



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.

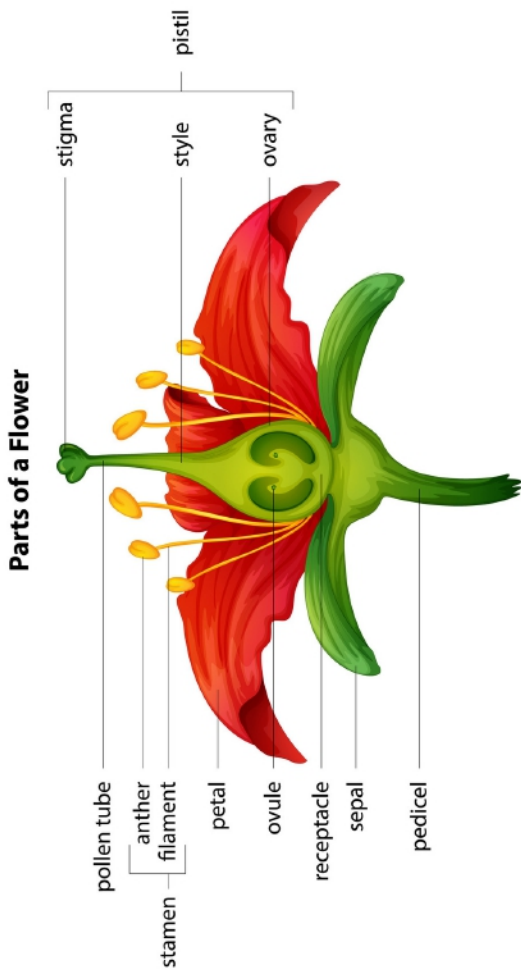
As you progress through our sessions, you may find it handy to keep your past nature cards in a binder for easy reference when your children come across a familiar object. These seeds you are planting will grow into a wonderful garden of knowledge for your children in years to come.

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



Lily of the Valley *Convallaria majalis*



- Lily of the Valley is an herbaceous perennial from the asparagus family.
- This plant is native to Europe and Asia but is found across the Northern Hemisphere in woodlands and high altitudes.

- Lily of the Valley prefers partial to fully shaded locations.
- It is highly poisonous, containing 38 different cardiac glycosides that can cause illness and death.
- Red berries are the Lily of the Valley's fruit.
- Lily of the Valley reproduce mainly through rhizomes.



Bouncing Bet 2 *Saponaria of icinalis*

- Bouncing Bet has several common names, including soapwort, crow soap, soapweed, and wild Sweet William.
- Like some names imply, this plant can be used to make a mild soap.

- The Bouncing Bet plant is native to Asia, Europe, and Siberia but can be found along hedgerows and roadways in North America.
- These flowers produce a stronger perfume at night.
- This plant can be toxic and cause illness.
- Bouncing Bet is from the carnation plant family.
- This flower is the subject of "A Very Wild Flower," one of the poetry selections for this curriculum.

Buttercup 2 *Ranunculus acris*



- The common tall buttercup is from the Ranunculaceae family of flowering plants.
- The line "Cuckow buds of yellow hue" from Shakespeare's poem "Spring" refers to buttercups.

- Buttercups are used in Tibetan medicine, where they are considered to have an acrid taste and a heating potency. The heat is believed to reduce arthritic pain, dissolve tumors, and draw out fluid.
- Buttercup is a very toxic and acrid plant when used fresh.
- Buttercups in many varieties are found all around the world.
- The genus name *Ranunculus* means "little frog."



Common Milkweed 3

Asclepias syriaca

- Milkweed reproduces through rhizomes, also called creeping rootstalks.
- Milkweed is the only host plant for the Monarch butterfly's food and larvae.
- Milkweed is a perennial herb.

- Milkweed can grow up to 5 feet tall and usually has a single stem.
- Milkweed blooms from early to late summer in bright colors that attract bees and butterflies.
- Milkweed produces white latex when the stem is broken open.
- The seeds of this plant are long with white hairs and grow in clusters called follicles.
- Milkweed was one of the earliest identified North American plant species in Cornut's 1635 publication, *Canadensium Plantarum Historia*.

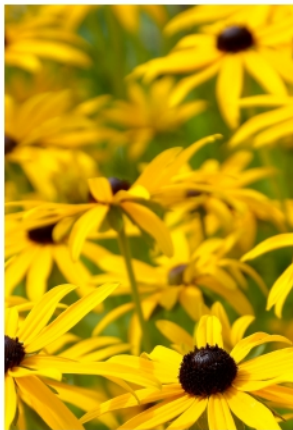


Blue Columbine 3

Aquilegia coerulea

- Blue Columbine is an herbaceous perennial found at elevations of 6,900 to 12,100 feet.
- Blue Columbine comes in multiple colors: blue, white, red, yellow, and pink.

- Blue Columbine is in the Ranunculaceae family.
- The nectar of the Blue Columbine is only reachable by hawkmoths.
- Blue Columbine is the state flower of Colorado.
- There are 5 varieties of *Aquilegia coerulea*.
- The common name "Columbine" comes from the Latin word for "dove" due to the resemblance of the inverted flower to five doves with their heads clustered together.
- Columbine propagates by seeds.



Black-eyed Susan 4

Rudbeckia hirta

- The Black-eyed Susan is a member of the Sunflower family.
- The Black-eyed Susan is the state flower of Maryland.

- The roots of the plant contain similar immune-boosting properties to echinacea.
- The Black-eyed Susan is native to North America's east and central areas but has been naturalized to the west coast as well as to China.
- Different cultivars can be annuals, perennials, or biennials.
- Black-eyed Susans are considered a symbol of justice.
- Native Americans used Black-eyed Susans as medicinal herbs for several ailments and made poultices for snake bites from the plant.



Johnny Jump-Up 4

Viola tricolor

- Native to Europe, the *Viola tricolor* was introduced to the United States and spread.
- The plant has been used to treat eczema, acne, and epilepsy.

- This plant is known as wild pansy, love-in-idleness, heartsease, three faces in a hood, and other names.
- This plant has many medicinal uses, including as an expectorant and as an aid for respiratory illnesses, such as asthma and bronchitis.
- Johnny Jump-ups propagate through rhizomes and are self-fertile.
- In the language of flowers, these *Viola Tricolors* (also known as pansies) represent thought, and a line spoken by Ophelia in *Hamlet* references them by saying, "There's pansies, that's for thoughts."