

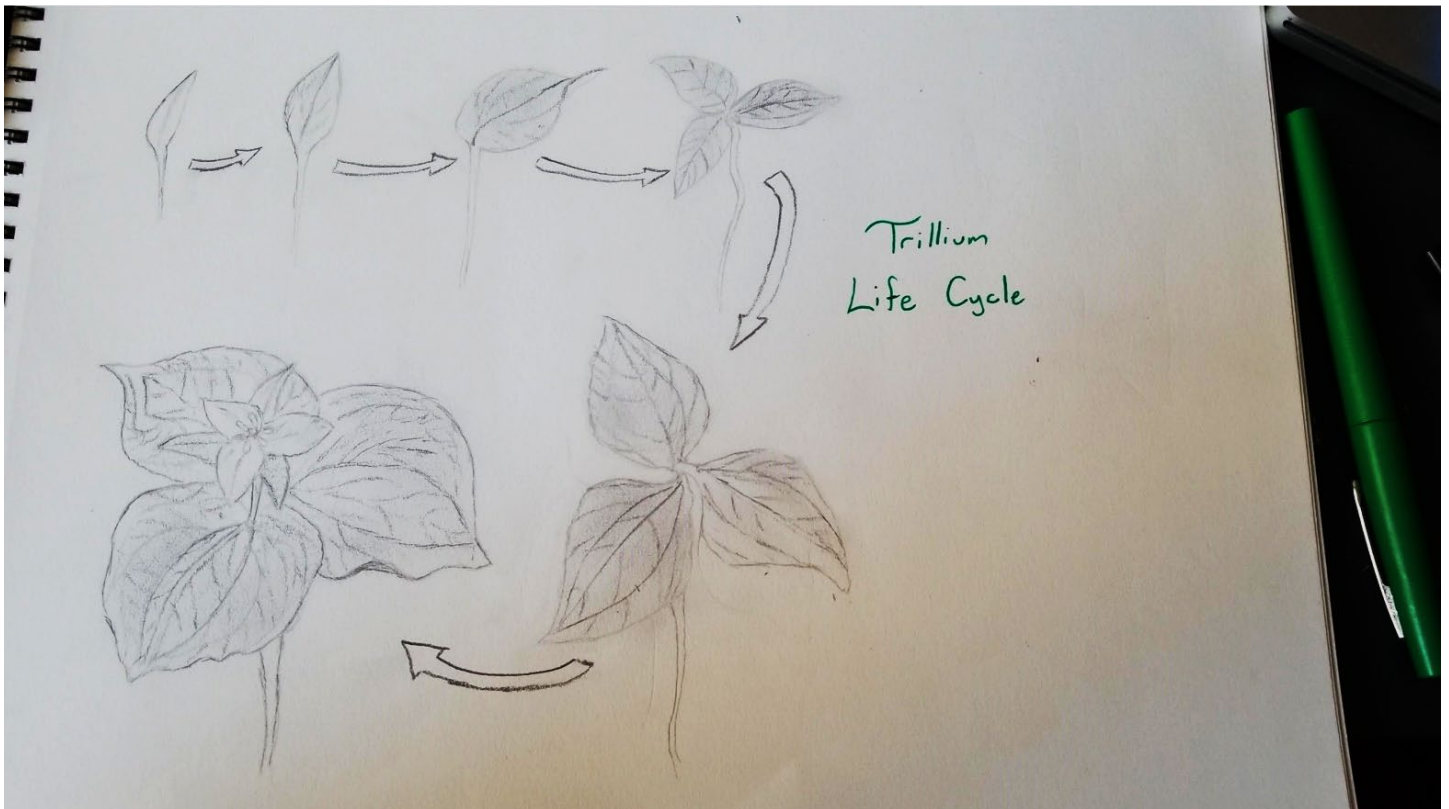
# Nature Journaling

*"The most exciting phrase to hear in science,  
the only one that heralds new discoveries,  
is not 'Eureka' but 'That's funny...'"*

*-Isaac Asimov*

We only process a fraction of the data from our five senses, and we remember even less. Developing strong observation skills is the foundation of field research as well as an inquisitive mind.

Nature journaling provides a means to document and discover nuances in our everyday experiences.



An Example Sketch by Conservancy employee Stephen Lin

Additional Resources:

<https://johnmuirlaws.com/journaling-curriculum/>

# Nature Journaling

## BASIC: String Circle

How much life do you think you could find in one square foot? The beauty and biodiversity of the outdoors can often be overwhelming. This simple exercise allows us to focus our attention on the flora and fauna we most often overlook.

You will need:

- Nature journal
- Drawing/writing utensil
- Four feet of string

1. Tie the string into a circle
2. Place your circle somewhere in the park that you find interesting
3. Really explore your circle. Take a stick and poke around.
4. Use all of the tools you were born with. (Hint: You have five of them!)
5. Record your observations! There are a number of ways to do this:
  - a. Sketch what you see
  - b. Keep a tally of all the plants and insects you find
  - c. Record the number of colors you observe

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## INTERMEDIATE: Plant Timeline

Have you ever watched a flower bloom? It is amazing how much a flower can change over time. In this exercise, you will choose a plant, observe and record how it changes over the period of days, weeks, or months.

You will need:

- Nature journal
- Drawing/writing utensil
- A twist tie

1. Choose a plant you want to follow and tie your twist tie so that you can find it later.
2. Sketch the plant and measure the length of the stem and growth between the leaves.
3. Make a new sketch for each new observation and label your sketch with any changes in growth.
4. You can also record the growth in a graph with time on the x-axis and length on the y-axis.
5. Take notes of when any changes occur and what might have caused these changes.

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## ADVANCED: Tell a Story

Have you ever seen something amazing in nature, but lacked the tools to describe it? Fear not, for we have all been there. This exercise will teach you how to record an event and share it with your friends.

You will need:

- Nature journal
- Drawing/writing utensil

1. When you see something interesting, avoid the temptation to pull out your wildlife guide because you never know what you might miss! Instead, focus on describing what you are seeing.
2. If you have your journal out, instead of drawing what you see, try to take notes on the sequence of events as well as any significant details. This will allow you to remember what you saw long enough to record it in your journal.
3. Sketch what you saw. Do not worry about the intricacy of your sketches, but instead focus on telling the story.
4. You can use arrows to show the flow of events and add thought bubbles to record your own experiences and questions.
5. Once you have completed your story, review your notes and add any details you may have forgotten about.



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Use these pages for your journaling, and feel free to share your results!



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