



Review: Braiding Sweetgrass

Braiding Sweetgrass by author, Robin Wall Kimmerer, eloquently braids Indigenous insight, scientific knowledge with the philosophy of plants, while showing the love and distress of the living world. Kimmerer puts together multiple different perspectives into a sequence of essays that are both moving and informative. As a member of the Potawatomi Nation, Kimmerer offers a clear Indigenous viewpoint on the significance of gratitude and the importance of the role of Indigenous beliefs in environmental science. The novel shows the reader that we have the capability to change how we care for the land we live on. Kimmerer beautifully captures the relationship between Indigenous people and the earth. If you find interest in growing your understanding in Indigenous teachings and wisdom, I greatly recommend taking the time to indulge in this book!

Reviewed by Courtnie Reyes

Hibulb Newsletter

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Plants and Trees Interconnection

Harvesting and a Sustainable Future

Our elders deeply believed in the teachings inherent in our ancient stories, to understand, value, and honor the spiritual and physical interconnection we have with all life, including animals, plants, rivers, and mountains; to recognize and respect the family and ancestral connections our people have with plants and animals who share our homeland and experiences; and to reciprocate the care of the Creator, plants and animals, land and rivers, for a sustainable future for all.



As we know, for our people, knowledge is passed down mainly through ceremonies, storytelling, participatory learning, and direct observation. Our elders shared important teachings for harvesting of plants and trees, which include a sacred responsibility to respect the one who will share a gift of food, nourishment, medicine, clothing or ceremonial items for us; to take only what we need, leave an offering, use all of what is taken; to be caring of

their surroundings and habitat; to understand the seasons in order to know when and where to harvest, prepare and store the food, medicine, tools, or clothing; and particularly to show gratitude, be prayerful to the Creator, share songs and joy when gathering.

The Burke Museum recorded 300 food sources of the Coast Salish peoples' diet in a 2003 archaeological survey, 74 of which were plants, attesting to our ancestors' complex diet and nutritional recognition.

Today it is essential to protect the plants and trees and the rest of our natural homelands. Our elders are grateful and extremely pleased that many of our young people are revitalizing our sacred obligation to our gift-giving relatives and honoring the wise, sustainable practices of our elders and ancestors. Each of us is given a gift. The young ones will use their gifts in this time when transformational change is needed to protect our plants, trees, and environment.

I Pictured: Montessori students
gather tules, late 1990s

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The Hibulb Cultural Center is appreciative of the many employees, departments, and community members who acknowledge and uplift our Indigenous knowledge and ancestral environmental wisdom. We believe these collaborative efforts can strengthen solutions for the damaging effects of climate change and can help alleviate the injustices of a commercialized world to our homelands. These will benefit the plants and trees.

Perhaps we can each learn about the plants, the Little People as our elders referred to them. They are generous, care for one another, care for their habitat; provide beauty, provide nutrition, provide medicine; and persevere as best they can. And so much more.

From Lena Jones

Pictured: Virginia "Ginnie" Carpenter gathering Cedar, 2007

Harvesting Ethics

From Feeding the People, Feeding the Spirit

- Help keep the ecosystem in balance. Always leave enough behind for the plant or animal to continue flourishing.
- Take only what you need. To avoid waste make sure you do not take more than you have time to work with. Sometimes the bulk of the work comes when you get home
- Know how to identify wild foods properly (poisonous plants are rare but they are out there). The first few times you harvest, it is a good idea to go with someone who has experience.
- Make sure you are harvesting from a clean, non-toxic area (check Washington department of Fish and Wildlife website).
- Know the rules and regulations of the land where you are foraging and be sure you have a permit for the specific type of food you are harvesting if you need one.
- Do not trespass onto federal, state, private or tribal land
- Honor traditional foods by recycling them. If you can't return them to the original place where you harvested them, compost your cuttings.

Camas Nettle Soup

This hearty soup is filled with gorgeous colors. It will warm your body and feed your spirit. If you're a beginning forager, camas can be a difficult plant to identify as it has a deadly look-alike; death camas. The proper cooking of camas takes at least 24 hours so in this recipe the bulbs can be substituted for chopped parsnip. If you choose to use camas bulbs make sure that you have identified them correctly, never munch on a hunch!

Ingredients

- 1 grocery bag full of fresh spring nettles
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 large onion chopped
- 1 leek chopped
- 2-3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1-2 sprigs of rosemary
- 1-2 sprigs of thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 32 oz of chicken or vegetable broth
- 3 cups fresh or frozen camas bulbs or 2 cups dried camas bulbs. Alternatively: 3 cups of chopped parsnip
- Salt and pepper to taste

Recipe

Cooking camas from fresh:

If you are using parsnip or pre-prepped camas, skip this step. Place camas in a vegetable steamer inside of a slow cooker and fill with water just below the level of the steamer. Cover and set the cooker at a medium to high temperature (around 210 degrees). Steam the bulbs for 18-36 hours or until browned refilling the water level as

necessary. Once cooked through they can be dehydrated or frozen for later use.

For the soup

Wash nettles in a colander and finely chop with scissors being careful not to sting yourself (gloves are recommended). In a soup pot on medium heat cook the onions and garlic in olive oil until they become translucent, about 5 minutes. Bind your bay leaf, rosemary, and thyme with kitchen twine for ease of removal. Add your broth and herb bundle and bring to a boil. Add camas or parsnip, nettles, and leek and cook for 20 minutes until the vegetables are tender. Remove your herb bundle and season with salt, pepper, and any other seasonings of your choice

Adapted by Braxton Wagner from *Feeding the people, Feeding the Spirit*

Dangerous Plants or Powerful Healers?

Thorns, spines, and prickles. Often we're wary of plants with such a defense mechanism and may remember nasty stinging nettle rashes or berry bush scratches from our childhoods. However, indigenous people have honored many of these plants as powerful healers and crucial food sources for generations.



Devil's Club - *Oplopanax horridus* - s̓x̓diʔac

Stinging Nettle - *Urtica dioica* - sc̓əd̓z̓x̓

Devil's club is a significant plant in Coast-Salish culture as well as Tlingit, Haida, Nuxalk, and more who share a home with the plant in the PNW up to Alaska. The plant earned its common name from the numerous compact spines covering every inch, aside from the berries and roots, giving it a dangerous appearance. The bright green leaves are large and flat, a shape similar to maple leaves with spines on the veins. The flowers are small and white, and it bears bright red berries in clusters. The berries are a favorite food of bears.

People use the root and inner bark of the stem for medicine. Devil's club is a powerful healer used for various ailments such as arthritis, cancer, wounds, fever, tuberculosis, stomach trouble, cough, colds, sore throat, diabetes, low blood sugar, and pneumonia.

Devil's club is sacred, and many indigenous legends, stories, and cultural practices feature the plant. The medicinal salve can be applied directly to the skin or consumed as liquid extracts and tinctures, mixed into drinks or otherwise. The dried root bark of Devil's Club can also be steeped in boiling water for several minutes and brewed into a tea.

Also known as the common nettle, the plant is single stalked with soft, bright green leaves that are coarsely serrated and have pointed ends. Small green flowers can be found hanging off the stems like catkins. The tiny hairs, or trichomes, located on the stems and underside of the leaves are what deliver the painful sting from this plant. Traditional foragers are well-practiced in harvesting nettle safely though many recommend gloves for beginners.

Historically, the leaves and stems of nettle treat arthritis and relieve sore muscles. The leaves are nutritious and abundant wild vegetables but must be cooked or dried to neutralize the sting. Commonly, nettle treats diabetes and osteoarthritis as well. It is sometimes used for urinary tract infections (UTIs), kidney stones, enlarged prostate, hay fever, and other conditions. However, there is little scientific study to support these uses. Native Americans also used stinging nettle fibers in the Northwest to make twine, fishing nets, and rope.



Salmonberry -
Rubus spectabilis -

Black Hawthorn *stəg^wad*
- *Crataegus*
douglasii - čibadac



The Black Hawthorn is the most widespread of the genus in the west. The Common Hawthorn - *Crataegus monogyna* can be used for the same medicinal properties. Serrated green leaves, small white flowers, black fruits, and reddish-gray twigs armed with large thorns are identifiers of the black hawthorn. The haws of the common variety are red.

The berries are used to make syrup or tea, and the flowers for tinctures. Hawthorn is used to help protect against heart disease and help control high blood pressure and high cholesterol. Animal and human studies suggest hawthorn increases coronary artery blood flow, improves circulation, and lowers blood pressure. It has also been used on the skin to treat boils and skin sores.

Article by Braxton Wagner



Salmonberry calls the Pacific Northwest home, extending north into Alaska and south into parts of California. As the name suggests, the berries are yellow or salmon-colored. The plant and fruits are similar to raspberries, with serrated, pointed leaves and woody stems protected with fine prickles. The harvesting experience is more pleasant since the branches are not as heavily armed as other thorned berry bushes.

Indigenous people have harvested salmonberries for thousands of years as a food source and medicine. It can be consumed as a tea to treat diarrhea or dysentery. As an astringent, a poultice of leaves and bark is used for dressing burns and open sores. The tender and sweet fruits make good jams, jellies, and baked goods. Traditionally it is often a favorite served with smoked salmon. Salmonberry is not cultivated and must be harvested locally, usually ripe in June - July. There was once a time when children were taught to fill a basket of berries before they could play in the summer.

A Letter From Our Director

Hello to our members, friends and fans!

I am thrilled to WELCOME back our quarterly Hibulb Newsletter. It really is the little things that make the return to “normal” seem closer.

The past two years have been tricky to say the least. Our center was fortunate to reopen in August of 2020 and we have been so proud to provide our communities a place of normalcy and solitude during a time of uncertainty and chaos. My hands go up to each of you for your encouragement and support of the Hibulb Cultural Center, you have carried us through some very challenging times.

I look forward to a new season and hope to see you soon.

Respectfully,

Mytyl Hernandez

Museum Manager

Thank you for reading!

I'm honored to be bringing this newsletter back to you. Much hard work and collaboration was poured into this project and soon, even more for all future issues to come.

Enjoy,

Braxton Wagner

Editor & Museum Assistant

