

steps

ROWNTREE MILLS PARK

2021 ACTIVITY BOOK

Rowntree Mills Park Activity Book

Welcome to the Rowntree Mills Park Activity Book, a part of From Weeds We Grow, an exploration of public space connecting community members to each other, to the arts, and to the park led by STEPS Public Art. Take part in activities then share your creations on social media using #growwithsteps and tagging @stepspublicart.

Check out the From Weeds We Grow web app to explore the park through storytelling, visual arts, spoken word performances and teachings: fromweedswegrow.stepspublicart.org.

See you at the park!

“Rowntree Mills Park forms part of the Humber River. Established in 1959, it was originally known as Riverbend Park and is a beautiful expanse of greenspace, it is a huge park - one of the largest in Toronto. The park is located in North Etobicoke, a diverse community which is also a Neighbourhood Improvement Area.

The park is great for hosting many different events and activities - Guided nature walks, bird and deer watching, picnics, cycling and art. The diversity of native species and learning about the ravine system are just a few of the amazing things the park is used for.

The park's greenspace is well maintained by the City Parks staff and contractors. I love walking and exploring the park with my colleagues. We have been to different greenspaces and love the 2 huge ponds that house many birds and other wildlife. The native flowering plants is a must see on anyone's list.”

- Adassa B., Community Volunteer and Park People Walk Leader

From Weeds We Grow is part of the Arts in the Parks program. It has been made possible through generous support from



LET'S GET ACTIVE!

List the activities from your favourite to least favourite below!



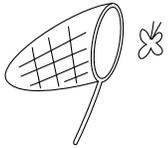
Bird Watching

1. _____



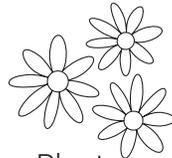
Cloud Watching

2. _____



Bug Catching

3. _____



Plant Appreciation

4. _____



Soccer

5. _____



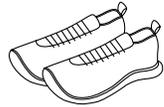
Yoga

6. _____



Hiking

7. _____



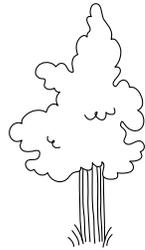
Running

8. _____



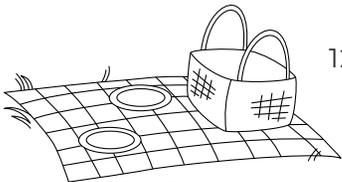
Bike Riding

9. _____



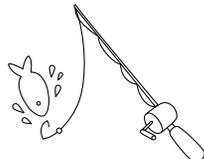
Tree Climbing

10. _____



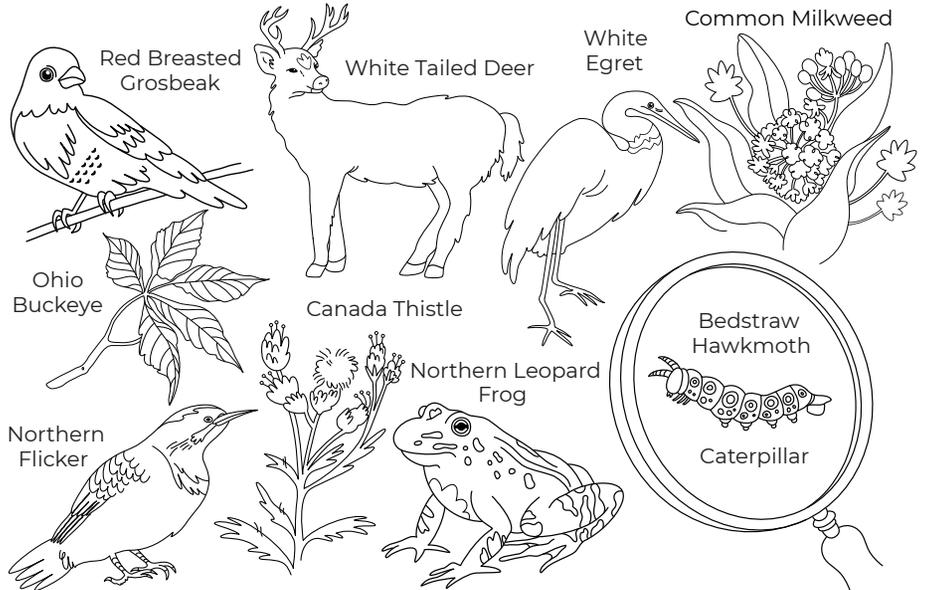
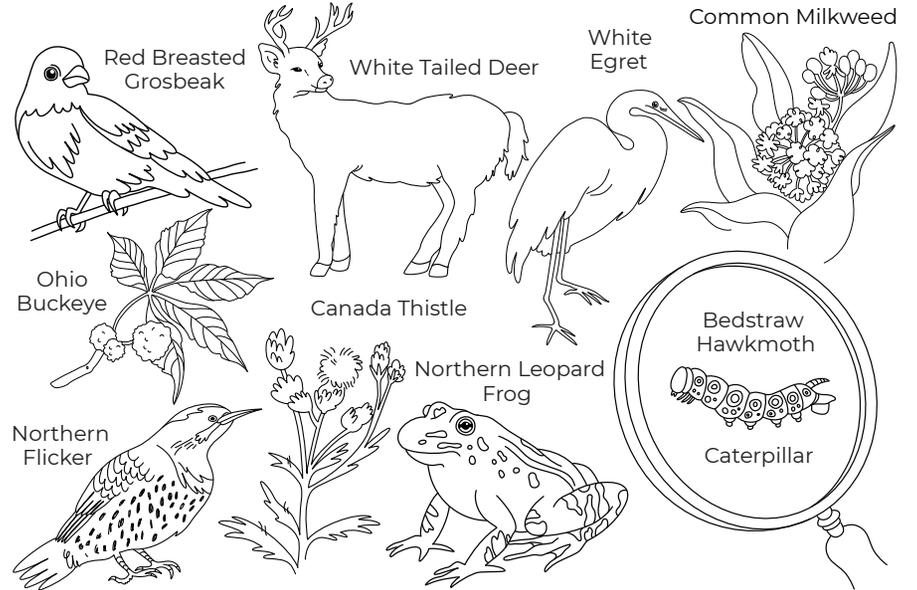
Picnic

11. _____



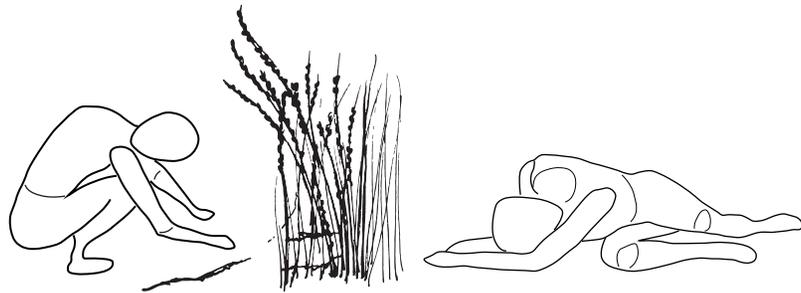
Fishing

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

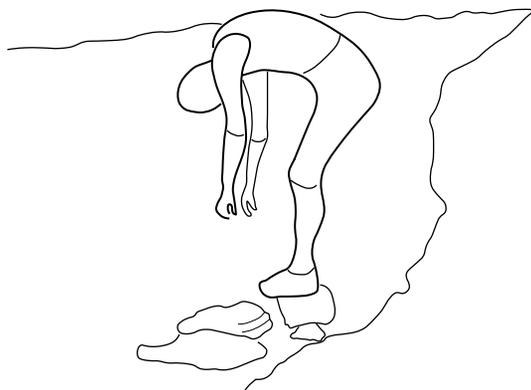


MOVEMENT WITH GRASSES: A SERIES OF PROMPTS

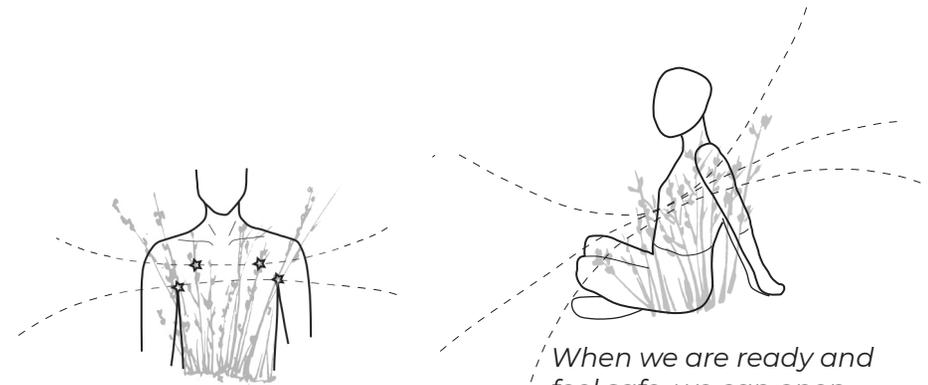
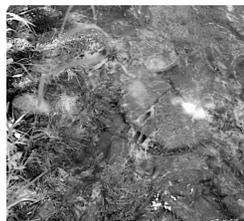
This is a movement exercise designed to guide you through meditation at the park, using visual cues from nature, and in turn, feel that this space is for *you*. How can we embody feelings of safety & protection in the park?



Feet are grounded, core and belly are protected; grasses reach above our heads, sheltering us.

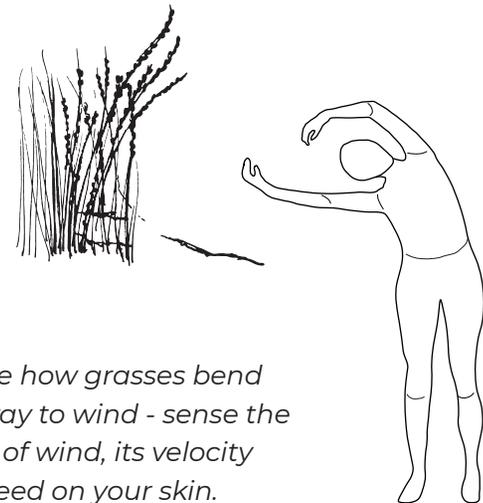


Listen deeply to water, and match your breath to its rhythm.



The stars show pressure points that hold tension in the body. Use your thumb and index to massage these points.

When we are ready and feel safe, we can open our hearts and chest to the surrounding space. Imagine the tips of grasses brushing up against your chest.

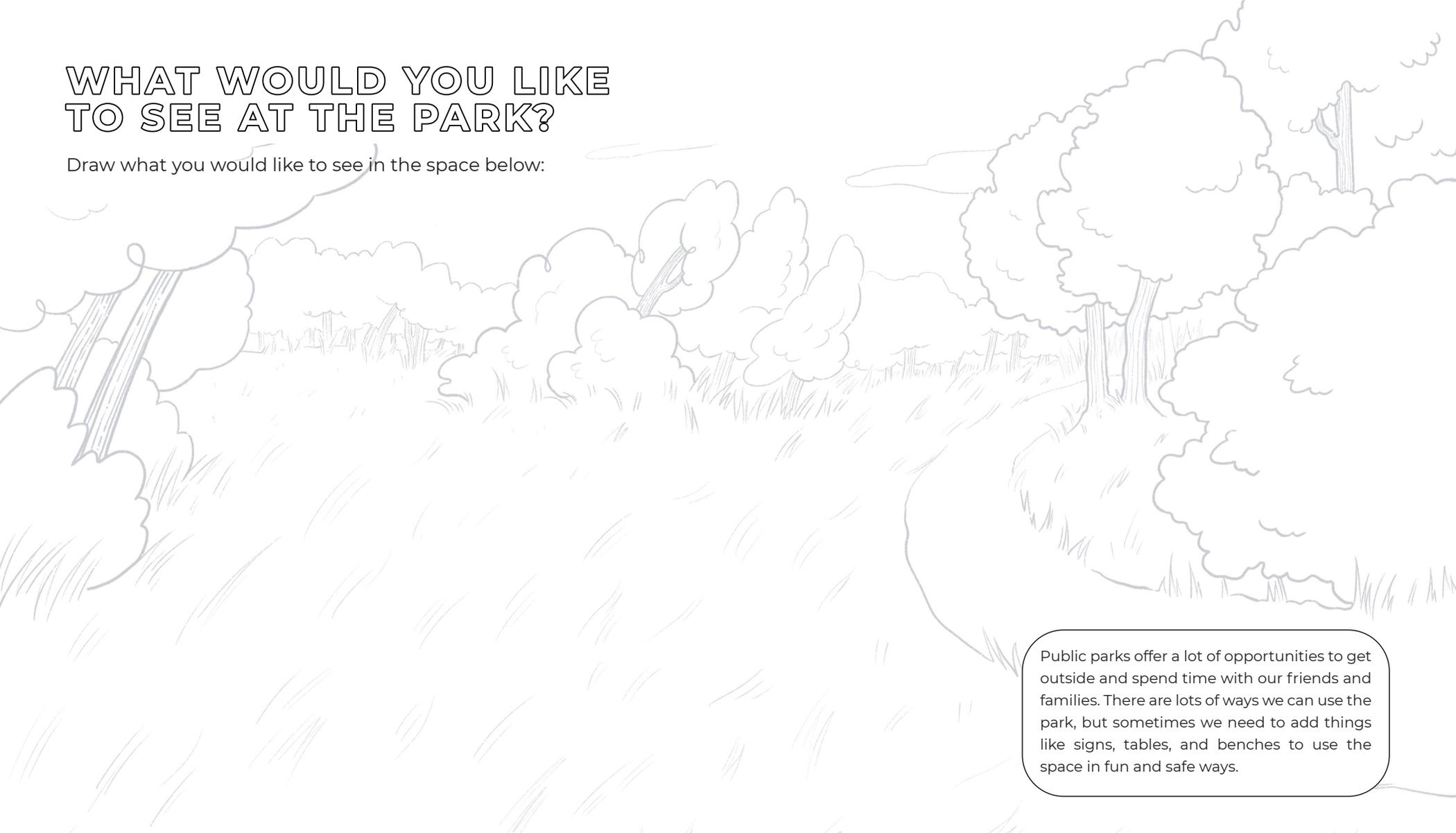


Observe how grasses bend and sway to wind - sense the weight of wind, its velocity and speed on your skin.

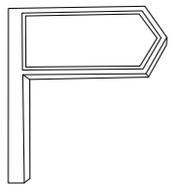
Let your body naturally melt and take the shape of these characteristics. Try and release any stickyness, and invite easy movement.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE AT THE PARK?

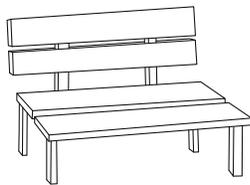
Draw what you would like to see in the space below:



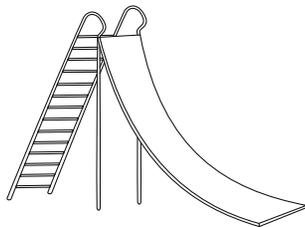
Public parks offer a lot of opportunities to get outside and spend time with our friends and families. There are lots of ways we can use the park, but sometimes we need to add things like signs, tables, and benches to use the space in fun and safe ways.



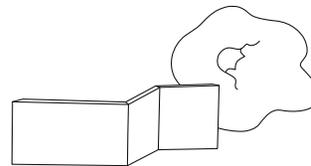
Signs



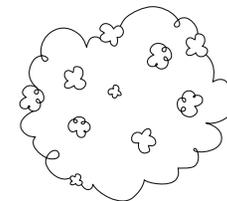
Seating



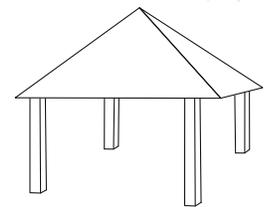
Play Place



Public Art



Gardens



Group Spaces

HOW MANY DANDELIONS CAN YOU FIND?



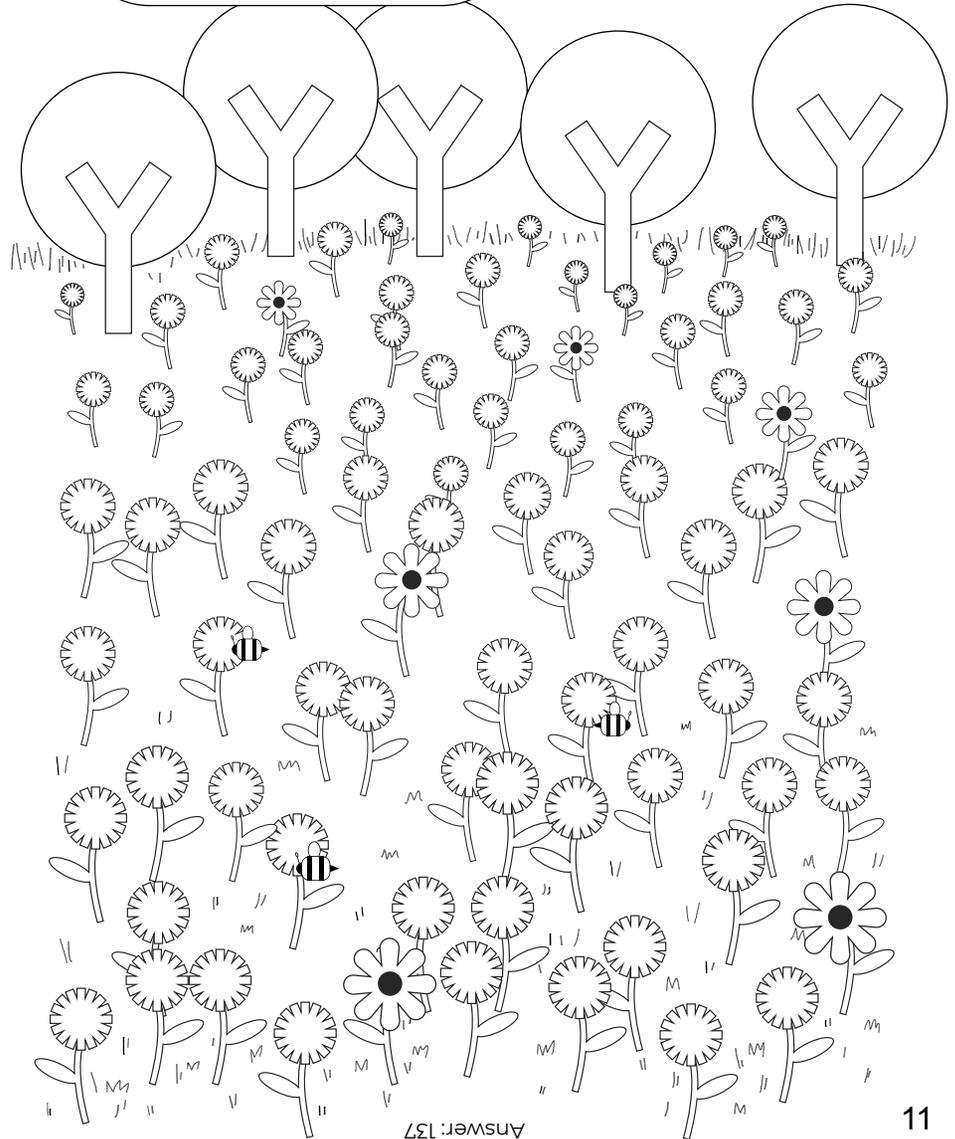
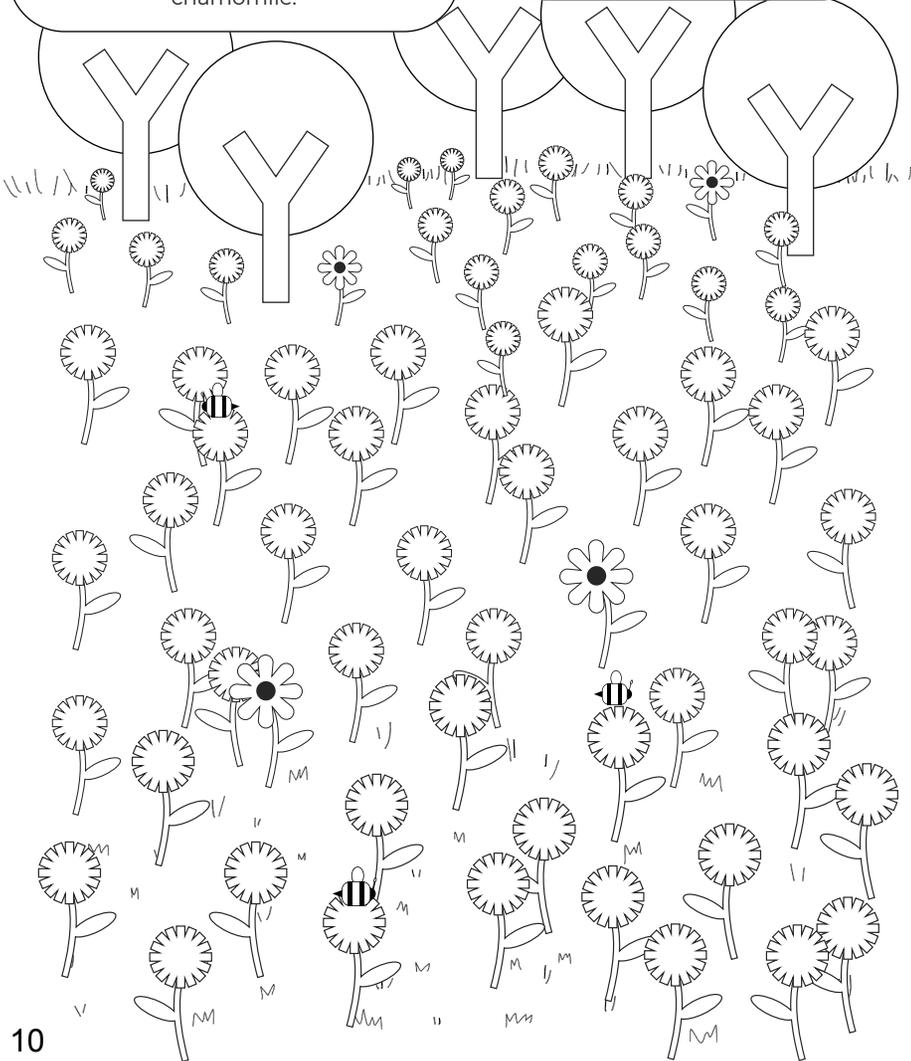
Did you know?

1. Up until the 1800s Europeans and North American settlers would pull grass out of their lawns to make room for dandelions and other useful "weeds" like chickweed, malva, and chamomile.

2. Dandelions are fast growers, so when the lawn is mowed these sunny characters seem to grow taller in defiance. Now that is some resiliency!

3. Dandelions are masters of survival. They are fast growers, the sunny yellow flowers going from bud to seed in days. The root sinks deeper over the years, and can go down 15 feet. Their roots clone when divided; a one-inch bit of dandelion root can grow a whole new dandelion.

4. Dandelions are highly nutritious! In foods, they are used as salad greens, and in soups, wine, and teas.



SPREADING SEEDS

When you explore the woods in the park, lots of seeds with burrs stick to your clothes. Match the wildflowers to the burrs.



1. Queen Anne's Lace



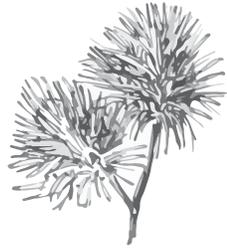
2. Cleavers (stickyweed)



3. Houndstongue



4. Burdock



a. dried flowers with sharp hooks that attach to clothes and animal fur like velcro.



b. small oval seeds with a rough surface like the tongue of a dog.



c. flower dries into a lacy crown shape that is full of tiny seeds with little hooks in them.



d. tiny round seeds that stick to fabric and fur - like the plant it's named after.

Seeds can spread by wind and water. Seeds with burrs can catch a ride on clothes and fur. Some seeds hide inside fruits and berries. Birds and animals eat the fruits and berries, leaving seeds in their droppings. Read the descriptions of the plants pictured here and see if you can guess how they disperse their seeds.

1. Dandelion

Releases tiny seeds with little parachutes attached. Seeds spread by:



2. Cattails

Grow in wetlands and on the banks of ponds and rivers. Produce fluffy floating clouds of seed. Seeds spread by:

and _____



3. Blackberry

Grows delicious juicy berries. Seeds spread by:



About STEPS

STEPS Public Art is a Canadian-based public art organization that develops one-of-a-kind art initiatives and engagement strategies that transform public spaces. We are responsible for Canada's largest and most community-engaged public art initiatives.

Together with our partners, we transform urban areas into vibrant public spaces, helping artists, community organizations, BIAs, and property owners push creative and technical boundaries - breathing new artistic energy into our public spaces.

For more information on STEPS or to get in touch, visit stepspublicart.org and follow @stepspublicart.



This activity booklet was designed by



For more information, visit mpcto.ca and follow us at @mpctoronto

Contributing Artists:

Debbie Woo
debbiewoo.com
@woohyunji

Marina Fathalla
@_nous_nous

Marjan Verstappen
marjanverstappen.com
@far_stepping

