

Using Nature's Notebook to Observe Phenology



Follow these steps to set up your observation program for plants and/or animals. More details can be found on the Nature's Notebook "How to Observe" page (www.usanpn.org/participate/observe).

1. Select a site to make phenology observations.

A site is the area within which you will look for your chosen animal species, and which encompasses any plants you choose to observe.

2. Select plant and/or animal species to observe.

Explore the list of USA-NPN recommended species at www.usanpn.org/species_search.

Tips for observing plants and animals:

Plants: Observe the same individual plants each time you visit your site. For example, you would observe the same red maple tree in your backyard all through the year.

Animals: Create a checklist of animal species and look for them each time you visit your site. For example, if your checklist included robins, wood frogs, and tent caterpillars, you would record whether you saw or heard each of those species anywhere in your site each time you visited.

3. Register yourself with Nature's Notebook.

Create an account with Nature's Notebook. All you need is a valid email account.

4. Register your site.

Using the online mapping tool, the address of your site, or latitude and longitude, create and describe your site in Nature's Notebook.

5. Register your plants and/or animals.

If you are observing plants, **register your individual plants** with Nature's Notebook. If you are observing animals, **create an Animal Checklist** on Nature's Notebook.

6. Record your observations of plants and/or animals.

Using datasheets that you download from Nature's Notebook, record the following for each of your species:

- **Yes (Y)** – if you saw that the phenophase (e.g., open flowers or mating) **is** occurring
- **No (N)** – if you saw that the phenophase **is not** occurring
- **Uncertain (?)** – if you were not certain whether the phenophase was occurring, or if you did not check for the phenophase

7. Report your data in Nature's Notebook online.

As you collect data during the season, log in to Nature's Notebook and enter the observations you recorded.

Key Resources:

- Nature's Notebook "How to Observe" page - www.usanpn.org/participate/observe
- Frequently Asked Questions page - www.usanpn.org/participate/faq
- Training Videos - www.usanpn.org/participate/guidelines

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