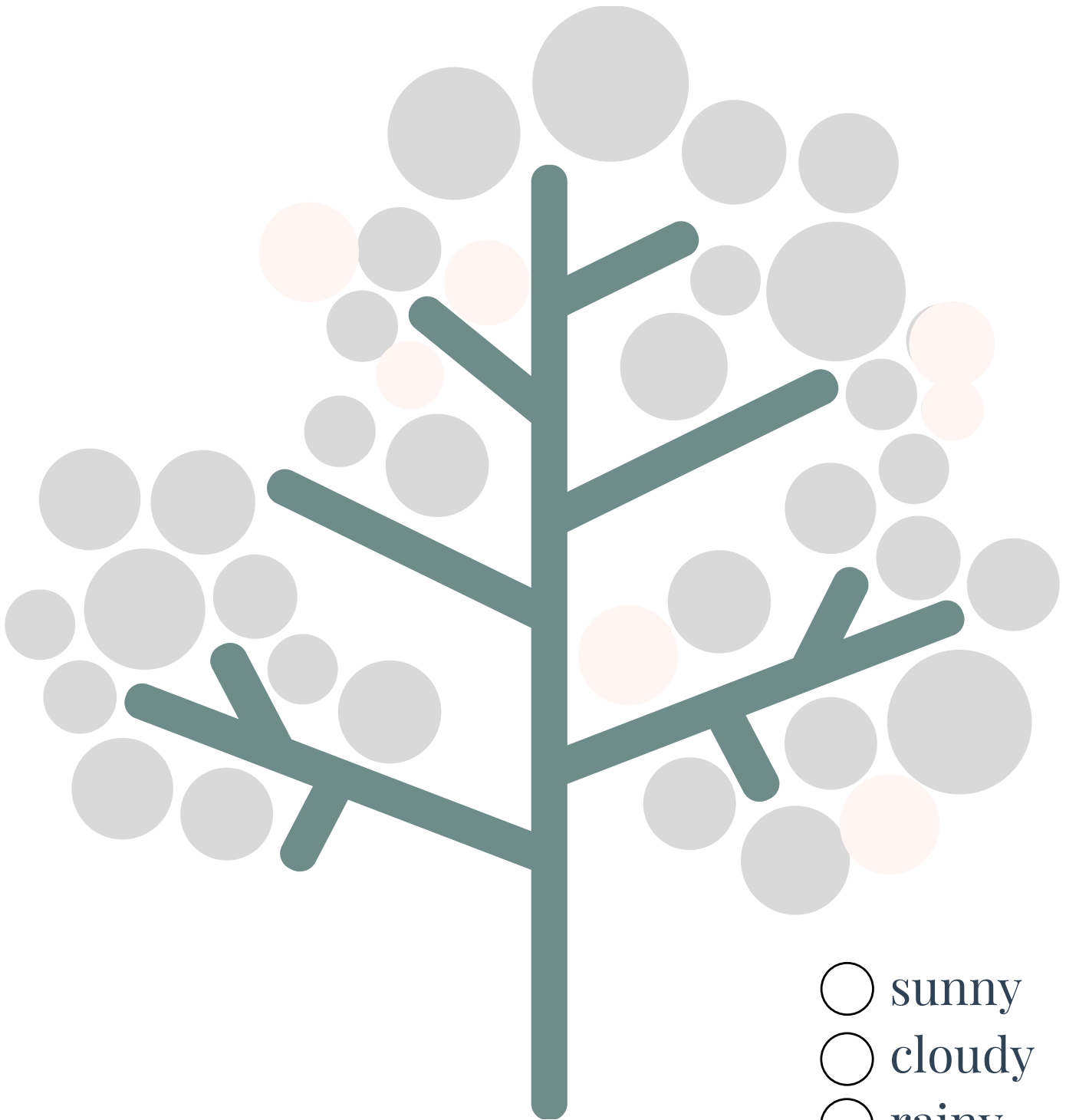
For how can I be sure
I shall see again
The world on the first of May
Shining after the rain?

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 _____

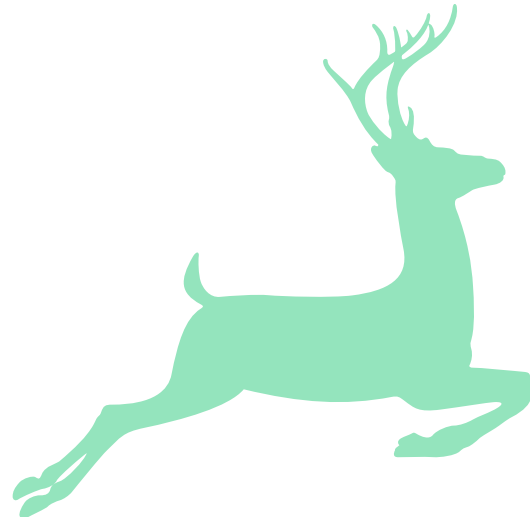
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.