

# RAMSEY READER



## THIS WEEK'S ACTIVITIES:

Take a photo

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Learn about invasive species

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Dive into a good book

## *Environmental Restoration*

Everyone, both kids and adults, can do something positive for our environment. Caring for a natural area, reducing energy consumption, or recycling are just some of the simple ways we can empower our youth to make a positive impact in their own community.



# Citizen science



Citizen science is when the public collects scientific data, and Picture Posts give you a fun and easy way to give it a try. In collaboration with the Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization (VLAWMO), there are now two Picture Posts in Ramsey County parks. They can be found at Tamarack Nature Center and at Sucker Channel in Vadnais Sucker Lake Regional Park.

Picture Posts collect nine photographs as evidence of seasonal changes in the environment. The top of the post is an octagon, the user takes eight photographs, one from each direction: north, northeast, east, southeast, etc. The final photo is one straight up to show the sky.

The photos are uploaded using either the Picture Post website or a free app. By collecting the photos, environmental changes can be tracked over the years. Restoration projects can be evaluated and events that may be impacted by climate change, such as when lakes freeze and when plants bloom, can be monitored.



## TAKE A PHOTO

Visit a picture post at Vadnais Sucker Lake Regional Park. To find it, head to Sucker Lake Pavilion #2 on Sucker Lake Road in Vadnais Heights and walk down to the channel. While you're there, look for the trumpeter swans and turtles that are frequently seen in the area.

Post your photos to [www.picturepost.ou.edu/map.jsp](http://www.picturepost.ou.edu/map.jsp) or search "Picture Post" on your phone's app store.

# *Invasive species*



One of the big reasons that Ramsey County Parks & Recreation does habitat restoration projects is due to the spread of invasive species. Invasive species are living animals, plants or even fungi that are not native to a particular area. Once they arrive, they can cause damage to the environment or human health. Invasives can be found on land and in water and can be very difficult to get rid of once

they are established. Common invasive species found in Minnesota include buckthorn, wild garlic, zebra mussels and many more.



## **PLAY A MATCHING GAME**

**Do you which of the animals or plants listed below are invasive to Minnesota? Draw a line connecting the living thing to the correct category.**  
*Answers can be found on the last page of this activity guide.*

Marsh marigold •

Japanese beetle •

Zebra mussel •

Common loon •

Buckthorn •

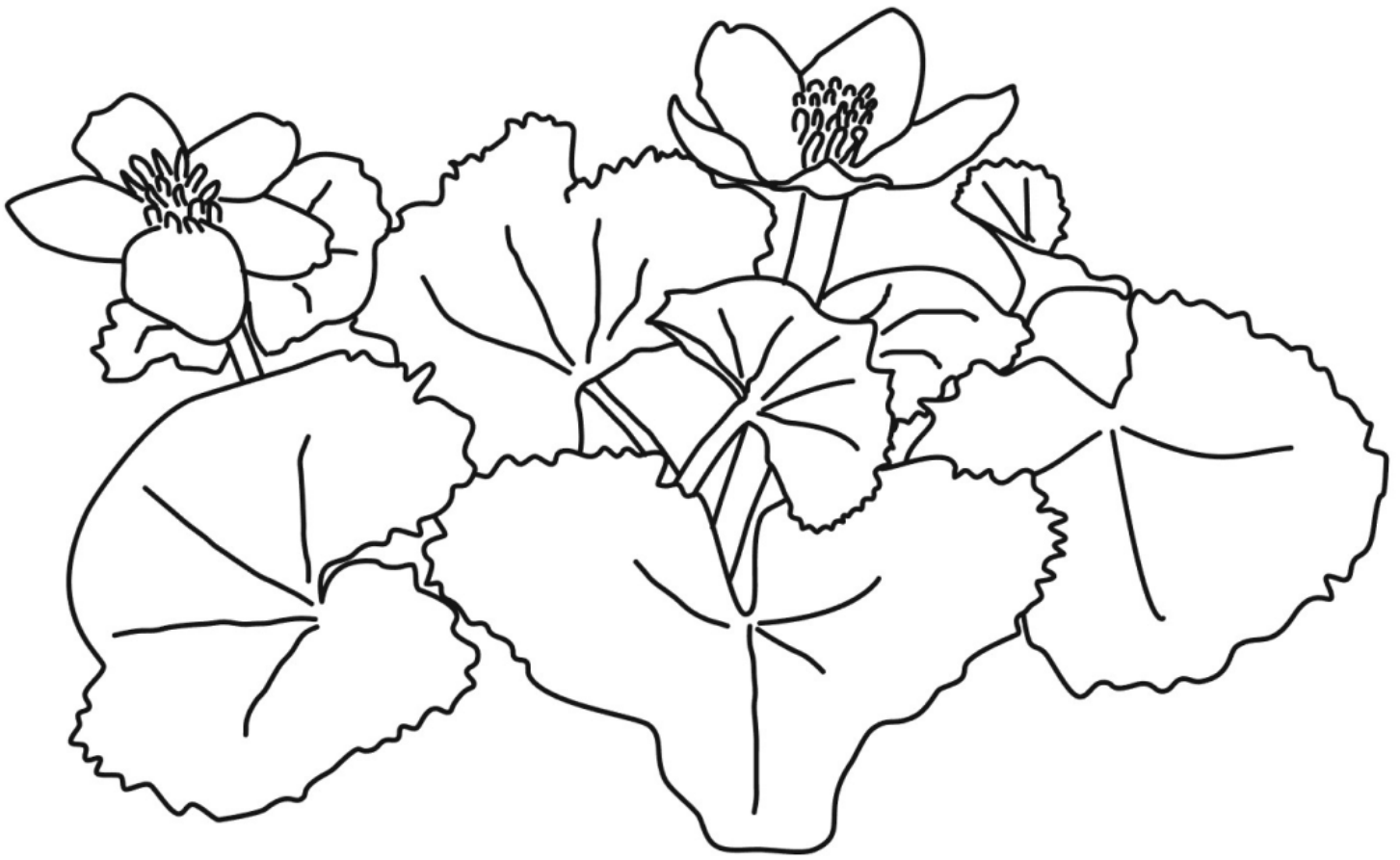
Earthworms •

Emerald ash borer •

Sugar maple •

• **Native species  
(Minnesota)**

• **Invasive species**



# Marsh Marigold



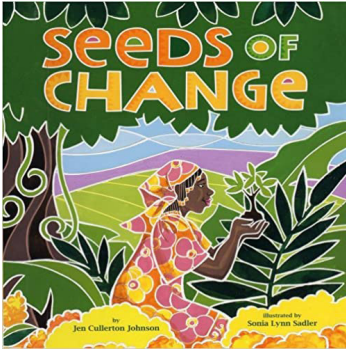
The marsh marigold is a lovely member of the buttercup family of plants. It blooms from mid-April through early June. As the name suggests, it can be found in marshes, ditches and swamps. It is a Minnesota native plant and is frequently used in wetland restoration projects. The marsh marigold can be purchased but handling the plant may cause skin irritation. Try your hand at coloring in this beautiful plant!



# Ramsey readers

Here are some interesting books to get your little learners interested in restoration projects. All of these books are available through Ramsey County Library. Book descriptions from: [www.rclreads.org](http://www.rclreads.org)

## → DIVE INTO A GOOD BOOK



### **Seeds of Change: Planting a Path to Peace**

by Jen Cullerton Johnson

A biography of Kenyan Nobel Peace Prize winner and environmentalist Wangari Maathai, a female scientist who made a stand in the face of opposition to women's rights and her own Greenbelt Movement, an effort to restore Kenya's ecosystem by planting millions of trees.



### **The Bear's Garden**

by Marcie Colleen

A little girl sees an empty lot in a city and imagines what it can be. She sees a place to grow, a place to play, and a place to love. She plants a seed in a tin can and tends it carefully, even once it falls off her windowsill and takes root in the vacant lot. When she has to go away, she leaves her beloved stuffed panda to keep watch — and when she returns, she discovers that her starting point and her bear have brought the community together to create a beautiful garden.



### **Green Green: A Community Gardening Story**

by Marie Lamba and Baldev Lamba

Green grass is wide and fresh and clean for a family to play in, and brown dirt is perfect for digging a garden. But when gray buildings start to rise up and a whole city builds, can there be any room for green space? The neighborhood children think so, and they inspire the community to join together and build a garden for everyone to share in the middle of the city.

# *Learn more*

There's so much more to learn about environmental restoration. Check out these select resources to continue exploring and discovering.

## **Minnesota Department of Natural Resources**

Learn about Minnesota's terrestrial and aquatic invasive species.

[dnr.state.mn.us/invasives](http://dnr.state.mn.us/invasives)

## **Vadnais Lake Area Water Management Organization**

Support lakes, wetlands and streams from home through tips and resources the whole family can take part in.

[vlawmo.org/residents/water-stewardship](http://vlawmo.org/residents/water-stewardship)

## **Minnesota Wildflowers**

Check out this field guide to wild plants that grow in Minnesota, both native and non-native.

[minnesotawildflowers.info](http://minnesotawildflowers.info)

# *Matching game answers*

Native species: marsh marigold, common loon, earthworms, sugar maple

Invasive species: Japanese beetle, zebra mussel, buckthorn, emerald ash borer

## *Did you know?*

That you can help stop the spread of invasive species? That's right! You need to remember this phrase: *Play, Clean, Go!* After you hike or bike, remove plants, animals and mud from your boots, bikes, gear and vehicle. Clean your gear before you enter or leave the recreation area and stay on designated trails. To learn more about how you can help stop the spread of invasive species, visit [www.playcleango.org](http://www.playcleango.org)