

How to use your wheel

This wheel is a gentle way to keep your family in step with the year. It isn't a checklist or a curriculum – it's a living record of what your own place does as the season turns, so that when you gather, you are already meeting the year where it is.

1 • HANG IT WHERE YOU GATHER

Put it somewhere your family passes every day: the kitchen, the entryway, the wall beside the door where the boots come off. A wheel that is seen daily becomes part of the rhythm. One in a drawer never does.

2 • FIND TODAY TOGETHER

Start at the month on the outer rim, then work your way in: the season and its intention, the flora and fauna, the moon and its date. Let your child be the one to find it – they will remember it far better than if you point.

3 • SET ONE INTENTION EACH SEASON

Just one, written on the season page at the solstice or equinox that opens it, then read aloud together. One intention held gently all season does more for a family than four you have forgotten by week three.

4 • KEEP A LINE FOR EACH MOON

Once a moon, write down one thing you noticed together: a first bloom, a bird you had not heard before, the morning the ice went out. The blank wheel holds a whole year of these, in pencil, so it can be filled again next year.

5 • HONOR THE PAUSE

Two sacred pauses are printed right on the wheel, and the whole summer is left open. During a pause nothing is scheduled and nothing is taught – rest, walk, and let what your children learned settle before the next session begins.

6 • MAKE IT YOUR OWN PLACE

The plants and animals here are Central Oregon's – juniper, ponderosa and high desert at 3,600 feet. If you are somewhere else, use the blank wheel and fill it in from your own watching. The rhythm holds anywhere; the species are always local.

FOR A FAMILY AT HOME

One walk a week on the same short loop. One line on the wheel each moon. The season page read aloud together at the solstice or equinox. That is the whole practice – about twenty minutes a week, and it will carry your children for years.

FOR A LEARNING COHORT

Open every session at the wheel and close every session at the wheel. Three full sessions a year with a pause after each, plus one short summer session in July. The wheel is what turns a day camp or a pop-up into something children feel is continuing, even when you are apart.

One intention, four times a year

Write it together at the gate that opens the season, then read it again at the gate that closes it.

GATHERING

Sep 22 – Dec 21 • Autumn Equinox

Take stock – gather seed, story and supply before the light goes

OUR INTENTION THIS SEASON

WAYS TO PRACTICE TOGETHER

- ☐ Gather and label seed from three plants your children can name.
- ☐ Walk the same short loop once a week and notice what has left.
- ☐ Put up one thing for winter together: fruit, firewood, or a story written down.

DEEPENING

Dec 21 – Mar 20 • Winter Solstice

Stay in – read the tracks, learn the year stripped bare

OUR INTENTION THIS SEASON

WAYS TO PRACTICE TOGETHER

- ☐ Learn five trees by bark and bud alone, with no leaves to help.
- ☐ Follow one set of tracks together until it tells you something.
- ☐ Bundle up on a clear night and watch Orion cross the sky.

AWAKENING

Mar 20 – Jun 21 • Spring Equinox

Note the firsts – first bloom, first return, first thaw

OUR INTENTION THIS SEASON

WAYS TO PRACTICE TOGETHER

- ☐ Write down every first: first bloom, first bird, first bare ground.
- ☐ Adopt one wildflower and visit it weekly, from bud to seed.
- ☐ Learn three birdsongs well enough to name them with your eyes closed.

OFFERING

Jun 21 – Sep 22 • Summer Solstice

Spend it – fruit, shade, water, welcome

OUR INTENTION THIS SEASON

WAYS TO PRACTICE TOGETHER

- ☐ Harvest something together and give most of it away.
- ☐ Spend one whole day outside, sunrise to dark.
- ☐ Bring a friend to the place your family keeps watch.

The pause between sessions

A pause is a resting period between sessions – time to slow down, let what your children learned settle, and begin gently dreaming toward the next. Three fall across the year, one after each session, so that rest is built into the rhythm rather than borrowed from it.

PAUSE ONE

Nov 10 – late January
across the winter solstice

PAUSE TWO

Mar 20 – Apr 26
*five weeks out of the
equinox*

PAUSE THREE

Aug 9 – Sep 21
the long end of summer

FIRST, SLOW DOWN

Before planning anything, sit with this: what did this season ask of your family that you did not quite have to give?

LET IT SETTLE

Name one thing each child can now do, or notice, that they could not at the start of the season.

LOOK AHEAD GENTLY

What is the season ahead already doing out there, without us? Begin there, not with a lesson plan.

WHAT WE ARE SETTING DOWN

A pause is not preparation. Write down what you are putting away for now, so that you can truly rest.

During a pause nothing is scheduled and nothing is taught. Walks, journals, long sleep, the same short loop. The year keeps turning whether or not we gather – and letting your children feel that is the gift of the pause.

Thirteen moons, thirteen things to look for

□ SEEN • DATE _____

Tuck this in a pocket or a pack. The dates are the full moon, but the plants and animals run through the whole moon, not just that one night.

Sep 26	First Harvest	☐ Rubber rabbitbrush in full gold ☐ Big sagebrush blooming	☐ <i>Sandhill cranes staging on the flats</i> ☐ <i>Nighthawks gone south</i>
Oct 26	Hunter's	☐ Western larch turning ☐ Aspen gold in the canyons	☐ <i>Elk bugling ends</i> ☐ <i>Dark-eyed juncos drop to the valley</i>
Nov 24	Beaver	☐ Juniper berries ripe and dusty blue ☐ Ponderosa bark warm in low sun	☐ <i>Bald eagles arrive on the Deschutes</i> ☐ <i>Ravens paired for winter</i>
Dec 24	Cold	☐ Mistletoe visible in bare junipers ☐ Lichen bright on lava rock	☐ <i>Great horned owls begin courting</i> ☐ <i>Chickadees in mixed flocks</i>
Jan 22	Wolf	☐ Willow catkins swelling ☐ Oregon grape leaves gone purple	☐ <i>Coyotes pair and call</i> ☐ <i>Rough-legged hawks on fence posts</i>
Feb 20	Snow	☐ Sagebrush buttercup – the first flower ☐ Alder catkins loosening	☐ <i>Great horned owls on the nest</i> ☐ <i>First red-winged blackbirds</i>
Mar 22	Worm	☐ Yellow bells open ☐ Balsamroot leafing out	☐ <i>Sandhill cranes return</i> ☐ <i>Mountain bluebirds back on the fences</i>
Apr 20	Pink	☐ Arrowleaf balsamroot in sheets ☐ Antelope bitterbrush in bloom	☐ <i>Mountain bluebirds nesting</i> ☐ <i>Sage thrashers singing at dawn</i>
May 20	Flower	☐ Bitterroot on the scablands ☐ Scarlet gilia	☐ <i>Western tanagers arrive</i> ☐ <i>Common nighthawks return at dusk</i>
Jun 19	Strawberry	☐ Wild strawberry fruiting ☐ Silvery lupine at full height	☐ <i>Osprey chicks on the nest</i> ☐ <i>Swallows over every pond</i>
Jul 18	Buck	☐ Indian paintbrush ☐ Penstemon on the rimrock	☐ <i>Mule deer bucks in velvet</i> ☐ <i>Clark's nutcrackers working the pines</i>
Aug 17	Sturgeon	☐ Chokecherry heavy with fruit ☐ Rabbitbrush in tight bud	☐ <i>Vaux's swifts gathering</i> ☐ <i>Young hawks learning to hunt</i>
Sep 15	Second Harvest	☐ Blue elderberry ripe ☐ First aspen yellow	☐ <i>Nighthawks depart</i> ☐ <i>Cranes beginning to stage</i>

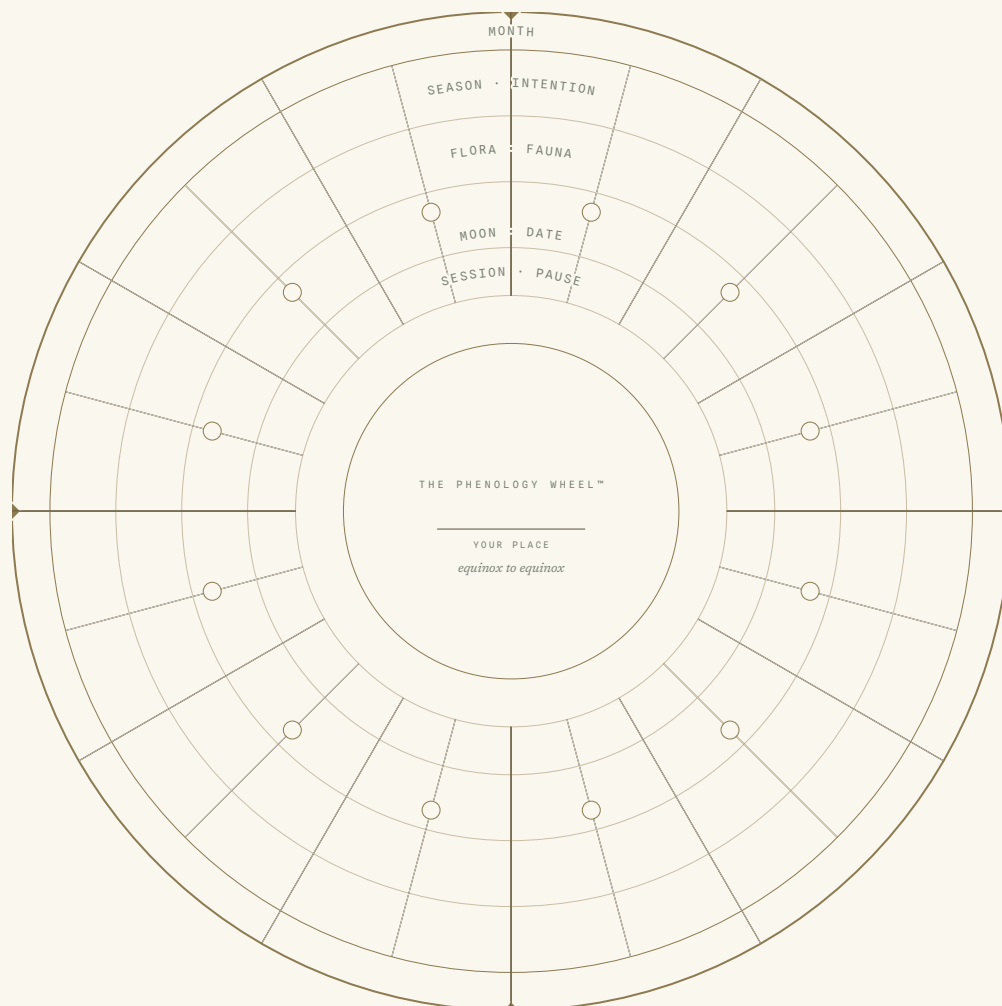
Plants are in roman, animals in italic. Use the line on the right to note where you saw it. Nothing here needs to be picked or collected – noticing together is enough.

The blank wheel

The same rhythm, waiting for your place. Fill it in slowly, from a year of your own watching.

PLACE

YEAR



Begin with the four gates for your latitude and the full moon dates for your year – everything else hangs off those. Then add your season names and intentions, two plants and one animal for each moon as you notice them, and finally your own sessions and pauses.