



Nature Study

Each Friday morning, you will go through two of our nature cards. They are labeled in the upper right corner with the corresponding week. These are short, factual cards with images to help your child become familiar with objects in the natural world.

As you progress through our sessions, you may find it handy to keep your past nature cards in a binder for easy reference when your children come across a familiar object. These seeds you are planting will grow into a wonderful garden of knowledge for your children in years to come.

As you explore nature outside your home, watch and listen for newly discovered delights. Most of all, remember...

"Point to some lovely flower or gracious tree, not only as a beautiful work, but as a beautiful thought of God."

~ Charlotte Mason

Nature Study

1

Rose

Rosa

- Our modern garden roses originated in China in the 18th century.
- The Old Blush group remains the most similar to their 18th-century ancestors.
- What is traditionally known as “thorns” along the stem of a rose are actually called “prickles” because they grow out of the outermost layer of the stem rather than from within the deep inner part of the stem like typical thorns do.
- Some roses have a fruit called a rosehip that looks similar to a berry.
- The rose hips of certain species can be incredibly rich in Vitamin C and are often used in medicinal teas.



1

Violet

Viola

- Violet petals can be purple, blue, or white, and they typically flower throughout the spring and summer.
- Many violets have heart-shaped leaves.
- Violet species are found in many different areas, such as prairies, bogs, woods, and mountains.
- The leaves of the plant are edible when they are young, both in raw and cooked form. In fact, one type of violet, ‘Rebecca,’ is even said to have both a vanilla scent and flavor to its leaves and flowers.
- Many moths and butterflies rely on violets as food for their larvae.



2

Geraniums

Geranium

- The flowers of geraniums are usually five-petaled and come in many different shades, such as white, purple, pink, blue, and a deep magenta.
- Geraniums are considered “winter hardy,” meaning they can typically withstand cold temperatures and last throughout the winter.
- The name “Geranium” comes from a Greek word meaning ‘crane.’ This name is due to the fact that the fruits of some types of geraniums look similar to a crane’s head and bill.
- There is another species of plant that is also commonly referred to as “geraniums.” Their official name is “pelargoniums,” and because they are well-known due to being planted in many gardens, people frequently confuse the two.



2

Buttercup

Ranunculus

- Buttercup petals are often naturally reflective and create a flash that helps to attract pollinators such as bees and butterflies.
- The name “buttercup” is thought to have come from an old wives’ tale that buttercups gave butter its yellow coloring after they were eaten by cows. This is untrue because cows do not eat buttercups since they are poisonous to them.
- The Latin name for this species, *Ranunculus*, means “little frog,” and is likely named that because buttercups are often found close to water like frogs.
- Buttercups are sometimes used in traditional medicine to treat fever or inflammation.



3

Cypress Tree *Cupressus*

- Cypresses are part of a family of plants called conifers, which means that they have seeds that grow within a cone.



- Cypress trees often get up to 80 feet tall. They grow in either pyramid or cone-like shapes.
- Cypresses are evergreen, meaning they last throughout the year rather than losing their color or needles.
- Cypress wood is rot and pest-resistant.
- Cypresses were important in Greek and Roman mythology and were believed to be symbols of some of their gods, like Apollo and Artemis in Greek mythology and Helios and Diana in Roman mythology.

3

Pine Tree *Pinus*

- The pine family began in the Jurassic Period.



- Pines are often used for Christmas trees.
- New shoots of pine tree branches are sometimes called "candles" because their conical shape resembles a candle.
- Pines can live a very long time- most reach anywhere from 100-1,000 years old.
- One pine tree named "Methuselah" is one of the oldest living organisms in the world and is said to be around 4,800 years old!
- The seeds of pinecones are frequently eaten by various types of birds, and the needles serve as food to many different moths.

4

Almond Tree *Prunus*

- Almond flowers can be white or light pink and they appear throughout the tree in early spring.



- The almond tree's fruit matures in the fall, about 7-8 months after the tree flowers.
- Mature almond trees can grow almonds for up to 25 years.
- Many almond trees need pollen from a mixture of different types of almond trees in order to produce fruit. Because of this, almond orchards plant many different kinds of almond trees, and they often keep beehives in their orchards so the bees can pollinate the trees.

4

Mulberry Tree *Morus*

- After being planted from seed, it can take Mulberry trees about ten years to start growing fruit.



- Black mulberry was planted and grown by both Greeks and Romans in ancient times for its edible fruit, for silkworms to feed on, and for its medicinal qualities.
- During the Middle Ages in Greece, the area that is known today as the Peloponnese region was once called "Morea," which was named after their word for the mulberry tree.
- Black mulberry was transported to 17th-century Britain in an attempt to help cultivate silkworms.
- Mulberries were often used for many things in folk medicine, such as to treat ringworm, fatigue, and dizziness.

5

Basil *Ocimum*

- Basil was originally a native plant of India, Africa, and Southeast Asia, but it has been spread throughout the world, and many different cultures grow it to use in food.
- Basil's name comes from a combination of Latin and Greek words that mean "royal/kingly plant." This is thought to be because the herb may have been used in making royal perfumes in the past.
- Basil was considered a symbol of love in Ancient Rome.
- Basil has been used for medicine since ancient times. In Greece, it was sometimes used to remedy headaches and toothaches. Today, it is still commonly used in folk medicine for stomach aches.



5

Coriander *Coriandrum*

- Coriander has been grown in Greece since ancient times. It had many uses, from perfume to flavoring for food.
- Both the leaves and the seeds are edible. The seeds were used as a spice and the leaves as an herb to flavor different dishes in ancient Greece; in modern times, we still use these flavors in cooking today!
- Coriander is described as having a fresh, tangy, grassy taste to most people; however, some people who are born with a certain gene can only taste a soapy flavor when they try it!
- Coriander is also commonly known by a different name: cilantro.



6

Thyme *Thymus*

- Thyme has antiseptic properties and in the past was used to medicate bandages. Today, oil from thyme is used in many mouthwashes, such as Listerine.
- Thyme is native to the Mediterranean, particularly in the Levant, where it may have first been grown.
- Thyme was used in ancient Greece in baths and also as incense because they believed it brought courage. Similarly, during the Middle Ages in Europe, gifts containing thyme leaves were often given to knights and warriors to bring them courage.
- Ancient Rome was likely responsible for the spread of thyme throughout Europe. They used it to give flavor to different foods like cheese, as well as to purify rooms.



6

Rosemary *Salvia*

- The rosemary plant is often used in foods, and can be used to season meats, vegetables, and pastas, and even to make teas!
- Rosemary was first mentioned on stone tablets that are believed to date back to 5000 B.C.
- Rosemary has been used in folk medicine since ancient times and was special to the ancient Greeks, Egyptians, and Romans. It was used as a remedy for many things, such as snakebites, fatigue, and heart trouble.
- Rosemary oil is known for its fragrant scent, and it is often used in everything from perfumes to shampoos and cleaning products.
- One of the first perfumes in 14th century Europe, Hungary water, was made using rosemary.

