

NATURE'S ACTION GUIDE

News & Puzzles – Winter 2024



Wishing you a warm and cozy holiday season!

In many U.S. ecoregions, we are enjoying a cup of hot chocolate while poring over seed catalogs or perhaps bundled up outside winter sowing seed. Whether you live in a cold climate or warm one, I hope your holiday season is filled with laughter and joy!

Heartfelt thanks!

As 2024 comes to a close, I would like to sincerely thank everyone who has been a part of bringing *Nature's Action Guide* to life. From those who have been trudging along with me since the beginning to new acquaintances, to all the people in organizations working tirelessly to help nature, and to YOU the reader, THANK YOU! I truly believe that what we do matters and that no matter the height of the mountain, together we will make a positive and lasting difference!

LEFT: This young pileated woodpecker is feeding on a snag. This snag was also home to the red-bellied woodpecker shown on page 7.15 in the book and elsewhere.

RIGHT: Nature crafts are a fun way to invite people to get a taste of the joy and wonder of the outdoor world. On the next page, see how to make this twig furniture.



Nature's Action Guide: Additional Resources

Here are some useful resources not yet included in *Nature's Action Guide*:

- **Gardening when access or mobility is limited.** Physical challenges, such as illness or injury, can interfere with one's ability to garden, yet access to a garden can improve one's morale and boost healing. With a little help from friends and family, a garden can be made more accessible. The British organization **Thrive** provides helpful resources. Visit thrive.org.uk and click on "Get Gardening".
- **Estimate a tree's benefits:** With the **iTree app**, you can enter the diameter of a tree and its species to learn about its ecoservices. For example, a 5-inch diameter maple can remove 790 pounds of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, intercept 9,000 gallons of rainfall, help to avoid 508 gallons of runoff and filter out 9 pounds of pollution like ozone and PM2.5 from the air we breath. Visit itreetools.org to learn more about this app and other iTree tools for estimating the benefits of trees.
- **Free DIY Plans for Building a Catio:** Keeping cats indoors solves the crisis of bird predation by cats (our pet cats kill between 320 million to 1 billion birds each year; see *Nature's Action Guide*, page 2.10 for more information), but offering our beloved cats a safe outdoor place is even better. In their article "**How to build a catio for your cat**", the **SPCA** offers free PDF plans for building catios, including window catios, enclosed porch catios, stand-alone catios, and even a catio enrichment plan to enhance existing catios. Search online for "SPCA how to build a catio for your cat".

A Way to Garden: A Podcast with Margaret Roach

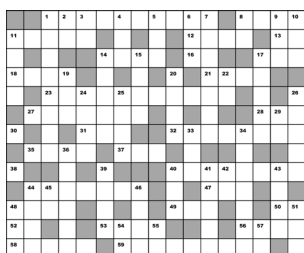
I had the true pleasure of talking about *Nature's Action Guide* with Margaret Roach, host of the *A Way to Garden* podcast and author of a book by the same name. Margaret's breadth of gardening knowledge and thoughtful perspective adds depth to all her interviews. **Margaret is gifting a copy of *Nature's Action Guide* to a listener who leaves a comment on this episode's show notes.** She'll be picking a winner on Tuesday, December 17, 2024. To listen to the podcast, search online for the title.

'horticultural how-to and woo-woo' | margaret roach, head gardener
ETCETERA

**an ecological horticulture action guide,
with sarah jayne**

Puzzles for a little winter fun!

See pages 2 and 3 of this newsletter for this issue's Weedy Words and crossword puzzle.



Nature Craft: Twig furniture

Nature crafts are a fun way to invite people to get a taste of the joy and wonder of the outdoor world. Making twig furniture is an engaging project that can lead to play in magical miniature worlds.



Collect thin straight twigs. For the **chair**, cut short pieces of twigs for the legs, seat, and back. Cut two thinner pieces to support the back crosswise. Use craft glue or a glue gun (with adult help) to attach the pieces. The **bench** is built in the same way as the seat of the chair but made longer. The **stool** uses three thin twigs for legs and a cross-section of a thicker branch for the seat.

This idea comes from the wonderful book *Nature's Art Box* by Laura C. Martin (Storey Publishing, 2003) which features 65 projects made with natural materials, including twig animals!

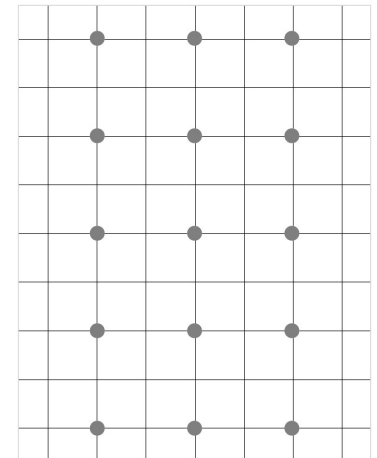


Chair (half actual size)



River birch twigs work especially well for making twig furniture.

Grid for marking windows to prevent bird glass strikes: Screening or marking the outside of windows is one of the easiest and most impactful actions we can take to protect wildlife. Painting dots on windows in a 2-inch grid is perhaps the quickest method for accomplishing this. Nothing fancy is needed, simply a small paint brush and some light-colored acrylic paint left over from a home project. Print and tape this handy grid (shown at right) to the **INSIDE** of a windowpane, and paint dots on the **OUTSIDE**. Move the grid to the next pane. The last page of this newsletter prints as an 8.5 x 11-inch grid. Making multiple copies requires fewer trips inside to move the grid. For larger windows tape multiple sheets together.



Containers for seed germination: Upcycled pots and tubs to hold them

It's time to start stratifying seeds in many parts of the country. In *Nature's Action Guide*, I included directions for stratifying seed outdoors in milk jugs. Here, I'd like to stress that most any container that your household produces in abundance, will work equally well. A drill is handy for making drainage holes in thicker-walled containers. Punch holes in the lid, too. If the container doesn't have a clear lid, cover it with upcycled clear plastic bags secured with a rubber band.



Tubs with the lid cut out and screened protect seeds during stratification.

To conserve seeding mix, fill the bottom of the container to 5 inches below the rim of the container rim (leaving 3 inches for seeding mix and 2 inches for grow room) using any free or inexpensive filler material, such as gravel, rice hulls, or sand.

Then, cut a false bottom that fits on top of the filler. Cut drainage slits in the false bottom as shown at left.



False bottom with slits for drainage

This will economize on the more expensive or time-consuming to prepare seeding mix.

Happy seeding!

Nature's Action Guide is designed to be a living document. Your input is valued. Please email me sarah@naturesactionguide.org with your questions or ideas.

WEEDY WORDS by Sarah F. Jayne The Daily Pilot, December 1967

UNCLE LEN'S CORNER

SEERU
OO _____ in.
GOOYCEL
O _____ O _____
SHAPT
_ O _ O _
STOOPMC
_ _ O _ _ O
HEBCN
_ _ O O _
RAEMFS
_ _ O _ O

PRIZE WINNER !

Christmas drawings this week, boys and girls, and
35 Schooner Road, Newport Beach
For answers to the puzzles, visit naturesactionguide.org/puzzles
Puzzle Complaint Department: Open 5:00 - 5:05 a.m., February 29th.

CROSSWORD: Creating Habitat by Sarah F. Jayne

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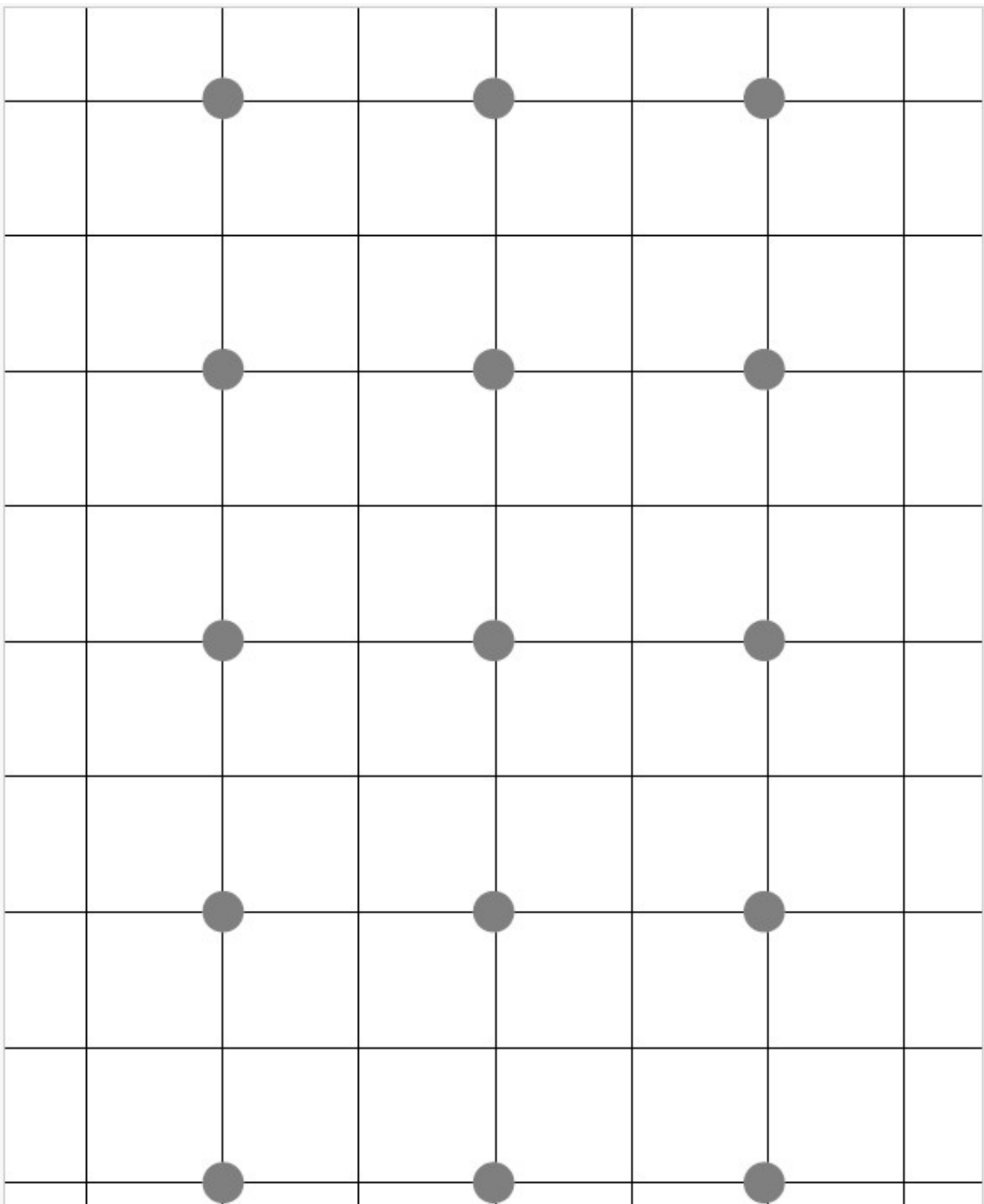
ACROSS

- 1 Bird bath and feeder essential care; 8.5
- 8 You have to ___ some seeds to break dormancy; 10.15
- 11 Upcycled plastic containers for growing plugs; 10.10
- 12 Fungus on cedar and apples
- 13 Smallest state in the U.S.
- 14 Standing dead tree
- 16 Klamath River recently undammed here
- 17 Upper layer of lawn; 11.6
- 18 Plant cutting (rhymes with "trip")
- 21 Wintertime bird treat
- 23 Places foot traffic goes even when there isn't a sidewalk, 9.23
- 27 Cultivar with native parents, 5.2
- 28 French for "sea"
- 30 ___ can make a difference
- 31 Necklace of flowers
- 32 Podophyllum peltatum; a favorite turtle fruit
- 35 Caterpillars need ___ landings under trees, 7.3
- 37 Use ___ toxic household products; 12.11
- 38 ___ can make a difference (text speak)
- 40 Planting a ___ buffer along a stream prevents erosion; 8.11
- 47 Not well
- 44 Goal of wildlife gardening: provide ___; xiii
- 48 Another name for coco peat: coco ___; 10.13
- 49 Quick, easy mark on outside of window to prevent bird strikes
- 50 Just ___ old-fashioned love song
- 52 Do as much ___ you can.
- 53 Sociable animals in the mongoose family: ___ kats
- 55 Registered nurse
- 56 Prong of a pitchfork; 3.9
- 58 Avoid using bird netting because animals get ___ in it.
- 59 Genetic makeup of an organism

DOWN

- 2 Never look directly ___ the sun.
- 3 No show (abbr.)
- 4 Use the ___-step rule to assess insect damage; 12.5
- 5 Keeps track of plants; 11.2
- 6 Spanish for "gold"
- 7 Plants are propagated here; 10.17
- 8 Street (abbr.)
- 9 Chokeberry genus (1st 3 letters)
- 10 A natural fan of nature
- 11 Rose genus
- 14 Pack in or crowd (rhymes with "drive"; verb)
- 15 Maple genus
- 17 Tree removal leftover; 7.10
- 19 Don't ___ furry caterpillars; 2.14
- 20 Digital cameras replaced this
- 22 One of the countries with the fewest national parks
- 24 Soil components: sand, ___, clay
- 25 Ideal planting time: before ___
- 26 Densely grow plants: ___ mulch; 11.9
- 29 Spanish for "the" (masculine)
- 33 Pawpaw genus (1st 3 letters)
- 34 Lightweight, unsustainable potting mix ingredient; 10.13
- 36 Wrap stumps with landscape ___ to avoid herbicide use ; 4.18
- 39 Pores on leaves and stems (1st 4 letters)
- 40 Safest color of light for fireflies and bats; 1.9
- 41 Leave hollow and ___ stems for native bees
- 42 The "yellowhammer state"
- 43 Artificial light at night 1.3
- 44 Milkweed is the ___ plant for monarchs
- 45 Artificial intelligence
- 46 Large woody plant
- 51 Potential hazard for animals
- 54 For example
- 57 To be or not to be, that ___ the question

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Grid (2" x 2") for marking windows to prevent bird glass strikes | Nature's Action Guide | Reproducible. Share freely.