

*July 2025*

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS



**The Outside  
Adventure  
Anti-Board Game**

**Wild Berry  
Popsicles**

**Mud Travel Log**

**Foraging Wild Plums**

**10 Fun Facts about  
Cottonwood Trees**

**Seasonal poems,  
activities, nature  
journal pages and more!**

# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

*Hello July!*

What fun are you hoping to have in nature this month?

Here in our little corner of Minnesota, we're hoping to do a lot of camping this month. We're also hoping to travel a little bit around our state and neighboring states. We spend a lot of time with good friends in Nebraska and we hope to go spend time there again soon.

Also on our wild bucket list for July – boating, picking wild berries, doing weekly nature art workshops at our arts center, hiking, storm watching, looking for rocks and artifacts at the lake, gardening, gathering invasive Asiatic dayflowers for their pretty blue paint, making sun tea from garden and foraged blends of herbs (some of our favorites are lemon balm, wild mint, elderflowers, pineapple weed, catmint and bee balm), bird watching, building some fun backyard structures and sculptures with trimmed branches and making treats from the cherries on our cherry tree.

Summer always means a lot of work outside for us too, like mowing lawns. I've been working at replacing more and more of our lawn with native plants so it's nice to have less and less lawn to mow too! There will still be lots of outside work to do like weeding the gardens and cutting down tree seedlings that seem to sprout up every few minutes, but somehow work also seems more fun to me when it's outside. ☺

I hope you have a wonderful wild month with lots of outdoor adventures!

*Alicia*



Our youngest daughter, Fiona, with wild mint she foraged from a nearby beach.

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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# 10 Fun Ways To Learn & Play in Nature in July

*Color in the ones you do!*

Gather twigs from the ground and use string to build something with them

Try to make a famous building or your dream house out of sand or mud

Put a pot over the top of a weed in your yard and check it every day to see how it changes without sunlight

Gather berries to make wild ice cream (we have recipes in this issue)

Take a cutting of a plant outside and see if you can root it in water to grow a new plant

Next time it storms, count the seconds between thunder and lightning to figure out how far away it is (every 5 seconds is one mile)

Start a mud log of places you visit (we have one in this issue)

Try to ID 3 new birds, flowers, mushrooms, bugs, rocks or other parts of nature in your area

Head into nature with friends or family and gather materials to make music together like rattling seed pods & whistling with blades of grass

Tour your yard or neighborhood and see which plant seems the most popular with pollinators

# THE ANTI-BOARD GAME OUTSIDE ADVENTURE

**Here's a game to play where you are the game piece and nature is the board!**

**Number of players: 1 to 100**

**How to Play:** Head outside with the game page and a pen (or use mud!) to mark off the squares as you complete them.

**Also bring a water bottle!** The game takes longer than you might think – and you'll need to take a drink of water during the game.

Starting at the start square, find the object in each square or do what it tells you to do. If you're playing with other players, make sure everyone has done each square before moving on to the next one. **You can work as a team to do them together.** *Feel free to change them if any of the squares don't work for you or your group.*

**If needed, you get one free skip! Use it wisely!**

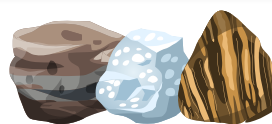
Keep going until you get to the end!



Spot 3  
different  
kinds of  
birds



Find an animal  
track



Find 3 cool  
rocks



Stop & watch  
an insect for  
one minute



Climb a tree  
or a rock

Figure  
out  
which  
way is  
north



Do  
some  
kind of  
exercise  
for 1  
minute



Find an  
edible plant



Find a rock  
with a hole in it

Listen  
for 5  
different  
nature  
sounds



Find an  
invasive plant



Howl like a wolf

# Start

Move like a bird,  
bug or other  
creature you see



Balance on  
something for  
10 seconds

# Finish



Find a  
native plant



Arrange leaves  
or rocks in a  
cool pattern



Find a piece  
of trash to  
throw away



Find a feather



Notice something  
pretty or cool



Take  
a drink  
of  
water



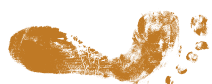
Smell 3  
nature items



Use a stick to  
draw in the dirt



Spot two kinds  
of mammals



Wiggle your toes  
in the sand, mud  
or grass



Find an insect  
or animal home



Find a  
medicinal plant



Spin in  
circles  
until you  
get  
dizzy



Sit or lie down &  
watch the sky  
for one minute



Find a shell or  
fossil



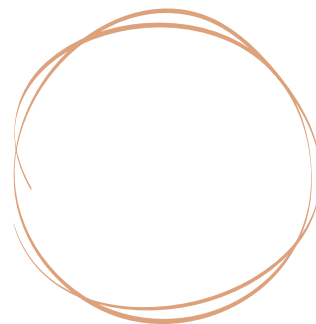
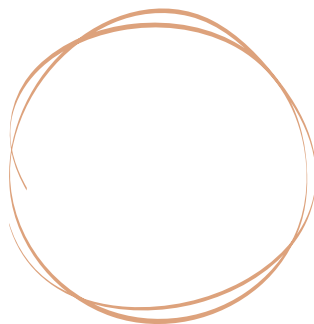
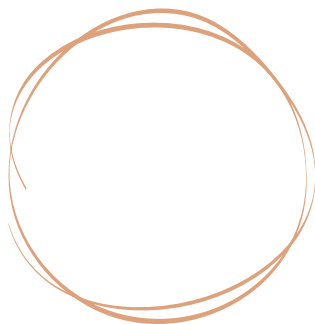
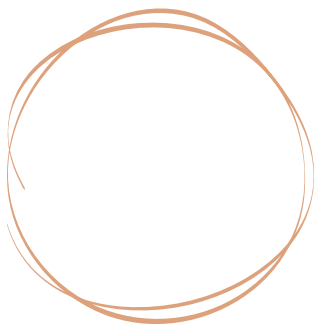
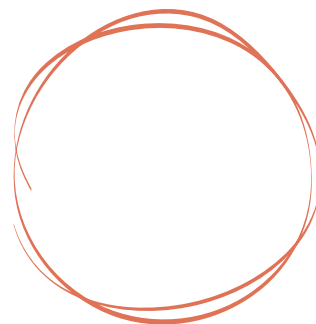
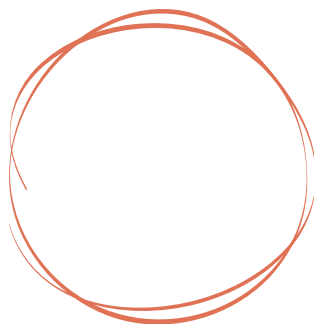
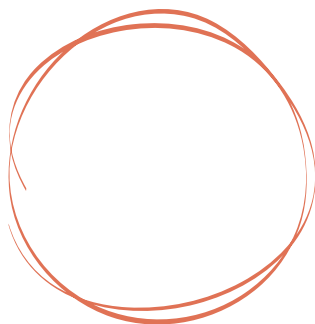
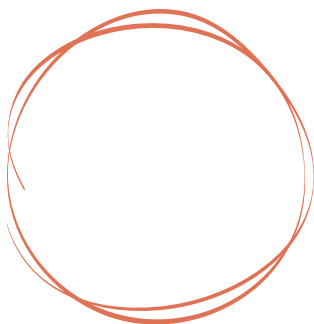
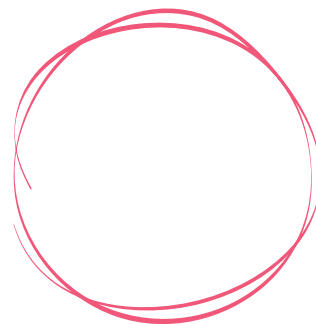
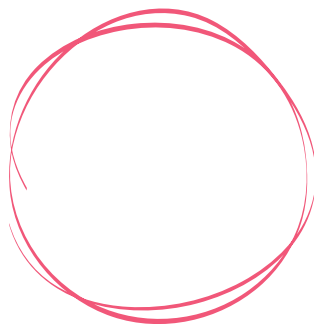
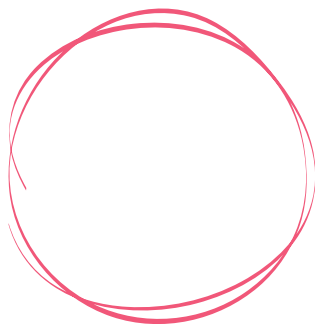
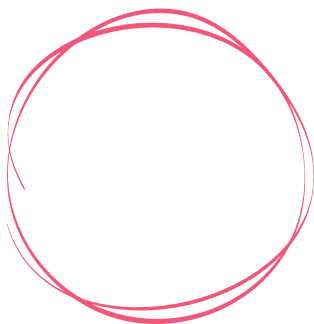
Spot something in  
nature that starts  
with each letter of  
your initials



# Mud Travel Log!

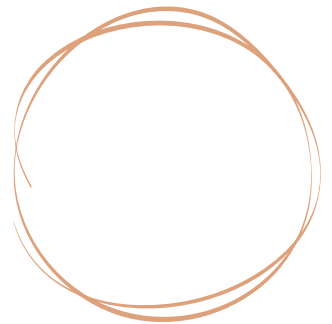
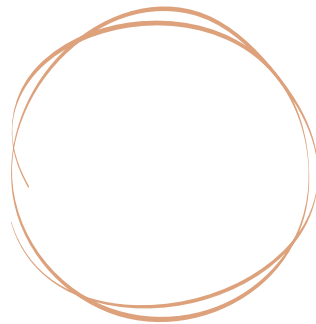
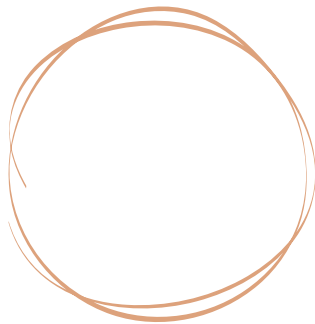
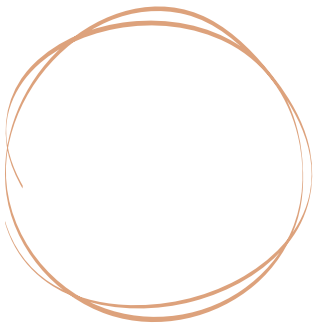
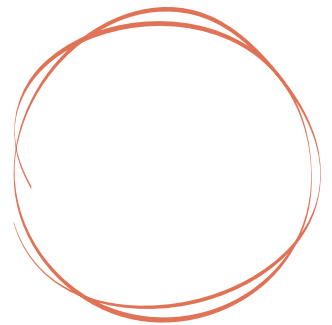
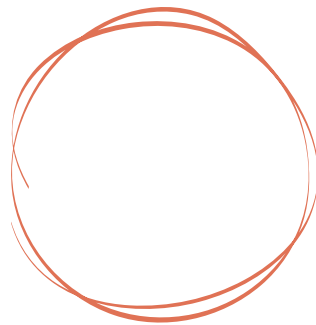
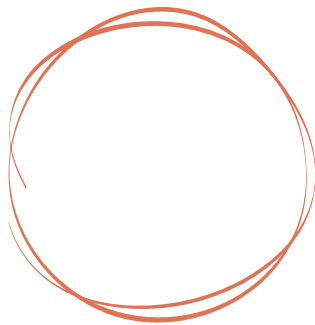
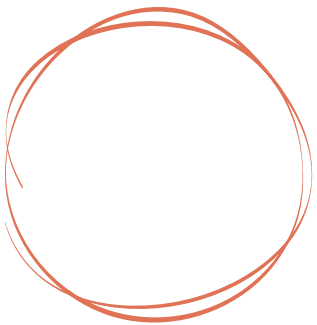
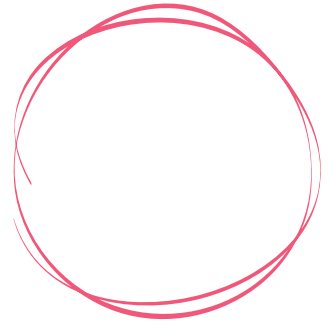
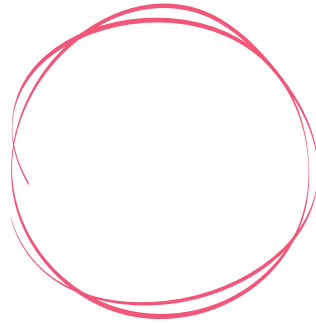
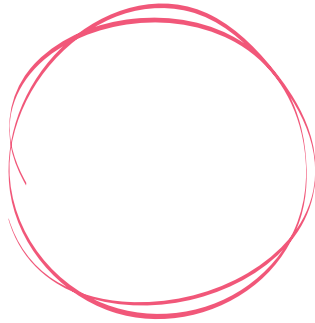
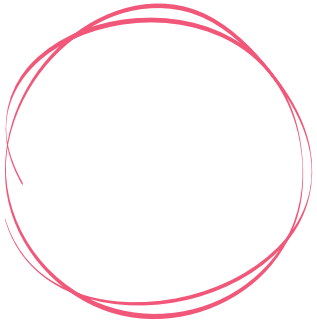


Did you know that the soil in different places is different colors?  
Lots of things help determine the color of dirt and mud like the minerals and organic matter (like decomposing leaves) in it. Here's a mud log to record the places you go this month. Just use your fingers or a homemade feather paintbrush to paint inside a circle when you go to a new place. Write down the location underneath.





# Mud Travel Log!



# Wild Berry Popsicles

Here's a fun way to use berries that you've foraged, grown or picked. Make some homemade wild berry popsicles!

You can use any berries you like, but some really tasty ones that you may be able to forage in your area are *mulberries*, *blueberries*, *strawberries*, *huckleberries*, *raspberries*, *black raspberries*, *gooseberries* and *blackberries*. You can mix and match too. Your berries can be either fresh or frozen.



*Remember, not all wild berries are safe to eat! Some dogwood berries and honeysuckle berries are poisonous, for example, so be sure you know your berries!*

Here is the basic recipe with a few variations:

**Blend ingredients in a blender until smooth. Pour into a popsicle mold, insert sticks, cover and freeze for 4 hours or until frozen.**

## Basic Berry

4 cups berries  
¼ cup sugar, maple syrup or honey (to taste)  
¼ cup of water  
handful of fresh herbs like lemon balm or mint (optional)



## Creamy Coconut Milk

4 cups berries  
1 (15-oz) can full-fat coconut milk  
¼ cup sugar, maple syrup or honey (or to taste)  
pinch salt



## Yogurt Berry

3 cups berries  
1 cup vanilla Greek Yogurt  
¼ cup sugar, maple syrup or honey (or to taste)  
pinch salt



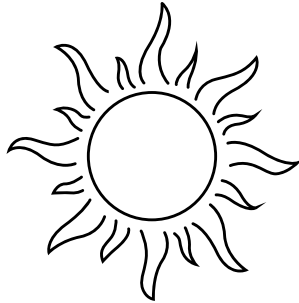
# Poems for July

Summer  
by Christina Rossetti

Winter is cold-hearted,  
Spring is yea and nay,  
Autumn is a weathercock  
Blown every way:  
Summer days for me  
When every leaf is on its tree;

When Robin's not a beggar,  
And Jenny Wren's a bride,  
And larks hang singing, singing, singing,  
Over the wheat-fields wide,  
And anchored lilies ride,  
And the pendulum spider  
Swings from side to side,  
  
And blue-black beetles transact business,  
And gnats fly in a host,  
And furry caterpillars hasten  
That no time be lost,  
And moths grow fat and thrive,  
And ladybirds arrive.

Before green apples blush,  
Before green nuts embrown,  
Why, one day in the country  
Is worth a month in town;  
Is worth a day and a year  
Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion  
That days drone elsewhere.



Trees at Night  
by Helene Johnson

Slim Sentinels  
Stretching lacy arms  
About a slumbrous moon;  
Black quivering  
Silhouettes,  
Tremulous,  
Stencilled on the petal  
Of a bluebell;  
Ink sputtered  
On a robin's breast;  
The jagged rent  
Of mountains  
Reflected in a  
Stilly sleeping lake;  
Fragile pinnacles  
Of fairy castles;  
Torn webs of shadows;  
And  
Printed 'gainst the sky—  
The trembling beauty  
Of an urgent pine.



# FORAGING WILD PLUMS

Have you ever eaten a plum? Plums grow wild all over North America and beyond, but the cool thing about plums is that in the wild, the fruit on every tree tastes different, like apples.



If you try to grow a plum or apple tree from a seed or pit from a fruit that you eat, you have no way of knowing what the fruits of your new tree will taste like because they don't grow "true to seed" or exactly like their parents – just like us people!

That means that every time you find a wild plum tree, it will have a different tasting fruit. If you find one that's nice and sweet, that will be a great one to pick for fresh eating. But if it's sour or astringent (making your mouth pucker) then you can use those ones for making jams, jellies, sauces and pies. Grown ups use them to make wine and cider, too.



Keep in mind that if your plum tastes sour, it might just not be ready for picking yet too! Try coming back in a week to see if the fruits are sweeter. They usually ripen in late summer.

You can find wild plum trees all over. They tend to like river banks and the edges of woods. We found a wild plum tree in a local state park, and luckily in Minnesota you're allowed to forage fruits in our state parks as long as they're just for yourself and your family (not to sell).



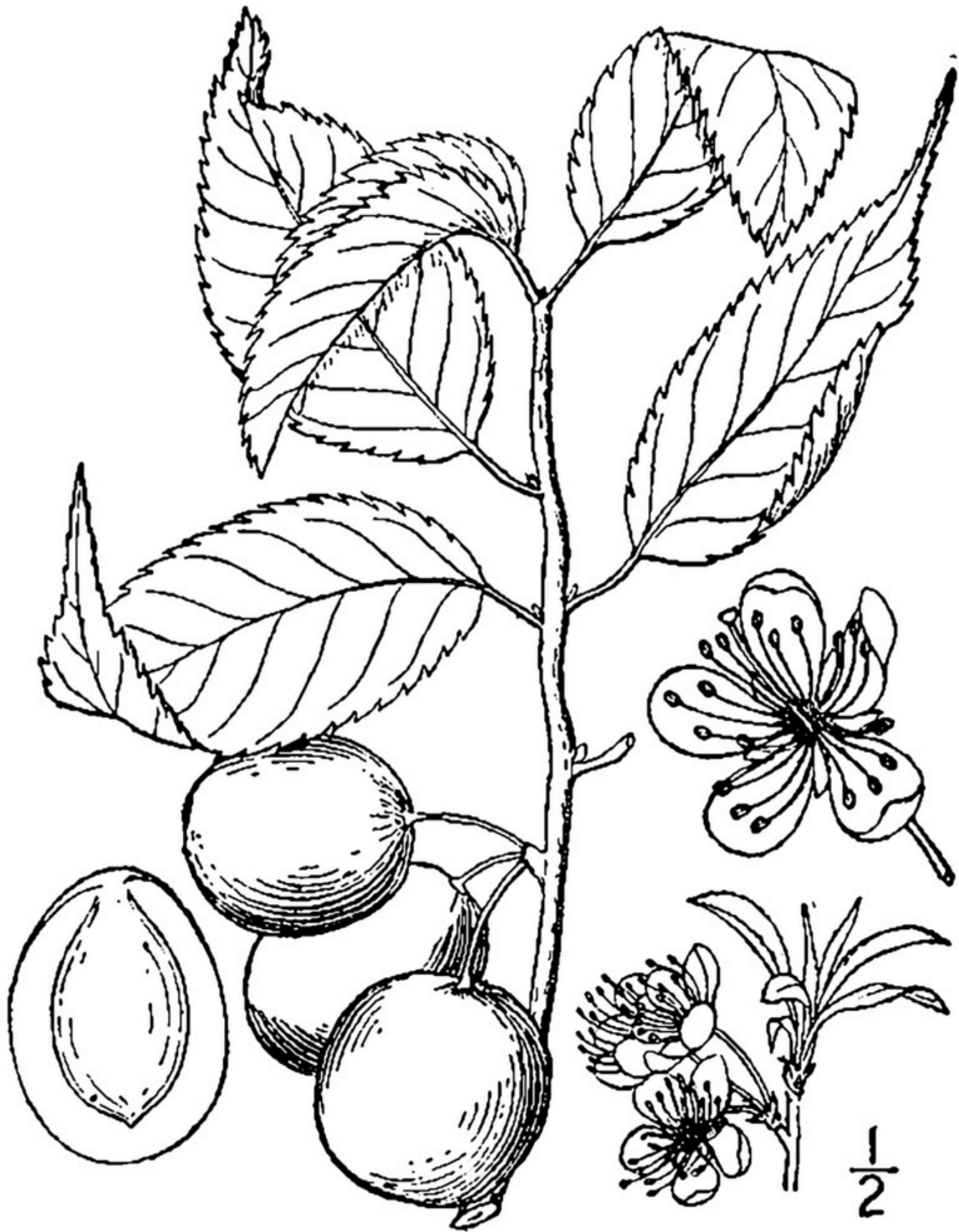
Plum trees have oval, serrated leaves that are about 2-4 inches long, arranged in an alternate pattern along the branches. The plums can be all different colors, from yellow to dark purple to red. There aren't really any look-alikes to plums once they're ripe, so they're a good plant to forage when you're new to foraging. It's still important to use a good ID guide and double check that everything matches though!



Wild plums tend to be smaller and tarter than the ones we buy in stores, but they also have way more healthy stuff in them. And it's just fun to find and pick your very own!



AMERICAN PLUM TREE  
(*Prunus americana*)



# 10 Fun Facts about Cottonwood Trees



Have you ever seen a cottonwood tree? They're called that because their seeds look like cotton balls.

In our family, we always say the seeds are fairies visiting, because they just float on the wind like something magical.



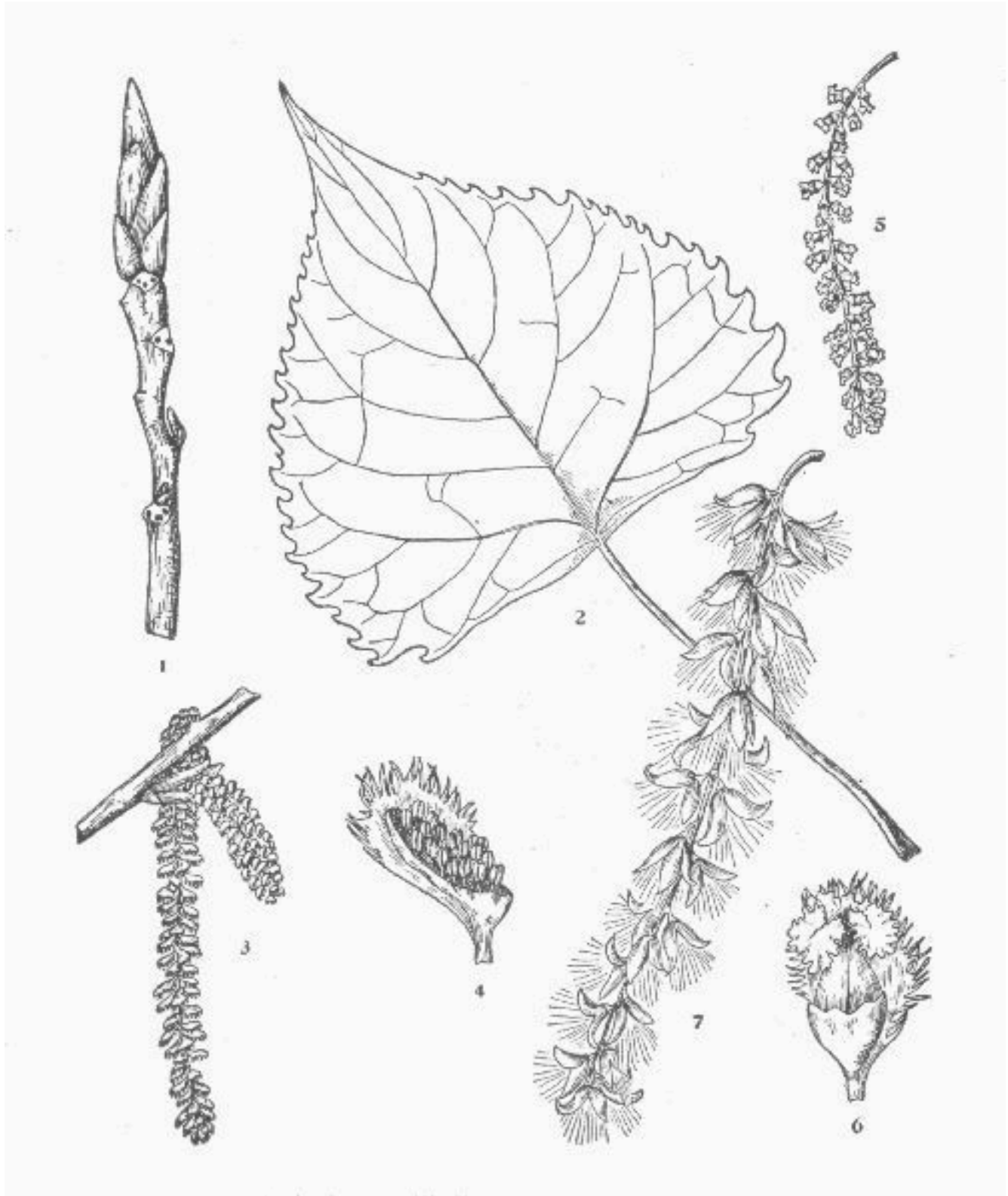
A lot of people don't like them because they make a bit of a mess, but they're pretty cool trees! Here are 10 fun facts about cottonwood trees....

- They are one of the fastest growing trees in North America, growing up to 6 feet in one year!
- Cottonwood trees can be male or female. Only the female trees make the cottony seeds.
- Native American tribes used them for making medicine (the bark contains salicin, which is what the painkiller aspirin is made of) and in making dugout canoes.
- Cottonwood trees can live 100 years and can grow over 120 feet tall!
- They tend to grow around water, and they help protect the soil from erosion.
- Their leaves are heart shaped and look a little bit like aspen leaves but they are bigger.
- Beavers like to use cottonwood logs for building dams.
- Deer like to eat the bark of cottonwood trees.
- A single cottonwood tree can release millions of seeds.
- Seeds can float on the air for several miles, but they are only viable (able to grow into a tree) for a few weeks and need to be somewhere with wet soil like a riverbank.



# COTTONWOOD TREE

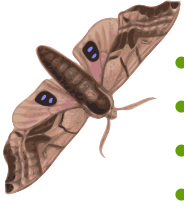
( *Populus L.* )



# Phenology Calendar

Keep track of all of the firsts in nature that you see this month!  
Write in firsts and interesting nature observations and draw a picture.

## Examples:



- First apples ripe
- First sphinx moth spotted
- First garden tomatoes harvested
- Fireflies spotted
- Temperature over 100° F
- Over 1" of rain

- Foraged wild raspberries
- Hummingbird spotted
- First hollyhock blooms
- Milkweeds in pod stage
- Turtle spotted sunning on log
- Double rainbow



## JULY 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		01	02	03	04	05
06	07	08	09	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31	01	02

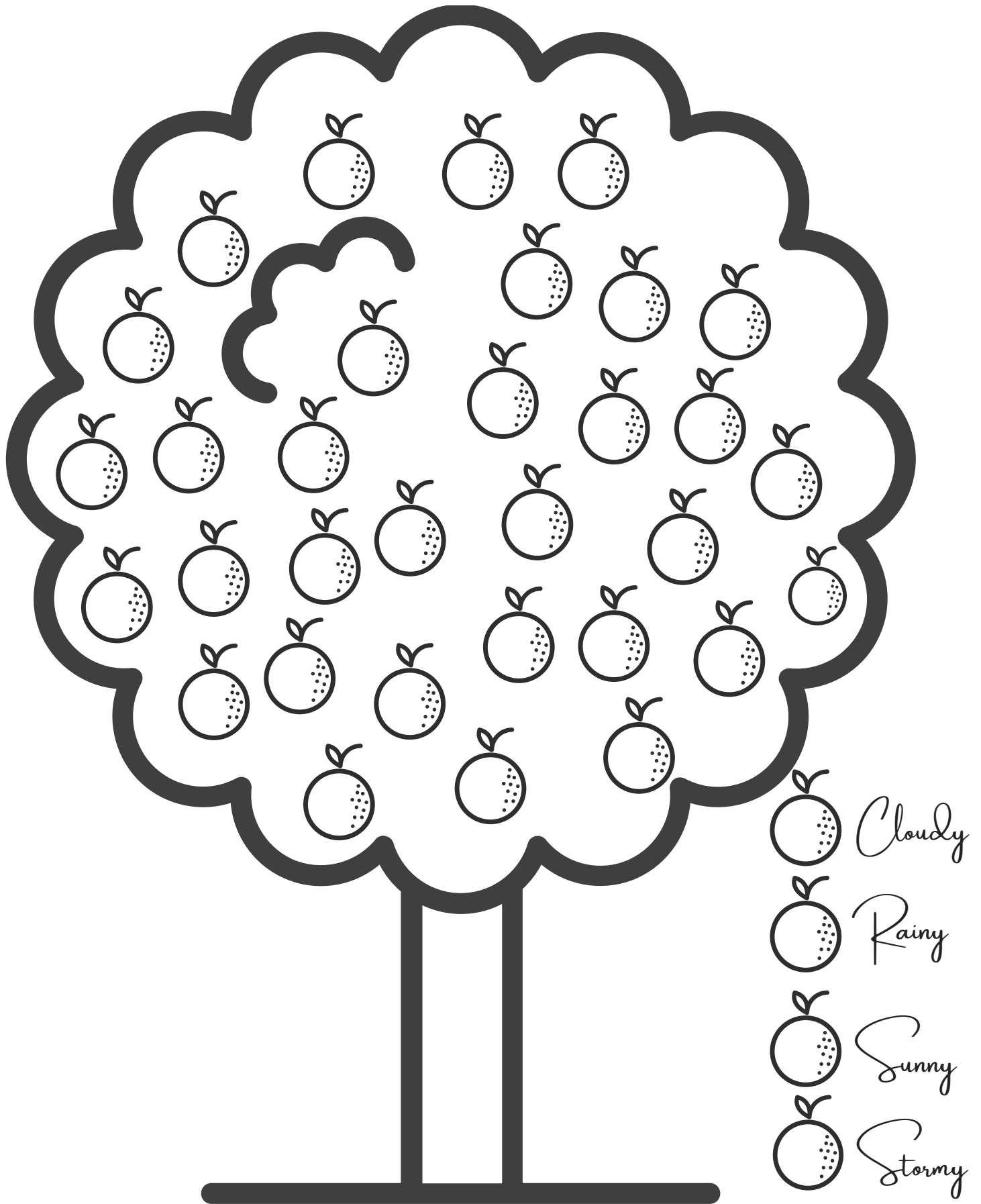
**NOTES:**

*My Nature Journal*

July



# July Weather Tree



# July Bird List

Birds spotted this month

# July Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

# July 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

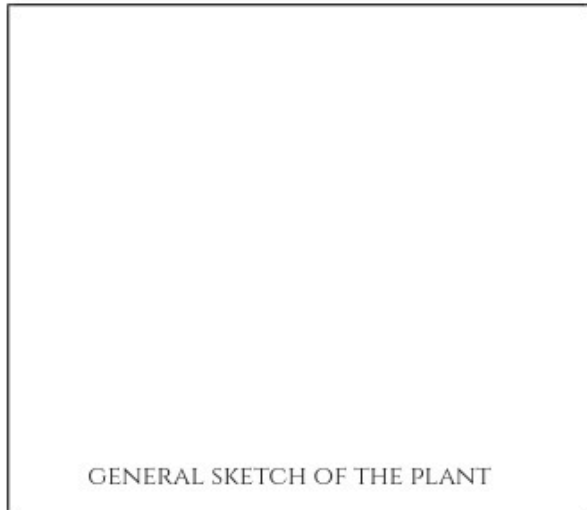
Week 2 Observations

Week 3 Observations

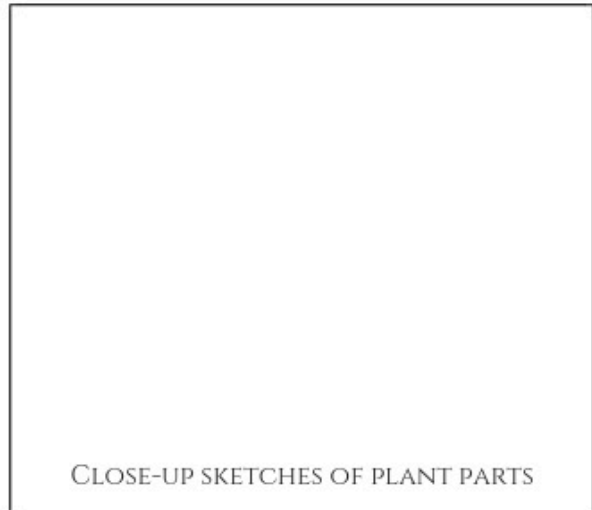
Week 4 Observations

# MY FORAGING GUIDE FOR:

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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](http://magicalchildhood.com/wildkids) to learn more.