

Benefits of Nature Journaling:

- Improves mental health, reduces stress, anxiety and depression
- Sharpens memory, literally by rewiring your brain
- Improves physical health, increasing vitality
- Sharpens observational and communication skills by opening up all your senses
- Develops mindfulness and gratitude by focusing on the present; Stop and smell the roses
- Improves analytical, drawing, photography, writing, and other art skills



Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts. There is something infinitely healing in the repeated refrains of nature -- the assurance that dawn comes after night, and spring after winter.

— Rachel Carson



References

johnmuirlaws.com/this-is-your-brain-on-nature-journals

keepnaturewild.com/blogs/journal/nature-journaling-101

www.rei.com/blog/hike/your-guide-for-journaling-in-nature

sierraclub.org/pennsylvania/blog/2020/05/how-start-nature-journal

www.lilyandthistle.com/how-to-start-a-nature-journal-today

All photos and drawings by Kathy Boys

Nature Journaling

Into the forest I go, to lose my mind and find my soul
- John Muir

If you wish to know divine, feel the wind on your face and the warm sun on your hand
- Buddha



Types and Tools

Digital:

- Use a camera/computer to create a blog to share, or simply keep a personal file
- Use iNaturalist to record your photos, notes, and sounds

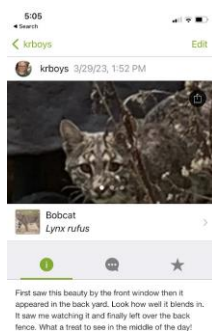
Paper :

- A notebook, bound or loose leaf, or an art book with special paper (many types)
- Consider: size, waterproofing, portability
- Basic tools: Colored pencils, pens, sketching pencils, erasers, water colors, glue to stick in photos, small ruler for measuring, camera, nature field guides

Collage Art:

- Use multimedia tools to create a collage of your drawings, observations, photos, collected natural items (wood, stone, pressed flowers)

iNaturalist



Collage



Paper Journal



Paper Journal



Challenge Yourself:

- **Look for things you don't normally seek. Push yourself out of your comfort zone.**
- **Consider gathering friends to go observe nature with you**
- **Seek out nature guided walks**
- **Try adventuring to new natural areas**
- **Don't let the weather deter you, just be prepared!**



Advice and Rules:

- **Do your best to not disturb your natural surroundings. Leave no trace that you have been there.**
- **Be prepared. Consider weather, sunscreen, insect repellent, rain gear, water bottle, footwear**
- **Do not trespass**
- **Be aware of dangers like poison ivy and venomous snakes**
- **You may collect flowers or leaves to press, but not feathers nor bird nest parts (Migratory Bird Act)**
- **Have fun and enjoy your nature journaling experience!**

Things to Consider:

- There is no right or wrong!
- Note location, date, time, weather
- Where appropriate, observe with as many of your senses as possible: sight (include tiny details / different perspectives), sound, touch, taste, smell
- Label parts/details of the plant, animals, etc. that you see/draw/photograph
- Document the whole (a landscape) and all of its parts
- Record seasonal lists e.g., migrating birds or spring flowers
- Look for signs of animals: tracks, nests, beaver cuttings, holes
- Look up! The sky is amazing!
- Plants stay still long enough to sketch but animals don't, so sketch from photos



Incorporate Other Arts:

- Write a song, story or Haiku
- Describe your thoughts/feelings about the resource
- Delve deeper / analyze & research. What does your resource need to survive? Jot notes next to your observation.