

NATURE JOURNALING

PHENOLOGY

Taking time to observe the natural world around us helps us slow down and connect to the space around us. Anyone can be a naturalist. A naturalist can be many things, but most importantly, they are enthusiastic and attuned to the natural world. Recording observations is a way to keep track of phenology. Phenology is the study of cyclic and seasonal natural events. This means observing and recording the changes that occur in nature. Phenology is important because it helps us see if plants or animals are thriving, surviving, or struggling in their environments. This in turn can help us gain knowledge about impacts to other parts of the ecosystem.

When recording observations, it is best to do so in an area that is familiar and visited frequently. This can be your yard, neighborhood, or a favorite local park. Be consistent and careful in your observations and recordings. For example, if you are measuring in centimeters, continue to do so for the remainder of your recordings.

Record your observations in a way that makes it easy to pull the information back out and make sense of it. Date and locations are great ways to keep track of the information that you are recording. If you are truly journaling with lots of detail, create a small section that highlights your observations. This will make it easier to go back and find information without

needing to read through pages of entries. Record your observations in a way that works best for you. This could be a notebook, a spreadsheet, or the calendar on your fridge. Included in this guide are pages that can be used to start your observations.

In this guide we will provide a topic for four of the days. On the final day, we encourage you to pick any aspects of nature that interest you. When you take time to observe nature, you can make a connection by being mindful, present, watchful, and respectful.

It is okay not to know the species of a plant or animal. There are plenty of great guides that can help. Those resources are listed below.

TERMS

Phenology - The study of cyclic and seasonal natural events, especially in relation to climate, plant, and animal life.

Naturalist - Someone who is enthusiastic and attuned to the natural world.

Ecosystem - A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

Spring Ephemerals - Plants that last for a very short time.

PHENOLOGY RESOURCES

CLICK ON THE LINKS BELOW
FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Nature Journaling](#)

[Plants](#)

[Phenology](#)

[Trees](#)

[iNaturalist](#)

[Birds](#)

[Insects](#)

NATURE JOURNALING

DAY 2

Insects

Warm weather means that insects are spreading their wings. The first insect of the season could be a moth, butterfly, or a queen bumblebee. If you stumble upon a bumblebee follow it for a while, notice what it does. Visit the sunny side of a building. Insects will be attracted to the warmth.

NATURE JOURNAL

DATE -

TEMPERATURE -

WEATHER -

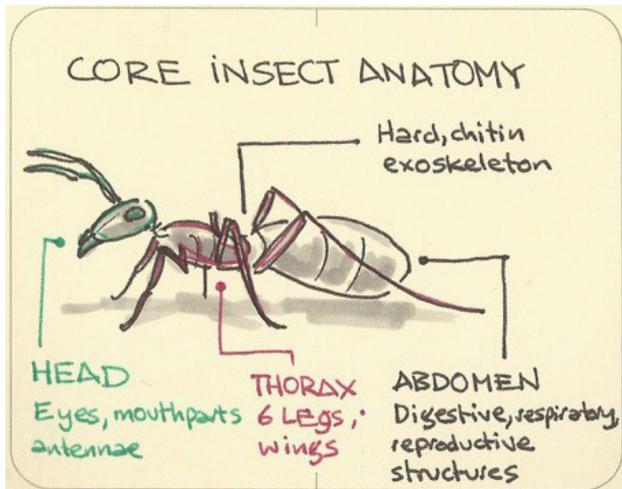
RECORD THESE INSECT OBSERVATIONS

What is it doing?

Where is it going?

How is it moving?

INSECT SKETCH



NATURE JOURNALING

DAY 3

Plants

Spring is a wonderful time to observe plant life. From leaf out to spring ephemerals there is plenty to observe.

NATURE JOURNAL

DATE -

TEMPERATURE -

WEATHER -

Record the following:

Observe the trees and shrubs in your space. Do they have buds? Do they have leaves? Pick one plant and describe what the leaves or buds look like.

Spring ephemerals are plants that bloom when there is the most sunlight available, before the trees leaf out. What is the first flower you've seen this spring?

PLANT SKETCH

How many shades of green are there? What is the deepest green and the lightest green?

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DAY 4

Birds

Birds can be found all over the state and the world. Birds can be a source of entertainment, a soundtrack to morning sunrises and an alert system to predators in the area. They are also a source of phenology. Many birds in Minnesota migrate to other parts of the world during the winter months and come back during spring and summer. Birds can also be a window into the greater workings of an ecosystem.

NATURE JOURNAL

DATE -

TEMPERATURE -

WEATHER -

Record the following:

While sitting at a window at home or on the front or back porch, count the number of birds you see in 5 minutes.

Observe one bird- what size is it? What color(s) is it? What is it doing?

How many different bird calls can you hear?

If there are no birds, what might be the cause?

What could the birds be eating at this time of year?



Visit [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](https://www.cornell.edu/ornithology/) to learn more about your birds.

Watch birds from other parts of the globe at <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/all-cams/>

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DAY 5

Naturalist's Choice

Today is the day, it's your turn to choose. You've got a great base for observations, now go use your tools! You pick what you want to observe and record. Pick something that you are interested in. Remember to be careful and consistent in your recordings. Ask "How" and "Why" questions. If your interest is gardening aim for a deeper understanding of the hornworms that plague the tomatoes or the slugs on the pumpkins. We learn more when we have authentic interactions with the world and can have more confidence in our knowledge when we know where it came from.

NATURE JOURNAL

DATE -

TEMPERATURE -

WEATHER -

SIGHTS AND SOUNDS -

NATURE SKETCH

NATURE JOURNALING

SUNCATCHER RAINDROPS CRAFT

Supplies

Crayons (blues)
Pencil/Crayon Sharpener
Wax Paper
Iron (adult use only)
White Paper
Scissors
Yarn(blue, white, or black & yellow for storm cloud)
Yarn Needle
Old Towel

Instructions

Roll out about 1.5ft of wax paper. Peel blue crayons and start sharpening. Let the shavings fall onto the paper or empty the sharpener container onto the wax paper. Spread out the shavings in a thin layer so they lightly cover the wax paper. The wax will melt when ironed so this does not need to be perfect and having space between the shavings will give room for the wax to spread and not leak out. Cover the shavings with another layer of wax paper. Turn your iron on low, it will not take very much heat. Place an old towel under the wax paper. Iron with a fast sweep motion. Do not hold the iron over one spot, the wax will melt fast. Let cool. Break time if you have wiggly kids.

Take your white paper, draw a cloud shape and cut out. Color if you would like a gray or storm cloud.



Cut out rain drop shapes in the wax paper, about 2in in size or different sizes.

Lay cloud on your towel. It is easier to poke the needle through with the soft firm surface behind. Thread yarn onto needle and poke through along the bottom of the cloud. Grab a rain drop and poke needle through the top of the drop and tie. Repeat along bottom of cloud until you have reached desired effect. Hang in your window!

Get Creative

To make a storm cloud use black yarn and add small pieces or yellow yarn to look like lightening.

Add other wax colors and cut out different shapes to decorate your windows.



To read these books and more search under the
Anoka County Library E-library page.

No library card needed!

<https://www.anokacounty.us/2599/eLibrary>



SEARCH FOR: SPRING



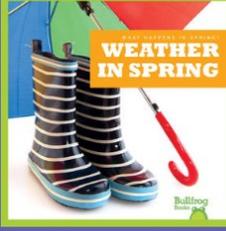
BIRDS IN SPRING

Birds in Spring
What Happens in Spring?, Bullfrog Books

Jenny Fretland VanVoorst (Author),
Ellen Huber (Designer), Michelle
Sonnek (Designer)

Minnesota Made

BOOK



WEATHER IN SPRING

Weather in Spring
What Happens in Spring?, Bullfrog Books

Jenny Fretland VanVoorst (Author),
Ellen Huber (Designer), Lindaanne
Donohoe (Designer)

Minnesota Made

BOOK



I see Spring

I See Spring
Charles Ghigna (Author), Jatkowska
Ag (Illustrator)

Minnesota Made

BOOK



Animals in Spring

Animals in Spring
Kathryn Clay (Author)

Minnesota Made

BOOK



SPRING

Spring
Watching the Seasons, Bullfrog Books

Emily C. Dawson (Author), Rebecca
Glaser (Editor), Ellen Huber
(Designer)

Minnesota Made

BOOK



WHAT DO PEOPLE DO IN SPRING?

What Do People Do in Spring?
Jenna Lee Gleisner (Author)

Minnesota Made

BOOK

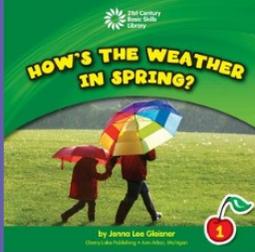


HAIL to Spring!

Hail to Spring!
Laura Watson (Illustrator), Charles
Ghigna (Author)

Minnesota Made

BOOK



HOW'S THE WEATHER IN SPRING?

How's the Weather in Spring?
Jenna Lee Gleisner (Author)

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