

July 2026

# WILD KIDS

SEASONAL NATURE EDUCATION FOR KIDS & THEIR GROWN UPS

July Foraging  
Bucket List

Pounded Leaf &  
Flower Prints

Summer Nature Fun  
Word Search

Deadly Dolls Eye Berries

Beware of Belladonna

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 some 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 plan to go spend time there again soon.

Also on our wild bucket list for July – boating, picking wild berries, doing 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! Our backyard black raspberry patch is now like a jungle, but I love it. 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. 😊

What do you like to do in nature in July? I hope you have a wonderful wild month with lots of outdoor adventures!

*Alicia*



*Picking black raspberries in our jungle of a patch in the back yard*

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!*

Create a fairy or gnome house out of sticks, mud and rocks

Visit a local farm or nature center

Use a paint pen or permanent marker & smooth rocks to label some of the cool plants in your yard

Make a smoothie using wild berries or greens

Use nature as a gym for pull-ups, weight lifting and other exercises you can dream up

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

Look for the full moon during the day on July 29

Head someplace away from city lights on July 28 or 29 & watch the Delta Aquarids Meteor Shower

Arrange nature items on a piece of dark or bright paper in the sun & leave it for the day to bleach the pattern on it

Build a fort with fallen branches

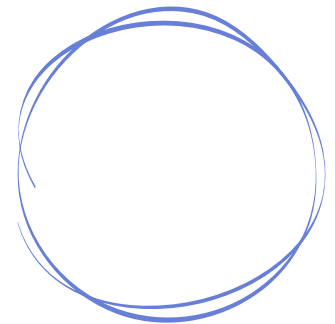
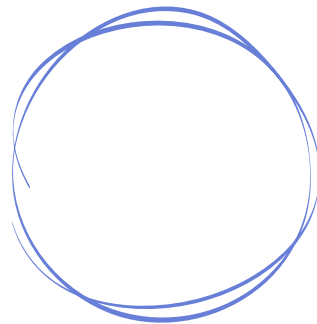
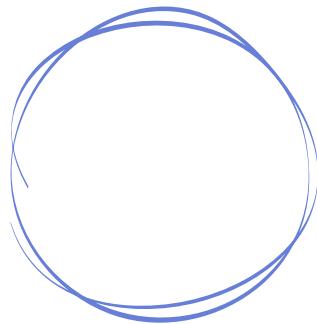
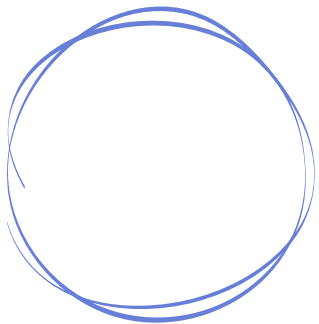
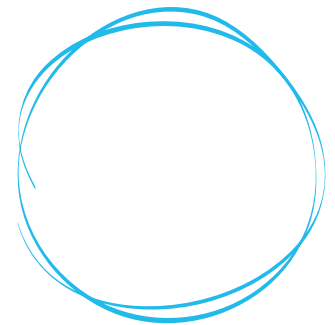
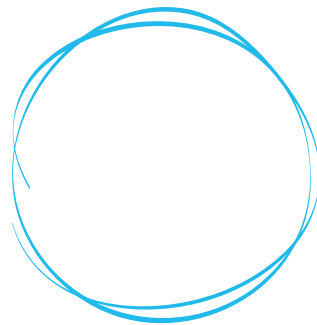
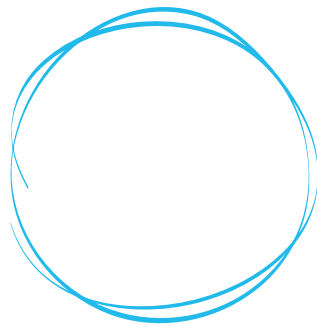
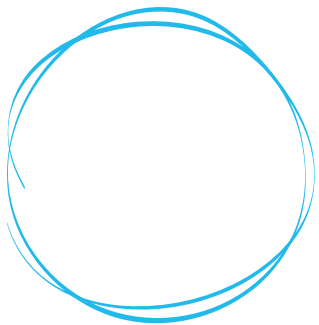
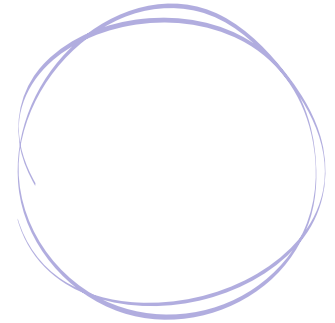
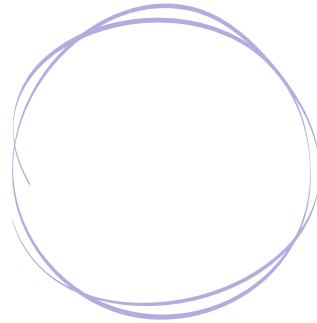
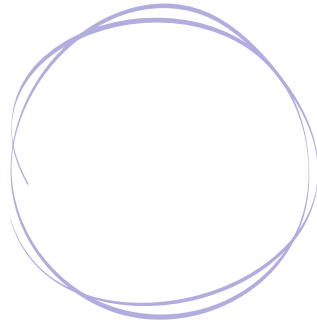
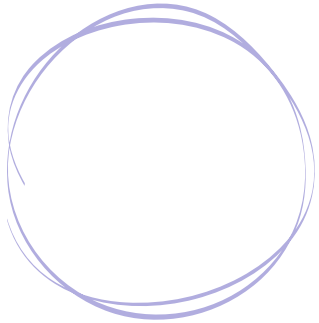


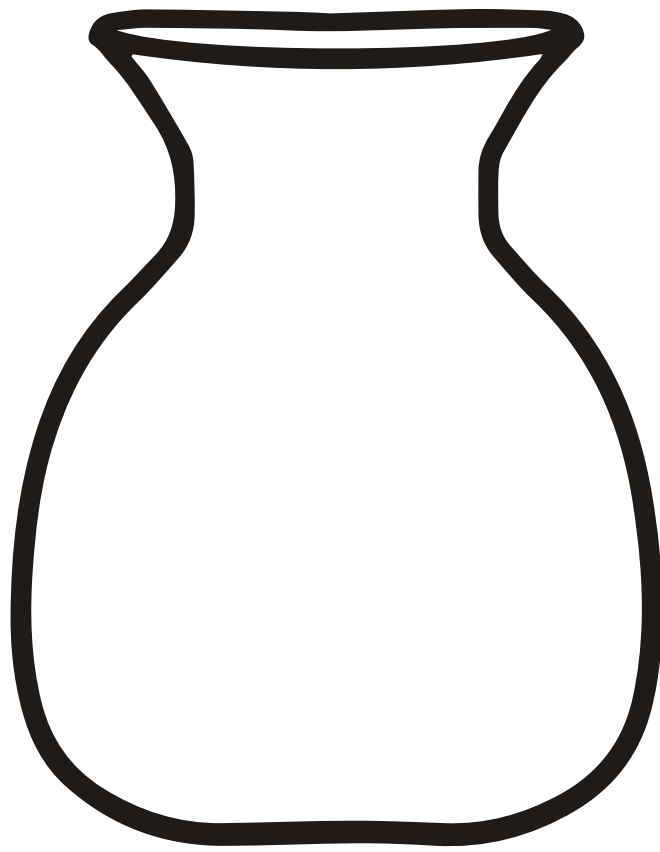
# *Pounded Petals & Leaves*



Here's a fun way to play with art and nature!

Find lots of colors of petals & leaves that are okay to pick, & pound them into the circles to make color swatches. Just put your plant on the circle, cover with a piece of wax paper, & pound it with a smooth rock, hammer or mallet. Take a picture of your finished samples & then check back a week later to see if the colors have changed.





Pound leaves and petals above the vase to make your own bouquet  
and then draw in stems!

# July Foraging

# BUCKET LIST



Keep an eye out for these wild edible and medicinal plants this month. Not all of them will be in your area, but it's fun to look. How many can you find? You can add some of your own, too!



ELDERFLOWERS



GOOSEBERRIES



WILD ROSES



LAMBSQUARTERS



MULBERRIES



CATMINT



OYSTER MUSHROOMS



PURSLANE



MILKWEED BLOSSOMS/PODS



CHOKE CHERRIES



CURRANTS



RASPBERRIES



BLACK RASPBERRIES



PLANTAIN



CHICKWEED



CATTAIL POLLEN



CHICKEN OF THE WOODS



WILD PLUMS



BLACKBERRIES



GRAPE LEAVES



DOCK SEEDS



WOOD SORREL



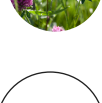
JEWELWEED



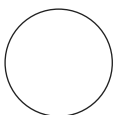
HUCKLEBERRIES



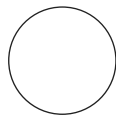
PINEAPPLE WEED



RED OR WHITE CLOVER



\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_

Can you find the ways to have fun in nature in the summer time below?  
As summer goes on, color in all the ones you've done!

## Summer Nature Fun Word Search

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

Find the following words in the puzzle.

Words are hidden → and ↓ and ↘

BIRDWATCHING

BOATING

BUGCOLLECTING

CAMPFIRES

CAMPING

CLOUDWATCHING

FORAGING

GARDENING

HIKING

ROCKCLIMBING

ROCKCOLLECTING

SANDCASTLES

STARGAZING

SWIMMING

TRAVEL

TREECLIMBING

(Answers on the back cover)

# DEADLY DOLLS EYE PLANTS



Remember, our theme for 2026 is dangerous plants. Doll's eye plants are some really weird ones to learn about!

Doll's eye plants (*Actaea pachypoda*) are also known as white baneberry. Remember that bane in a plant name means that it is toxic or poisonous. So white baneberry means white poisonous berry – a very good name for it! It is also known as white cohosh.

You can probably guess why they're also called doll's eye plants – the berries look like eyeballs growing on red stalks! The berries even last into the winter, looking like tiny skulls on the stalks.

Some people like to plant doll's eye plants in their gardens because they're such interesting looking plants, but it's important to tell everybody that the whole plant is poisonous for people, especially the berries.

## One berry is enough to hospitalize a child!

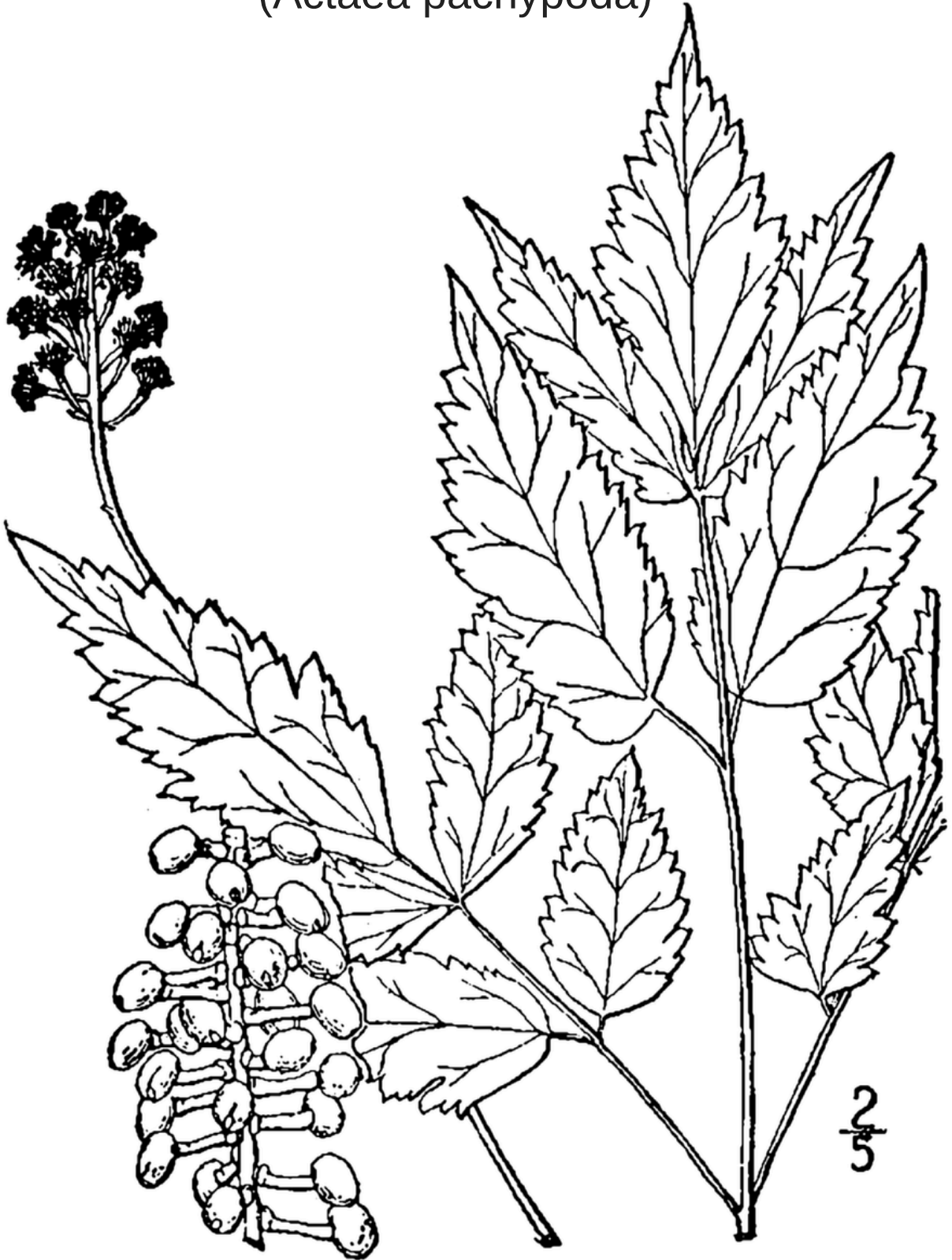
Doll's eye plants are native to North America and grow to be about 18-30 inches tall. They grow in shady places like the woods and they are related to buttercups.

It's safe for birds to eat doll's eye berries, so they eat them and then spread the seeds wherever they go.

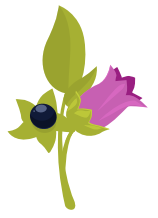
Doll's eye plants are very pretty, but if you see them, treat them the same way you'd treat a white tiger you came across – appreciate how pretty it is but stay far away!



DOLL'S EYE PLANT  
(*Actaea pachypoda*)



# Beware of Belladonna!



Belladonna has a very pretty name (it means “beautiful woman” in Italian) and it’s a pretty plant. Deadly belladonna (*Atropa belladonna*) is also pretty dangerous, so you should stay away from it!



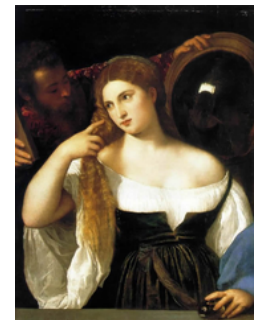
Belladonna is also known as deadly nightshade. All parts of deadly nightshade are poisonous – the vines, leaves, berries, flowers and roots.



Here are five really cool facts about this interesting plant:

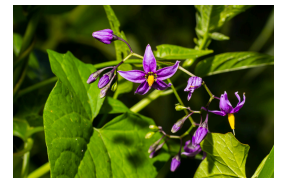
1. In the Middle Ages, people sometimes ate belladonna berries as medicine. This was a terrible idea, since it’s poisonous. But it also led to the myth that witches ride on broomsticks, because it caused hallucinations when people used witch’s salves that made people think they were flying.

2. Royal women in Italy used to put belladonna drops in their eyes to dilate their pupils (to make the black part of the eye bigger) because they thought it made them look prettier. There is a famous painting called “Woman with a Mirror” that historians think shows a woman who used belladonna drops in her eyes. Those eyedrops are called atropine drops because of belladonna’s latin name (*atropa belladonna*). Eye doctors still use atropine drops to dilate eyes for surgery and eye exams.

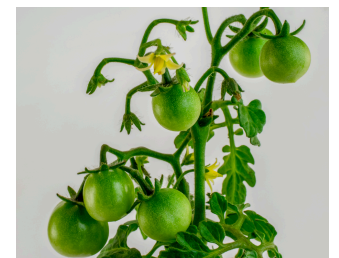


3. Belladonna was used for poison for several armies in history. Sometimes it was added to water supplies and in Shakespeare’s play *Macbeth*, the Scottish army put it in the Danish army’s alcohol supply. The wives of Roman emperors Augustus and Claudius also poisoned them with atropine.

4. There are several kinds of belladonna, and the one that most people have in their yards is a less dangerous type called bittersweet nightshade instead of deadly nightshade. It’s also mildly poisonous but it’s not nearly as dangerous as deadly nightshade.



5. If you pay attention to plant families, you might recognize the nightshade in belladonna’s name. Do you know what other plants are nightshades? Tomatoes and potatoes! In both of those cases, the leaves are still poisonous but we eat other parts – the tubers (like roots) in the case of potatoes, and the fruits in the case of tomatoes. For many years, people believed tomatoes were poisonous because they were in the belladonna family.



# DEADLY NIGHTSHADE

( *Atropa belladonna* )



# Nature Poems for July

Evening West  
by Emily Dickinson

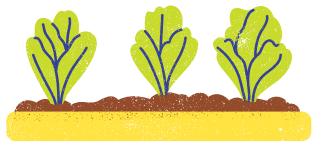


She sweeps with many-colored brooms,  
And leaves the shreds behind;  
Oh, housewife in the evening west,  
Come back, and dust the pond!

You dropped a purple raveling in,  
You dropped an amber thread;  
And now you 've littered all the East  
With duds of emerald!

And still she plies her spotted brooms,  
And still the aprons fly,  
Till brooms fade softly into stars —  
And then I come away.

Little Garden  
by Beatrix Potter



We have a little garden,  
A garden of our own,  
And every day we water there  
The seeds that we have sown.

We love our little garden,  
And tend it with such care,  
You will not find a faced leaf  
Or blighted blossom there.

Laughter  
by Olive Enoch

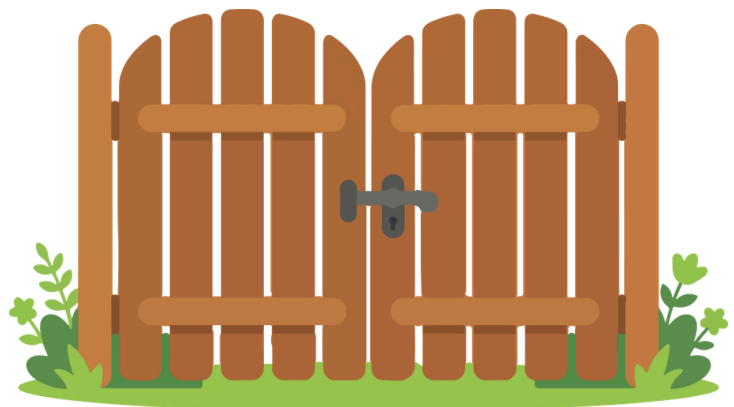


No one in the garden  
Up the mossy path,  
Yet I almost certainly  
Heard a little laugh.

Light as fluffy thistledown,  
Fresh as dew at morning,  
Happy as a bird's song  
When the day is dawning.

No one in the rockery  
As I tiptoe round,  
Listening for another laugh,  
But scarce a single sound.

Nothing but the sound of grass  
Rippling in the breeze.  
No one in the garden  
But the flowers and trees.



*My Nature Journal*

# July





# 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
- 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 2026



SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

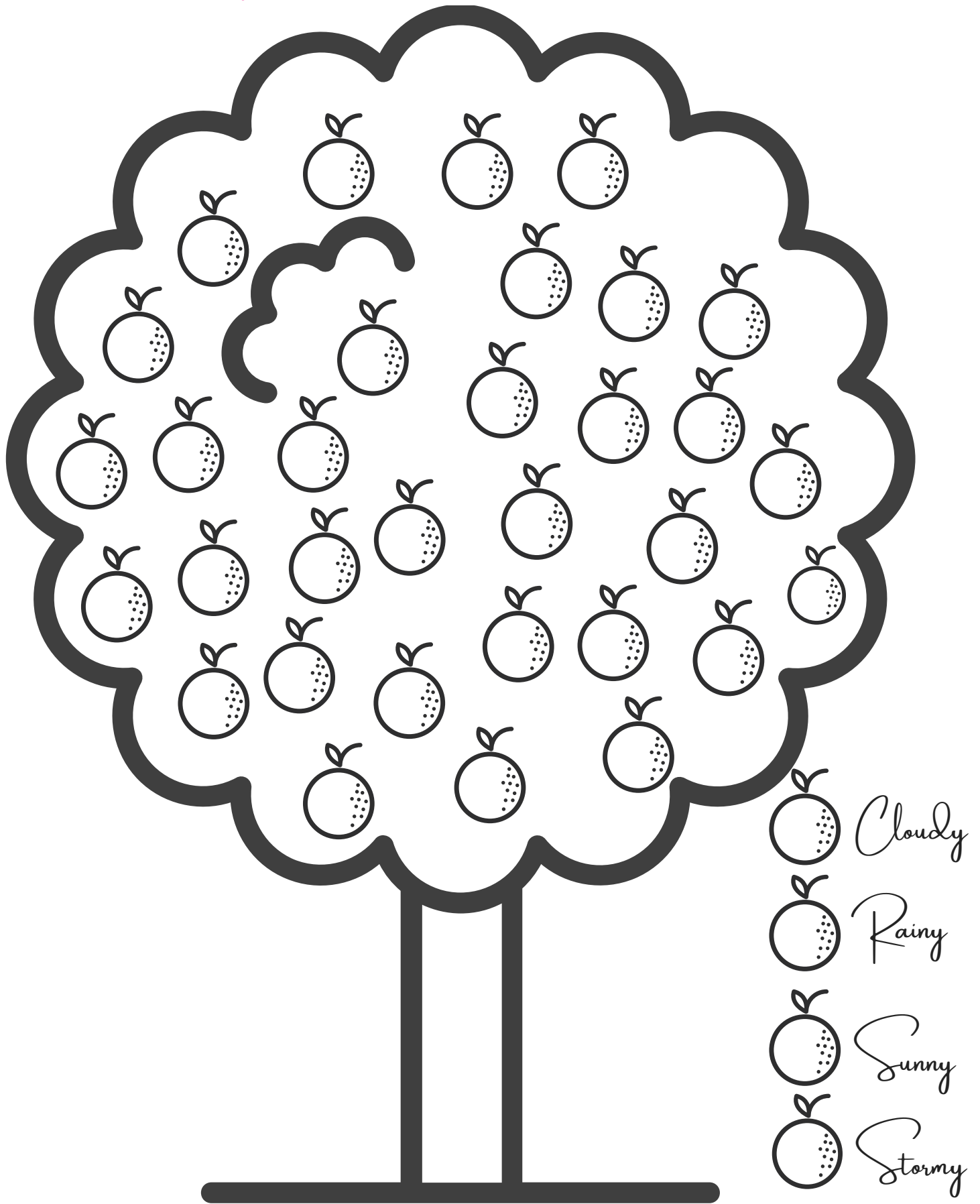
THURSDAY





FRIDAY

SATURDAY

			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	

# July Weather Tree



-  Cloudy
-  Rainy
-  Sunny
-  Stormy

# 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

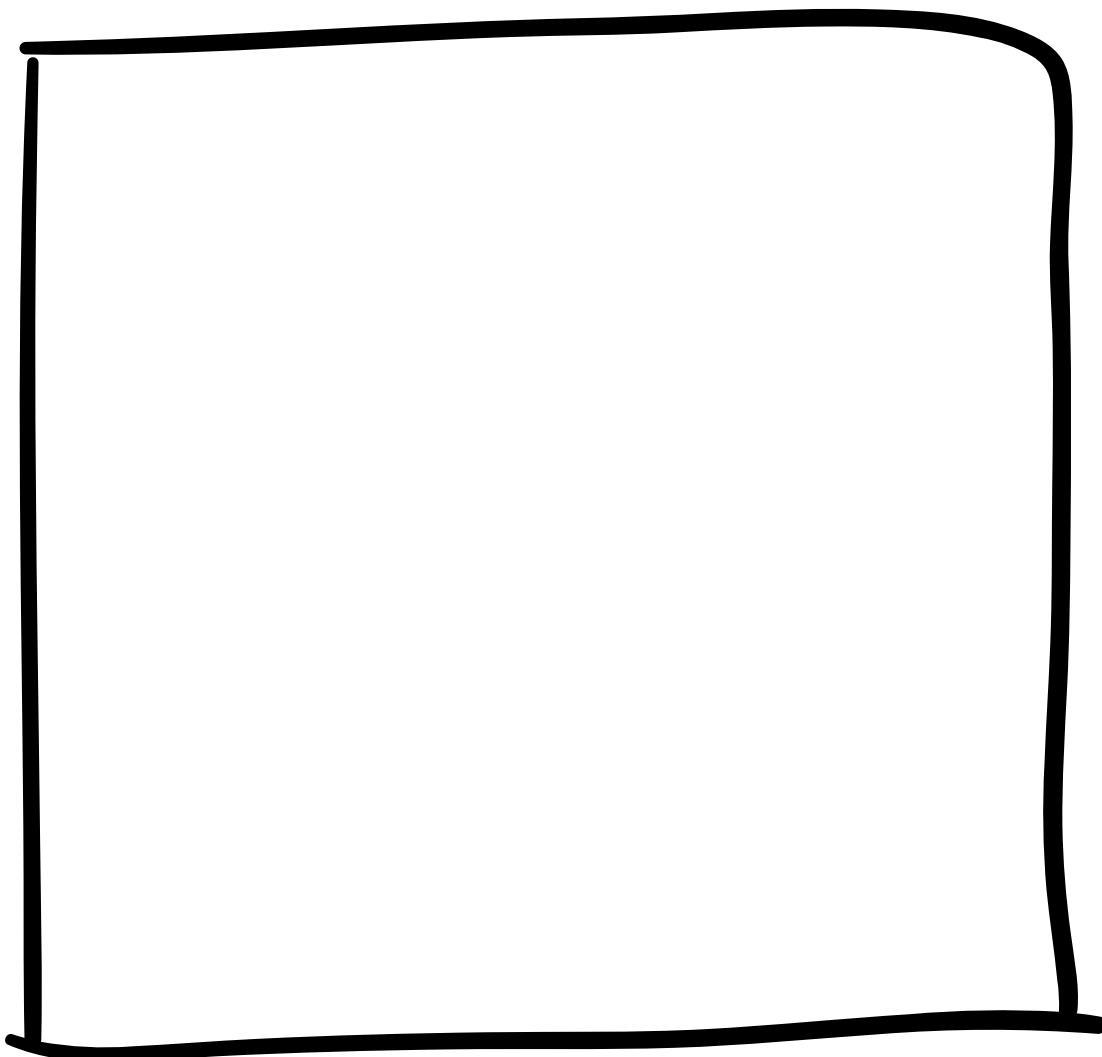
# Nature Study Close Up

I found: \_\_\_\_\_

Latin name: \_\_\_\_\_

Where found: \_\_\_\_\_

Date/Time of Day: \_\_\_\_\_



Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# 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:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

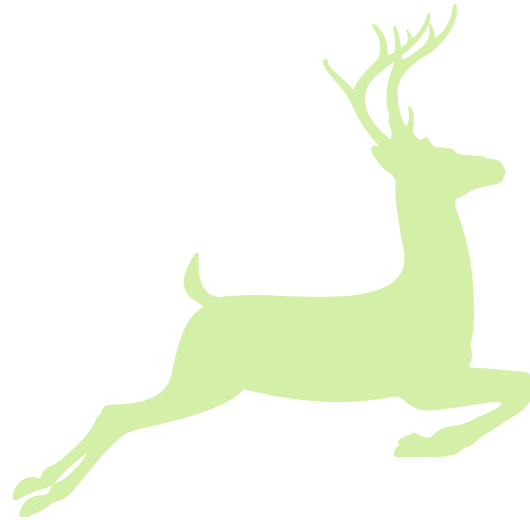
WARNINGS: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

MY RATING FOR THIS PLANT





Word search answers:

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