

BRANCHING OUT WITH PLANTS!

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO EXPLORING FORT COLLINS FLORA



Typha sp.

PLANTS ARE THE FOUNDATION OF EVERY ECOSYSTEM.

Native plants are especially important because they're adapted to local soil and climate, and support native insects and animals. With your support through sales tax ballot measures, the Fort Collins Natural Areas Department protects native plants by conserving habitats and managing invasive species.

NATIVE PLANTS AND ANIMALS RELY ON EACH OTHER IN COMPLEX, FASCINATING PARTNERSHIPS.

The yucca moth pollinates yucca flowers and lays its eggs inside, giving larvae a safe place to grow.



Beavers feed on and harvest cottonwood trees, while wetlands created by their activity helps new trees grow.

Prairie dogs eat grasses and dig burrows that aerate the soil, keeping the prairie ecosystem healthy.



DISCOVER PLANTS LIKE A BOTANIST

SEASONS OF A PLANT –

Choose one plant and visit it during each season. Watch how it changes – look for new leaves, flowers, seeds, or changing colors.

A RAINBOW OF PLANTS –

Can you find plants in every color of the rainbow? Draw them or take photos. Don't forget the stems, seed pods, and leaves – they can have fascinating colors too!



LEAF SHAPE HUNT –

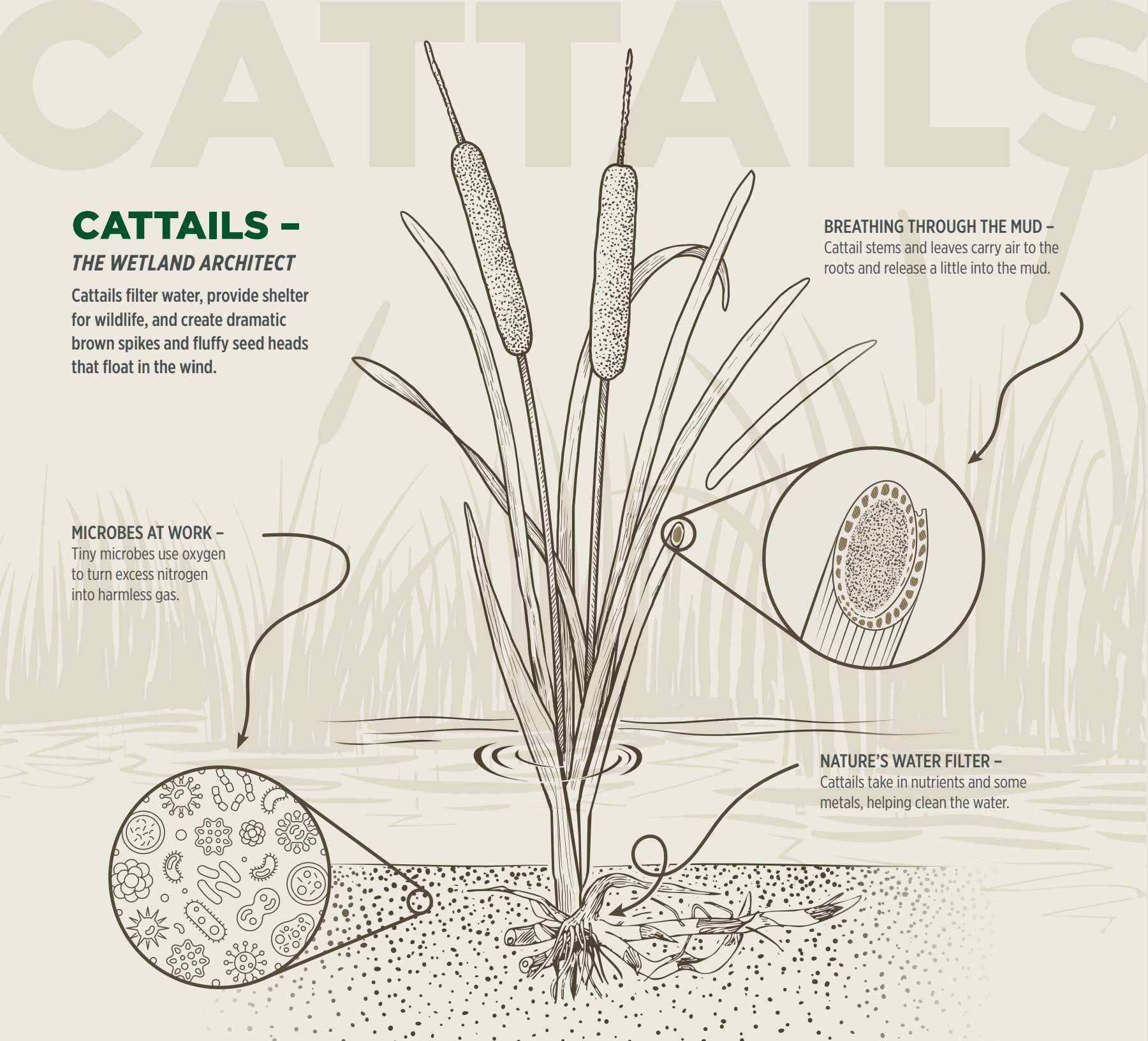
Look for leaves shaped like hearts, ovals, stars, or arrows. Sketch or photograph the different shapes you find!

PLANT PATTERNS –

Examine bark, flowers, or seed pods closely. Do you see lines, spirals, or other repeating patterns? Try tracing the patterns with your finger in the air or on a piece of paper to notice how they flow.



- STAY ON TRAILS
- LOOK, DON'T PICK - COLLECTING IS ILLEGAL
- PROTECT POLLINATORS



CATTAILS – THE WETLAND ARCHITECT

Cattails filter water, provide shelter for wildlife, and create dramatic brown spikes and fluffy seed heads that float in the wind.

MICROBES AT WORK –
Tiny microbes use oxygen to turn excess nitrogen into harmless gas.

BREATHING THROUGH THE MUD –
Cattail stems and leaves carry air to the roots and release a little into the mud.

NATURE’S WATER FILTER –
Cattails take in nutrients and some metals, helping clean the water.

PLANTS IN THE CITY

Discover these native plants throughout Fort Collins, including Kingfisher Point, Magpie Meander, McMurry, North Shields Ponds, Red Fox Meadow, and Riverbend Ponds natural areas.



Populus deltoides
ssp. monilifera

PLAINS COTTONWOOD –

The river’s engineer

Plains cottonwoods shape entire river corridors—providing food, shelter, and nesting sites for more than 80% of local bird species.



Asclepias speciosa

SHOWY MILKWEED –

A monarch nursery

This striking wildflower is the only food for monarch caterpillars and a summertime magnet for pollinators.

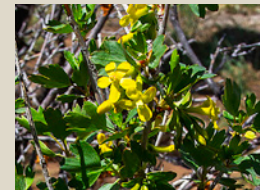


Cornus sericea
ssp. sericea

RED-OSIER DOGWOOD –

The winter showstopper

With vivid red stems and bird-feeding berries, dogwood adds color and life to wetlands all year long.

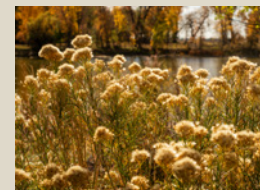


Ribes aureum

GOLDEN CURRANT –

The scent of spring

Fragrant yellow flowers, juicy berries, and fiery fall leaves make this shrub a four-season favorite.



Ericameria nauseosa

RABBITBRUSH –

The late-season bloomer

When most plants fade, rabbitbrush bursts into golden bloom, feeding pollinators into the fall.

CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE AT KESTREL FIELDS

The Native Seed Increase pilot project cultivates local **ecotypic** plants, which are naturally adapted to thrive in our climate and soil. By harvesting and storing their seeds, we create a sustainable supply that supports ongoing habitat restoration and helps native ecosystems flourish.



PLANT YOUR OWN NATIVE PLANTS TO
BRING MORE NATURE INTO THE CITY!

Learn how to get started and find resources at:
fcgov.com/natureinthecity



FOR ASSISTANCE VIEWING OR READING ANY CITY DOCUMENTS,

please call 970-221-6515 (V/TDD: Dial 711 for Relay Colorado) for assistance or contact the City's ADA Coordinator via email adacoordinator@fortcollins.gov or phone: 970-416-4254.

[A Request for Reasonable Accommodation](#) can also be completed online.

For more information about the City's Non-Discrimination policy and Accessibility efforts, visit fortcollins.gov/Non-Discrimination.

