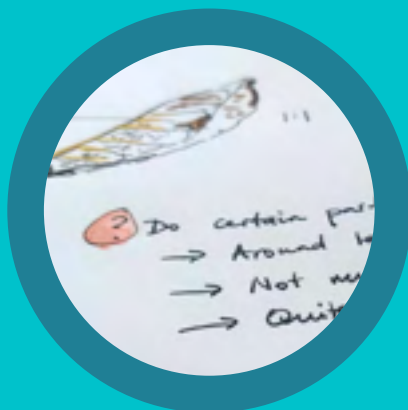




NATURE JOURNALING

QUICK GUIDE



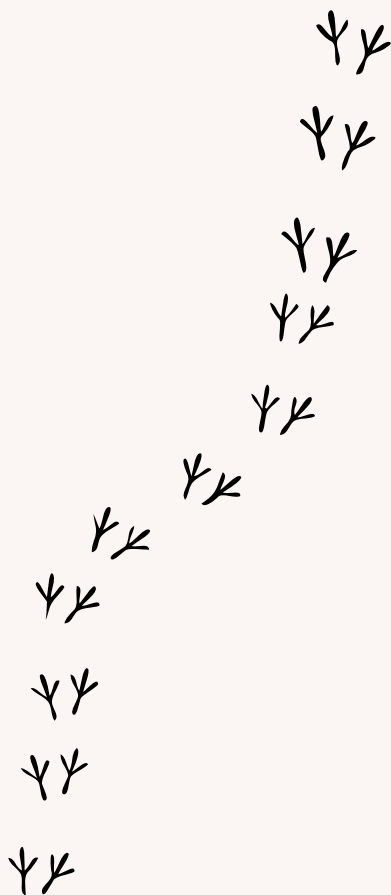
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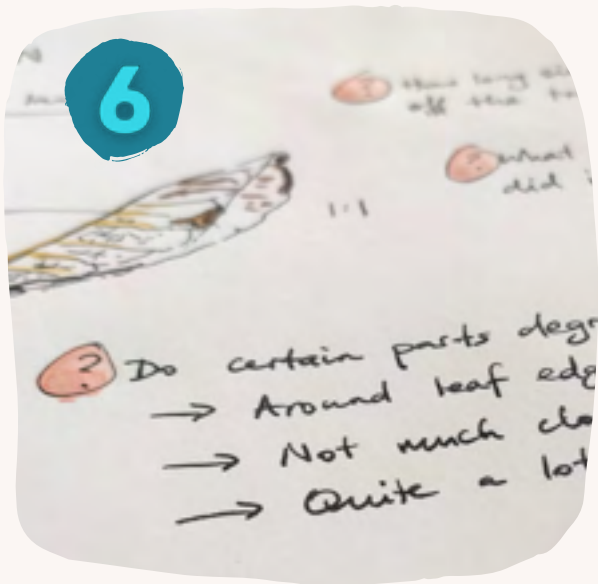
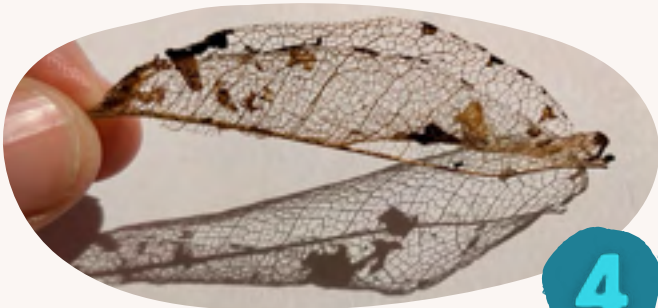
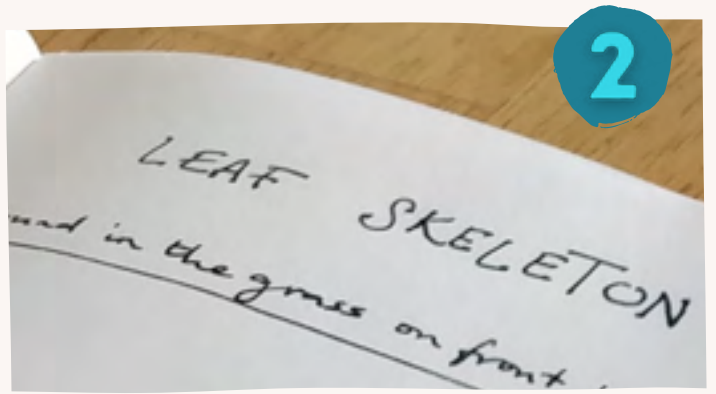
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Table of Contents

Introduction	5
What is nature journaling?	6
1. Materials	7
2. Find your subject	8
3. Start with metadata	9
4. Use your curiosity	10
5. Draw and write	11
6. Ask questions	12
7. Keep going	13
About	14
Connect with me	15





Introduction

In the last few years we've experienced huge changes to our everyday lives due to the pandemic. In response we've searched for ways to reconnect with ourselves, others and nature.

Nature journaling is increasingly becoming one such activity we turn to, whether it's for spending time in fresh air, to practice a creative pursuit, for our own mental health or to help balance our work lives. It is affordable, accessible and can be done in a short amount of time depending on our needs.

If you are just getting into nature journaling **this quick guide will help you with finding materials, a subject to study and putting your first marks on the page.**

Even if you've never nature journaled before, aren't artistic or don't have much time, you can get started today!



What is nature journaling?

Honestly it's really simple: using a journal to record your environment.

Your journal can be anything you want it to be, however it's usually a combination of **words, pictures and numbers**. Your nature journal is a tool to express what your senses feel, get thoughts out of your head, connect with nature and live in the moment.

The "trick" (if there is one) is to have a beginner's mindset, to just **be curious** about any object - as if you're experiencing it for the first time. By observing and asking questions you can endlessly explore anything.

Nature journaling is an activity that can help you relax, connect with nature and re-energise you. Anyone can do it, from toddlers to adults.

It's a **common misconception** that you have to "go out in nature" to nature journal. The urban environment still has plenty of nature and so even without access to wilderness, parks or a garden you *can* still nature journal.



1. Materials

Before you begin, gather your materials.

The simpler you keep your materials, the easier it will be to start and maintain your nature journaling practice.

At a minimum you need:

- ☐ a **notebook or journal**, and
- ☐ a **pen or pencil**



TIP: *It doesn't matter if you have lined or plain paper. Loose pages can work but a bound book is preferable to keep everything in one place and track your progress.*

OPTIONAL TOOLS

- coloured pencils or markers
- watercolours or gouache paints (these dry quickly and just require water, so are preferable to other painting media) and brushes
- ruler or measuring tape
- glue or sticky tape (e.g. for leaves or specimens)
- magnifying glass and binoculars (see textures or small objects better, or far away birds)
- scissors or razor blade (for dissecting)

2. Find your subject

Once you have your tools its time to find something to observe. Having the whole world to choose from can be daunting, so it helps to **narrow your focus down onto one subject**. Remember, you don't have to go far to find a natural subject, even in an urban environment.

Your subject could be:

- a pot plant
- your pet
- a leaf or feather from a walk, or
- an interesting sky out the window

TIP: Choosing a subject that **isn't going to move around too much** means you can spend time observing it and not become frustrated by changes all the time. Plants and resting animals are ideal subjects for beginners to start with for this reason.



3. Start with metadata

When you open up your journal it can be intimidating to have a blank page in front of you, so a great way to break that fear is to just put some marks down straight away.

Jot down **a title** and some **metadata** such as:

- the date and time
- your location, and
- the weather

All of these help set the scene and can be useful data for later.



4. Use your curiosity

I notice, I wonder and **it reminds me of** are three prompts you can use to activate your curiosity.

Use your senses to explore your subject. Make connections with previous knowledge and experience - what does it remind you of?

There are no 'wrong' observations! It can help to say them out loud first, then either write or draw what you have said.



5. Draw and write

Whatever you **notice first, get it down** on paper. For instance, you could begin by drawing the object (note if it's life-size next to the drawing) or describe its shape or texture.

Don't worry about spelling or making a pretty picture - this is about getting your observations down on paper. It doesn't matter how good your drawing is, or if what you write down is incorrect. By practising you will improve, as with any skill.

A **blind contour drawing** is a fun way to warm up your sketching skills while sharpening your hand-eye coordination. To do this, observe your object by 'tracing' its outline with your eyes, then draw it without looking at your paper. Do this for just 1 minute. What features did you capture? You can then try a modified contour drawing where a few sneak peeks are allowed, but try to keep your pen on the paper the whole time.



TIP: You can include **measurements** here in addition to **words, pictures and numbers**.

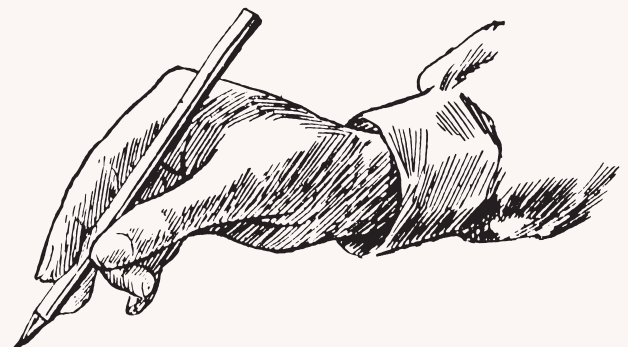
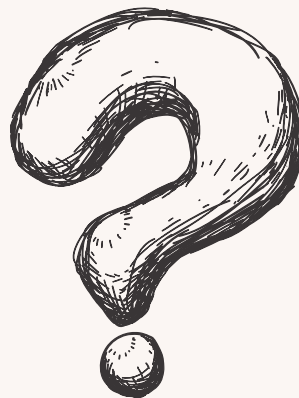
6. Ask questions

Ask questions and write them down. What is occurring? Why do you think this might be? Can you answer by observing some more?

TIP: Don't worry if you don't know the answers, you can always search later, the goal here is to keep stimulating your brain about the subject. There's always more to discover!

Keep asking more questions even if you think you're finished or there's nothing more to note - there will be! Sometimes just one question can spark a whole page of them. If you're stuck use the following prompt words:

- Who or what
- When
- Where
- Why
- How
- What if
- Could it be



7. Keep going

If you have more time you can **add colour** with pens, pencils or paint. Or try **different exercises**, such as a comparison to another specimen, or zoom in or out to a different scale.

How does it make you **feel**? Maybe you're inspired to write a poem?



Finally, although it might seem scary to **share your work**, think of it instead as a chance to learn and find new ideas.

It can be interesting to see what other people have in their journals, even for the same subject!

About

Hi, I'm Kim!

**I'm an Australian
artist, scientist,
educator and
aspiring naturalist.**

I make YouTube videos and
online resources about nature
journaling.



I hope that my nature journaling adventures and resources can inspire everyone to go outdoors, explore and learn more about the world around them. There is so much to benefit from being in the natural environment, and by connecting in this way I hope we can make a difference towards preserving our planet and life on it.



Connect With Me



Website

[Kim's NJ Adventures](#)



YouTube

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Instagram

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