

## START A GARDEN OR NATURE DIARY

Observing and recording what is happening around you also connects you to place and to your surrounding ecosystem. So keeping a garden or nature diary is a great way to start thinking from patterns to details, while building your connection with your garden and deepening your knowledge of your ecosystem.

If you have a garden, or are thinking of starting one, a garden diary is the perfect place to chart what grows when – and how well – from year to year, helping you plan and make good decisions in seasons to come.

Being connected with the large patterns of the seasons and also the smaller patterns – such as which particular bugs visit the yellow flowers in your window box – helps us make better design decisions. Because when we're designing – whether it's deciding where to put your favourite pot of herbs, plant a garden, position a house or add on a sunroom – reading the natural patterns around us is everything.

For example, if you've made a commitment to record descriptions of all the bugs you see visiting your tomato plants, you're much more likely to learn their names and figure out which are helpful to your garden. Then you can find out how to encourage them, whether as pollinators or as predators of garden pests.

A garden diary also serves as a reminder of what we've learnt and how far we've come as food producers – it's a beautifully never-ending learning curve. Plus, it's fun! As adults, we sometimes lose that permission that small folk have, to draw and record the simplest of everyday things. A garden diary can help you kick-start that again.

### No garden? No worries

If you don't have a garden, or not much of one, you can definitely still keep this kind of diary: it's all about observing the seasons and your ecosystem around you. So try keeping a nature diary. Observe the spaces around you, or a park where you walk often, to flex your pattern recognition and start building more connections with the art of designing from patterns to details, and just getting to know the bees, birds, trees and other life.

This sort of knowledge and observation is what our brains are for. It is how we learn to deeply relate to spaces and places that, in turn, enable us to effectively design, and live, in a harmonious way. And a nature diary can be a beautiful and important pathway towards strengthening our relationships with place.

## Getting started

You might like to get a blank notebook and just go for it, or use a notebook with tabs and columns for different types of information, or create a bullet journal. Grid notebooks can help when sketching planting or seeding layouts in various garden beds.

Straight-up day-to-day diaries can be good for easy organisation, but you may find you need more space on some days than others.

Different-coloured pens, pencils or highlighters might also be handy to highlight specific themes, so you can easily find what you're looking for when flipping back through your diary.

And a reminder: no-one is going to judge your wonky bug drawings or misspelt cloud formations. This diary is a personal practice to cultivate your connection with your ecosystem, so just have fun with it.

## Things to observe and record

Observations increase pattern recognition and relationship to place. We're storing up this knowledge to help us design better, from patterns to details.

### In a garden diary

A record of your seasonal tasks is a useful observation from year to year, especially when you're planning next season. You might like to record:

- When seeds get planted and then pop up in the garden, or when seedlings are ready for planting out.
- What is planted where? This is helpful for planning crop rotations.
- What you harvested, when, and how much you got.
- Weather events, such as rainfall, frosts, heavy winds, really hot days.
- The types of insects you see, both predator and pest.
- Things that grow really well – and things that don't.

### In a nature diary

Keeping a diary of the local spaces around you could be as simple as committing to going to the park or your local wild space each week and spending half an hour observing and recording. Ask yourself:

- What are the trees doing?
- Which species are here?
- What is flowering?
- What is that bug I always see in the bark under the big tree?
- Which way is the wind blowing today?
- How much rain has there been this past week?



Find a local 'sit spot' where you go regularly to observe, reflect and record what's happening around you.



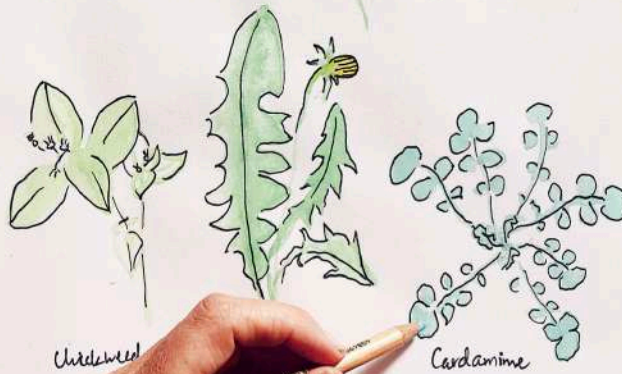
## Spring Equinox



- Predominant winds: N-NW
- Rainfall: 423mm - so so wet this season!
- Sun rising about 6:06 am
- Sun setting about 6:03 pm
- Avg. temp: 7.8 - 16.9 °C



Cloudflower first season begins!



Chickweed

Cardamine



← we saw a broadhead  
tiny blue-tongued lizard!  
I thought it was a huge  
centipede until  
saw the legs! :)



Some cute  
fungi coming  
up in the  
woodchip  
paths

The quince  
blossoms are  
really catching  
my eye  
this year

