

Search the Museum at Campbell River's Gardens for the following plants!

Plants that are Food



English: Red Huckleberries

Kwak'wala: Lwad / m / s

Comox: T'exw 7â may

Nootka: His , itqmapt

The bright red berries of this shrub ripen in mid to late summer. When fully ripe the berries can be harvested simply by shaking the branches. Some First Nations peoples manufactured special comb-like implements which they used to rake the berries from the branches.

"Gwadgwatānu'xw" is Kwak'wala for "We are eating huckleberries"



English: Nodding Onion

Kwak'wala: Me Dw 'ets i

Comox: MâDw'eth '

Nootka: ?i?isa2q kuk

Nodding Onion was eaten by many coastal First Nations. Because the bulbs can be confused with those of death camas which often grow in the same localities, the Kwakwaka'wakw sometimes marked the plants when they were flowering in May and June and returned to harvest them in August.

English: Lupine

Kwak'wala: Kw'eni

Nootka: Kukuxmat?aq3

The roots or rhizomes of this plant contain toxic alkaloids which can be harmful if eaten raw. The roasted rhizomes were eaten in the spring at Knight Inlet while people were waiting for the oolichan to arrive and food was scarce. To cook the roots red hot rocks were placed in cedar boxes, the rhizomes were placed on top and covered with dry grass. Four clamshells of water were added and the rhizomes left to steam cook until the box had boiled dry.



"hεhaw ?ajεqap q'asēm" is Homalco for "The flower smells nice."



“Hamsan” means “I’m picking berries” in Kwak’wala.

English: Salmonberry bush
Kwak’wala: ƛ̓amdzqkw’mqs or ƛ̓wa’l’mqs

These little berry plants are also known for their beautiful magenta flower. Native to the west coast of North America from California to Alaska, the salmon berry was a food staple of First Nations communities in the area.

Plants that are Tools



English: Ocean Spray or Ironwood
Kwak’wala: Ts’axens
Comox: Máts’alhpay
Nootka: Siwi’pt

The wood of this shrub is very hard and can be made even harder by heating it over a fire. The long straight stems were used for making arrows, harpoon shafts, and digging sticks. Wood from younger plants was used for clam barbeque, sticks, knitting needles, and long needles used sewing cat tail mats.

“Kwi’lanx” is “Feasting season” in Kwak’wala.



English: Oregon Grape
Kwak’wala: Resp’úli
Lik’wala: Talquadzu’mas

Both the fruit which grows in grapelike clusters, and the bark of this plant were used by First nations people of the area. The sour berries were sometimes mixed with sweeter salal and huckleberries before being boiled and mashed for drying. Bark from the roots and stems was shredded and boiled to produce bright yellow dye for basketry and other materials.