

Seasonal Scavenger Hunt (for all ages!)

What are these weird things? This activity challenges you to look at plants in New Mexico in a whole new way!



Go on a scavenger hunt to find out more about the **phenology** of plants in the spring.

Phenology is the study of how plants and animals change based on the seasons. You can do this scavenger hunt from inside or outside your home: look out a window, go in your backyard or on your balcony, or take a walk with your family. Track what you find in the boxes below!

<p>How many different types of plants do you see?</p> <p>_____</p>	<p>Find a flower, fruit, or seed and answer the questions below:</p> <p>Did you find a...</p> <p>Fruit Flower Seed (circle one)</p> <p>What color is it?</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Describe it! (smooth, rough, spiky, big, small...)</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>How many of the plants have green leaves on them?</p> <p>_____</p>	

Do you think the plants looked the same last week? Will they look the same next week? Why or why not?

Take it to the next level!

Here are a few things you can do to track the seasons on your own:

1. Pick one plant that you can see from your window and/or close to your house. Each week, visit your plant and look for life cycle events (phenophases) like the ones on the data sheet below - Use this sheet or write it in a notebook of your own! BEMP, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge, and other cool organizations in NM use a program called **Nature's Notebook** to do this -- check it out online to learn more!

Date:

Did you see...	Give your plant a name: _____		
	Can you find out what species it is? _____ (you can use a program called iNaturalist to help you identify it!)		
Leaves	Yes	No	Not sure
Leaves that are changing color	Yes	No	Not sure
Falling leaves	Yes	No	Not sure
Flowers or flower buds	Yes	No	Not sure
Open Flowers	Yes	No	Not sure
Fruits	Yes	No	Not sure

2. There's so much more you can do to observe plants and how they are changing! Here are our suggestions for tracking your plant each week:

Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Collect phenology data on your plant using the data sheet above!	Draw or write about your plant: use colors, lots of descriptions, try from different locations (far away, really close up, underneath, above...)	Use your other senses: What does the plant smell or feel like (look out for spikes or pointy parts!)? Do you hear anything when you sit near the plant or near your window looking at the plant?

Note: The pictures at the beginning of this activity are from two plants in NM: Flower buds from Rio Grande Cottonwoods (a **native** plant) and fruit from a Siberian Elm (an **exotic** plant)!