I'm Celeste Dufour, a 3rd year Biochemistry/Biotechnology student at Michigan State University and intern at the MSU Herbarium. I have been interested in digital art and design for many years. When I started at the Herbarium in September of 2019, I was drawn to the aesthetic value of plants and wanted to find ways to use the MSU Herbarium’s specimens as art. I completed some smaller projects that merged art and botany and also spent many hours on digitization projects; these both helped me learn how to work with specimens as digital media.

COVID-19 meant our outreach at the MSU Herbarium had to grow in new ways to accommodate virtual learning, instead of the usual in-person events or tours. It also meant that my previous project to create displays for the Herbarium was not as worthwhile, given we couldn’t have visitors. Fall 2020 I brainstormed new project ideas that incorporated both specimens as art and our social media. This led to the coloring book Michigan Trees!

I thoroughly enjoyed creating this book and getting to flex my creative muscles through the whole process by working with and learning about a wide variety of specimens. I hope those who put this book together and color in the pages, or color in even just a single page, not only find enjoyment in it, but also feel inspired to learn about and appreciate herbaria, the specimens they contain, and some of Michigan’s wonderful native trees.

A great big thank you goes out to all who have helped move this project along smoothly by providing support, advice, and assistance.

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