

February 2026

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Nature  
Valentines

15 Poisonous Plants  
You Probably Eat!

February Nature  
Photo Challenge

February  
Bird ID  
Challenge

Seasonal poems,  
activities,  
nature journal  
pages & more!

# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

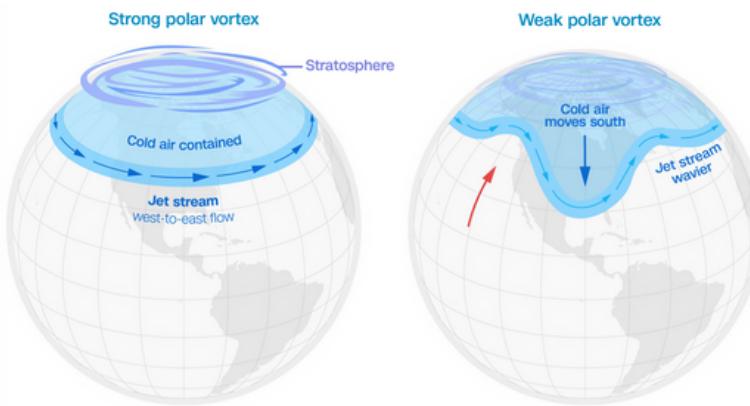
## Welcome February!

What is the weather like where you live right now?

People have been having unusual weather in many places lately, with some kids seeing snow for the first time - or a lot more snow than they are used to, like a foot of it in one day!

Where we live in Minnesota, we had a large "cold front" that came down recently and pushed very cold air down from around the North Pole and pushed our usual cold winter air down to states that aren't used to so much cold and snow.

This is caused by something called the Polar Vortex that usually goes around the North Pole in a circle of very cold wind. Some of the ice has been melting in that area and that makes the Polar Vortex weaken. When that happens, it's like opening a freezer door and the icy winds that usually just circle the North Pole flow down and push the cold into Southern areas.

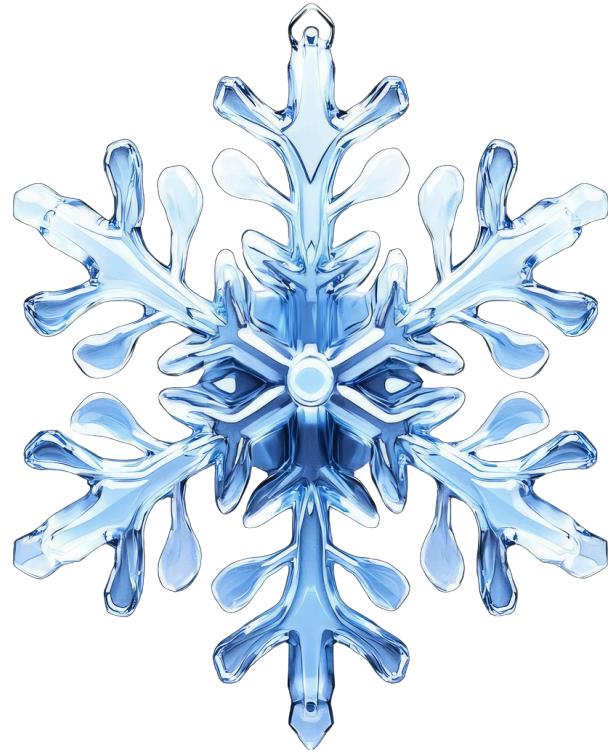


Source: NOAA  
Graphic: Jhasua Razo, CNN

In some upcoming issues, we'll learn more about the weather, including some fun ways to predict it using nature!

I hope you have a wonderful, wild month, with whatever weather you end up with!

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 February

## 10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Try to find 10 heart shaped nature items (rocks, leaves, clouds, etc.) to draw, collect or photograph

Take a nature walk and gather natural items like pine cones, spruce sprigs, feathers and dried seed pods to make into a wreath or display on a windowsill

Check out a new foraging book from the library

Take part in the 2026 Great Backyard Bird Count February 13-16\*

Look for the Snow Moon (a full moon) on February 1, rising in early evening

Send in a poem, photo, letter or piece of nature related art to Wild Kids

See how many different kinds of bird and animal tracks you can sketch or photograph in nature this month and them to try to ID them

Take part in our February bird ID daily challenge

Send a postcard to your local representative about a nature issue that is important to you

Go on a nature walk and look for seed pods to collect, and plant a few in pots on a windowsill to try to sprout

\*Visit [www.birdcount.org](http://www.birdcount.org) for more information

# Wild Valentine's Day Cards



From:

---

You're such a  
TWEET heart!



Happy Valentine's Day



From:

---

I would be BLUE  
without you



Happy Valentine's Day



From:

---

You're a friend like  
no OTTER!



Happy Valentine's Day

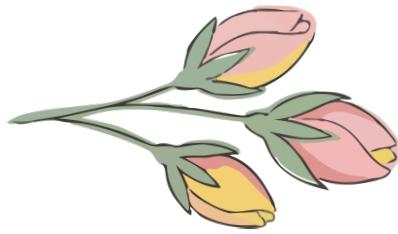
# Wild Valentine's Day Cards



From:

---

Thanks for being my  
BEST BUD!



Happy Valentine's Day



From:

---

You're such a  
FUN-GI !



Happy Valentine's Day



From:

---

You're a hoot!



Happy Valentine's Day

# Wild Valentine's Day Cards



Created by:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Will you BEE my  
Valentine?



Happy Valentine's Day



Created by:  
\_\_\_\_\_

You're a rocking  
good friend!

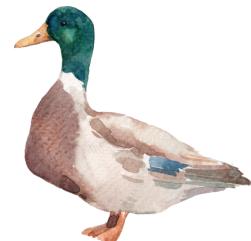


Happy Valentine's Day



Created by:  
\_\_\_\_\_

You QUACK me up!



Happy Valentine's Day

# Wild Valentine's Day Cards



From:

---

We're friends of a feather!



Happy Valentine's Day



From:

---

I'm nuts about you!



Happy Valentine's Day



From:

---

You're a BERRY good friend!



Happy Valentine's Day

# FEBRUARY BIRD ID CHALLENGE

EACH DAY THIS MONTH, TRY TO FIND A BIRD OUTSIDE THAT YOU IDENTIFY. IT CAN BE A PIGEON, BLUE JAY, HAWK, CROW, YOU NAME IT. USE A BIRD ID BOOK, APP OR A GROWNUP TO HELP IF YOU NEED IT. HOW MANY DIFFERENT BIRDS CAN YOU FIND AND ID?



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28

NOTES:

# Poisonous Plants that people eat!

A lot of people are afraid of coming across poisonous plants and mushrooms in nature. And yes, there are some we should definitely avoid!

**But did you know that we humans regularly eat parts of poisonous plants?**

**Or that some plants that we eat are poisonous if you eat more than a little bit?**

**Or that some plants we eat are poisonous if they're not cooked?**

*Don't worry – it's perfectly safe to eat these plants!* It's a good example of why it helps to know a lot about any plant, whether it's a plant you forage in the wild, a plant you grow in your garden, or a plant you buy for food at the grocery store.

**Here are 15 plants that we eat that can be poisonous in one way or another.**



Nutmeg is a spice made from grinding the seeds from nutmeg trees. You've probably had it in foods like pumpkin pie and eggnog. But if people eat more than 1 or 2 teaspoons they can hallucinate (see things that aren't there), throw up and have serious health effects. Luckily we usually just use a tiny pinch for a whole recipe for things like desserts!

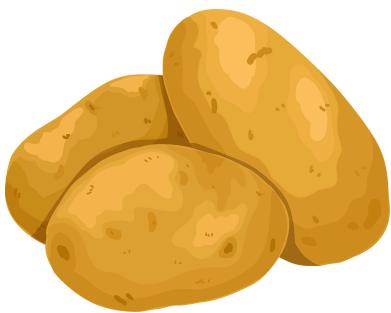


Raw lima beans contain something called linamarin, which turns into a poison called cyanide when you eat them. When you boil them at a "hard boil," it destroys the enzymes that would release the cyanide. Canned lima beans are already cooked, so they're safe to eat, too.



Rhubarb is a plant that lots of people grow in their gardens. We cut up the pretty red stems to make rhubarb pie and other tasty desserts. But the leaves are poisonous and can make us very sick.

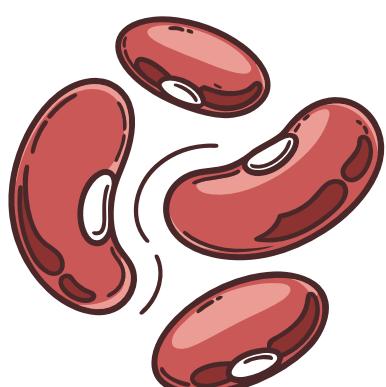




Wild potatoes naturally contain some chemicals that can make us very sick. Potatoes that are grown on farms don't have nearly as much of those chemicals and they are mostly in the leaves and fruits of the plants, which we don't eat. The part of the potato plant that we eat is the tuber that grows underground. If the tubers are exposed to light, they grow more of these chemicals and become unsafe. They usually turn green where that is happening, which is why we should always cut off any green parts of potatoes before cooking and eating them. Cooking them also helps destroy some of those chemicals (don't eat raw potatoes!).



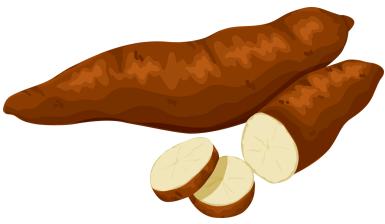
Tomatoes are in the same family as potatoes (the nightshade family, Solanaceae). In the case of tomatoes, the fruits are the part that we eat (yes, tomatoes are technically fruits because they contain seeds). They are safe to eat, but tomato leaves can make us very sick.



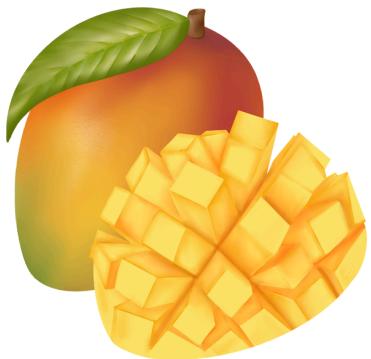
Kidney beans, like lima beans, can make you very sick if you eat them raw. They have a lectin in them that is poisonous, called Phytohaemagglutinin (I wouldn't want that word to be on my spelling test!). They need to be cooked at a high temperature (like boiling) for at least 10 minutes to make them safe. Some people have gotten sick from eating kidney beans cooked at a low temperature in a crock pot because the heat wasn't high enough to destroy the lectins. Canned kidney beans are cooked at high temperatures and are safe to eat.



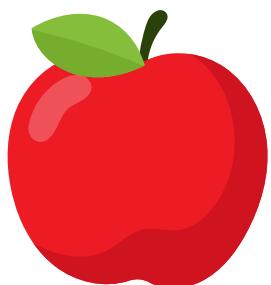
Asparagus is healthy and tasty when we eat the young stems. The red berries that the plants produce later are poisonous, though.



Cassava root is used sometimes as a flour, especially for gluten free cooking. It naturally has some chemicals in it that turn into poisonous cyanide unless it's processed by doing things like soaking, fermenting and cooking it. In some countries, people grow a lot of cassava and they have to be careful because the water used to process it can make the plants, animals and people who live there sick.



Mango leaves, stems, peels, and sap contain urushiol, an allergen that is also in poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. Touching it can give some people a painful rash. During harvesting season in Hawaii, mangoes are the most common reason for people going to doctor for allergic rashes.



Apples are very good for us, but don't eat the seeds. They contain small amounts of poisonous cyanide. Don't worry if you accidentally swallow one or two though. It takes lots of them (at least 150!) to do any harm, and then they have to be crushed (like chewing) to release the cyanide.



Members of the prunus family, which includes cherries, peaches, plums, apricots, almonds and more, have poisonous cyanide in their leaves and seeds/pits. It's perfectly safe to eat the fruits but you should spit out the pits (almonds are pits that have been processed to make them safe). Also, just like apple seeds, those fruit pits need to be chewed to be harmful.

*Remember, none of these foods are dangerous if we eat them in traditional ways! But now you can say you know how to eat poisonous foods!* 

*When we forage wild plants for food, we need to learn all the same sorts of precautions to eat them safely.*

# PEACH TREE

(*Prunus persica*)

Plate 101.



The Peach Tree  
Eliz Blackwell delin. sculp. et Pinx.

1. Flower  
2. Fruit  
3. the Stone  
4. the Kernel

*Perfica Malus.*

# ALMOND TREE

(*Prunus dulcis*)



# February Nature Photo Challenge

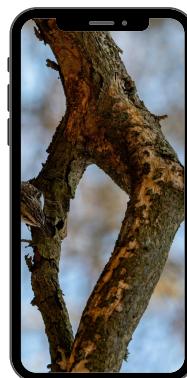
Try to head outside and take a picture each day with that day's prompt as an inspiration!



1	White
2	Old
3	Sky
4	Pattern
5	Red
6	Sharp
7	Colorful
8	Round
9	Grayscale
10	Cheerful

11	Heavy
12	Edible
13	Shadow
14	Heart shaped
15	Green
16	Soft
17	Broken
18	Stick
19	Rock
20	Symmetrical

21	Dirty
22	Water
23	Leaf
24	Smooth
25	Fuzzy
26	Triangle
27	Parallel
28	Hole



# Poetry Corner



## How They Sleep

By Anonymous

Some things go to sleep in such a funny way:

Little birds

Stand on one leg and tuck their heads away;

Chickens do the same, standing on their perch;

Little mice

Lie soft and still, as if they were in church;

Kittens curl up close in such a funny ball;

Horses hang

Their sleepy heads and stand still in a stall;

Sometimes dogs stretch out, or curl up in a heap;

Cows lie down

Upon their sides when they would go to sleep.

But little babies dear are snugly tucked in beds,

Warm with blankets,

All so soft, and pillows for their heads.

Bird and beast and babe -- I wonder which of all

Dream the dearest dreams

That down from dreamland fall!

## The Waterfall

By Frank Dempster Sherman

Tinkle, tinkle!

Listen well!

Like a fairy silver bell

In the distance ringing,

Lightly swinging

In the air;

'Tis the water in the dell

Where the elfin minstrels dwell,

Falling in a rainbow sprinkle,

Dropping stars that brightly twinkle,

Bright and fair,

On the darkling pool below,

Making music so;

'Tis the water elves who play  
On their lutes of spray.

Tinkle, tinkle!

Like a fairy silver bell;

Like a pebble in a shell;

Tinkle, tinkle!

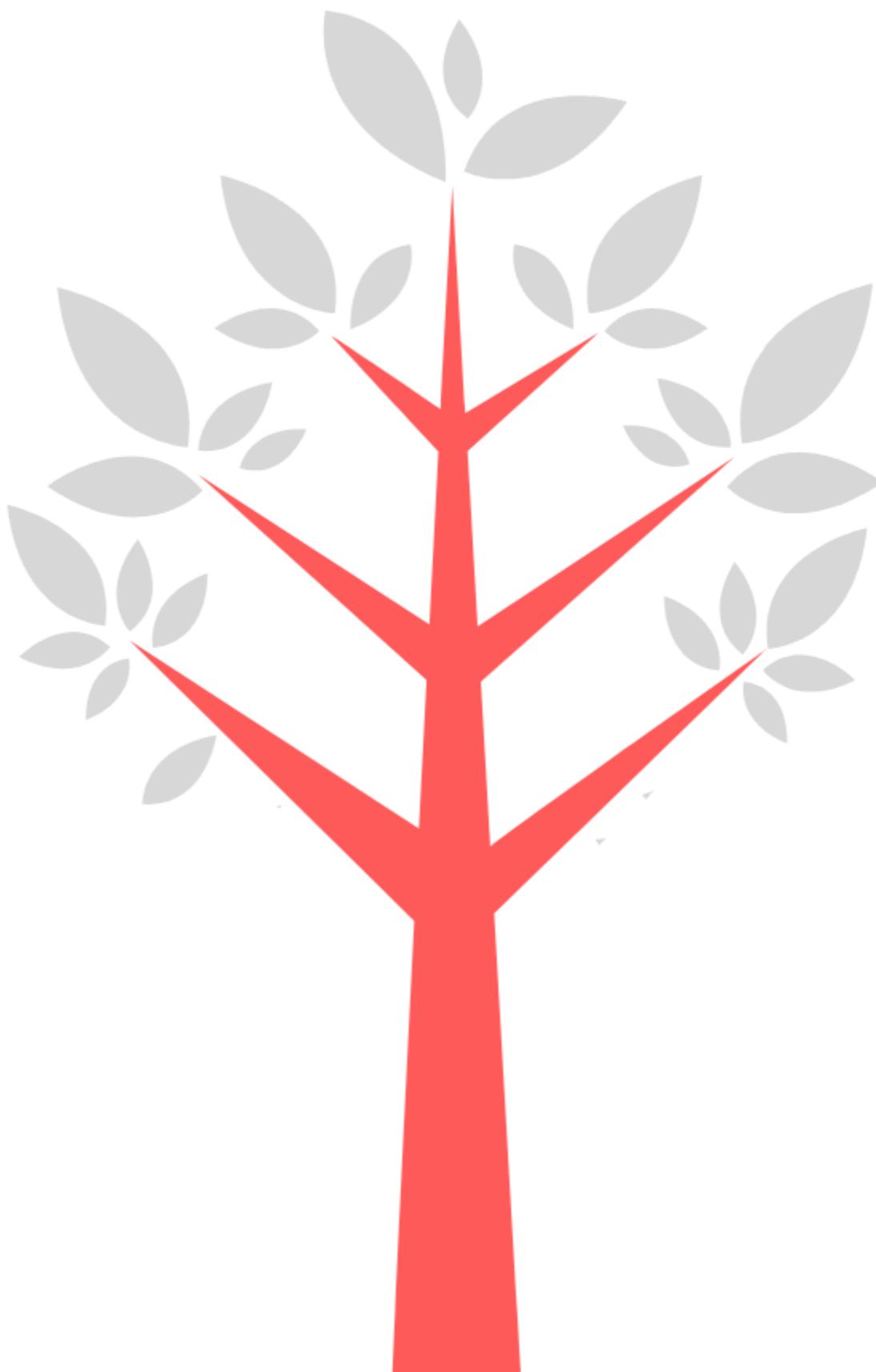
Listen well!



# February Weather

Directions: Designate one color for each type of weather.

Color a leaf with one or two colors each day to show that day's weather.



Key

sunny

cloudy

rainy

snowy

windy/  
stormy

*My Nature Journal*

FEBRUARY



# Phenology Calendar

Keep track of things you observe in nature that you see this month!  
Write in observances like these examples or draw a picture if you like.

- Record high or low temperature
- Icicles melting
- Seagulls spotted in parking lot
- Blue jay call heard
- Strawberry leaves poking up under the snow
- Bald eagle soaring over the lake



- Witch hazel tree budding
- 6 inches of rain in one day
- Deer tracks spotted in park
- Chew marks on young apple tree bark
- Coyote scat spotted in state park
- Neighbor tapping maple tree



MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
FEBRUARY 2026						
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	

# February Bird List

Birds spotted this month

# February Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

# February 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

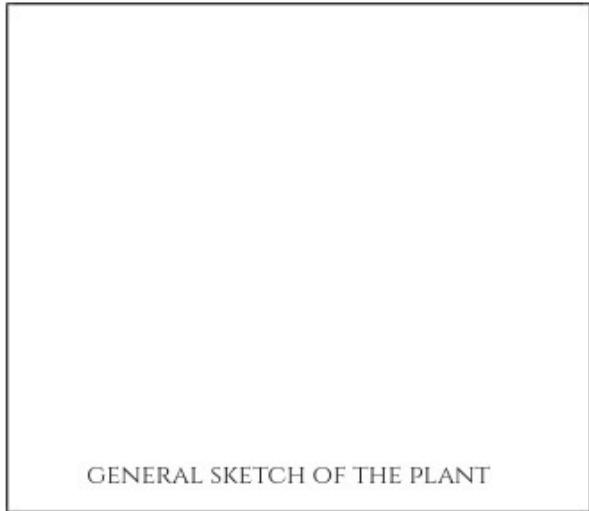
Week 2 Observations

Week 3 Observations

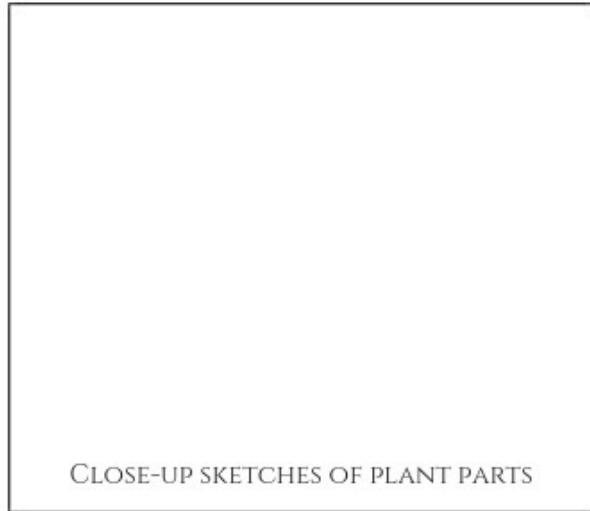
Week 4 Observations

# 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:

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WARNINGS: \_\_\_\_\_

FORAGING RECORD (DATES, WHERE FOUND, HOW IT WAS USED)

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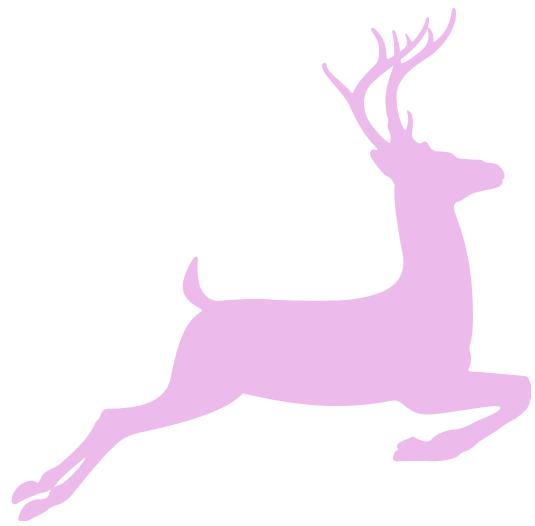
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MY RATING FOR THIS PLANT



*Wild Kids Magazine*



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.