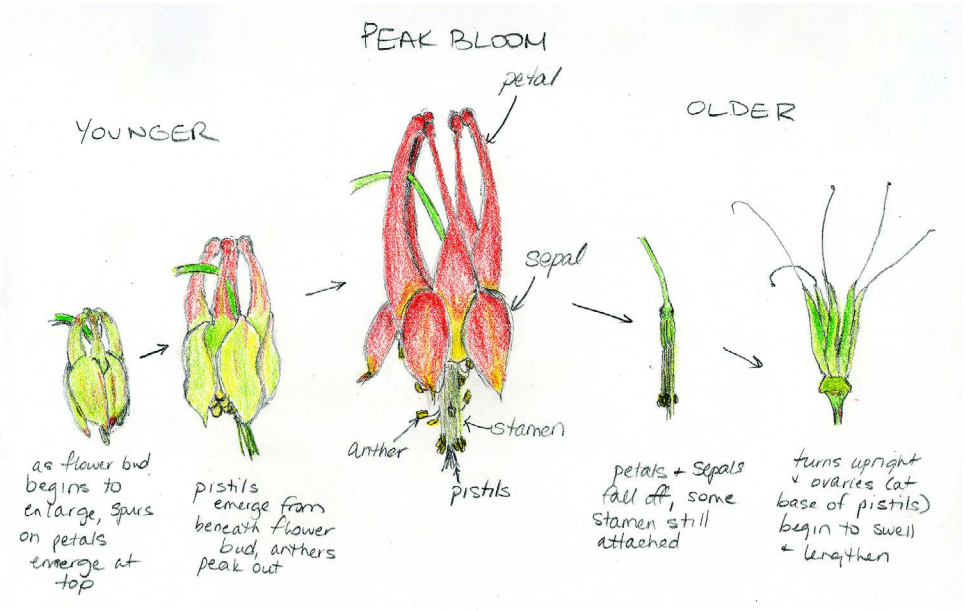
Nature Neighborhood

Sitting quietly in nature and observing the life and patterns going on around you can be a relaxing experience. Recording your feelings, thoughts and observations in a Nature Journal will help you reflect on the experience and can set the stage for future observations and reflections.

Plant Time Machine

Watch the "Parts of a Flower" video and check out the "Flower Parts Diagram" PDF for an introduction to the fascinating world of flowers. Then see if you can identify the parts of a flower in your yard, and see if you can observe how your flower changes as it develops.



Did you know — even though most of us enjoy the beauty of flowers — the reason they exist is not really so that we can set them in a vase on our kitchen counters? **Plants have flowers so that they can reproduce.** Many flowers are adapted to attract bees and butterflies, who cross-pollinate plants by carrying pollen from one flower to another. Other flowers, like those of pine and oak trees, disperse their pollen on the wind. Once they are pollinated, flowers develop into fruits which bear seeds that produce new plants. All of the fruits and vegetables that we eat, as well as other fruits like acorns and dandelion puffs, are the result of flowers!

Materials:
Nature Journal
Pencil
Colored pens or pencils
Magnifier

Having fun?
Tag @naturalsciences on social media, so we can see you and your loved ones enjoying your nature neighborhood.

Instructions:

1. Go outside and choose a flower to observe. Try to find a species with lots of flowers of the same type. If you only have a single flower to look at, you can do this activity across time instead of space. Just be sure to date your drawings and note the weather over subsequent days.
2. Choose a single flower to focus on that is in "peak bloom" *(fully open petals)*. Make a careful diagram of this flower in the middle of your page. Try to label as many of its parts as possible including sepals, petals, stamens, and pistils. *Use the "Flower Parts Diagram" PDF to help you remember the parts of simple and composite flowers.*
3. Next, find a different flower of the same species that is a little older *(further developed)* than your first one. Draw it to the right of your first sketch. Be sure to jot down any notes or questions.
4. Then, find a different flower that is a little younger *(less open)* than your initial drawing, and draw it to the left.
5. Continue trying to find increasingly older flowers and increasingly younger flowers, and sketch them on either side of your initial drawing to create a timeline. See if you can find the youngest *(all the way back to buds, if you can find them)* and oldest stages *(maybe even producing a fruit)* of your species of flower!
6. Look back over your sketches in your plant timeline. Did anything surprise you about how the flower developed?