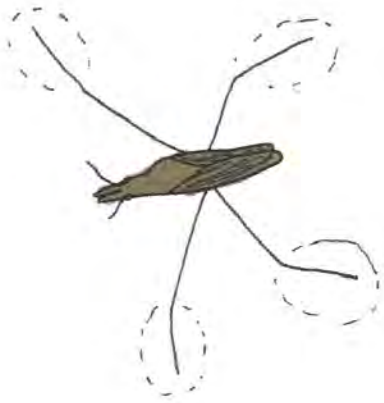
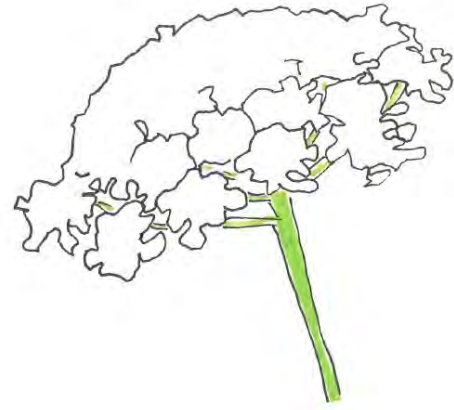


Locals'

Guide to

Nature

in St. Albans



by

the Campers of the St. Albans Day Camp

with Jeannie Bartlett at the

Franklin County Natural Resources Conservation District



+ Safety +

Risks are everywhere, not just in nature. But here are some important tips for being safe outside.

- + "Bring a safety kit. Like band aids and things." - Alexis. Other good things for a first aid kit are sterile gauze pads, medical tape, anti-itch cream, nitrile gloves, and tweezers. Bring prescribed epi-pens for those who need them. Know how to use what you bring.
- + "Look out for dangerous plants." - Taylor. Poison ivy and poison parsnip are the main plants in Vermont that we shouldn't even touch. The rash will show up a day or two afterwards and can last for weeks. If you think you've touched one of them, wash the area thoroughly with cold water and strong dish soap to remove the oils before they take effect. Poison ivy and poison parsnip are described on pages 5 and 7.
- + Don't eat something unless you have triple checked that you know what it is and it is safe to eat. Good resources for checking your identification are in-person experts, published field guides, and online resources like GoBotany, Wikipedia, and iNaturalist. "Bring something that helps you tell what's poisonous and what's not, like a book." - Alexis
- + Check your whole body for ticks every day from early spring through late fall, especially after playing outside. Have someone help you check hard-to-see places like your back.
- + Wear appropriate shoes and be thoughtful about where you go barefoot. Glass, metal, pokey sticks and sharp rocks can be hiding under water or leaves.
- + Bring a long-sleeved layer. It can help keep off bugs, the sun, and scratchy plants.
- + "Bring lots of hydration. I'm really thirsty!" - Alexis
- + "If you're running on trails you have to be careful of rocks." - Maverick. Be especially thoughtful about running down hills, where you could really fall hard.
- + Throwing or skipping rocks is fun, but do it away from people!
- + If you're moving or carrying a stick, think about where both ends are so you don't hit someone.
- + If you are climbing on a tree or shaking its trunk, look up first to see if there are weak branches that might break under your weight or loose sticks that might fall on you.
- + Go together! Stay within sight of an adult.
- + "I listen to my favorite animals and that teaches me something about how to be safe. For example, wolverines always look where they're going to step." - Shane.

What else might you want to think about so you'll always want to keep exploring nature?
~

The Locals' Guide to Nature in St. Albans

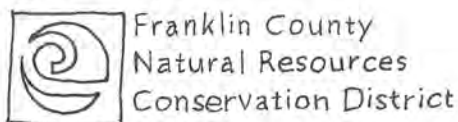
This nature guide was created by and for the kids and their families who would like to explore the nature around St. Albans or other natural areas around their homes.

We gathered material for the guide on nature walks at the Collins-Perley Sports Complex and Aldis Hill/Hard'ack Recreation Area, with campers from the St. Albans Department of Recreation summer day camp. We asked campers to find "cool stuff" in nature and tell us why that thing is so cool. Adults helped with enthusiasm for every discovery and by asking questions like, "How would you describe it to a friend back at camp?" or, "If you wanted to learn more about this on the internet, what would you type in to Google to look it up?"

There is so much awesome nature that we found that didn't make it into this edition of the guide. We just could not record everything. So write your own observations right into this book or in your own notebook! We would love to see what you find and maybe include it in a later edition of this guide. Email your drawings and notes to franklincountynrcd@gmail.com.

The nature walks and the creation of this guide were made possible by many partners. A Small and Inspiring Grant from the Vermont Community Foundation made this financially possible. Thanks to Kelly Viens, Chris Messier, and all the staff at the St. Albans Day Camp for welcoming this partnership, providing transportation, and fitting nature walks into their already fun-filled days. And thanks to all the campers for their sharp observations, their knowledge, and their curiosity. Happy exploring, Jeannie

© 2017 by Jeannie Bartlett



"Mint leaves are awesome."

-Taylor

Mint



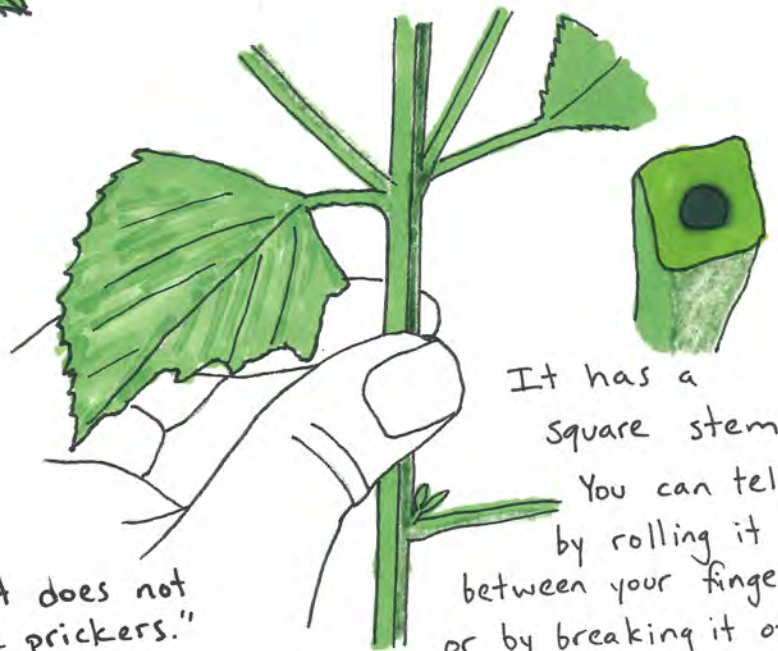
You can eat mint, or use it to flavor your water, but how are you sure it's mint?

"It tasted really strong." -Kambree

Sometimes it has a purple stem. But not always.



It smells like mint.



It has a square stem.

You can tell by rolling it between your fingers or by breaking it off and looking at the end. It's hollow, too!

"Mint does not have pricklers."
-vera



The leaves come off of the stem in pairs opposite each other.

"Mint tastes terrible, but it smells like mint gum."
-Adrienne

"It looks like the leaf on an ice cream container."
-Taylor



We found mint growing abundantly among the cattails
② in the stream at the Collins-Perley Complex.

Cattails

or "Corndogs"

The brown flowers of cattails look just like a deep-fried hot dog on a stick, so sometimes we call them "corn dogs."

We found lots of cattails growing at the Collins-Perley Complex in the restored stream.

Cattails have grown in the wetlands and ponds of Vermont for a long time.

Muskrats eat cattails and use them to make their houses.

"The cattail smells like cucumbers." - Eli

"When the cattails are old you can blow on them or wave them and they just go

pew!...
pew!
pew!..."

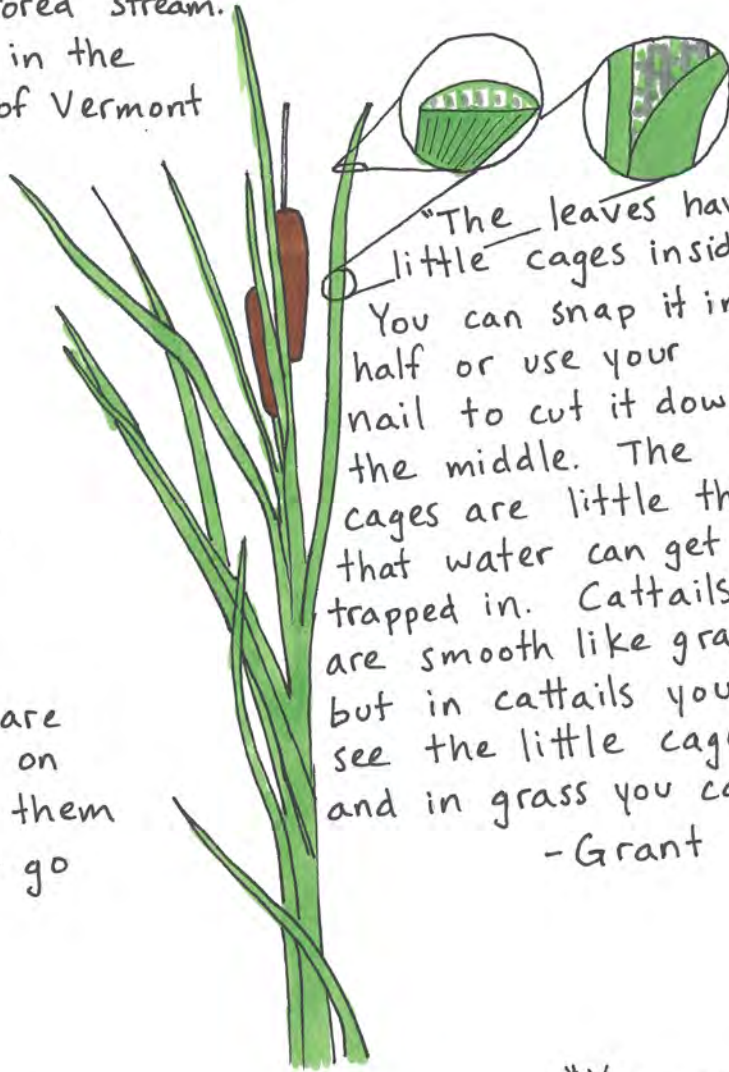
- Nancy



"This root looked like a snake or a dead bug. But in the



middle there were little lines, which is how I started to think maybe it was a root."
- Madisyn

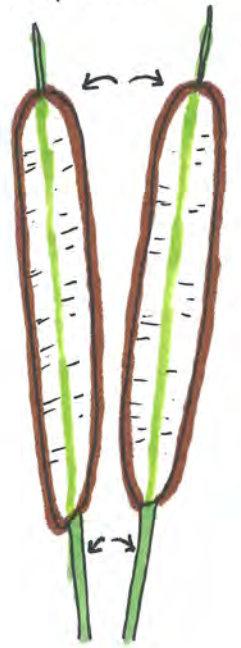


"The leaves have little cages inside.

You can snap it in half or use your nail to cut it down the middle. The cages are little things that water can get trapped in. Cattails are smooth like grass, but in cattails you can see the little cages and in grass you can't."

- Grant

"You can rip it open and see the stem inside. It's so soft, feel." - Grant



"You can make bracelets out of the leaves.

Can I make you one?"

- Shane



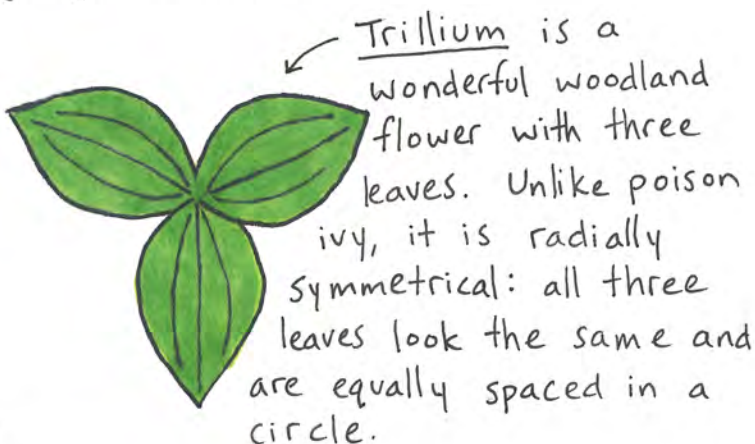
Friendly plants that might look like poison ivy but aren't



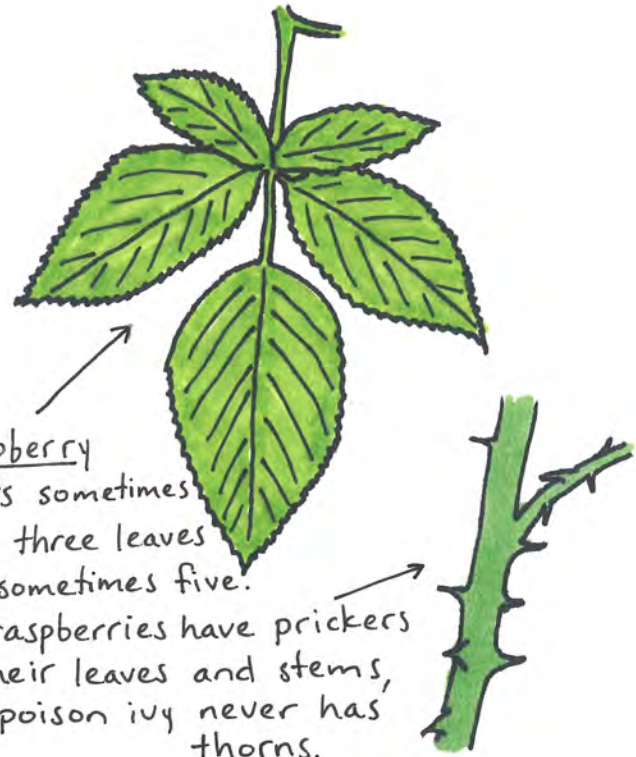
Poison ivy has three leaves, not five like this Virginia creeper. But they like to grow together on the sides of roads.



Strawberry plants have three leaves, but unlike poison ivy they have serrated (bumpy) edges all the way around. It looks like they were cut out with zigzag scissors.

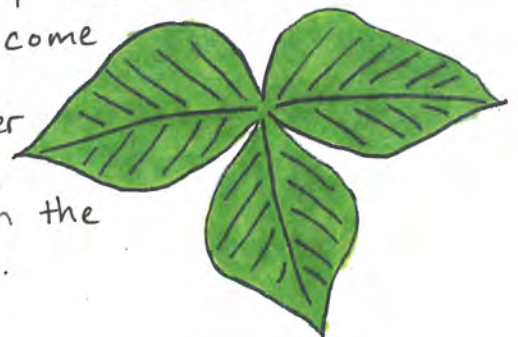


Trillium is a wonderful woodland flower with three leaves. Unlike poison ivy, it is radially symmetrical: all three leaves look the same and are equally spaced in a circle.

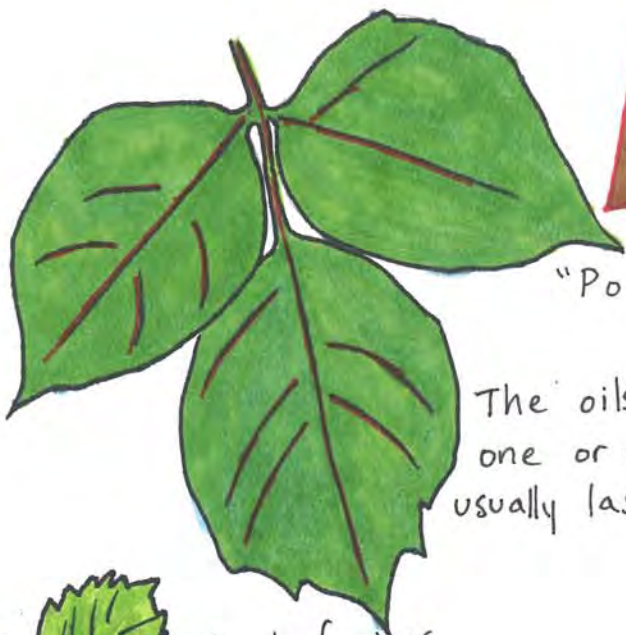


Raspberry plants sometimes have three leaves and sometimes five. But raspberries have pricklers on their leaves and stems, and poison ivy never has thorns.

Jack-in-the-pulpit is a special woodland wildflower. You can tell it from poison ivy because the leaf edges are completely smooth, and because the three leaves come right together at the stem in the middle.



Poison Ivy



"Poison ivy has three leaves."
-Owen

The oils in poison ivy will cause an itchy rash one or two days after you touch it. The rash usually lasts about a week.

Young, new leaves are usually very shiny and reddish.



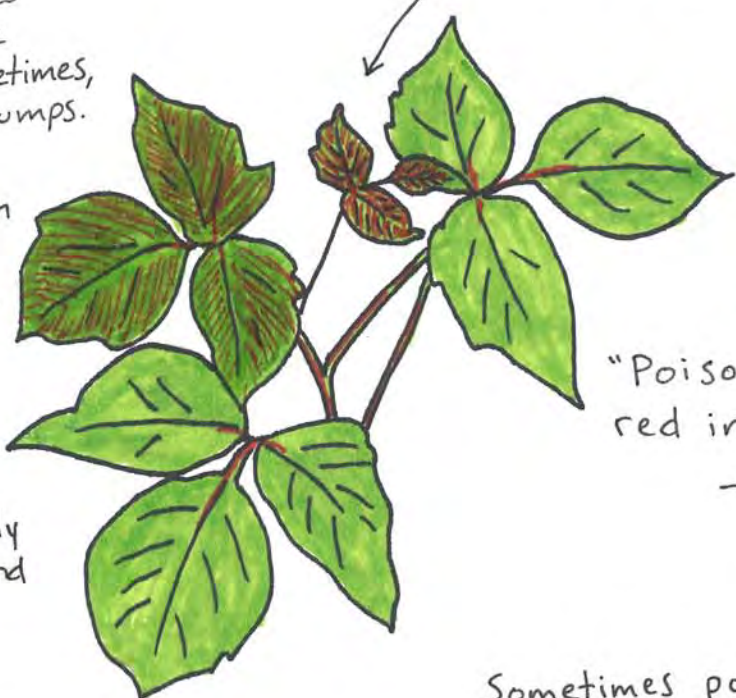
The leaf edges can be more serrated sometimes, with lots of bumps.



Or they can have just a couple jagged edges.



Or they can be almost completely smooth around the edges.

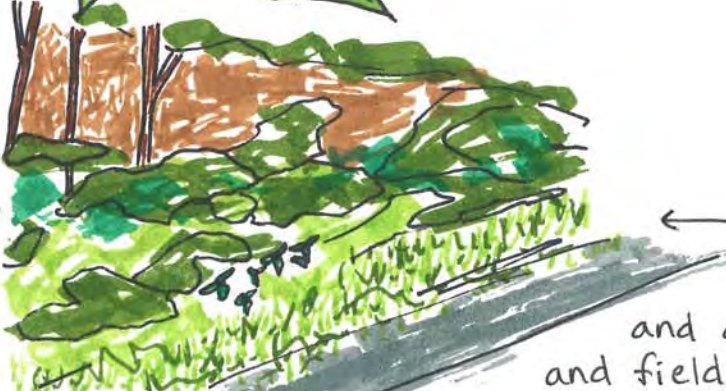


"Poison ivy has red in its leaves."
-Sebastian



The middle leaf always hangs off of a longer stem than the top two.

Sometimes poison ivy grows as a vine on trees or fences.



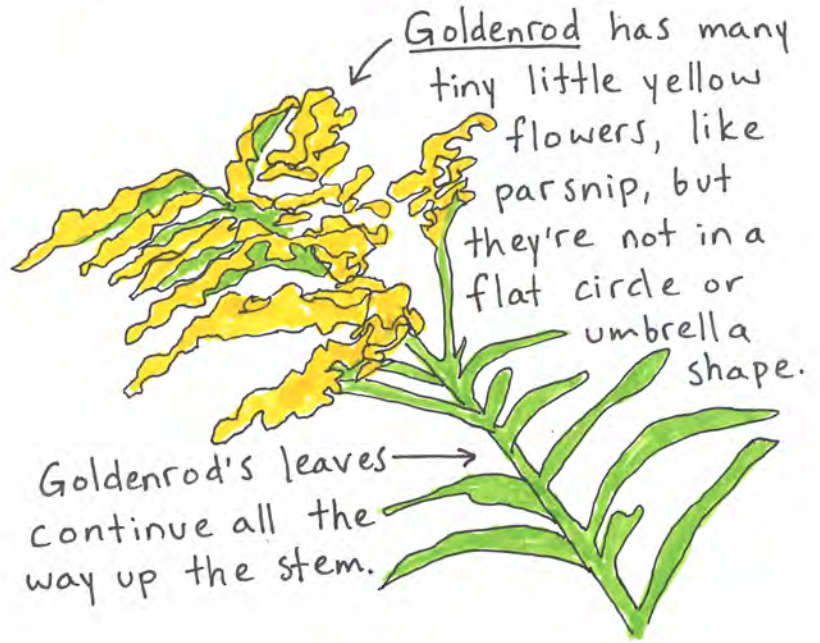
Poison ivy really likes to grow along roadsides and along the edge of woods and fields.

Friendly plants that might look like

poison parsnip but aren't



Queen Anne's lace flowers have the same shape as parsnip flowers, but they are white. Queen Anne's lace is closely related to carrots, but don't eat it.



Goldenrod's leaves continue all the way up the stem.

Goldenrod has many tiny little yellow flowers, like parsnip, but they're not in a flat circle or umbrella shape.

Dandelions and cat's-ear are yellow like parsnip, but they just have one flower on one stem. You probably recognize them anyway,



like cat's-ear they just recognize them from lawns!



Buttercups are yellow like parsnip, but they have bigger flowers with five nice, flat petals. They are okay to touch, but poisonous for you or your animals to eat!

Dogwood flowers grow in a big cluster of tiny flowers, like parsnip, but they are white and they grow on a tree or shrub.



Poison Parsnip

Poison parsnip is actually the same plant you might grow in your garden for vegetables, but it escaped!

We call it poison because if its sap gets on your skin, it will react with sunlight to give you a nasty burn.

Don't get its juice on you!!!

The flowers look a lot like Queen Anne's lace, except yellow.

Poison parsnip likes growing in fields, pastures, highway medians and roadsides. We didn't find any at the Collins-Perley Complex or Hard'ack. Hooray!

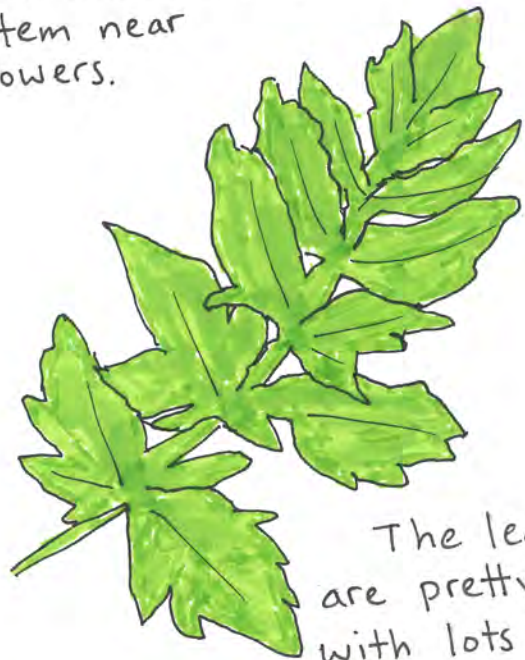
The fancy word for the rash: PHYTO,PHOTO,DERMATITIS,

"FIE-toe" plant "FOE-toe" light "DER-ma-TIE-tis" skin reaction



Poison parsnip is most obvious in July when it has bright yellow clusters of flowers.

Campers noticed that poison parsnip has almost no leaves up on the stem near the flowers.



The leaves are pretty big, with lots of little sections.



In its first year, parsnip just grows leaves right out of the ground, like lettuce. The second year it grows its tall stalk and flowers.



drawing of poison parsnip by Chloe and Jonah

Goldenrod and Galls



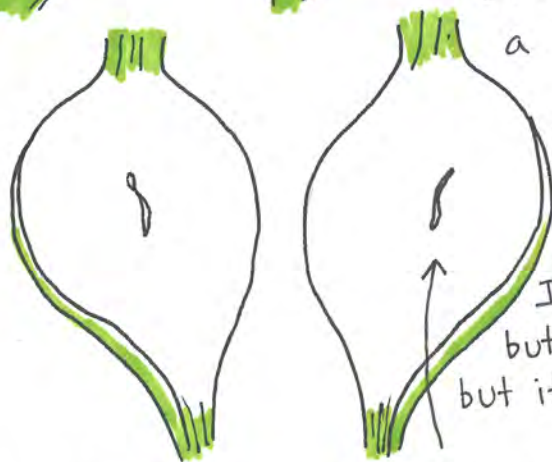
Goldenrod is a beautiful flower that has always grown in Vermont. It loves full sun, and bees love it for its clusters of bright yellow flowers in August.



What are those things growing on the stems of the goldenrod?

"They smell like potatoes. I found more potato-thingies!"
-Nick

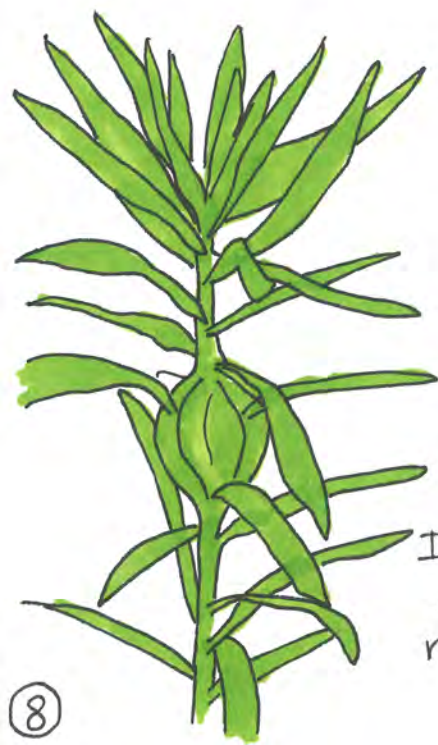
They smell like potatoes, look like the outside of an onion, and are about the size of a big olive. Hmm...



"We picked it apart, and it kind of looks like a kiwi in the middle. Inside it is hard, like ice, but not cold. It looks wet but it's not, just sticky."

-Logan O.

In summer the tiny bug inside is too small to see very well, but this "potato thingy" is a gall, a home for a baby insect. The gall formed when a fly laid her egg on the goldenrod's stem, and her baby will live there as a tiny worm, or larva. It will rest safely through the winter as a pupa, and finally emerge as a new fly in the spring!



Meadows and Lawns

Queen Anne's lace

"This flower is very delicate. It is cold when you put your hand on it, so it should be used on hot days. It's even colder when you squeeze it gently." - George

"What is the black part in the middle?" - Dawson

"Those white flowers are very fluffy." - Sydney

"The stem is hairy, and the flower comes off the top of it." - George

drawing of Queen Anne's lace by Carly

"Milkweed is sticky and there's stuff inside it." - Grant
 "Look! Sticky milk is puking out! Blehh!" - Hardy



"Oh my gosh it glimmers! It looks like a fish with all its scales." - Grant

Red Clover

"Look at these! They're little spike-things. They have white on them." - Sebastian

Red clover is Vermont's state flower!



Oxalis, Wood Sorrel,
 "Sour-grass," or "Lemon-grass"
 "Sour-grass doesn't smell like anything but it tastes sour. It looks like clover because it has three leaves." - Maverick



"Jewelweed" "Touch-Me-Not" "Poppers"

"New England Aloe"

"Clearstem"

"Red Root"

Impatiens capensis



A fun, common and useful plant that goes by many names.

"My grandpa calls it honeysuckle and he showed me that you can eat the flowers. I like them." -Grant

"Poppers" or "Touch-me-Not" because the ripe seed pods spring apart when you squeeze them lightly.



"It helps your rashes." -Nancy

We could call this plant "New England aloe," because its juice can soothe itchy rashes and bug bites, kind of like aloe. Take a big handful of stems and leaves and crush them in your hand until they get slimy, then wipe the juice onto your itchy spots. It's especially good for poison ivy and bug bites.

"I found more of the plant with the springy thing!" -Madyson

"Is this slimy enough yet?" -Taylor

It grows commonly along the edges of streams and woods, often in thick stands 3-5 feet tall.



Plants of the Woods and Meadows

"Snowflake grass" or
Robert Geranium

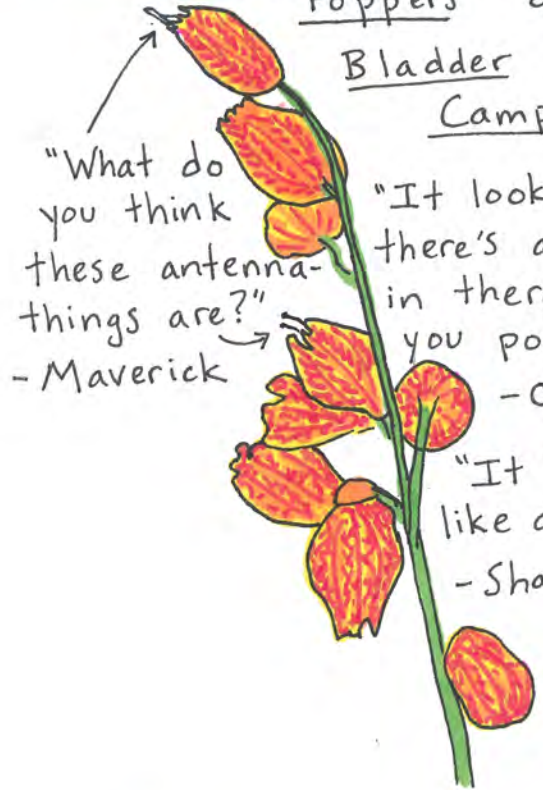


"The flower has a very simple look to it, with five pink petals." - Oliver

"I call it snowflake grass because it looks like a snowflake with five points, like a star, that keep dividing smaller." - Oliver

"It grows on the edges of cliffs."
- Oliver

"Poppers" or
Bladder
Campion



"What do you think these antenna-things are?"
- Maverick

"It looks like there's a seed in there that you pop."

- Oliver

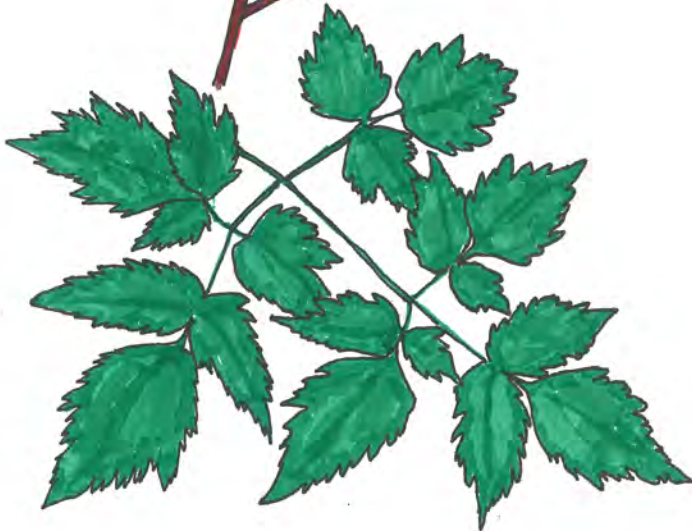
"It looks like a pea."
- Shane

Doll's eyes or White Baneberry

"This stuff is really poisonous. I know it because the berries look like anybody's eyes. Don't touch it."



Keep away."
- Shane



Black-eyed Susan

"They hold seeds. Birds will peck at them and the seeds fall out. Or sometimes my mom shakes them out."
- Oliver

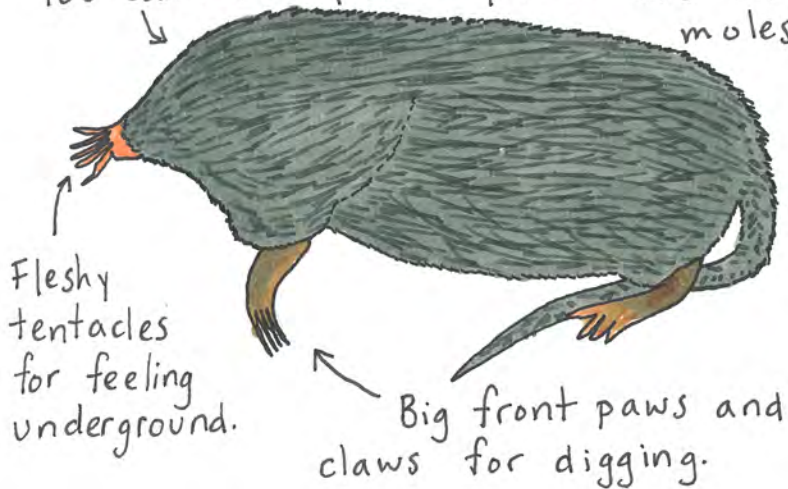
"Once they die you can crumple the top and they regrow from the seeds. There are thousands."
- Shane

Woods Animals

Star-nosed mole

We saw moles and shrews at Hard'ack and Collins-Perley, but always dead unfortunately. They're hard to see while they're scurrying underground or under the leaves!

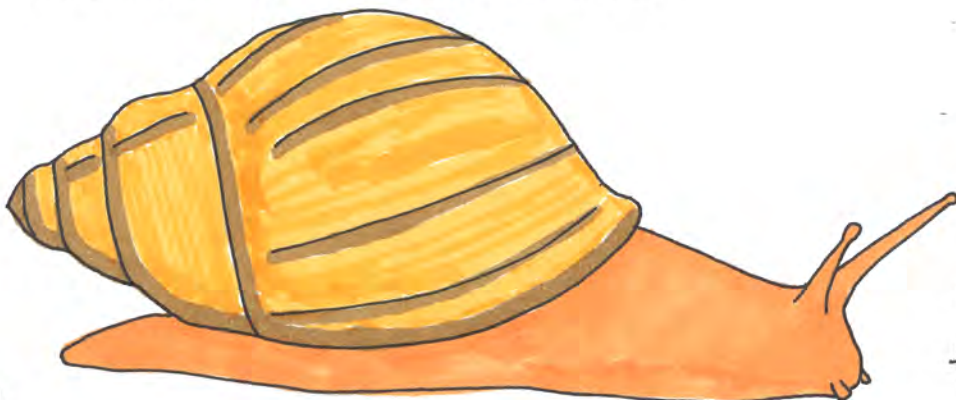
You can't really see eyes or ears on moles.



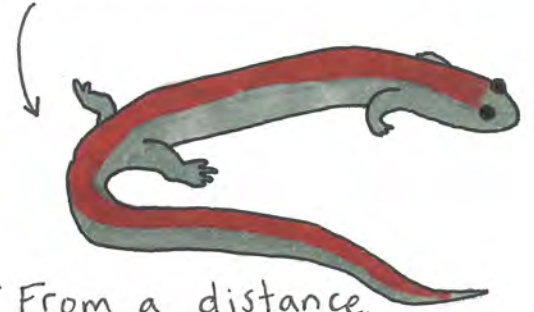
Snail

"It's like the snail is making its own slip 'n slide." -Chloe

Sometimes we held snail races.



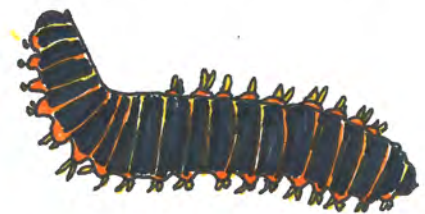
Red-backed salamander



"From a distance, he kind of looks like a worm." -Angus

"At first I thought it was a snake, but then I saw those little legs."
-Shane

Red-backed salamanders don't always have a red back! The one we found was all gray.



Millipede

"It looks like a fat centipede."

-Sebastian

"It was mostly black with yellow feet."

-Alexis, Emily, & Autumn

We found millipedes in the woods at Hard'ack.

Stream Life

"That one looks like an airplane." - Nancy



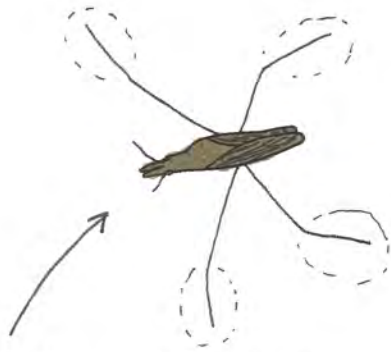
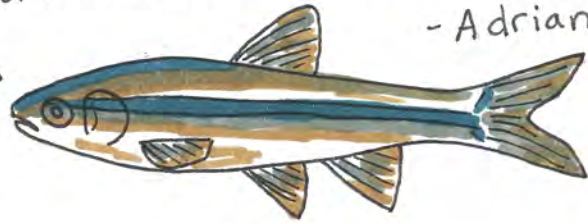
Minnows

"There could be tadpoles here, but from what I know there are just fish. I caught a minnow! I just put a cup in the water and I held it there until I saw the minnow go in."

-Adrienne

"It doesn't have a chin like people do. His mouth is in the way so you can't even see his nose."

-Adrienne



Water Strider

Leech

"It looked like a squid's arm."

-Adrienne



"I like water bugs because they're cute." - Carly

We heard a frog and might have seen one. We saw the leaves in the stream move anyway.

Leech



Person with leeches attached.

The stream behind the Collins-Perley Sports Complex is a good place to find these animals.

Drawing by Lilly-Rose. Drawing is not to scale.



the root



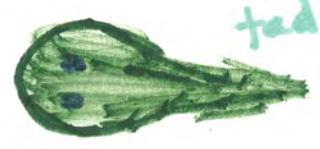
Mr. Snail



the onion potato thing



mint leaf



tadpole

the plant with the springy thing



weird thing that Shane found



cattail



the dead cattail



flower to

this plant



bee



orange flower



ant



Madyson