

Create a Nature Journal

Keeping a nature journal can be fun and relaxing for everyone. It provides a way to remember what you have observed and record things you are curious about. There is no wrong way to create a journal so you can be creative with how you proceed. Below are some ideas to get you started.

Supplies

All you really need is an empty notebook and something to write with like a pencil. If you want to get more creative you can use the following items or anything else you think of:

- Colored pencils or crayons
- Ruler
- Magnifying glass
- Binoculars
- Camera
- A bag to help you carry everything



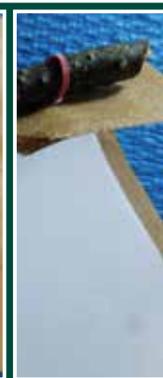
Making your Notebook



1 Find some paper. You can use notebook filler paper that already has holes along the side, or you can use copy paper and a hole punch to make your own holes.



2 You can use a piece of colored paper to make your cover. A paper grocery bag works well, too. To use a paper bag (work on the side that doesn't have any printing), measure the size you need based on the size paper you are using and cut it to the size you need. Decorate your cover however you like.



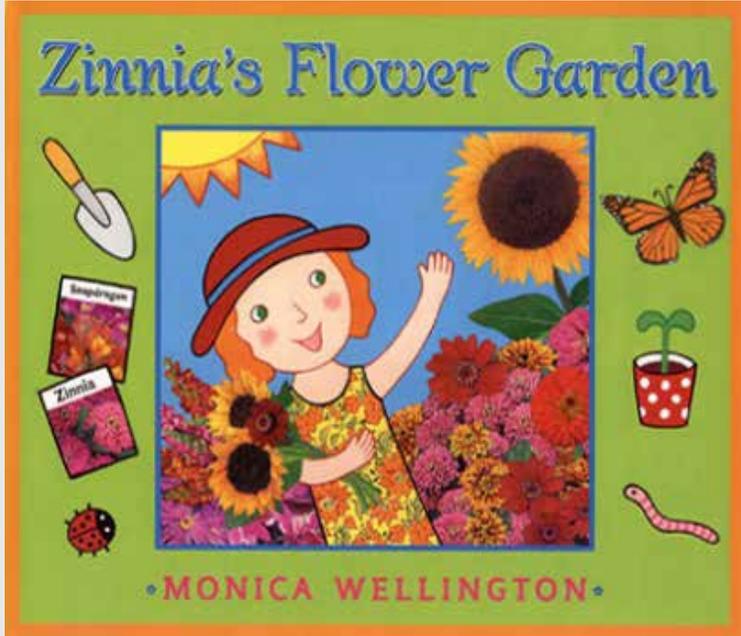
3 Connect your cover to your paper by stapling the pieces together or use a hole punch make holes along one side and then tie it together with string/ribbon. Make a more natural binding by finding a stick the length of your journal and laying it on top along the holes you punched. From the back thread a rubber band through the top hole and loop it around the stick. Do the same for the bottom. This will keep your cover attached to the rest of your pages.

Record your Observations

- Be creative!
- Sketch what you observe to help you remember what you see. Some people include photos instead.
- Jot down some notes: What color was it? Where did you see it? How did it move? What time of day is it? What is the weather like?
- Take measurements.
- You can also include a tracing or a rubbing of leaves or bark

Remember you are observing nature so it is important to respect nature and leave nature where it is. Only collect items (leaves, twigs, bark) if they are dead, down and detached!





Connect to a Children's Book

In the story *Zinnia's Flower Garden* by Monica Wellington, Zinnia plants a garden. Notice the illustrations in the book, pictures of the journal she wrote to help keep track of how her garden was growing are included. What tools did she use to create her journal? Did she include any of her feelings about how her garden was growing?

Use a Writing Prompt

For children:

- Observe birds (perhaps at a feeder). Describe or draw them for later identification. Describe the type of seeds they ate.
- Pick a tree and observe it. If it could talk, what questions would you ask it?
- Describe your feelings when you are out in nature.
- Find a quiet spot, listen carefully to nature, what do you hear?
- If you met a garden fairy and they granted you one wish, what would it be?
- Find a sign of spring and write about it (new leaves, a flower, an insect you see).
- Write down a poem inspired by nature (either one you write or copy a favorite one you have read).

For adults and teens:

- What was your favorite experience with nature? How did this shape your understanding of nature?
- Write about a nature hike you were on (or would like to go on). Who was with you? What was special about it?
- Observe a tree (or a plant or river). If it could talk, what questions would you ask it? How do you think they perceive humans?
- Find a sign of spring and using descriptive words write about it (new leaves, a flower, an insect you see).
- Would you prefer to visit a forest or the ocean? Why?
- Take five minutes and write down every word you can think of to describe the nature around you.