

Signs of Spring Worksheet

Directions: In order to complete this worksheet, you will need to spend some time outdoors.

1. Find a tree in your backyard or at a local park. Look at its branches. Is your tree a deciduous or coniferous tree? How can you tell? What other types of trees do you have in your yard or neighborhood?
2. Now that we have identified what type of trees we see, look closer at some of the lower branches. You may see some buds on both the deciduous and the coniferous trees. What do you think those are and what is their purpose?
3. Below are some pictures of acorns, samaras (“helicopters”), and pinecones. Do you know what these are in relation to the trees? What do they have in common? Can you find some of these in your backyard?



4. Now that we've looked at trees, find another plant in your yard and examine it with all of your senses (except taste – unless an adult tells you it's safe). What does it look like? What does it smell like? What does it feel like? Does it make any noise when you move it? Observe this plant closely for at least 1 minute and write down all of your observations (things that you notice). A great place to keep all of these observations is in a nature journal!

- Find another plant and repeat number 4. Then, compare and contrast the two plants. How are they different? How are they the same? Try to think of at least 4 differences and 4 similarities between the plants.
- One way that scientists learn about nature is by taking data (information) and comparing that data over time. Challenge yourself to be a plant scientist, or botanist, by choosing a plant in your yard and filling in the data chart below over the next few weeks. Feel free to make several charts for several plants! You will want to come up with an identifier for your plant. This can be the species name (if you know it), or a descriptive name that you make up yourself. You will also want to measure the height of the plant, write down any observations you have (be specific), and draw and/or take a picture of your plant.

Plant Identifier:

Date	Height of plant	Observations	Picture

- After some time has passed, look at your data and think about how your plant has changed. How much did it grow? Was the growth steady over time? Can you come up with your own plant study? First, think of a question you can answer by observing your plant, then think of a hypothesis (educated guess) and come up with a plan for collecting data. Once you have your plan, put that plan to work!