



Harvest for your Health

*SEARHC encourages harvesting and processing of local plants and berries.  
Traditional foods can positively contribute to your health.*



Southeast Alaska

# Traditional Foods Guide

**THE TRADITIONAL FOODS GUIDE** exists to promote awareness of the physical, mental, and emotional benefits of harvesting and eating traditional foods. We encourage you to use local resources whenever possible. Decreased blood sugar and lower risk of type 2 diabetes are some of the benefits of eating traditional foods. Traditional practices include giving thanks for the natural gifts that are available to us, attempting to use all of the food (do not waste), and remembering to leave enough for the plant to reflourish. Harvest only what you will use.

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**Disclaimer:** Check with your healthcare provider, especially if you have special dietary needs. Do not use plants to substitute for any medication or treatment without advice from your healthcare provider. Additionally, there are poisonous plants that look similar to edible plants. Please consult a knowledgeable person and take the time to learn how to properly identify plants. A list of poisonous plants can be found at the back of the guide to help avoid misidentification. The distributor of this guide and those associated with it cannot be responsible for actions taken by readers.

**LOOK FOR THIS  
SYMBOL FOR  
WARNINGS ABOUT  
INDIVIDUAL PLANTS:**



**WARNING**

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This traditional foods guide is made possible through the SEARHC Health Promotion Department, the Kake and Wrangell Traditional Foods advisory teams, and several volunteers in Southeast Alaska. Gunalchéesh to the following individuals for sharing their invaluable knowledge of plants and/or with the Tlingít Language:

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Marge Byrd · Dawn Hutchinson · Matt Goff · Mike Jackson · Roby Littlefield  
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# Spring Harvest *[Taakw.eetí]*

|   |     |   |    |
|---|-----|---|----|
| Beach Greens                                  | 1   | Labrador Tea   <b>S'ikshaldéen</b>                      | 15 |
| Black Seaweed   <b>Laak'ásk</b>               | 2   | Nettle, Stinging Nettle   <b>T'óok'</b>                 | 16 |
| Bladderwrack, Popweed   <b>Tayeidí</b>        | 3   | Plantain   <b>Léit' Kayáani</b>                         | 17 |
| Bull Kelp   <b>Geesh</b>                      | 4   | Ribbon Seaweed   <b>K'áach'</b>                         | 18 |
| Clover, Shamrock   <b>Kayaaní Tlaaxí</b>      | 5   | Saltbush  | 19 |
| Dandelion   <b>Yéil Kágu</b>                  | 6   | Sea Lettuce   | 20 |
| Devil's Club   <b>S'áxt'</b>                  | 7-8 | Siberian Miner's Lettuce, Siberian Spring Beauty        | 21 |
| Fiddlehead Fern   <b>K'wálx</b>               | 9   | Skunk Cabbage   <b>X'áal'</b>                           | 22 |
| Field Mint, Wild Mint   <b>Kóoshdaa Náakw</b> | 10  | Sitka Spruce   <b>Shéiyi</b>                            | 23 |
| Fireweed, Wild Asparagus   <b>Lóol</b>        | 11  | Watermelon Berry, Twisted Stalk   <b>Tleikw Kahínti</b> | 24 |
| Goose Tongue   <b>Suktéitl'</b>               | 12  | Willow   <b>Ch'áal'</b>                                 | 25 |
| Hemlock   <b>Yán</b>                          | 13  | Yellow Cedar   <b>Xáay</b>                              | 26 |
| Wild Celery, Cow Parsnip   <b>Yaana.eit</b>   | 14  |   |    |

# Summer Harvest *[Kutaan]*

|   |    |  |    |
|---|----|--|----|
| Alaska Blueberry   <b>Kanat'á</b>             | 27 | Jacobs Berry, Bunchberry   <b>K'eikaxétl'k</b> | 37 |
| Beach Asparagus, Glasswort   <b>Sukkáadzi</b> | 28 | Nagoonberry   <b>Neigóon</b>                   | 38 |
| Burnet  | 29 | Pineapple Weed, Alaskan Chamomile              | 39 |
| Cloudberry   <b>Néx'w</b>                     | 30 | Puffball Mushroom   <b>S'igeekáawu Léix'u</b>  | 40 |
| Elderberry   <b>Yéil'</b>                     | 31 | Salmonberry   <b>Was'x'aan Tléigu</b>          | 41 |
| Geranium                                      | 32 | Sea Lovage                                     | 42 |
| Gray Currant, Gooseberry   <b>Shaax</b>       | 33 | Sour Dock   <b>Tl'aak'wách'</b>                | 43 |
| Highbush Cranberry   <b>Kaxwéix</b>           | 34 | Strawberry   <b>Shákw</b>                      | 44 |
| Huckleberry   <b>Tleikatánk</b>               | 35 | Thimbleberry   <b>Ch'eex'</b>                  | 45 |
| Indian Rice, Chocolate Lily   <b>Kóox</b>     | 36 | Violet   | 46 |

# Fall Harvest *[Yeis]*

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Bog Cranberry   <b>K'eishkaháagu</b>         | 47 |
| Crabapple   <b>Lingít X'áax'i</b>            | 48 |
| Lowbush Cranberry, Lingonberry   <b>Dáxw</b> | 49 |
| Horsetail   <b>Taan X'adaadzaayi</b>         | 50 |
| Rosehip   <b>K'inchéiyi</b>                  | 51 |
| Yarrow   <b>Kagakwl'idi</b>                  | 52 |

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## *Appendix*

|                         |    |
|-------------------------|----|
| <b>Poisonous Plants</b> | 53 |
| <b>References</b>       | 55 |



# Beach Greens

## Harvesting

Beach greens can be harvested May through August. Beach greens flourish on moist, sandy shores from Southeast Alaska to the Arctic. Beach greens have a nice mild flavor that becomes stronger throughout the season.

## Preparing

Cut the young growth on top of the plants before flowers appear and discard the stems. Wash any grit and sand from the

leaves. Beach greens can be eaten fresh or added to soup, salad or stir-fry. They are also delicious fermented (similar to sauerkraut) or lightly steamed with butter.

## Preserving

Greens will keep in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to one week. They can also be cleaned, put into freezer bags and frozen or jarred.



## Laak'ask [Black Seaweed]

### Harvesting

Black seaweed, or “Tlingít Popcorn,” can be gathered during a minus tide in early spring. Timing is important because the ribbons can be short and hard to pick if harvested too early, or brown and may contain snails if harvested too late. The seaweed ribbons should be elastic and stretchy.

### Preparing

To dry fresh seaweed, lay it out on a large cloth under the sun. Kelp and

other seaweed pieces can be picked off as it dries. Drying can be finished in the oven on low heat if you are unable to dry completely in the sun. Dried seaweed can be eaten plain as a snack or chopped and added to soups and salads. Seaweed can also be eaten raw or boiled. Eating too much may cause gas or an upset stomach.

### Preserving

Seaweed will keep indefinitely if dried thoroughly.



## Tayeidí [Bladderwrack, Popweed]

### Harvesting

Bladderwrack is a seaweed best harvested in spring or early summer. It can be found attached to rocks along beaches. To harvest, cut with scissors above holdfasts to get the inflated tips.

### Preparing

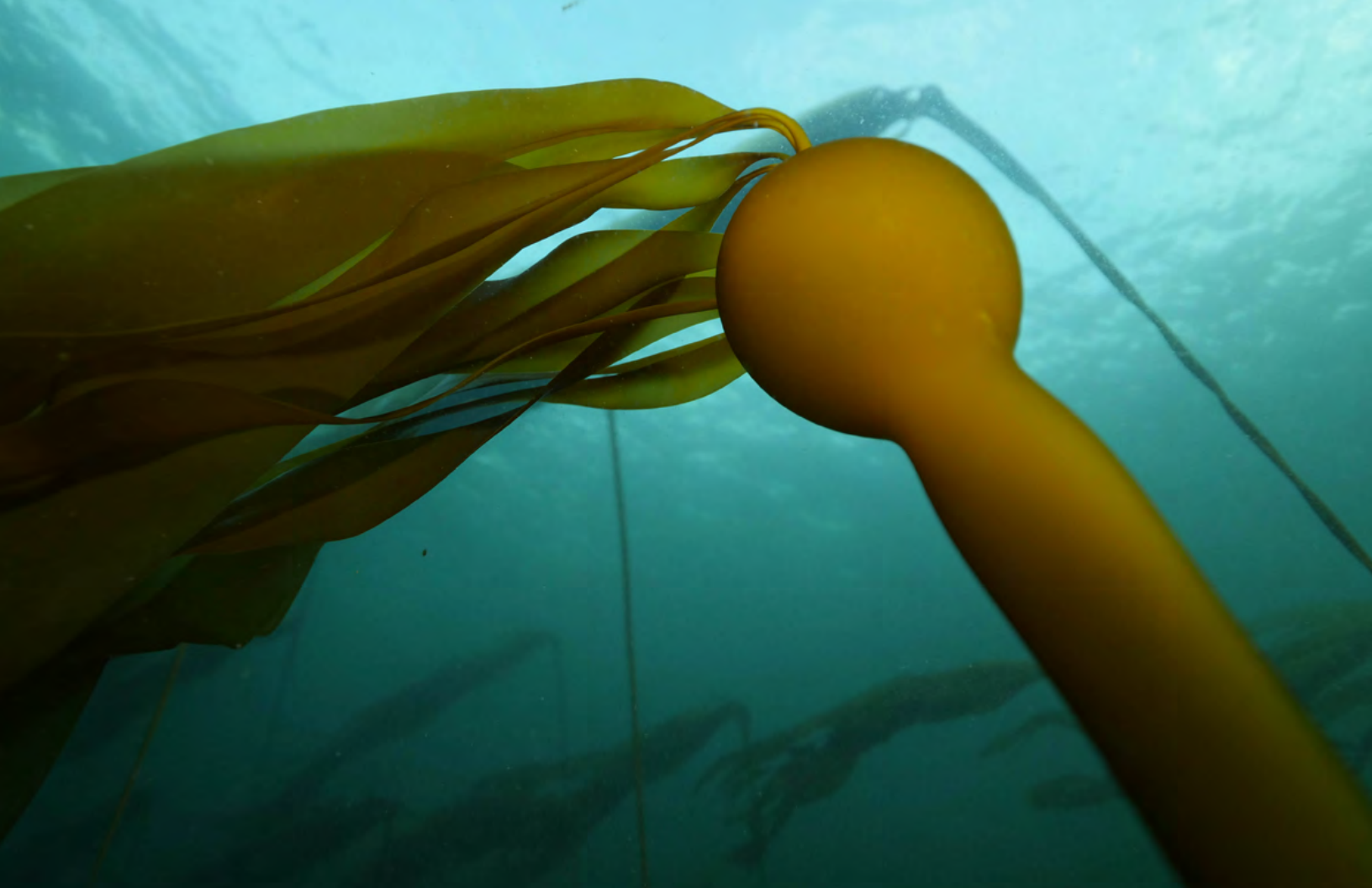
Bladderwrack can be eaten fresh or added to stir-fry, soups, sauces, quiches or omelets. It can be baked until crisp for a snack, or steamed with other seafood to add flavor. To use as a tea or soup starter, pour boiling water over dried seaweed.

### Preserving

Dry and grind to use as a seasoning.

*\*Bladderwrack is a great source of iodine that is essential for our health. Without iodine, the thyroid cannot produce enough hormones.*





## Geesh *[ Bull Kelp ]*

### Harvesting

Bull kelp is prime from April to June. To harvest in the ocean, use a boat. Kelp is attached to the ocean floor and can grow up to 200 feet long in one year. Using a sharp knife, cut down as far as you can reach. You can also look for freshly uprooted kelp on shore after a storm during a low tide. Be careful not to over harvest as kelp is home to many species in the ocean.

### Preparing

Peel hollow stems immediately after harvesting. Cut stems into rings and pickle or marinate for a delicious snack. You can also stuff the kelp with meat or vegetables and bake. Try wrapping fresh kelp blades around fish, cover with foil, and bake. Serve kelp blades as a hot vegetable.

### Preserving

Bull kelp is often pickled or jarred for preservation.



## Kayaaní Tlaaxí [*Clover, Shamrock*]

### Harvesting

The clover is not native to Alaska, but it has been used as a traditional food by natives of British Columbia. It is not used as much today, but it is easily accessible and edible. Harvest the leaves in spring through summer before flowers appear. Blossoms should be picked before they turn brown.

### Preparing

Clover blossoms may be used to make honey. Leaves can be eaten plain or added to salads. Dried leaves can be added to

baked goods. Leaves can be steamed as a potherb or added to casseroles, soups, and stir-fries. Some people soak them in salt water for a couple hours to help with digestibility. Eat in moderation to prevent an upset stomach.

### Preserving

Clovers can be dried and stored. Dried blossoms can be used in your bath for fragrance and to soothe the skin.



## Yéil Kágu [Dandelion]

### Harvesting

Dandelion leaves and roots can be picked in early spring. Flowers should be in full bloom before harvesting. Avoid areas where weed killers have been used.

### Preparing

Dandelion leaves are a great addition to salads or cooked as a vegetable. Roots can be added to stir-fry or roasted and ground as a coffee substitute. Try mixing tomato juice, dandelion, chickweed,

and other greens for a nutritious drink. Flowers are great for making jelly, wine, or liquors.

### Medicinal

Dandelion roots are used as skin and liver tonics. Boil roots and drink to lower blood pressure, or use as diuretic for water retention. The white milk in older plants is used to help remove warts and corns.



## S'áxt [Devil's Club]

### Harvesting

Devil's Club is the most important plant to the Tlingít people because of its strong medicinal qualities. For this same reason, caution should be taken when using the plant. Devil's Club is found close to the beach in wooded areas. Look for tall shrubs with large leaves and bright red berries. Leaf shoots can be harvested in spring while thorns are soft.

### Preparing

Devil's Club is used for tea and tonic as a preventative medicine for numerous ailments. Use gloves and a knife or brush cutter to gather a few stalks, then scrape off the thorns and outer bark with the backside of the knife. Use a sharp knife to cut the inner bark into peels, then boil the bark. Tender shoots can be eaten raw or added to soups.

*(continued on following page)*



(continued)

## S'áxt [ Devil's Club ]

### Preserving

Devil's Club can be dried, boiled or baked to preserve. Stems can be used to make drum sticks.

### Medicinal

Be careful when using Devil's club to prepare medicines. The plant has different properties depending on where it grows. Devil's Club bark has been used on top of hot rocks in sweat lodges.

Devil's Club berries are poisonous, but can be ground up and used on the scalp for severe dandruff. Devil's club branches are traditionally hung above doorways to keep away bad spirits.



**WARNING**

*Berries are poisonous. Caution: A doctor's supervision is important for diabetics when consuming Devil's Club because it may lower blood sugar levels.*



## K'wálx [ *Fiddlehead Fern* ]

### Harvesting

Fiddlehead ferns begin to grow in the spring right after the snow melts. Gathering time is usually limited to about three weeks in May. To harvest, break the stem off of the tightly coiled fiddleheads.

### Preparing

Wash and clean off the papery, brown chaff. Boil in water with a little salt until soft. Drain water and add butter to taste. Ferns can be steamed or sautéed, and eaten as a side dish, or added to casseroles and pastas.

### Preserving

Fiddlehead ferns can be frozen, canned or pickled but some say they should be eaten fresh for best flavor.



**WARNING** *The poisonous plant Bracken Fern looks similar. See the poisonous plant section for more information.*



## Kóoshdaa Náakw [ *Field Mint, Wild Mint* ]

### Harvesting

Field mint can be gathered in late spring before flowers bloom. Use scissors to harvest, remembering to leave enough for the plant to reflower.

### Preparing

Field mint has a pleasant fragrance and makes a nice tea or mint julep. Young leaves can be added to salads. Make mint jelly to eat with meat such as lamb.

### Preserving

Leaves can be dried for later use.

### Medicinal

Try mint tea to relieve menstrual cramps, upset stomach, or to help with morning sickness or sea sickness. A cool mint compress will help with headaches. Inhaling vapors of mint tea will help with sinus trouble. Mint can be used as a natural body deodorant and a soothing fragrance in baths.



# Lóol *[Fireweed, Wild Asparagus]*

## Harvesting

Fireweed shoots can be harvested in early spring. They should be violet in color. Fireweed leaves and buds can be gathered before the flowers bloom.

## Preparing

To clean, rinse in warm water using a colander, and pat dry with a towel. Fireweed stems and shoots are eaten fresh, boiled, or steamed like asparagus. Leaves, shoots, and buds can be added into salads. Blossoms add wonderful

flavor and color to salads or can be used to make honey or jelly.

## Preserving

Keep in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to one week. Blossoms and leaves can be laid on a paper towel to dry for two days. Shoots can be bundled and hung to dry for a few days then put in seal oil to preserve. Fireweed may become tough and bitter as it ages.





## Suktéitl' [Goose Tongue]

### Harvesting

Harvest goose tongue along the coast from spring to early summer. If harvesting later, collect the young growth in the center of the plant.

### Preparing

Goose tongue can be eaten raw or cooked, and has a nice, slightly salty flavor. Chopped leaves can be added to salads, casseroles, and stir-fry. It makes a great side dish topped with garlic butter.

### Preserving

Goose tongue can be canned or frozen.

### Medicinal

Mashed goose tongue may be applied to relieve itching from mosquito bites.



**WARNING**

*Goose tongue resembles the plant Arrowgrass, and the two often grow close together. See the poisonous plant section for more information.*



## Yán [Hemlock]

### Harvesting

Hemlock is one of the most common trees of Southeast Alaska. Branches are harvested in the spring.

### Preparing

Hemlock branches (haaw) are cut and put in the ocean during herring season. The herring then lay their eggs on the branches. The branches can be quickly dipped in simmering water with seal oil to blanch the eggs. Hemlock does not transfer flavor to the eggs. Traditional use

includes carefully removing bark from young trees in the spring. The small strips are heated by covering them in skunk cabbage leaves and burying under a fire. When the bark is thoroughly cooked, it is pressed into cakes and eaten.

### Preserving

Inner hemlock bark can be boiled until soft and eaten fresh or jarred.



## Yaana.eit [ Wild Celery, Cow Parsnip ]

### Harvesting

Wild celery starts to show in April. The young stalks and stems are collected before the flowers mature. There is about a two week window to harvest the young growth. Look along beaches for a tall plant with small white flowers. Wild celery has a strong smell. Use gloves while harvesting as the juice of the plant may irritate and can sometimes blister skin.


### Preparing

Peel and wash stems. The young stalks can be used in place of celery for recipes.

Immature flowers can be peeled and roasted or boiled. They are mild and sweet despite the strong odor of the leaves and outer skin. Try eating with seal oil while the leaves are tender.

### Preserving

Young leaves can be preserved in seal oil.

 **WARNING** *Water hemlock is a similar looking plant that is deadly poisonous. See the poisonous plant section for more information.*



## S'ikshaldéen [Labrador Tea]

### Harvesting

Labrador tea is found in muskegs or bogs. Leaves may be harvested any time of the year. Labrador tea can be identified by the brown, felt-like texture on the underside of the leaves and white flowers on top of the plant. Labrador tea has a distinct scent if you crush the leaf in your hand.

### Preparing

Boil in water for about five minutes and strain into a cup. Add lemon and honey or combine with other teas. Labrador tea is used alone for medicinal purposes such

as colds, arthritis, and digestive problems. Use in moderation to prevent looseness of the bowels.

### Preserving

Spread the tea out on a sheet in a warm spot for a couple days. Be sure tea dries completely or it can mold. Store in a sealed container.



**WARNING**

*Identification is important since the toxic Bog Rosemary and Bog Laurel plants look similar. See the poisonous plant section for more information.*



## T'óok' [ *Nettle, Stinging Nettle* ]

### Harvesting

Nettle can be gathered in early spring. Look for deep green leaves with serrated edges and tiny green flowers. The plant is approximately three to seven feet tall. Use gloves and scissors to harvest new growth when plants are less than one foot high. Do not use older greens with flowers as they can irritate the kidneys.

### Preparing

Cooked nettle tastes like spinach. It can be steamed, lightly boiled, or added to stir-fry. After boiling, use the cooking

water for soup or tea. Add dried nettles to a breaded mix or seasoning for nutrient benefits. Use nettle juice to treat nettle rash.

### Preserving

Summer leaves can be frozen or dried and used for herbal tea.

### Medicinal

Nettles are eaten to help with anemia, eczema, menstruation, or lactation problems.



## Léit' Kayáani [Plantain]

### Harvesting

Plantain leaves can be picked in the spring. Seeds can be gathered in late summer. To harvest, rub the stalk between your hands and gently blow to remove the chaff and collect seeds.

### Preparing

Leaves can be added to salads, stir-fry, steamed vegetable dishes, or can be cooked like spinach. Seeds are used similar to poppy seeds in breads and muffins.

### Preserving

Plantain does not dry well and is best if used fresh or used for salve. Seeds can be toasted.

### Medicinal

Plantain is known for its ability to draw out infection by boiling the plant in water and applying it to wound repeatedly.



**WARNING** There are some reported allergic reactions to plantain.



## K'áach' [ *Ribbon Seaweed* ]

### Harvesting

Ribbon seaweed is found on rocks during low tide and can be harvested from April to June. Ribbon seaweed is not as abundant as black seaweed. It is several inches wide and eight to ten inches long. To harvest, cut blades from holdfast. Rinse in seawater and pick off any shells. Be careful not to harvest all of the fronds in order to save some for other people, preserve habitat for living creatures, and for continued growth.

### Preparing

Seaweed can be eaten fresh as a snack, added to soups, sandwiches, or stir-fry. Chop and add dried seaweed to spreads or dips. To make chips, fry dried seaweed in a few drops of olive oil and stir until crisp. Some people dry it right away, others let it soak overnight to soften it prior to drying.

### Preserving

Dry in the sun with a light breeze on a large cloth such as a sheet. This seaweed will have a leathery texture and will be pliable after drying.



# Saltbush

## Harvesting

Saltbush shoots and leaves can be gathered in the spring. The plant grows up to three and a half feet tall with triangular leaves and small white or rose colored flowers. Seeds are collected in late summer to early fall.

## Preparing

Saltbush is like wild spinach. It has a nice salty taste to it. It can be eaten fresh, added to salads, or cooked in soups. Try sautéing leaves with olive oil, salt, and adding grated cheese. Seeds can

be ground and used to thicken soups and stews, or mixed with flour to add nutritional value when making bread, biscuits, and other baked goods.

## Preserving

Seeds can be roasted and ground for later use.





# Sea Lettuce

## Harvesting

Though not a traditional food, sea lettuce is gathered and used today. It has bright green, thin, transparent blades and grows on rocks. Harvest at low tide in spring to summer.

## Preparing

Rinse in seawater and pick any seashells off of the blades. Young sea lettuce can be used in salads and added to stir-fry and noodle dishes. Boil for one to two minutes to use as a potherb.

## Preserving

Dry and crush into powder with a blender to store for seasoning. To dry, place on a sunny windowsill or in a food dehydrator. Sea lettuce will dry quickly and have a leathery, pliable texture after drying.



# Siberian Miner's Lettuce

*[ Siberian Spring Beauty ]*

## Harvesting

Siberian miner's lettuce can be gathered in the springtime around shady, wet coastal areas. Plants may grow up to six inches tall. Stems tend to be stringy and are not usually eaten. The leaves have a nice, mild flavor. To gather, pinch off leaves and flowers. Leave enough flowers to reflowerish.

## Preparing

Leaves can be added to salads, cooked as a green vegetable, or used as a substitute for lettuce. The leaves are high in vitamins A and C. The small white to rose-colored flowers may be used as a nice edible garnish for salads, cakes, or spreads.

## Preserving

Best if used fresh.



# X'ÁAL' [Skunk Cabbage]

## Harvesting

Skunk cabbage grows in marshy, swampy areas. Collect leaves in the Spring while tender. To harvest the roots, wear tall rubber boots and use a shovel to pull them up.


## Preparing

Traditionally, skunk cabbage was used to wrap salmon prior to burying and cooking it in the ground. Today, we can cook in an oven or over hot coals to get the moist salmon results. Place skunk cabbage leaves in hot water to soften if needed, then fold around fish to cover and bake.

Use a deep pan with a little water at 350 degrees for about 30 minutes. Discard leaves after baking.

## Preserving

Dried skunk cabbage roots have been used for medicinal tea to help alleviate cramps, coughs, and respiratory problems. To dry, wash roots well, pat with a towel, and turn them over until thoroughly dried.

 **Skunk cabbage has oxalate crystals that can be painful and damage tissues if consumed.**  
**WARNING**



## Shéiyi [Sitka Spruce]

### Harvesting

Harvest bright green, newly grown spruce tips and inner bark in the spring. It is best to pick tips from older trees.

### Preparing

Clean with warm water and remove any brown needles. Add fresh spruce tips to your tea pot, lightly soak for five minutes, then strain and enjoy a nice cup of tea. Spruce tips are a nice addition to green salads. The inner bark is traditionally eaten raw, boiled, or dried. It can also be ground into flour. There is a three week window of time where spruce tips can be

collected for jelly. Tips can be pinched to check for juice.

### Preserving

Tips can be frozen in a single layer, then transferred to freezer bags to preserve.

### Medicinal

Boil and steam needles and inhale steam to help with sinus infections. Spruce sap and melted pitch can be used to protect and cover wounds, as well as draw out infection.



# Tleikw Kahínti [ *Watermelon Berry, Twisted Stalk* ]

## Harvesting

Watermelon berries were not traditionally used by Tlingít people but are used today. Watermelon berries grow in shady, moist areas and can be picked in summer when red. Plants are generally one to three feet high. Gather stems and leaves in early spring.

## Preparing

The tender, young stems can be eaten fresh off the trail or added to salads. Berries contain a lot of water and some people say they taste similar to

a cucumber. Wash berries and store covered for up to two to three days in the refrigerator. Berries can be used for jellies and syrups or dried and added to baked goods.

## Medicinal

Berries can have a laxative effect, explaining the nickname “scoot berry.”



**WARNING** *The deadly False Hellebore plant frequently grows close by with similar looking shoots. See the poisonous plant section for more information.*



## Ch'áal' [Willow]

### Harvesting

Willow leaves and shoots can be gathered in early spring. Pick leaves while they are bright green.

### Preparing

Peel shoots to get to the inner bark. Leaves can be eaten plain or added to salads, sandwiches or casseroles. Willow contains salicin, a natural aspirin substitute. Chew on willow leaves to help with a headache. Willow can also be added to foot baths for sore feet. Whole

leafy branches can be used in saunas to increase circulation. Alaska Natives used various preparations of willow to treat toothaches, stomachaches, diarrhea, dysentery, and dandruff. Flexible willow stems were also used for making baskets, bows, arrows, scoops, and fish traps.

### Preserving

Traditionally, willow were soaked in seal oil to eat in the summer.



## Xáay [ *Yellow Cedar* ]

### Harvesting

Yellow Cedar trees have an inner bark that is yellow and has a potato-like odor. The trees grow to about 100 feet tall and have branches that droop and spread.

### Preparing

Alaska Natives use yellow cedar for canoe paddles, masks, boxes, bowls, dishes, spoons, and other household utensils. Fine roots are split and used for the framework of baskets and hats.

### Medicinal

Yellow cedar is used in sweat lodges to treat rheumatism and arthritis. The bark can be chewed to help soothe a sore throat. An infusion made from the tips of branches can be used to wash sores and swellings.



**WARNING**

*Oil in leaves may cause severe allergic reactions in some people.*



## Kanat'á *[Alaska Blueberry]*

### Harvesting

Blueberries are harvested from mid-July to late August on hillsides where rain and sun are prevalent. Lay a clean towel over a cutting board with one end propped up. Gently roll the berries down so debris clings to the towel. Wild blueberries may contain worms and those berries usually have wrinkles or deformities. To treat infested berries, soak for one hour in a gallon of warm water with 1/2 teaspoon of salt, then drain and rinse.

### Preparing

Enjoy berries fresh or use for cobblers, pancakes, muffins, jams, jellies, and pies. Flowers from the plant may also be eaten fresh.

### Preserving

Keep in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to one week. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer into a freezer bag or other container, label and date. Frozen berries will last up to two years. Berries may also be dried.





## Sukkáadzi *[ Beach Asparagus, Glasswort ]*

### Harvesting

Beach asparagus are gathered on beaches in late spring through summer. They should be gathered before the plants flower to avoid a woody taste. To harvest, cut and discard stems from the plant. Only take some of each plant rather than taking the whole plant. This will help it to replenish itself. Rinse thoroughly.

### Preparing

This is a favorite of locals. Beach asparagus can be enjoyed fresh, added to salads, steamed as a side dish, or used to make honey or jelly. The salty flavor adds a nice touch to soups or stir-fry.

### Preserving

Keep in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to one week or preserve by canning.



# Burnet

## Harvesting

Burnet has a nice fragrance with flowers that bloom in the summer. Harvest greens for use in teas and cosmetics before the plant blooms. Roots may be harvested in the fall.

## Preparing

Chop leaves and add to salads, dressings, or use for tea. Mix with herbs to put in soups and casseroles.

## Medicinal

Root teas have been used to help with internal or external bleeding. Burnet has also been used to make wine and is said to cheer spirits and help with depression.



## Néx'w [Cloudberry]

### Harvesting

In Northern Alaska, cloudberry leaves are called salmonberries. Berries can be picked in late summer to early fall. Leaves are gathered before flowers bloom.

### Preparing

Berries can be eaten fresh, mixed with other berries, or used to make jams and jellies. Berries and leaves can be used to make a nice flavored tea.

### Preserving

Traditionally, cloudberry leaves were preserved in seal oil. They will keep in a sealed container in a refrigerator for up to one week. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer into a freezer bag or other container, label and date. Frozen berries will last up to two years. Leaves can be dried.



## Yéil' [Elderberry]

### Harvesting

Elderberry trees can grow up to 20 feet high. They ripen and can be harvested in summer. Berries can be cooked to remove the toxic alkaloid that may upset your stomach. Small star-shaped flowers can be gathered late in spring to early summer.

### Preparing

Berries are used for jams and jellies after seeds are removed. Use chopped flowers in pancake, waffle, and cake batters.

### Medicinal

Flowers can be added to herbal teas. Elderflower tea is used for cold relief. Infusions are used to calm nerves or help with rheumatic pain.



**WARNING** *Elder seeds, stems, roots, and unripe berries can cause cyanide poisoning. Also the look-alike plant baneberry is toxic if ingested. See the poisonous plant section for more information.*



# Geranium

## Harvesting

Geranium flowers bloom in early summer. They can be found in forests, meadows, or along road sides. Gather leaves before flowers bloom. Identification is crucial because of the deadly look-alike plant monkshood.

## Preparing

Leaves can be added to goose tongue recipes. Use in stews, soups, and casseroles. Flowers can be added to salads or used as a cake garnish for nice flavor and color.

## Medicinal

Powdered roots are traditionally used for hemorrhoids or intestinal problems. Fresh roots can also be directly applied to help with tooth infections.



**WARNING**

*Geranium may be confused with monkshood because the plant leaves look alike. Geranium leaves and buds have small hairs whereas the monkshood is smooth. See the poisonous plant section for more information.*



## Shaax [ *Gray Currant, Gooseberry* ]

### Harvesting

Currants have a distinct odor, but the berry doesn't taste like it smells. Berries can be picked from mid-August to mid-September.

### Preparing

Lay a clean towel over a cutting board with one end propped up. Gently roll the berries down so debris clings to the towel. Eat raw or cooked, mix with other berries, or use in tasty jams, jellies, or syrups. Can be used in place of store bought currants in recipes.

### Preserving

Keep in a sealed container in a refrigerator only for a couple of days. Berries can be frozen or dried. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer into a freezer bag or other container, label and date. Frozen berries will last up to two years.



## Kaxwéix [ *Highbush Cranberry* ]

### Harvesting

Harvest in late summer and fall. Most people choose to gather before the first frost because the berry has higher pectin and a fresh fragrance. Some prefer after the first frost for a sweeter flavor. Cranberries grow in the woods or on rocky banks.

### Preparing

Berries may taste tart when raw, but are great for jellies and sauces. Seeds are large and flat, so run through a food mill if using for cooking. Fruit adds well to rhubarb or apple dishes. Flowers can

be picked in early summer and used in pancake batters.

### Preserving

Berries can be stored covered in the refrigerator for up to four days. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer into a freezer bag or other container, label and date.

### Medicinal

Bark extracts are traditionally applied to infected cuts.



# Tleikatánk [Huckleberry]

## Harvesting

Huckleberries can be found on hillsides during the fall. Some say huckleberries contain less worms than blueberries.

## Preparing

Huckleberries can be eaten raw, but they are also great for jams, jellies, pies, or muffins. To treat for worms, soak in a mix of 1/2 tablespoon of salt per one gallon of water for one hour before rinsing. Generally, infested berries are wrinkled or deformed. To clean, lay a towel over a

cutting board with one end propped up. Gently roll the berries down so debris clings to the towel.

## Preserving

Keep in a sealed container in a refrigerator for up to one week. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer into a freezer bag or other container, label and date. Frozen berries will last up to two years.





## Kóox [ *Indian Rice, Chocolate Lily* ]

### Harvesting

Flowers are a beautiful dark purple/black, and have an odor similar to manure. Look in shady areas along the coast. Harvest during summer and fall when leaves are yellow. If gathered too soon, bulbs may taste bitter.

### Preparing

Dig around the base of the plant and gently pull up the bulb. Break bulbs apart to get the kernels. Leave a few kernels to replenish. To remove bitterness, bulbs can be soaked in water overnight then boiled

for an hour. To prepare, rinse and boil for 30 minutes. Rice can be used in soups, stews, or mixed with wild greens and used as a side dish. Mix with berries, use in stir-fry, or add with other vegetables.

### Preserving

Bulbs can be dried and ground. They are traditionally used as a flour extender.



# K'eikaxétl'k *[Jacobs Berry, Bunchberry]*

## Harvesting

Bunchberry is commonly found in maritime forests, interior spruce forests, meadows and bogs. Berries ripen from late July through September, depending on the area.

## Preparing

Berries can be eaten fresh or gathered and stored for later use. They are great for using in jams, pies, or puddings since they are high in pectin. Pectin is said to protect

the body against radiation. Some say it should be eaten with hooligan grease to make it easier to digest.

## Medicinal

Leaves and stems were used to make tea to help with pain, coughs, fevers, and even kidney and liver problems.



## Neigóon [Nagoonberry]

### Harvesting

The name Nagoonberry comes from the Tlingit word "goon," meaning jewel. Nagoonberries are red and look like a raspberry. Look low in damp meadows in July to late August. They are not usually found in abundance. Berries are fragile, so do not wash unless necessary.

### Preparing

Berries are best eaten fresh the day they are picked. Use them to bake pies or make jams, jellies, juices, or syrup. Berries and leaves can also be used to make tea.

### Preserving

Berries will keep in a sealed container in the refrigerator only for a couple days. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer into a freezer bag or other container, label and date. Frozen berries will last up to two years.

### Medicinal

Use leaves and roots to relieve diarrhea and dysentery.



# Pineapple Weed *[ Alaskan Chamomile ]*

## Harvesting

Pineapple weed is not native to Southeast Alaska but is available and used today. Flowers can be picked in mid to late summer. Foliage can be gathered any time during the growing season.

## Preparing

Eat fresh as a snack or add flowers to soups and salads. Use both flowers and foliage, or just flowers to make tea. Some say the foliage can cause tea to taste bitter.

## Medicinal

Alaska Natives use the tea after childbirth to cleanse the body and to promote breast milk to come in. It is also used as a skin cleanser and a laxative. Pineapple weed can be added to your bath to promote relaxation and sleep.



**WARNING** *Some have experienced nausea and vomit with large, frequent doses.*



## S'igeekáawu Léix'u [ Puffball Mushroom ]

### Harvesting

Puffballs are round or pear-shaped. They can be harvested in late summer and early fall. Look for them in lawns or hard packed gravel.

### Preparing

Puffballs can be added to eggs, soups or stir-fry, or used as a side dish. Cut the puffball in half and examine carefully. An edible mushroom should be creamy white in color throughout the whole mushroom. Do not eat yellow or discolored mushrooms.

### Preserving

Cut and sauté before freezing. Wax paper can be used to separate. Puffballs can be dehydrated to powder and used as a seasoning.



**WARNING**

*Discard any that show the outline of a mushroom cap or stem as this may be the stage of the deadly Amanita. If you have any doubt in identification of a mushroom, do not harvest or ingest.*



## Was'x'aan Tléigu [Salmonberry]

### Harvesting

Pick berries mid-July to late August. Blossoms and buds are available in spring. Look on hillsides where rain and sun are prevalent. Salmonberries are fragile, so it's best to eat them fresh and not wash them unless necessary.

### Preparing

Salmonberry shoots can be gathered in early spring while still tender. Break or cut branches then peel off bark. Shoots taste great plain or sprinkled with a little sugar. Buds and blossoms can be added to salads.

Eat berries fresh or add to yogurt, cereal, pies, or use to make jelly. Berries and leaves can also be used to make tea.

### Preserving

Keep in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to three days. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer to a freezer bag or other container, label and date. Frozen berries will last up to two years.



# Sea Lovage

## Harvesting

Sea lovage grows on sandy or gravelly beaches in late spring and early summer. Sea lovage generally has three groups of three leaflets. It should be harvested before it flowers or when leaves are partially grown.

## Preparing

Cut up for salad or add to fish, chowder, or spaghetti sauce. Seeds are traditionally used as a tea to treat gas or digestive problems. Add a handful of lovage to your hot baths for fragrance and relaxation.

## Preserving

Leaves can be eaten fresh or dried.



**WARNING**

*Positive identification is important. Poison hemlock is a plant with similar looking flowers that weakens breathing and can cause death within 8 hours if untreated. See the poisonous plants section for more information.*



# Ti'aak'wách [Sour Dock]

## Harvesting

Sour dock grows up to four feet high in wet, marshy areas. Gather young leaves in spring and summer while they are bright green. It may have reddish clusters of seeds.

## Preparing

Sour dock leaves are great for salads or used as a cooked vegetable. They can be added to casseroles and boiled dishes. Snack on seeds plain.

## Preserving

After cooking, sour dock will keep for one week in the refrigerator.

## Medicinal

Sour dock root has been used as a laxative, blood purifier, or made into tea to help relieve stomach trouble or hangovers.



**WARNING** Use in moderation, leaves contain an acid that can deplete calcium in the body.





## Shákw [Strawberry]

### Harvesting

Wild strawberries are like commercial strawberries, but smaller. They ripen in late June or early July. Young leaves and flowers can be gathered in spring.

### Preparing

Eat fresh or use in jams, jellies, syrups, or pies. Substitute in any recipe that calls for store-bought strawberries. Leaves can be added with mashed fruits to make tea. Flowers are also edible and can be added to salads or as a garnish on any dish.

### Preserving

Keep in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to one week. It helps to keep the hull on until you are ready to use the berry, then rinse and drain in a colander. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer to a freezer bag or other container, label and date. Berries will last up to two years. Leaves can be dried.



## Ch'eex' [Thimbleberry]

### Harvesting

Thimbleberries are similar to raspberries. They have a thimble-like shape and a mild flavor similar to raspberries. Look for them in late June and early July. Shoots are gathered in spring when they are soft.

### Preparing

Eat berries fresh or use in jams, jellies, syrups, pies, or any recipe in place of raspberries. Shoots are eaten raw or cooked like asparagus.

### Preserving

Keep in a covered container in the refrigerator for up to one week. It helps to keep the hull on until you are ready to use the berry, then rinse and drain in a colander. Berries don't freeze well, but can be dried to preserve for later use.

### Medicinal

Leaves have been used as infusion to help with stomach trouble, or crushed and rubbed on skin to treat pimples and blackheads.



# Violet

## Harvesting

Pick leaves and flowers in the spring. Violets are low to the ground and have a wonderful fragrance. It is said that two violet leaves may be enough to fulfill your daily Vitamin C requirement.

## Preparing

Add leaves and flowers to green salads or use to make tea. Leaves can be added to omelets, stir-fry, casseroles, and soups (it thickens like okra). Leaves can be steamed to use as a potherb. Violets are also used to make wine.

## Medicinal

Violets eaten in large quantities can act as a laxative, especially the yellow species.



## K'eishkaháagu [ *Bog Cranberry* ]

### Harvesting

Bog cranberries are best picked after the first frost. They can also be picked in spring if you can find them, but they may have a slight fermented taste.

### Preparing

Eat fresh or add to pancakes or breads. Add bog cranberries while making jams and jellies for flavor. Consider grinding with rosehips and citrus for a holiday relish. Bog cranberries are a good natural dye.

### Medicinal

Bog cranberry juice is used by Alaska Natives to help with colds or bleeding gums. Bog cranberries traditionally were soaked in seal oil and fed to individuals with a poor appetite or to aid with gallbladder difficulties.



## Lingít X'áax'i [Crabapple]

### Harvesting

Crabapple trees have reddish-green, oblong berries in the fall. Look for trees or shrubs along the coast.

### Preparing

Crabapples can be kept short term in a cool place or long term in optimum conditions. They can be used for jams, jellies, syrups, and relishes. Traditionally, bark is peeled and used for yellow dye. Peeled wood is good

for building smokehouses and used to hang smoked fish. Wood from crabapple trees can also be used to carve masks, bowls, and utensils.

### Preserving

Rinse crabapples and remove damaged fruit and debris. Freeze in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Transfer to a freezer bag or container when frozen. Use within three months.



## Dáxw *[ Lowbush Cranberry, Lingonberry ]*

### Harvesting

Low bush cranberries can be gathered in late fall usually after the first frost. Pick berries that are bright and firm. Berries look like commercial cranberries, but are smaller and more colorful.

### Preparing

Lay a clean towel over a cutting board with one end propped up. Roll the berries down the towel; debris should cling while berries roll off. Berries can be eaten fresh. They are great for jams, jellies, pies or muffins.

### Preserving

Keep in a sealed container in the refrigerator for up to one week. To freeze, spread a layer of berries onto cookie sheets then transfer to a freezer bag or other container, label and date. Berries will last up to two years.



# Taan X'adaadzaayi [ Horsetail ]

## Harvesting

Gather stalks in the spring while branches are pointing upward. Harvest young plants only.

## Preparing

Cook stalks to use as a tea or as a wonderful addition to soups.

## Medicinal

Infusions are used for anemia, prostate problems, or for strengthening hair and nails. Tea can be used to condition hair. Horsetail traditionally is used as a poultice for cysts, infections, or bleeding.



### WARNING

*Older plants can bother the kidneys. Raw horsetail contains a vitamin B-depleting enzyme. Use caution not to confuse with wood horsetail, which has softer branches and a feathery look to them. Animals that have overeaten fresh or dried horsetail have been known to experience convulsions and loss of muscle control.*



## K'inchéiyi [Rosehips]

### Harvesting

Rosehips grow on roadsides, mountain slopes, and meadows. Pick them when they are red and plump. Wear gloves since stems are covered with thorns. Rose hips are one of the most concentrated sources of Vitamin C known. Prime harvest time for rosehips is after the first frost.

### Preparing

For tea, take off the stems and dried brown sepals. Boil the rose hips in water until soft (about five rosehips per cup of water).

Strain tea into a cup and add lemon juice or honey for flavor. Traditionally, rose hip tea was used for cramps, coughs, and colds. Rosehips can also be used in jellies, baked goods, and fruit leather. Rose petals can be used in salads, sandwiches, teas, jellies, and omelets. Remove the bitter white base of the petal before consuming.

### Preserving

To dry, put rose hips in the oven on low heat. Ensure that they are thoroughly dried before storing.





## Kagakwl'idi [Yarrow]

### Harvesting

Harvest young leaves and flowers during the summer season when in bloom.

### Preparing

Yarrow leaves are a great addition to mixed green salads. Flowers and leaves can be used to make tea or as a preservative when making beer.

### Preserving

This plant can be used fresh, or dried and used in later months.

### Medicinal

Yarrow has been used for treating wounds to stop bleeding, and for treating colds, fever, or kidney disease. Apply leaves to teeth to help relieve tooth pain.



# Poisonous Plants

**Arrowgrass:** This plant is usually mistaken for goose tongue in the early spring, but leaves are more narrow and rounded. Arrowgrass leaves contain hydrocyanic acid that can cause headache, rapid heartbeat, or even convulsions.

**Baneberry:** Can cause sharp pains, diarrhea, and possibly death caused by cardiac arrest or respiratory paralysis.

**Death Camas:** The plant contains zygadenine which can cause salivation, muscle weakness, breathing problems, and coma. Death camas may be mistaken for wild onion, but does not have an onion odor.

**False Hellebore:** Grows several feet tall, has corn-like leaves and green flowers with three petals. Poisoning symptoms may be numbness in hands or feet, diarrhea, or stomach cramps.





# Poisonous Plants

**Bog Laurel:** Leaves look similar to Labrador tea leaves. Bog laurel has pink flowers that are toxic and should not be consumed.



**Bog Rosemary:** Leaves also look similar to Labrador tea with pink flowers that are toxic and should not be consumed.



**Monkshood:** Leaves are similar to those of the wild geranium. Flowers are purple with dark veins (some petals may be white). The flowers are shaped like a monk's hood. Monkshood can paralyze the central nervous system.



**Poison Hemlock:** This plant resembles wild celery. It contains a toxin that depresses the respiratory system. If not treated, death usually occurs within eight hours of ingestion.



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