

How to Create a Nature Journal

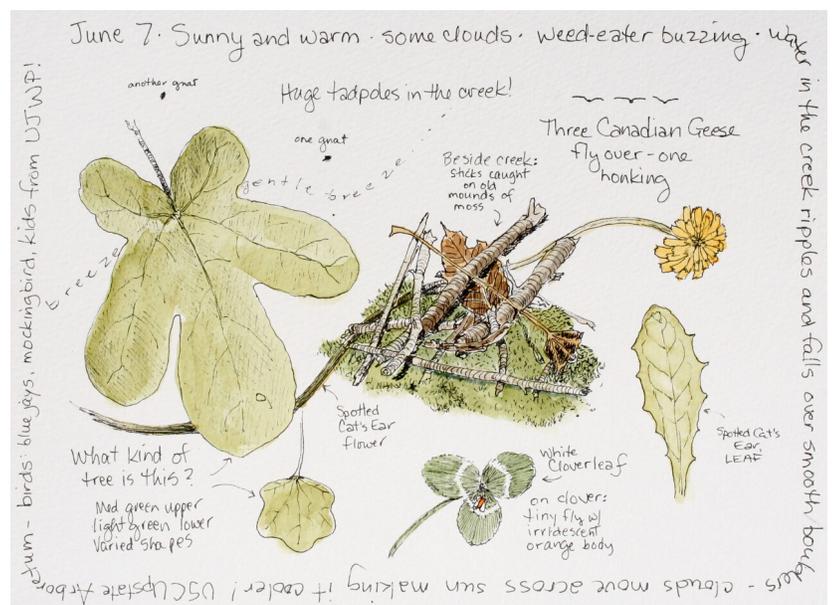
Nature journaling is a creative method for recording observations in the natural world. Some of the most well-known scientists, naturalists, and explorers from the past kept nature or field journals including Charles Darwin, Rachel Carson, John Muir, and Lewis & Clark.

To get started, all you need is some paper and a pencil and to head outside with an open mind.

To help, try starting with your eyes closed. What do you hear, smell, or feel? Record your observations using as much detail as possible. One observation to record may be of something very small, like an insect. Try to draw it and describe what it is doing. Does it make a sound? Is it eating something? Is there more than one?

Plants are great to include in your nature journal, because they will sit still long enough to sketch. Not feeling confident about your artistic abilities? Try making a rubbing of a leaf or use it to make an outline. Try capturing a zoomed in view, with a magnifying glass if you have one, but also zoom out and illustrate a landscape view of what's around you.

If your kids are having a hard time getting started with writing, challenge them to find two different things and compare them. Or, have them start with the prompts “I notice” or “I wonder”.



Credit: Middlewood Journal

There are many benefits to keeping a field or nature journal. Improved observation skills, a deeper understanding of science and the natural world, and a time for quiet reflection are just a few of the positive takeaways.

If you are interested in identifying the plants and animals in your yard, check out our previous post about useful apps like iNaturalist and Seek.

Want to learn more about nature journaling? Visit johnmuirlaws.com/journaling-curriculum to find a free download of the book *How to Teach Nature Journaling*.