

*May 2026*

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

Forage to Feast  
Board Game

Plant Name Decoding:  
What is a Bane?

Mighty Hunter  
Carnivorous Plants

Native Wildflowers  
Blooming in May  
Around the World

Nature Photo  
Prompts for May

With seasonal poetry, activities,  
nature journal pages & more!

# From the editor

BY ALICIA BAYER

Happy May!

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

We always start this month with three of our kids having birthdays in a row (three birthdays over four days!). I'm glad that Mother's Day comes soon after, because I feel like I've earned it after baking so many cakes and planning so much fun. 😊

I do love that those birthdays are in spring, though, because we could often have outside parties in parks and nature areas, and we could give out fun, nature-based party favors like flower seed packets and vegetable and flower plants to pot up and take home. Now most of our kids are grown up, but the grown up ones still love flowers, seed packets, picnics and outside fun this time of year.

May is one of my favorite months because so many flowers are blooming and so many tasty wild plants are popping up to forage, like wild asparagus and morel mushrooms. We forage a lot of medicinal herbs in May, too, like motherwort, hawthorn flowers, cleavers (bedstraw) and nettles – just to name a few!

In this month's Wild Kids, we have a board game (Forage & Feast) to play to help ID wild fruits, berries, mushrooms and more. We also have some examples of wildflowers that are blooming in some places around the world, plus information on what "bane" means in plant names, information about carnivorous plants, and lots more.

I hope you find something fun to try 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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# Go Wild in May

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

Color in the circles of the ones you do!

Head somewhere dark around midnight on the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> to watch the peak of the Eta Aquariids meteor shower

Play our Forage to Feast board game (in this issue)

Color in a leaf for every hour you spend outside this month on our tracker and see if you can color in all 50 – or add even more!

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

Look for the full moon on May 1, which will rise in the afternoon

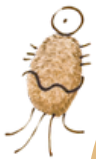
See how many kinds of bees you can spot on World Bee Day on May 20

See if your local library has a seed library where you can get free seeds or have a grown up ask for some for you on your local Buy-Nothing group

Try to use nature as a gym in 5 different ways (pull-ups on a sideways branch, lifting a small downed tree...)

Stamp your thumb in mud on paper, let it dry, and make little creatures with your mud prints

Write about your favorite thing to do in nature and send it to Wild Kids!



# What native flowers are blooming in May?

Plants that are native (originally from there) in one place are not native in another place.

Native plants help nature because the birds, animals and insects that live there have evolved to need certain plants for pollen, food, homes and more.

To find out what plants are native where you live, you can do a web search for your state, province or area along with "native plants." There are lots of great organizations in different places to help you learn about the plants that are native where you live.

**Here are some examples of native plants that are blooming in May in different places.** These are just a few examples. There are many, many more!

**Remember, what is native in one place can be non-native and invasive somewhere else!**

## Virginia, USA



Coral honeysuckle



Wild indigo



Sweetbay magnolia



Purple passionflower

## United Kingdom (UK)



Clustered bellflower



Foxglove



Marsh marigold



Daisy

# Ontario, Canada



Bunchberry



Downy yellow violet



Canada mayflower



Hepatica

# South Australia, Australia



Waxflower



Five-corners



Bottlebrush



Kangaroo paw

# Texas, USA



Rock rose



Indian blanket



Horsemint



Pink evening primrose

# Minnesota, USA



Wild geranium



Wild strawberry



Golden Alexander



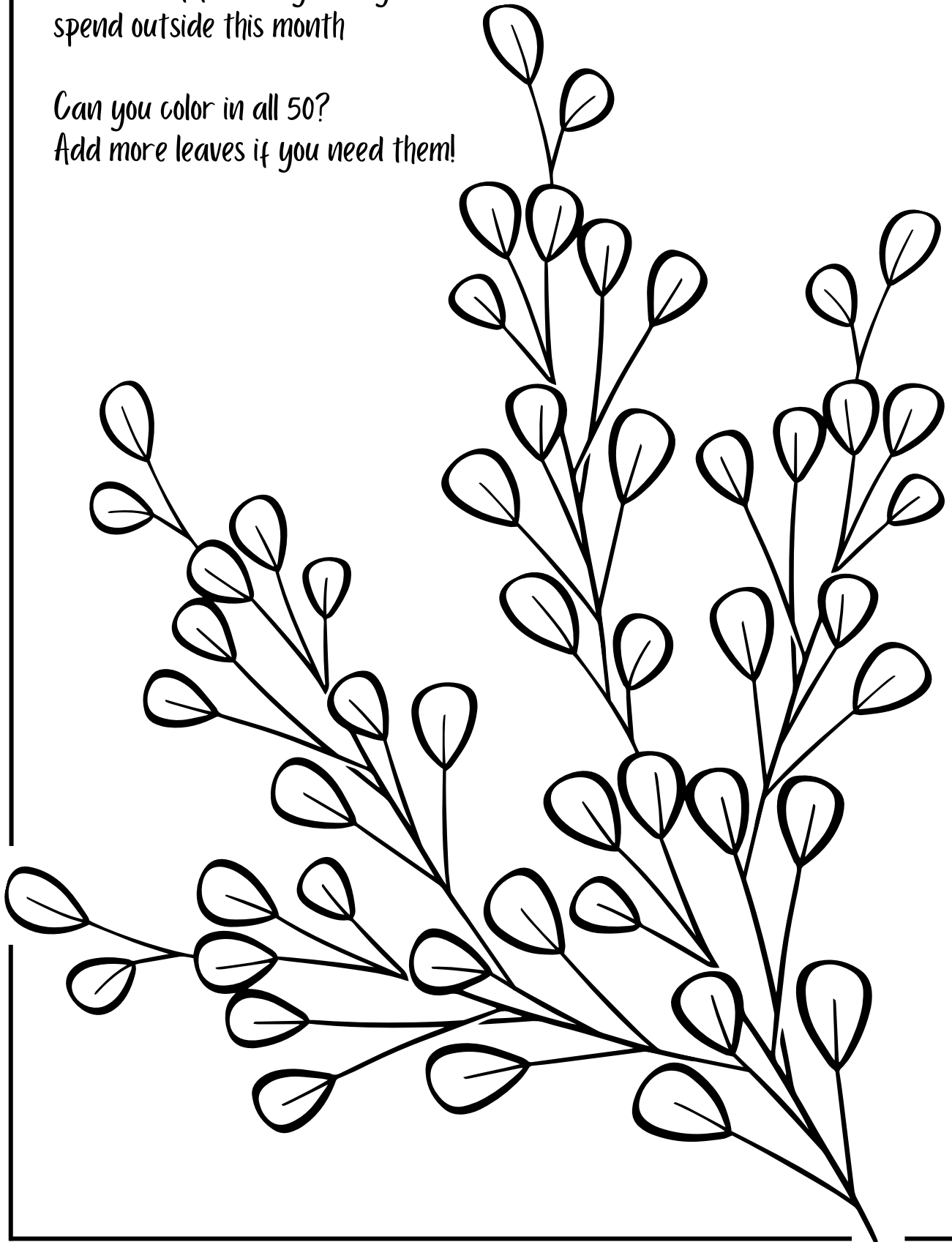
Wild lupine

# Hours Outside

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Color a leaf for every hour you  
spend outside this month

Can you color in all 50?  
Add more leaves if you need them!














# Forage to Feast












**How to Play:** Cut out the squares on the next pages to make your cards, & turn them right side down or just put them in a hat or bowl. Choose a pebble or small shell as your playing piece. Take turns drawing a card and moving to the next corresponding square of that type of wild food. If you don't need the card you draw, you can give it to another player. If you get a *Watch out!* card, go back 5 spaces (or to the start if you are less than 5 spaces from start). Keep going until you reach the center. **Everyone feasts (wins) once everyone has made it to the middle, but the player who gets there first is the forager of the day!**










# Greens

 Miner's lettuce	 Purslane	 Sheep sorrel
 Nettles	 Lambs-quarters	 Ramps
 Wood Sorrel	 Mint	 Chickweed










# Mushrooms

 Morel	 Oyster	 Chicken of the woods
 Pheasant back	 Chanterelle	 Lobster
 Puffball	 Hen of the woods	 Bolete







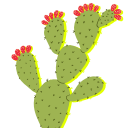


# Nuts

 Acorn	 Beechnut	 Hazelnut
 Chestnut	 Walnut	 Butternut
 Pine nut	 Hickory	 Pecan

# Flowers

 Violet	 Black locust	 Hibiscus
 Hawthorn	 Rose	 Elderflower
 Redbud	 Dandelion	 Milkweed





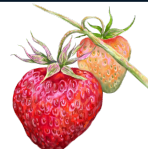




# Fruits

 Apple	 Rose hip	 Pawpaw
 Wild grape	 Persimmon	 Aronia
 Prickly pear cactus	 Plum	 Crab apple

# Roots & Stems

 Lotus	 Wild asparagus	 Wild onion
 Cattail	 Pignut	 Sunchoke
 Chicory	 Burdock	 Japanese knotweed

# Berries

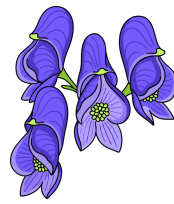
 Raspberry	 Elderberry	 Cloudberry
 Blueberry	 Strawberry	 Mulberry
 Gooseberry	 Black Raspberry	 Blackberry

# Watch Out!

 Poison ivy	 Fly agaric	 Giant Hogweed
 Wild parsnip	 Deathcap	 Poison oak
 Destroying angel	 Jack-o-lantern	 Poison hemlock

**If you get a Watch out! card, go back 5 spaces (or to the start if you are less than 5 spaces from start).**

# What is a Bane?



There are a lot of plants with "bane" in their names. That's always a hint about what the plant was known for in the old days when people used plant names to give clues about how they were used.

Wort is an old fashioned name for helpful plants, usually plants that were used for medicine and/or food, such as motherwort and St. John's wort.

Balm was used in a plant name if it was used as a healing ointment, like lemon balm.

If people thought plants were not helpful, they often gave them a name with weed in the name like ragweed or milkweed.

Bane was used long ago to mean "a slayer or murderer" or "one who causes the death or destruction of another."

As we learned in January, wolfbane (monkshood) was used to hunt wolves because it is so poisonous that people used it on their arrows to make any arrow strike deadly.

Here are some examples of plants with bane in their names. Can you guess anything about them from their names?

- Fleabane
- Wolfbane
- Henbane
- Leopard's bane
- Cowbane
- Dogbane
- Witchbane (rue)

The names don't really mean they are necessarily poisonous to witches, cows or fleas. Sometimes they were known to repel insects, like fleabane.

Some people used to believe that witchbane (rue) would keep witches away. We know better now, but it does repel a lot of insects - and keeps cats out of your garden. Maybe they should rename it catbane!

Wouldn't it be fun to get to name a plant?  
Next time you get to know a plant that's new to you, think about what you'd name it.  
Bullybane? Pinkweed?

What would be the perfect names for your favorite plants?



Dogbane



Fleabane



Henbane



Witchbane (rue)

# Carnivorous Plants

## Plants that hunt for their food!



Imagine having to hunt for your dinner, without being able to move from the spot you're in! That's the challenge for carnivorous plants, who catch and eat insects and protozoa for food.

Carnivorous plants get some of their nutrients from insects, so they can live in soil that doesn't have many nutrients of its own, like very rocky soil. They have different kinds of traps that catch prey and then they kill and digest that prey and use the nutrients from it to grow and stay healthy.

There are over 700 species of carnivorous plants around the world. They have different ways of catching their prey. Here are the types of traps they use.

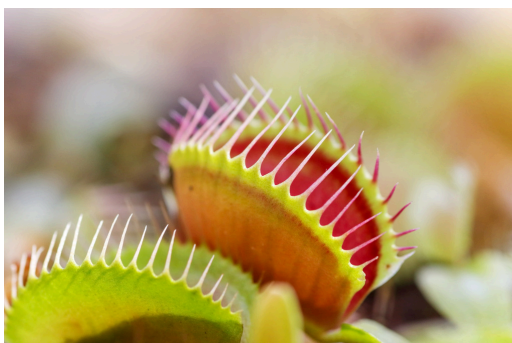
**Pitfall traps** like the pitcher plant are like deep cups or pitchers. The prey falls into a rolled leaf that holds a pool of digestive liquids or bacteria.



**Flypaper traps** like the cape sundew have sticky leaves covered in a gooey substance called mucilage. When an insect lands on it, it gets stuck.



**Snap traps** like the venus flytrap close very quickly, like a mouth.



**Bladder traps** like Bladderworts suck in prey using a sac that creates a powerful vacuum inside.



**Lobster-pot traps** like the species *genlisea* have inward-pointing hairs that guide prey deeper & deeper into a digestive area. Unlike other carnivorous plants, they prey on tiny underground organisms with leaves that grow underground.



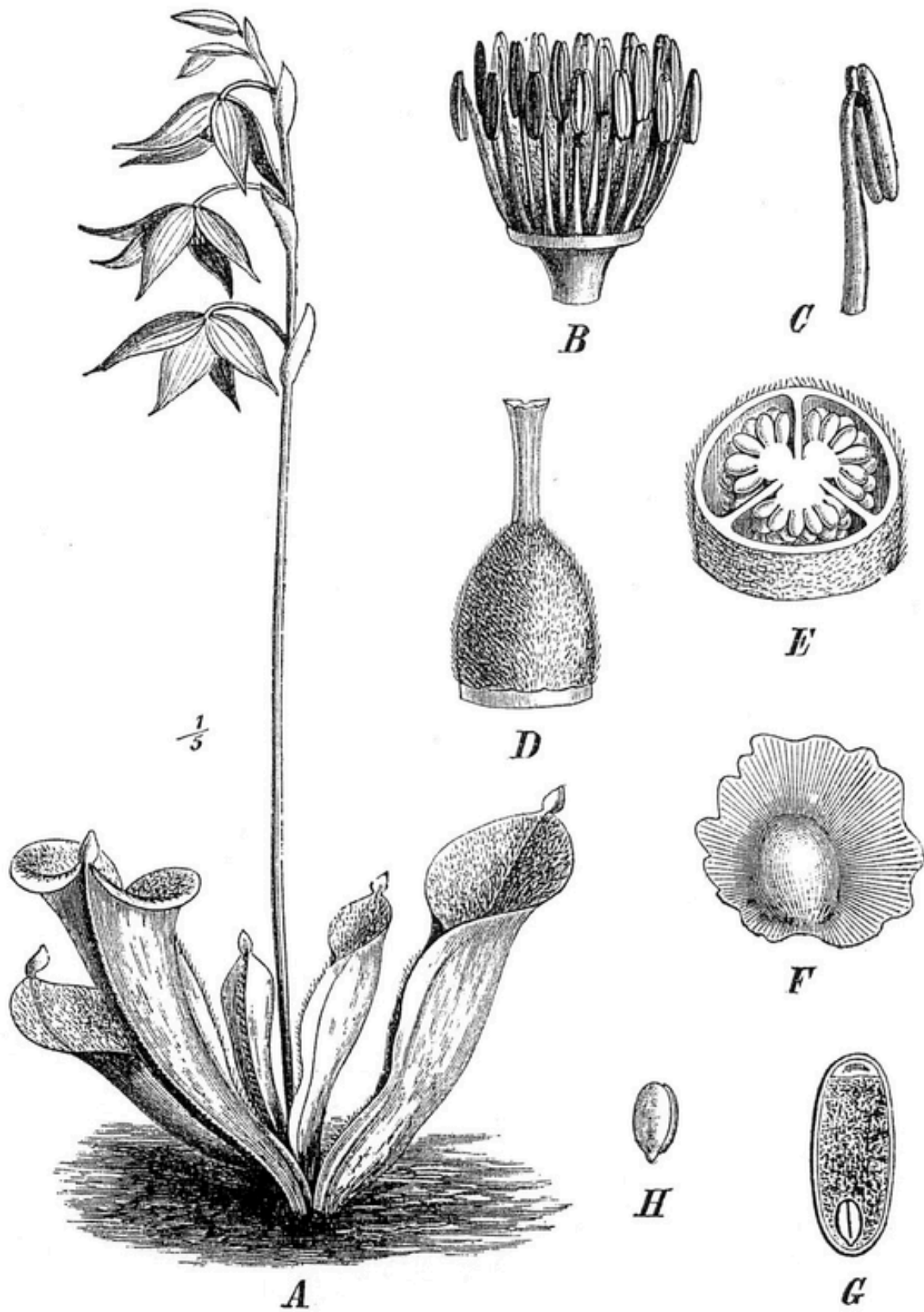
# VENUS FLYTRAP

*(Dionaea muscipula)*



# PITCHER PLANT

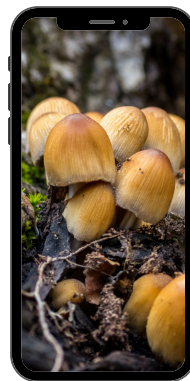
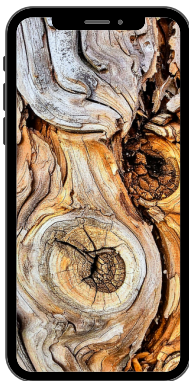
(*Heliamphora nutans*)



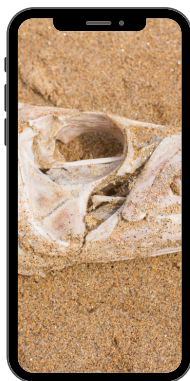
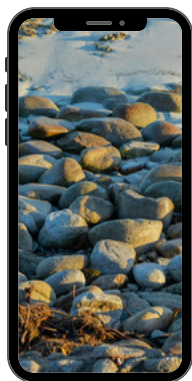
# May

## Nature Photo Challenge

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



- |            |                |             |
|------------|----------------|-------------|
| 1 Blossoms | 11 Feather     | 21 Red      |
| 2 Green    | 12 Water       | 22 Hidden   |
| 3 Soft     | 13 Wind        | 23 Lonely   |
| 4 Broken   | 14 Pink        | 24 Fragrant |
| 5 Shadow   | 15 Smooth      | 25 Herbal   |
| 6 High     | 16 Print       | 26 Wet      |
| 7 Old      | 17 Slimy       | 27 Fragile  |
| 8 Shiny    | 18 Sand        | 28 Balance  |
| 9 Insect   | 19 Complicated | 29 Slow     |
| 10 Many    | 20 Symmetrical | 30 Round    |
|            |                | 31 Striped  |



# Poems for May

Daisy Song

by Grace Denio Littchfield



I am only a plain little daisy-flower,  
Sprung up at hap-hazard 'neath sunshine and shower,  
'To live out as I may my life's poor little hour,  
Yet who is so happy as I?

Oh, the days they burn hot, and the nights they blow cold,  
And the shadows and rains,—true they fall, manifold;  
But my dress is all white, and my heart is pure gold,  
And who is so happy as I?

'There 's many a gladsomer meadow than mine,  
Where greener trees shelter and softer suns shine  
For others than me; but how can I repine,  
For who is so happy as I?

'There 's a brook I can't see by that far-away beech,  
And a bird that wont whistle, for all I beseech,  
And stars are up yonder, quite out of my reach,  
But who is so happy as I?

I just look up at Fate with my brave little face,  
I stir from my post in no possible case,  
And I keep my dress clean, my gold heart in its place,  
And who is so happy as I?



The Wind in the Grass  
by Ralph Waldo Emerson

The green grasses bowing,  
The morning wind is in it,  
'Tis a tune worth thy knowing  
Though it change every minute.





The Mountains Are A Lonely Folk  
by Hamlin Garland

The mountains they are silent folk,  
They stand afar-alone;  
And the clouds that kiss their brows at night  
Hear neither sigh nor groan.  
Each bears him in his ordered place  
As soldiers do, and bold and high  
They fold their forests round their feet  
and bolster up the sky.

# MAY PHENOLOGY CALENDAR

Keep track of nature observations in your area this month, such as extreme weather, garden harvests, foraging finds, and wildlife spotted. Write them on the date you observe them and draw a picture if you like.

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						

# My Nature Journal

## MAY






# May 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*

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