

March 2026

WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

What can you forage in early spring?

March Nature Photo Challenge

Poisonous Flower Bingo

White Snakeroot & Snowdrops

Seasonal poetry, activities, nature journal pages & more!

From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Happy March!

Isn't it funny how January seems to last forever, and then the next thing you know, it's March already?

I love March because it means it's almost spring time - or that it's already springtime, depending on who you ask.

Spring officially starts here in the Northern hemisphere on March 20, which is the vernal equinox. That means that the sun's most direct rays shine on the equator, and there is nearly equal 12 hours of light and darkness for everyone on Earth.

Meteorologists (weather experts) consider March 1 to be the real start of spring though. They consider winter to be the three coldest months - December, January and February - and summer to be the three hottest - June, July and August. They consider spring to be the three months between the coldest and the hottest, so March, April and May. Fall for meteorologists is September, November and December.

Which one do you think is the best way to decide the seasons - where the sun is in relation to the Earth, or what the weather is like?

Either way, sometime this month we get to celebrate the start of spring in the Northern hemisphere.

Do you have any plans in nature for springtime?

I hope you have a wonderful, wild month!

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 March

10 WAYS TO PLAY & LEARN WITH NATURE THIS MONTH

Use a stick to write a nature haiku in the dirt or sand

Look at the lunar eclipse and full moon early in the morning on March 3

Start some seeds for a spring garden

Look for four leaf clovers

Go outside at dawn & dusk on the March equinox (the 20th) when the Sun will shine directly on the equator & there will be nearly equal amounts of day & night throughout the world

Try to find 10 different bugs, birds or animals outside

Test your garden soil by putting a spoonful in two cups and adding a spoonful of vinegar to one and a spoonful of water and some baking soda to the other (if it fizzes with vinegar your soil is alkaline, with baking soda it's acidic)

Gather some dried plants and sticks and arrange them in a vase or recycled can

Play in the mud

Watch a storm with your favorite grown up

What can you forage in early spring?



Even in early spring, there are wonderful wild foods to forage, no matter where you live. We live in Minnesota, and these are some of our favorite wild edible foods to forage this time of year..

We tap our **maple tree and walnut trees** to gather the tasty sap that tastes like slightly sweet, pure water. It only flows this time of year when it's freezing at night and above freezing in the day time. We drill a hole in trees that are big enough and insert a spile (narrow metal tube), then hang a bucket or jug underneath. We boil it down to syrup or sometimes just drink the refreshing maple or walnut water plain.



Ramps (*Allium tricoccum*) are wild onions that are only around for a brief period. Some people call them ramsom, wild onions or wild garlic. In some areas they are sparse and protected since they are so slow to grow and so often over-harvested, but we have nearby patches that are extensive and flourishing. We find them in local parks in wooded areas. We harvest sustainably and only take the leaves (generally one from each plant), leaving the bulbs. We saute them with eggs, use them in soups, and dry them to make our own seasoning salt. We've also used them to make fresh ramp pasta!



You can use various parts of **cattails** (*typha* sp.) year-round, but the tender bottom shoots in early spring are some of our favorites. Be sure to only harvest them from clean, unpolluted water. Our kids love pulling them out of the muck and we clean them right there, bringing home the bottoms and stripping the outer layers off. I cook them in a little water and then braise them in butter, or use them in stir fries. My husband makes refrigerator pickles with them.



Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) grows all over, and is great to add to salads or sandwiches.



Purple dead nettle (*Lamium purpureum*) and **henbit** (*Lamium amplexicaule*) both show up in people's yards as weeds this time of year. They are often confused but they can both be used the same way, mostly in teas, salads, stir fries or as an herb for seasoning. They are both members of the mint family, and have a lot of vitamins and minerals.



Nettles (*Urtica dioica*) are a favorite not just for eating, but for nourishing us and beating illnesses. I dry them to use in teas, infusions and seasoning mixes all year. We use them fresh all season anywhere you'd use spinach — in casseroles, soups, even green smoothies. Our daughter Fiona loves green smoothies made from frozen pineapple and banana, fresh nettles and water.



You have to be careful when you forage nettles though! They sting if you touch them with bare hands! Harvest them with gloves or use scissors to drop them right into your foraging basket. You just want to take the fresh, green tops.



Once boiled or dried, they lose their sting. They are loaded with iron, calcium and tons of vitamins and minerals. They taste fresh and mild, much nicer than more bitter greens like dandelion greens.



In other areas...

When we travel farther south this time of year, I always look for **redbud tree blossoms** (*Cercis canadensis*) to forage in spring. They are so pretty and they taste like fresh peas! If you've never tasted fresh garden peas, don't confuse them with those frozen ones you get in the store. They are so much tastier. Redbud trees are actually related to peas! But it's much more fun to eat flowers, don't you think? We like to nibble them fresh from the trees on walks, but other people make them into jellies and syrups.



Out west in California, **miner's lettuce** (*Claytonia perfoliata*) is a wonderful spring green. It got its name because the people who moved to the area to mine for gold in the 1800s ate it. There weren't very many vegetables available, and if you don't eat enough plants with vitamin C you can get a disease called scurvy. Miners ate lots of the leaves and it kept them healthy. Miner's lettuce is nice and mild, and is great in salads or sandwiches just like mild lettuce.



These are just a few of the great wild edible plants to forage this time of year! **Others to look for are violets, sorrel, curly dock, dandelion greens, fiddlehead ferns and so many more.** We've covered most of these plants in past issues of Wild Kids if you want to learn more about any of them.



Poisonous Flower Bingo

We're learning about poisonous plants this year in Wild Kids, so here's a fun way to help remember which flowers we should stay away from.

How to Play:

Head outside and see how many of these poisonous flowers you can spot this spring and summer. You may find them in gardens, parks, in front of businesses, and in wild places. Make an x over the ones you spot and try to get a BINGO either across, down, or diagonally. How many can you find?



Some of these are only poisonous in parts like the roots and some are poisonous all over. Some of them are very poisonous and some are only dangerous if someone eats a lot of them. In all cases, it's best to just look at how pretty they are and leave them alone.

Spring Foraging

Word Search

How many can you find? 17 wild plants are hidden below going across, down and diagonally.

Spring Foraging

Y O B
B C R Y M Q
P Q Y O J S O O U
P Y Q C V H T R Z
A H S V I K O E E I
Z B E Y T C O L R L
J H T A V G O Z E M S O S Z Y G N R A L P Q
A Y B S X A N U M U I F I D D L E H E A D S
D S O A M R V N L S E G M X T T T F S W
M T N J L E G C H M M R T Q N
T D I U F N R A Q
T T N B T C I I U O P B S
Y R A S T A A M Q E C O L J O
R Y A D L E C T C S U I L T M E A R C
E Y E B I L L N P B K C S F D K S S K R Y
U D T A S C A I M R P S H T B G N Q A G E
C G S T R P L I A N T D F K I A Y A E W P I L
Z P T E F P R L Z D N F M C R L R T K Z A
V A N N K O A T H D E L J T K D O L I K T
C I T C K R C L R N N G M W H U I U D
M C L O V E R P U U A I E U K C K
N B P W H Z E A B X E I U
J Z G S Z Z V Y D
S E M
C Q Z

PLANTAIN
MORELS
DANDELIONS
PHEASANTBACKS
LINDEN
MINERSLETTUCE
MAPLESAP
RAMPS
CHICKWEED
GARLICMUSTARD
SORREL
FIELDGARLIC
CLOVER
CATTAILS
OYSTERMUSHROOMS
LAMBSQUARTERS
FIDDLEHEADS

March

Nature Photo Challenge

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



- | | | | | | |
|----|--------|----|---------------|----|------------|
| 1 | Path | 11 | Living | 21 | Silhouette |
| 2 | Sky | 12 | Shiny | 22 | Edible |
| 3 | Sharp | 13 | Blue | 23 | Wet |
| 4 | Bird | 14 | Strange | 24 | Giant |
| 5 | Gray | 15 | Bumpy | 25 | Shadow |
| 6 | Cracks | 16 | Pattern | 26 | Many |
| 7 | Sunset | 17 | Green | 27 | Delicate |
| 8 | Tall | 18 | Tiny | 28 | Evening |
| 9 | Sign | 19 | Black & White | 29 | Fluffy |
| 10 | High | 20 | Symmetrical | 30 | Pointed |
| | | | | 31 | Ending |



Poetry for March

The Rainy Day

by James W. Whitt

The hills are smothered in a fog,
The sky is somber-grey,
The rain is coming in a mist,
A cheerless rainy day.
To me the trees are weeping,
With their branches drooping low,
Their tears are steady falling,
With heavy drops, yet slow.
The birds they all are silent,
And not one sweet silvery note,
Re-echoes through the forest,
From our feathered songster's throat.
Not one thing to break the silence,
Save the rain-drops as they fall,
As I watch the clouds roll onward,
Or climb the mountain wall.
And somehow I feel so happy,
Though the world seems full of pain,
So I let my gaze go farther,
When the sun will shine again.



The trees and flowers and grasses,
They will all the fresher seem,
And the laughter will be louder
From the rippling mountain stream.
The birds will sing far sweeter
Than they did in days gone by,
The air will be the fresher,
And of bluer tint the sky.
We all do love the sunshine,
We love the moonlight, too,
We also love the twilight,
And the falling of the dew;
But I never growl or grumble,
Only this I wish to say;—
That this world would be a desert
Without you, oh! Rainy Day!



WHITE SNAKEROOT

The plant that killed Abe Lincoln's Mother
Even though she didn't touch it!



Have you ever heard of white snakeroot (*Ageratina altissima*)? It's a plant in the aster family that's native to Eastern North America. It was named snakeroot because early colonists thought it could be used to treat snake bites (they were wrong). It's very helpful for pollinators because it is one of the last native plants to bloom in fall and it also flowers even if it's grown in the shade. It has a sad history though!

In the 1800s, cattle and people started mysteriously dying in states like Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. Nobody knew why. They called the sickness "trembles" in cows because it made them tremble and shake, and they called it "slows" in people. After a while, they started to call it "milk sickness" because they realized that people could catch it from drinking milk sometimes. Thousands of people died of milk sickness in the 19th century.

In some places, up to half the people who died in a county were dying from milk sickness. Abraham Lincoln's mother, Nancy, was one of the people who died. He was only 9 years old.

People didn't know what caused milk sickness for many years, mostly because they didn't listen to the people who had knowledge about it.



Nancy Lincoln died in 1818, during a big outbreak in her county. In the 1830's Anna Pierce Hobbs, who worked as a local healer and midwife, told people that a Shawnee (Native American) woman had told her that white snakeroot was poisonous, and she tried to warn everybody about it. Then in 1838, a farmer named John Rowe published a letter to an Ohio newspaper saying that it was the cause of milk sickness, which he had proven by feeding some leaves to his cattle, who then died. A famous doctor wrote an article in response, saying that only professionals could figure out the real cause of milk sickness and that Mr. Rowe had to be wrong because he was not a professional.

In 1840, W.J. Barbee published another article saying that white snakeroot was the cause of milk sickness, which he had learned from another farmer who proved it by feeding leaves to cattle. That was ignored too. Doctors and specialists told the public that they weren't sure of the cause, but their biggest theories were "miasma" (bad air), polluted water, heavy metal poisoning, or some sort of plant poisoning. In 1841, the legislature of Kentucky even offered a reward of \$2,000 to anyone who could figure out the cause of milk poisoning (even though people had been telling them for years).

Finally, in 1858, the Ohio State Board of Agriculture released a report that said white snakeroot caused milk sickness. In 1928, over 100 years after people started dying of milk poisoning, USDA researcher J.F. Couch identified an alcohol in white snake-root that he named tremetol (because of the "trembles"), that caused the poisoning.



There are still some places in rural America that have names like Milk Sick Ridge, Milk Sick Cove, and Milk Sick Holler. If you ever pass one, now you know how they got their names!



WHITE SNAKEROOT
(*Ageratina altissima*)



SNOWDROPS

(*Galanthus nivalis*)



Snowdrops are pretty white flowers that are native to Europe and southwestern Asia.

They get their name from the fact that they are such early bloomers that they even bloom in the snow sometimes.

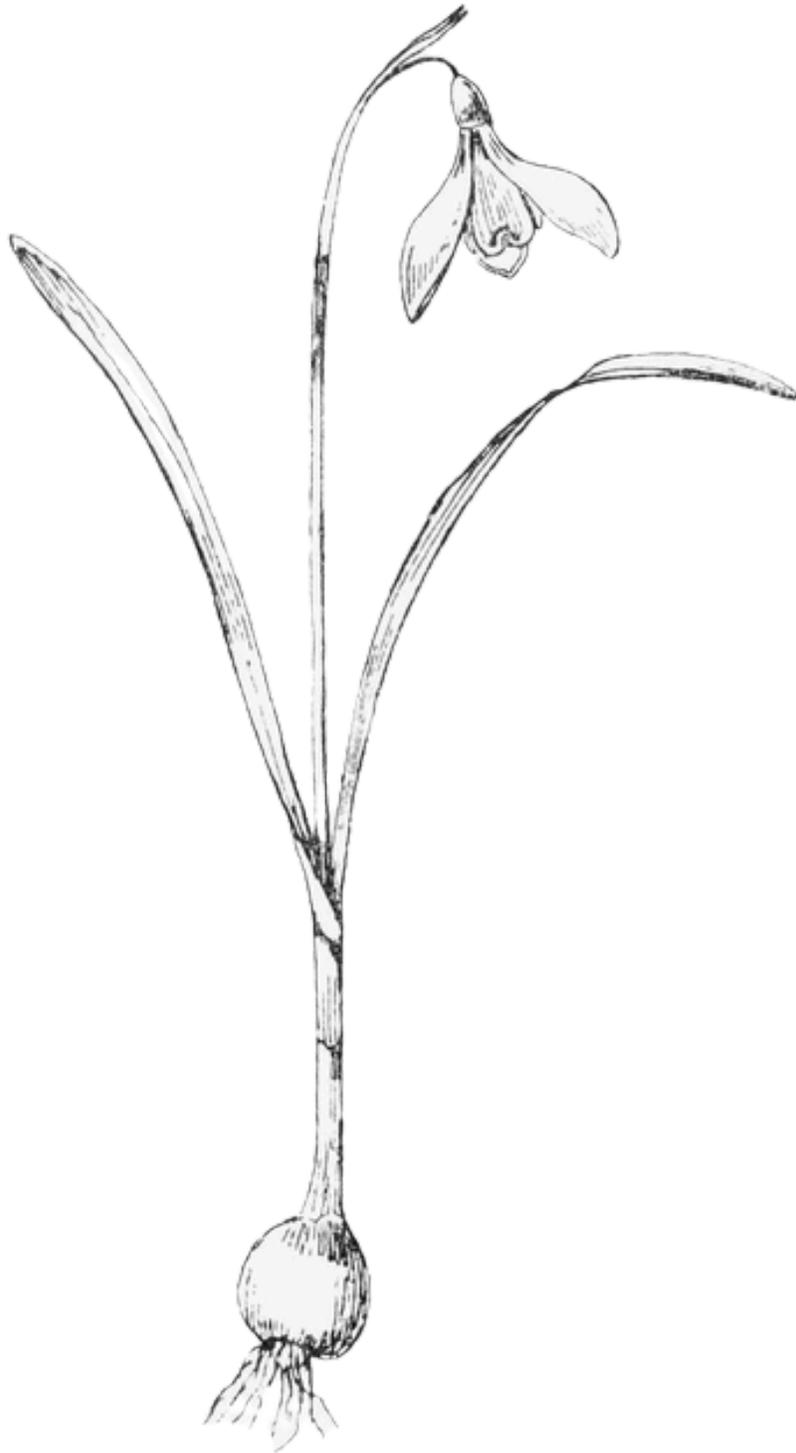
Snowdrops self-seed easily so they spread from where people plant them and spread to wild places.

Like many garden flowers, snowdrops are mildly poisonous. All parts of them are poisonous to cats, dogs and people – the flowers, leaves and roots. They are not extremely poisonous the way flowers like monkshood are, but if people or animals eat any part of them they can get sick to their stomach, throw up or get diarrhea. It's best to stay away from them and keep your pets away from them.



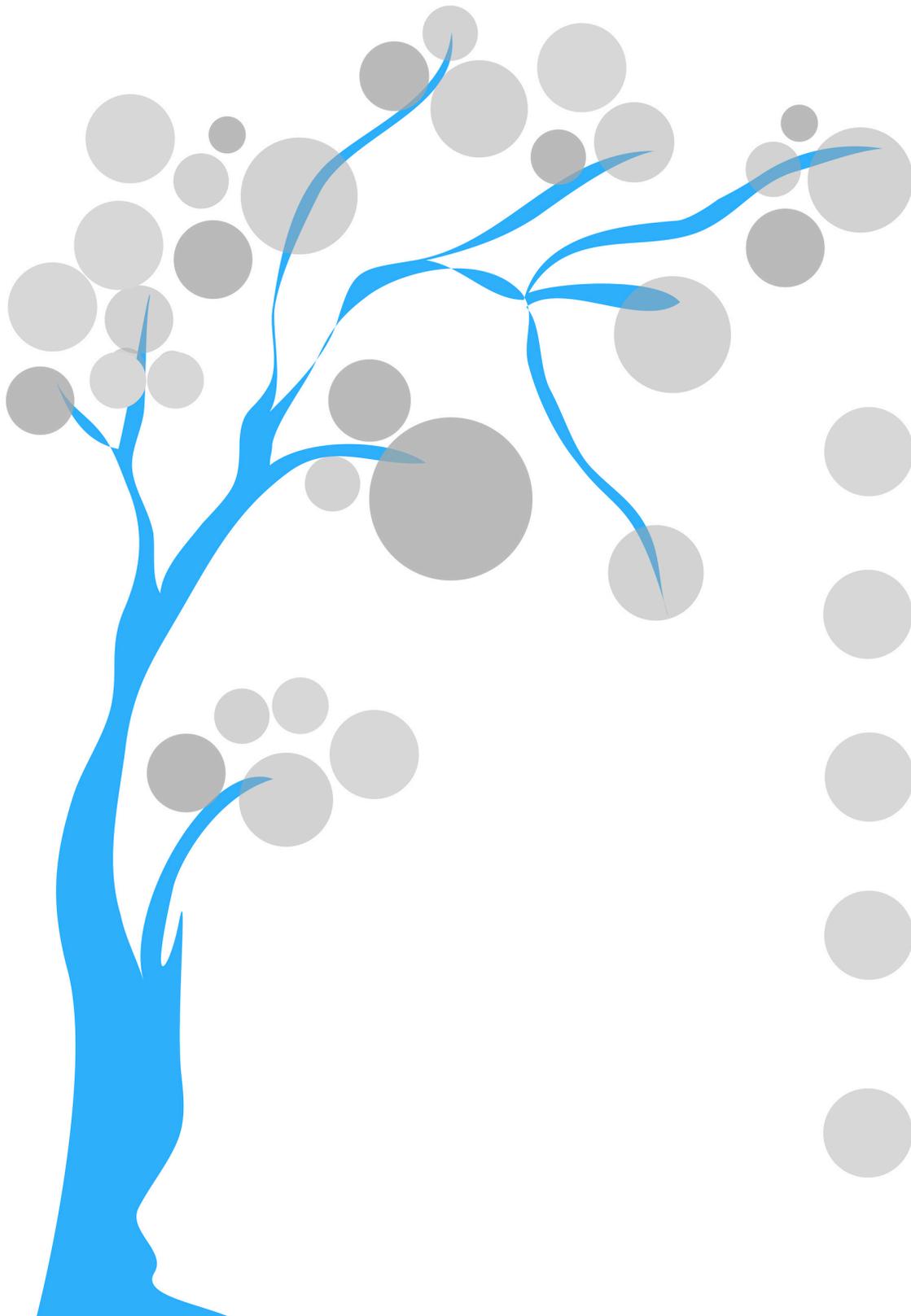


SNOWDROP
(*Galanthus nivalis*)



March 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.

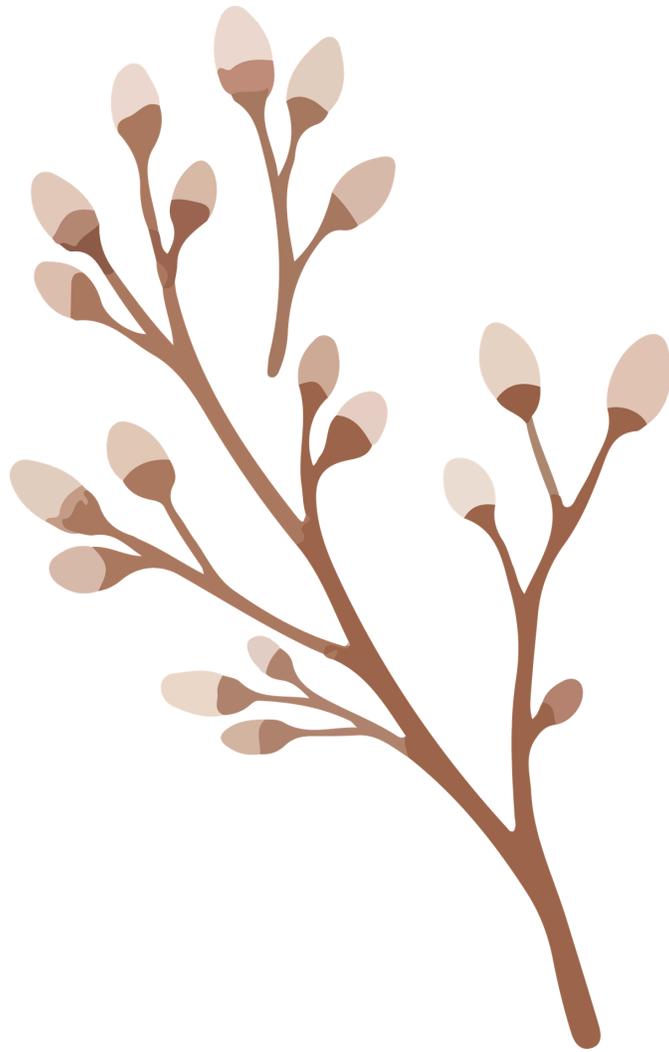


Key

-  sunny
-  cloudy
-  rainy
-  snowy
-  windy/
stormy

My Nature Journal

March



Phenology Calendar

March 2026

Make a note or draw a picture of nature happenings — first birds, flowers, weather notes & other signs of changing seasons



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	31				

March Bird List

Birds spotted this month

March Animal List

Mammals, reptiles & other wildlife spotted this month

March 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 Sketches & Observations

Week 2 Sketches & Observations

Week 3 Sketches & Observations

Week 4 Sketches & 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.