

November 2025

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Fall
Nature
Crafts

Tell Trees
by Their Fall
Colors

November
Nature Notes
& Sky Wheel

November
Nature
Bingo

Catalpa Trees
& Crab Apples

Wild Kids
Readers' Poems,
Photos & More

Plus
Seasonal
Activities, Poetry,
Nature Journal
Pages & More

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Happy November!

What is the weather like where you live right now?

It's getting cold here in Minnesota, but we still haven't had snow. Usually we've had lots of snow by now and we've even had Halloween blizzards!

I am kind of enjoying it, because I still have a few rose bushes blooming and they make me smile every time I go outside. I mostly have native plants in my gardens, but I love roses and I have a lot of them. Since we're in a very cold part of the country, I plant hardy roses like shrub roses. We had one that was a climbing rose called William Baffin (hot pink with a yellow center) that reached up to the second story windows!

I gather the rose hips this time of year and we scoop out the insides and dry them, and then I grind them up into a powder that I mix with a lot of other helpful things like wild mushroom powder, cinnamon and turmeric to stir into my morning coffee for all their health benefits. I always feel a bit like a kitchen witch when I grind and mix and make my nature potions! Of course there's science behind them, but it does feel magical.

Another magical thing this time of year is my climbing pumpkins and gourds. Every fall I toss all the extra and leftover pumpkins, decorative gourds and squashes into the side yard where we have roses, a cherry tree, and a lilac tree. They get buried in leaves and very slowly decompose all winter and spring, and some of the seeds inside always sprout. Then the long vines start wandering around the yard and climb everywhere. I never know exactly what will sprout or where it will go, but I've even had giant spaghetti squashes hanging down from the cherry tree. Right now we have three different kinds of decorative little gourds and pumpkins scampering everywhere, including hanging from the lilac tree and wandering all along the driveway. It makes me smile every time I go outside.

Do you have a yard where you can grow things? What do you like to grow or want to grow someday?

Wherever you are in the world, I hope you have a fantastic month with lots of wild adventures!

Alicia



A volunteer mini pumpkin climbing one of our lilac trees a few Novembers ago

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 information and back issues at
www.magicalchildhood.com/wildkids

Go Wild in November

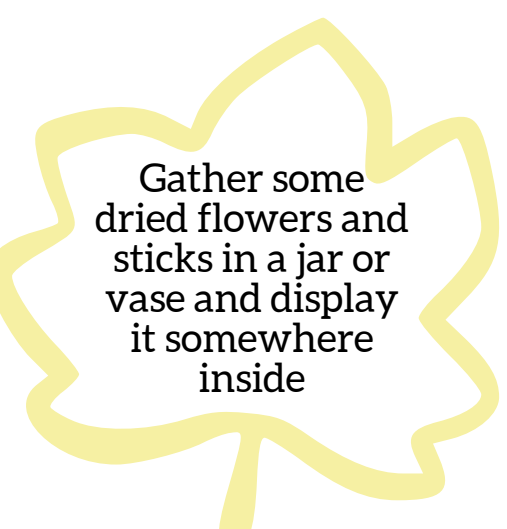
10 Ways to Play & Learn with Nature this Month



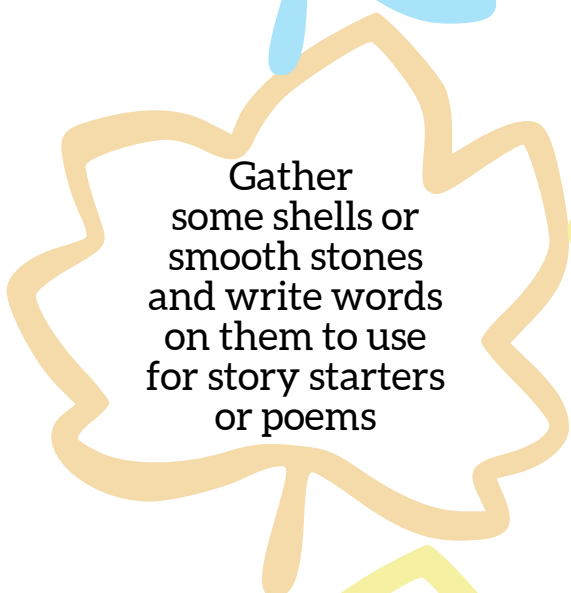
Gather some fallen branches and twine, and try to make a creature to decorate the yard



Draw, paint or color what the sky looks like each day in our November sky wheel



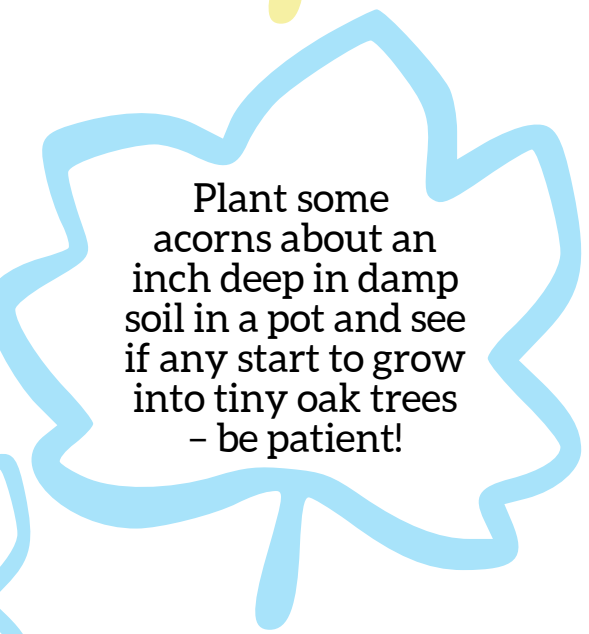
Gather some dried flowers and sticks in a jar or vase and display it somewhere inside



Gather some shells or smooth stones and write words on them to use for story starters or poems



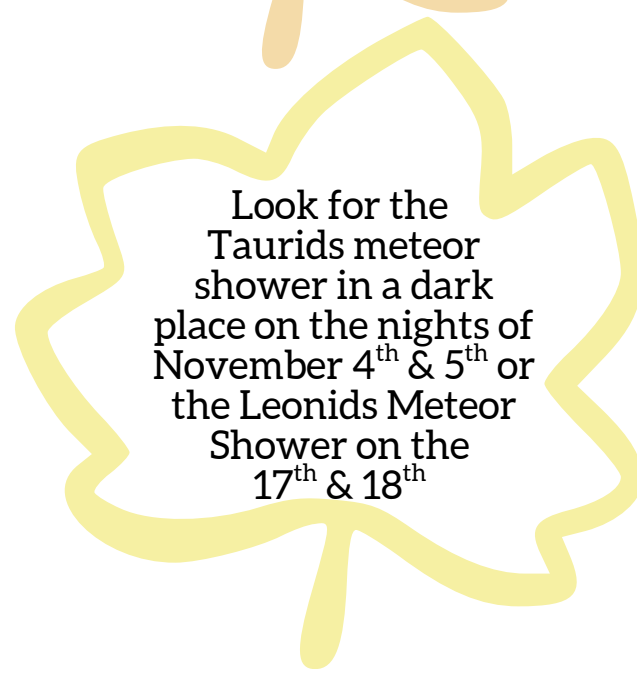
Take art supplies outside and draw or paint the landscape



Plant some acorns about an inch deep in damp soil in a pot and see if any start to grow into tiny oak trees – be patient!



Look for the full moon on November 5



Look for the Taurids meteor shower in a dark place on the nights of November 4th & 5th or the Leonids Meteor Shower on the 17th & 18th



Do a fall nature craft (we have some in this issue)



Take a photo or do some art in nature & send it to Wild Kids!

Tell Trees by Their Fall Colors

Did you know that you can figure out what kind of tree a leaf is from by what color its leaves are in fall? Here's a wonderful guide from a book published 99 years ago called *A Year in the Wonderland of Trees* by Hallam Hawksworth, with some examples of each color in leaves.

Bright Yellow: Black Walnut, Tulip Tree, Cucumber Tree, Ailanthus, Striped Maple, Judas Tree, Kentucky Coffee Tree, Yellowwood, Wild Red Cherry, Wild Black Cherry, Scarlet Thorn, Shadbush, Mulberry, Chestnut, Common Aspen, Large-Toothed Aspen, Balsam Poplar.



Pale or Rusty Yellow: The Hickories, Basswood; Silver, Norway, and Ash-Leaved Maples; Common, Honey, and Clammy Locusts; Mountain-Ash, Spindle Tree, Hop Tree, Choke-Cherry, Papaw, Persimmon, Silver-Bell Tree, Fringe Tree, Slippery Elm, Butternut, Nettle Tree, the Birches, Hop-Hornbeam; Burr, Chestnut, Swamp White Spanish, and Willow Oaks; the Poplars; Beech, Cottonwood.



Red: Red, White, and Pin Oaks.



Red and Yellow: Horse-Chestnut, Mountain-Maple, Sassafras, Post-Oak, Angelica Tree.



Orange, Crimson, and Yellow (more or less combined in the same leaf): Red and Sugar Maples; Sweet-Gum, Cockspur Thorn, Dotted Haw; Black and Scrub Oaks; Hornbeam.



Scarlet: Scarlet Oak, Sour-Gum, Black Haw, Sorrel Tree.



Brown: American Elm, Buttonwood; White, Red, Blue, and Black Ashes. Many of the Oaks also show brown and reddish-brown (bronze) colorings in various shades and combinations.



Remember this is just a general guide and leaves will look different at different times in the season and from species to species. It's fun to look around and see how different the colors are in different types of trees though! See if you can start your own list adding to this one of other species in your area.

Nature Crafts for Fall

Looking for some creative fun this time of year? Here are three ways to use nature for crafty fun this season



Arrange four maple seeds in a dragonfly shape and then add a drop of tacky glue to each end (older kids and grown ups can use hot glue instead). Top with a 4-inch twig and let it dry. Decorate the outside of the wings with paint or glitter glue, and glue on two little seed or bead eyes if you like.



Gather some clamshells to use as paint pallets (or grab some lids from the recycling) and mash up berries, charcoal from a cooled campfire, leaves or different colors of clay and dirt to make homemade watercolors. Add a few drops of vinegar to brighten some of them up and help mash them.



Go on a nature hike looking for fall mushrooms and make mushroom spore prints (no paint or ink required!)

Take a fresh mushroom, remove the stem, and put it gills-down on a piece of paper. (Since some spore prints are white or other light colors, you might want to do one on white paper and one on black.) Cover your mushroom with a bowl to keep it undisturbed and leave it for a few hours or overnight, then carefully lift the mushroom to see your print.

Wild Kids Readers Write: The Best Perch

"Just across our property line at the top of the hill was a tall dead tree. We could see it from our dining room, and soon learned that all the birds loved to sit on its two upraised arms, so much so that we named it the Best Perch. If you'd walk up there you could often see woodpeckers and small birds perching, nesting, fighting, or feeding. But most often we viewed it from our window, because it was a favorite spot for raptors. We could usually identify them from that distance, and sometimes we'd get out the binoculars to watch them preening or surveying their domain. Red-tailed hawks and vultures were frequent visitors, and we saw bald eagles a number of times. The two most special sightings: An osprey which was then chased away by a bald eagle; and the day that an eagle pair sat together on the Best Perch.

Sunday morning while we were at church the Best Perch came down. I always thought one of our big windstorms would take it, but it was a sunny, calm day. I guess it was just time.

It felt surprisingly significant, the loss of this tree. We each wrote a poem to its memory."

To the Best Perch
By Sam

Once alive and well thou grewest
Leaves of green in lofty skies.
Birds and bugs alike thou knewest,
Fed cicadas, sheltered flies.

Then, as some disease o'ertook thee,
Leaves no more thy limbs displayed,
But thy creatures ne'er forsook thee.
Thou wert dead, but life had stayed.

Hawks and eagles high upstanding,
Vultures sat to bask aloft,
Bold woodpeckers made a landing,
'Neath thy bark found quarry oft.

Now, as thou art fallen, resting,
Ants and pillbugs make their home.
Beetle-grubs in thee are nesting,
Swift returning thee to loam.
And thus at last thy aged wood
Shall feed new trees where once thou stood.



Fallen
By Sarah

O Best Perch, host of hawks,
morning salon for spread-winged vultures,
lookout for bald eagles,
we remember you.

You who launched fledglings for their first flight—
red-headed woodpeckers (young, noisy, lacking the banner of colors of their parents),
prolific starlings (unwelcome guests to many),
sweet-voiced bluebirds in their little flocks—
all found your haven.

No more silhouette, standing always at the hilltop,
now you rest in the meadow,
visited as before by bees, ants, beetles,
and doubtless the yellow-shafted flickers will still take their meals with you.

When we see the vultures circling,
when the hawks cry high in the sky,
when an eagle eyes us from above,
we will remember you.



Best Perch
By Asher

The best perch is gone
from our neighbors' lawn.

The raptors are left in the lurch
The woodpeckers, still on the search
For hens, marching, sang out:
End predator hang-out!
And brought down to earth the best perch

- Ben

NOVEMBER 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 (not all of these may be found in your area).

The items are: Fall leaf, feather, bark, shell, bones, berries, pine cone, storm cloud, dried flower, animal hole/den, squirrel, mushroom, FREE, vine, seed pod, nut, migrating bird, evergreen sprig, nest, animal scat, fern, rock, animal track, frost, spiderweb

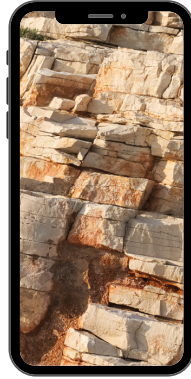
How many can you find?



November

Nature Photo Prompts

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



1 Dried

2 Orange

3 Ground

4 Polka dotted

5 Cracked

6 Seed

7 Hidden

8 Web

9 Sky

10 Alone

11 Yellow

12 Alive

13 Rock

14 Insect

15 Shadow

16 Reflection

17 Sharp

18 Many

19 Edible

20 Pattern

21 Bark

22 Root

23 White

24 Native

25 Curly

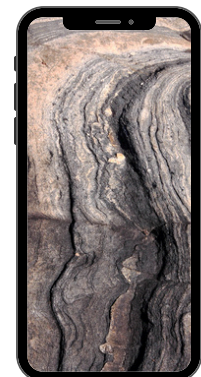
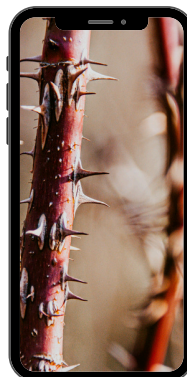
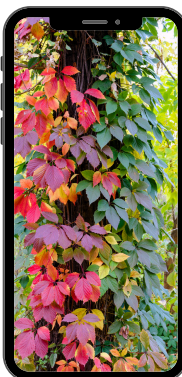
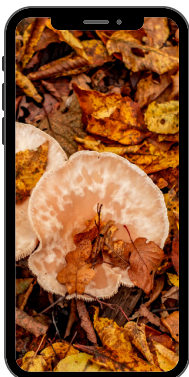
26 Up

27 Striped

28 Black

29 Water

30 Red



November nature notes

Each day this month, write or draw something to remember from nature that day like seeing a hawk, going to the state park, having the first snow or finding a wild mushroom.

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NOVEMBER SKYWHEEL

Make a picture record of your observations of the sky in November!

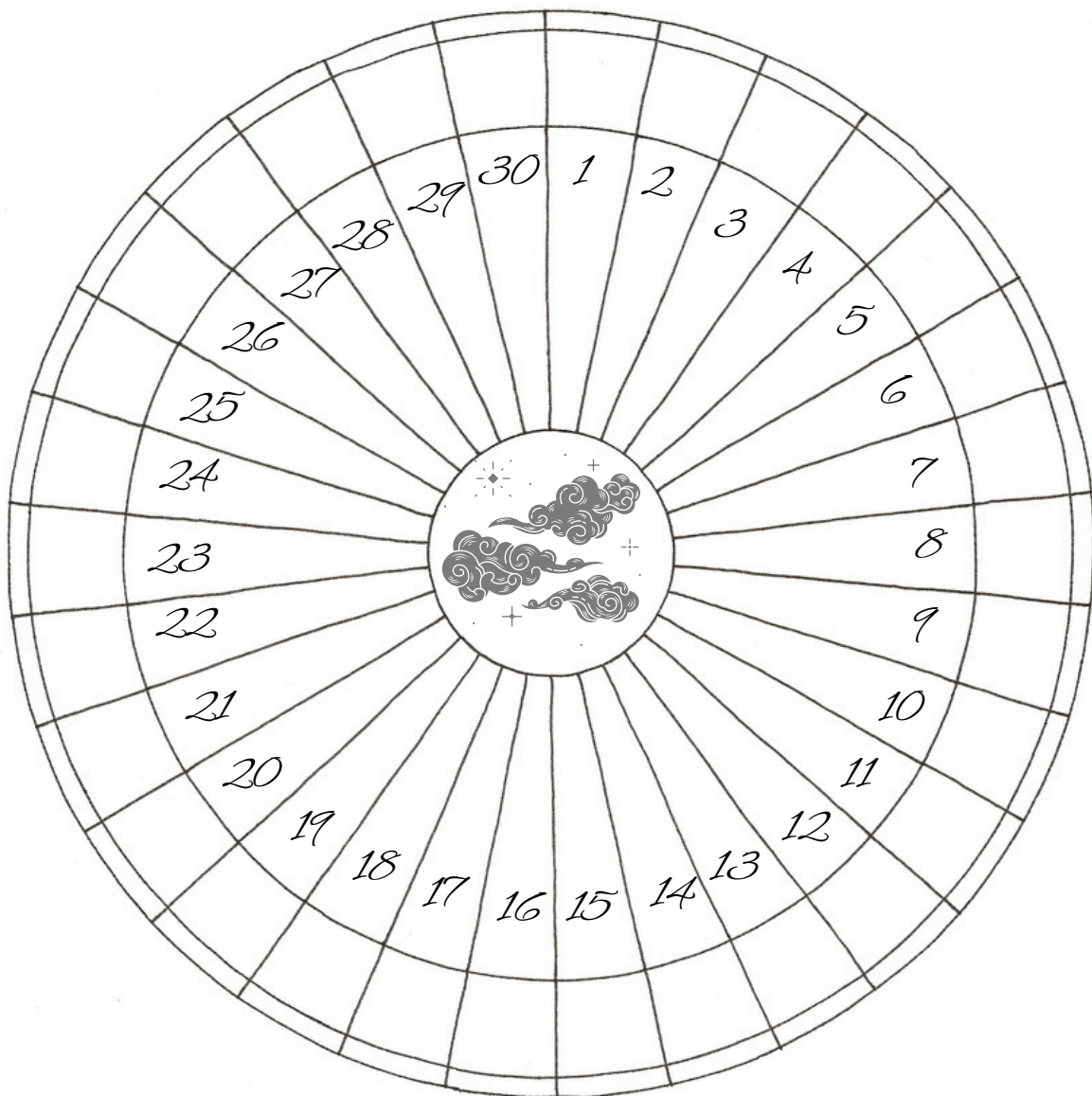
Draw, paint or color how the sky looks each day this month.

Is it cloudy? Gray? Does it match any crayons in a big box of crayons?

Are there big fluffy clouds? Did you see lightning, rain, fog or a rainbow?

At the end of the month, look back and see what trends you can see for the month.

It's art, math and science!



Catalpa Trees & Catalpa Sphinx Moths



Catalpa trees are really cool trees!

They are native to Asia, Europe, and the Eastern United States. There are Northern catalpa trees that started out where the Mississippi and Ohio rivers meet up, but they have spread into states like Maine and Minnesota. Southern catalpa trees are native to a few states in the southern states like Alabama. It has spread, too.



Catalpa trees are sometimes called cigar trees because of their long, funny looking fruits that hang on the trees even into the wintertime. Those fruits are poisonous, so don't eat them! They also have large, pretty white flowers in early summer. The flowers are great for pollinators like butterflies, bees and hummingbirds.



Catalpa leaves are big and heart shaped. They can grow up to 12 inches long! A really cool fact about them is they make nectar. That is really rare for tree leaves. This nectar also helps protect the trees.



Catalpa sphinx moths need catalpa trees because they are their only food source when they are caterpillars. That means that without catalpa trees, they would go extinct. But sometimes there are thousands of catalpa sphinx moth caterpillars munching on them, so the trees start to make extra nectar in their leaves. This attracts "bodyguard" ants that fight off the catalpa sphinx moth caterpillars. This kind of relationship is called a symbiotic relationship, where the ants and the trees help each other.



Those catalpa sphinx moth caterpillars are not all bad, though. Even when they cover a catalpa tree and eat a ton of leaves, the tree quickly recovers. The caterpillars are said to be some of the best fishing bait anywhere, and they are a major food source for birds like robins and blue jays.



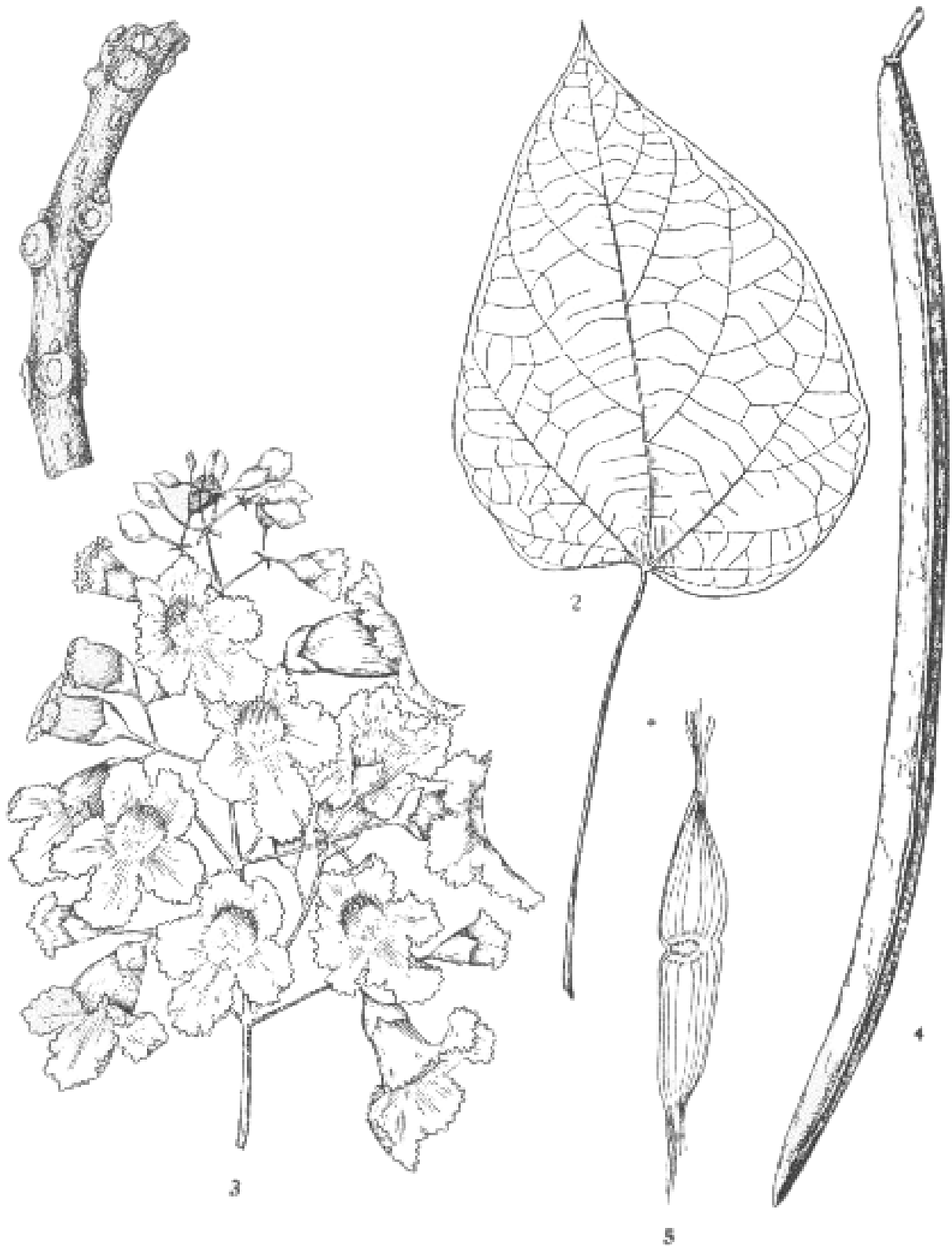
Catalpa trees can grow to 70 feet tall and live 100 years. They are great for cooling the area around houses because they make great shade, and they are pretty and help nature.

People plant catalpa trees in neighborhoods a lot, because they are such great trees. The wood is also great for things like whittling and it resists rot so it's used for things like fence posts.



Have you ever seen a catalpa tree? If not, see if you can spot one someday!

CATALPA
(*catalpa sp.*)



Crazy for Crab Apples



Did you know that crab apple trees are in the rose family? You can even tell, when you look at their little fall fruits and compare them to rose hips, the little fall fruits on rose bushes. Both crab apples and roses make tasty, tart fruits that are very high in vitamin C and both of them have beautiful flowers.



There are over 700 known cultivars (types) of crab apple trees, and they easily crossbreed with each other so they create their own new types all the time. They can be found in every state in the US and throughout Canada, Asia, Europe and the world. They can grow up to 30 feet tall.



Their latin name is *malus sylvestris*, which means wild apple.

Crab apple trees bloom with beautiful pink or white flowers in the spring and summer, and then in the fall they are covered in crab apples. Those crab apples can be teeny tiny or as big as a golf ball. If they are bigger than two inches across, then they are classified as apples.



Crab apples can be any color that apples can be, so there are ones that are red, pink, yellow and even green. They can be used to make jellies, jams and syrups. They are very sour when they're raw, so most people use them for some kind of cooking. Our family likes to simmer them in water and then strain it and add sugar, to make easy crab apple cider. It's especially nice when you use the red ones, because then the cider is the prettiest bright red!



Crab apple trees are wonderful for wildlife who eat the fruits and pollinators who love their fragrant flowers. They also make good windbreaks for houses.



AMERICAN CRAB

(*Malus coronaria*)



November Poetry

A Jelly-Fish
Marianne Moore

Visible, invisible,
A fluctuating charm,
An amber-colored amethyst
Inhabits it; your arm
Approaches, and
It opens and
It closes;
You have meant
To catch it,
And it shrivels;
You abandon
Your intent—
It opens, and it
Closes and you
Reach for it—
The blue
Surrounding it
Grows cloudy, and
It floats away
From you.



Clouds
Anonymous

White sheep, white sheep,
On a blue hill,
When the wind stops,
You all stand still.
When the wind blows,
You walk away slow.
White sheep, white sheep,
Where do you go?



Who Has Seen the Wind?
Christina Rossetti

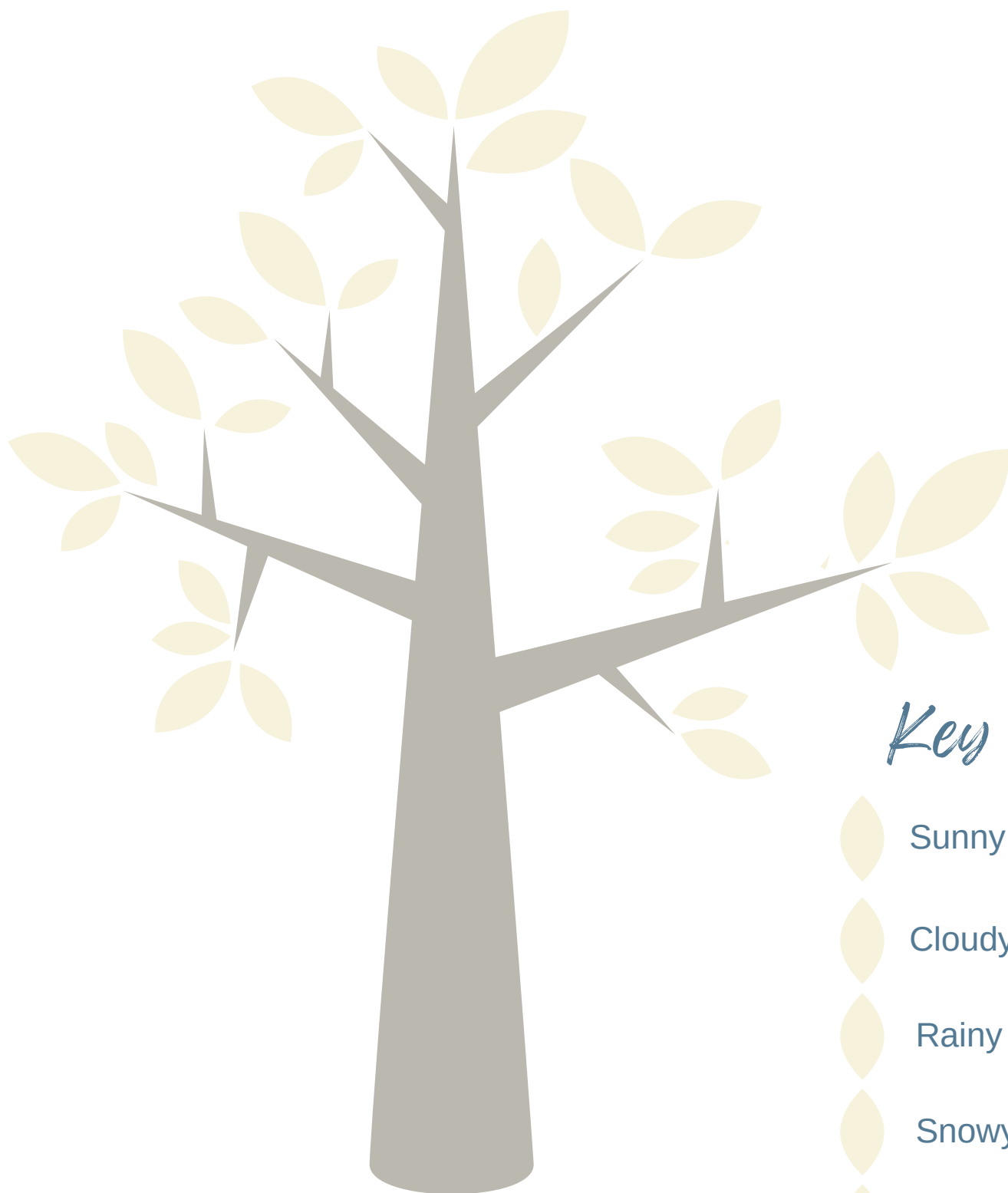
Who has seen the wind?
Neither I nor you.
But when the leaves hang trembling,
The wind is passing through.
Who has seen the wind?
Neither you nor I.
But when the trees bow down their heads,
The wind is passing by.

My Nature Journal

November



November Weather Tree



Key



Sunny



Cloudy



Rainy



Snowy



Stormy

November Bird List

Birds spotted this month

November Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

November 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!

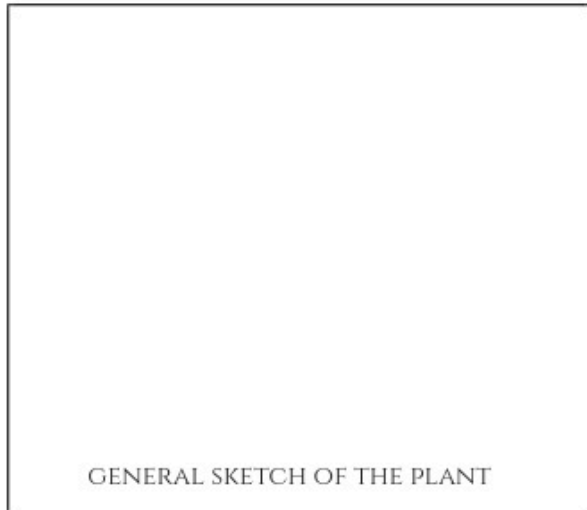
Week 1 Observations

Week 2 Observations

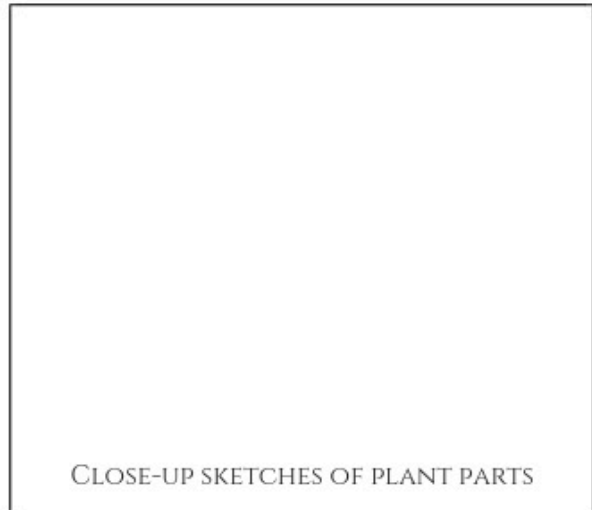
Week 3 Observations

Week 4 Observations

MY FORAGING GUIDE FOR:



GENERAL SKETCH OF THE PLANT



CLOSE-UP SKETCHES OF PLANT PARTS

LATIN NAME _____

WHERE FOUND _____

PARTS USED _____

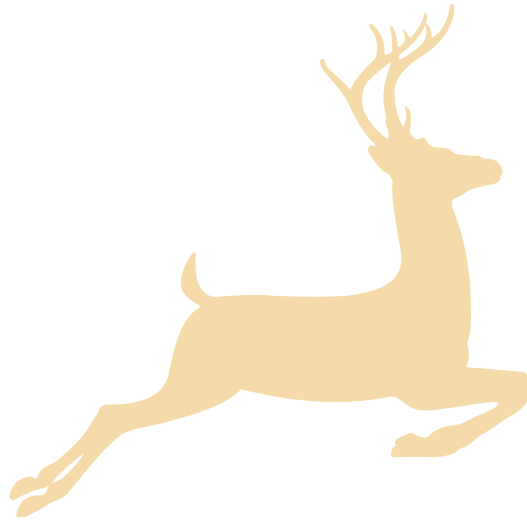
LOOKALIKES & HOW TO POSITIVELY ID:

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.