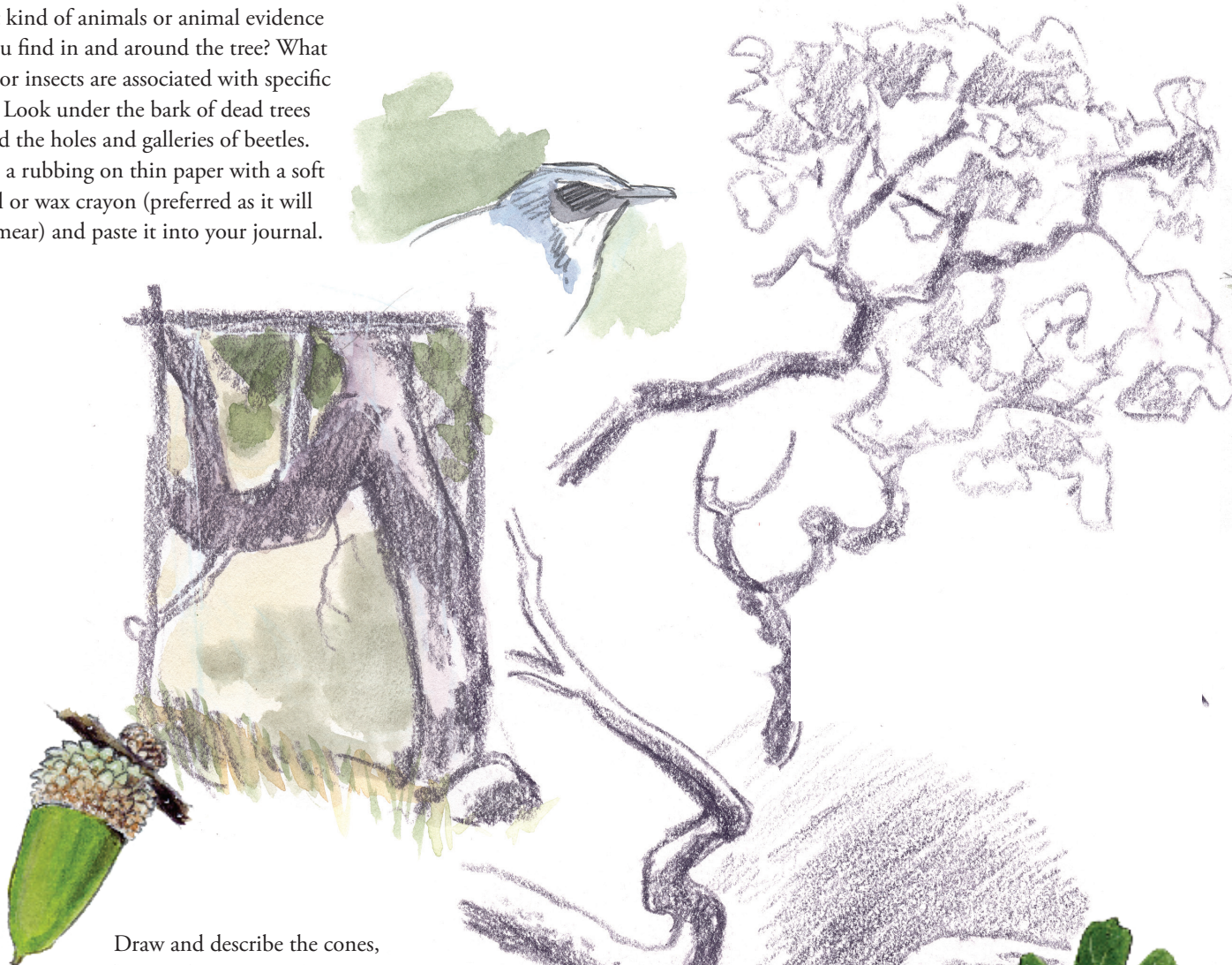


# RETHINKING "DRAWING A TREE"

Explore a tree rather than simply composing a portrait. Get to know a tree from many distances and scales from the shapes of acorns or leaves to who lives in, on, or under it.

What kind of animals or animal evidence do you find in and around the tree? What birds or insects are associated with specific trees? Look under the bark of dead trees to find the holes and galleries of beetles. Make a rubbing on thin paper with a soft pencil or wax crayon (preferred as it will not smear) and paste it into your journal.



Draw and describe the cones, flowers, fruits, or seeds.



Try drawing a single leaf life size. I often press a fallen leaf onto my sketchbook, trace around it, and use that to start my painting. With a soft leaf or a branch full of needles, try drawing little dots along the edge instead of making a complete line. The dots or traced lines will help you make a drawing with perfect proportions. Try to match the colors as exactly as you can on the side of



The view from up under the tree is overwhelming. Simplify your task by drawing a small frame and sketching a smaller portion of the tree. Because you are dealing with a focused area, you will be able to include much more detail and nuance than had you taken on the entire tree.



Many trees have a characteristic swing or angle to the branches. Start to collect sketches of distinctive branches.

On cone bearing trees, look for the small pollen cones in addition to the large seed bearing cones.

Explore the texture of the bark. How does it change from one tree species to another? How does the bark texture change as a branch ages?