

# Nature Journaling Basics

(AKA: get out there and scribble in a notebook)




- ⊛ **Age range:** all ages
- ⊛ **Time:** 15+ minutes
- ⊛ **Materials:** journal/ notebook & pencil (optional: coloring materials, magnifying glass, etc.)
- ⊛ **Location:** outdoor or indoor area with physical, visual, or auditory access to natural objects

Nature journals are simple way to relax and connect with nature.

They're also an excuse to get away from screens, break out your colored pencils or watercolors, and soak up some sunshine.

Nature journals are for people of all ages & artistic abilities.

They're also for people of all levels of outdoor experience; you don't need to know lots of facts to explore what's around you. Just grab your supplies, find a piece of the natural world—whether that's in your backyard, along a trail, or in your kitchen (hello fruit flies! )—and fill up the page in whatever way you're inspired.

## What do journal entries usually look like?

There's no wrong way to keep a nature journal, but most often, nature journals are a place where people record and reflect on things they experience in nature. Try using all of your senses (be careful with taste!), and write or draw what you experience and what you wonder.

Drawings don't need to be perfect. Just scribble away!

Write or draw what you notice and experience.

Spruce things up by adding some color!

Record the date, time, location, and weather.

"Why are there little hairs on the underside of this leaf?"

Dot down questions you come up with and things you wonder about.

*Journal entries on the notebook page:*

- sleeping heron! up in a snag. Storked to stir at the crow's call.
- lots of tail flicking.
- one syllable "tweet"
- brown
- I didn't notice any perceived danger... so blackberry maybe it's me?
- nothing wasp (about 5) + landing on himalayan blackberry leaves. Are they looking to nest in the ground?
- so tiny, in the willow more of a chitter than a tweet, tail flicking
- variable wind > 5mph very light drizzle
- bird sounds: - kildeer? (sand piper?) - crow - chickadees
- pellia lichen?
- pond-ly?
- noting ~~honey~~ bees skill flying low to the ground

# Some of our favorite ideas and prompts:

## Try a Sit Spot

Choose a spot you can return to often. Get comfortable. Sit as still and quietly as possible. What is going on around you? As you return time after time, what is changing? Do you notice patterns?

## Try something silly



Record the number of squirrels that show interest in your bird feeder and record their creative attempts to access it.

## Try one thing at a time

Overwhelmed? There's a lot out there to notice! To simplify things, choose and explore one aspect/object of the natural world per entry.

Try checking out:



one leaf on a tree,



bird sounds,  
a cluster of ferns, the weather,



insects in a patch of grass,  
a wildflower, or the flow or  
inhabitants of some nearby water.



## Try different ways of recording

There's no wrong way to fill up your journal. Record observations, write short stories, record your questions, create poetry, draw, create maps, trace objects. Get creative!

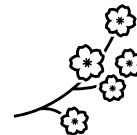


## Try The Three Questions

In examining an object or scene, ask yourself,  
"What do I notice?"  
"What do I wonder?"  
"What does it remind me of?"

## Try to ID something

Grab your supplies and wander until something catches your eye. Sketch it, describe it, or let it inspire a poem.



Not sure what it is? Try out a guidebook or website like Go Botany ([gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org](http://gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org)), or skip that and give it a creative name yourself.

## Try a schedule

Decide how often you want to journal—every day? once or twice a week?—and set a reminder on your phone or calendar for a convenient time of day.

