BEACH LOVAGE

Latin: ***Ligusticum scoticum***

Alutiiq: PitRuus'kaaq
Iñupiaq: Tukkaayuk
Lingít: Kées' shuwee kayaaní
Tanaina: Bidrushga
Unangam tunuu: Qanisan
Inupiq: Tukkaayuk

USES:

- **Culinary**
  - **The leaves and shoots are edible and can be used in salads, soups, and seasoning to add a celery or parsley-like flavor.**
- **Medicinal**
  - **Traditionally, beach lovage has been used for digestive issues and alleviating respiratory symptoms.**
- **Cultural**
  - **Indigenous cultures may have used it for various purposes, although specific usages can vary. It is generally associated with fish soup.**

Beach lovage commonly grows in coastal regions, particularly in sandy or rocky soils along beaches and cliffs. It is found all over Alaska and thrives in temperate climates, where it is exposed to water and full sun.

ROOTS

Beach lovage develops a deep taproot that helps it survive in sandy soils. Once the roots are mature and large, they can be propagated through root division, forming dense colonies.

LEAVES

The leaves are round, deeply lobed, and have a strong aroma reminiscent of celery. They have a distinct leaf pattern: three leaves in a cluster of three groupings together on a stock. The edges of the leaves are serrated. The three-leaf grouping is usually 3-6" wide.

FLOWERS

The flowers are small, white to yellowish, and clustered in umbels, typically blooming from late summer to early fall.

ABOUT

Beach lovage is a perennial herb characterized by its upright growth, typically reaching heights of 30-90 cm. It has a robust appearance with large, glossy, green leaves. The leaves are sturdy and dark green. One way to identify Beach Lovage is that it has a red to purple hued border around the edge of the leaves. Beach Lovage is part of the carrot (Apiaceae) family and has a flavor profile like parsley, cilantro, or celery leaves.

PLANT COMMUNITIES

Beach lovage is typically found in coastal ecosystems, often with other salt-tolerant vegetation. It doesn't like the shade, so it will be seen alongside other small-to-medium plants like:

- **Angelica**
- **Grasses**
- **Silver leaf**
- **Stinkweed**

HARVESTING

Leaves and shoots of beach lovage can be harvested by cutting them at the base.

The best time to harvest is in early spring for the shoots and throughout the growing season for leaves. This plant can be harvested from several times throughout the season.

STORAGE

Fresh leaves should be stored in the refrigerator and used within a week, while dried leaves can be kept in an airtight container for longer shelf life. It is good practice to use within one year.

IDENTIFICATION is KEY

While Beach Lovage is generally safe, it can be confused with other plants in the Apiaceae family, some of which may be toxic. Always consult a reliable source before foraging.

This work was supported in part by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of Tribal Relations

SOUR DOCK

Latin: *Rumex arcticus, crispus,* or *longifolius*

Alutiiq: Aatunaq
Haida: Tl'áañ'uuj
Lingít: Tl'aak'wách'
Tanaina: Tash'i
Unangam tunuu: Aalungaayax̂
Inupiq: Quaġaq
Yup'ik: Angukaq

USES:

- **Culinary**
  - **Leaves are commonly used in cooked salads, soups, and sauces due to their tart flavor.. They are simmered, strained, and sweetened to make a juice that is high in vitamin C.**
- **Medicinal**
  - **Traditionally, Sour Dock has been used for its potential digestive benefits assisting in motility.**
- **Cultural**
  - **Sour Dock has significance in various Indigenous cultures as a common vegetable, often used in traditional dishes or remedies.**

Sour Dock thrives in a temperate climate with cool to moderate temperatures. It is commonly found in all regions of Alaska, particularly in moist, disturbed soils such as meadows, roadsides, and gardens. They especially like to grow next to bodies of water.

ROOTS

The root system consists of a deep taproot that allows the plant to access moisture and nutrients.

LEAVES

The leaves of Sour Dock are elongated, arrow-shaped, and can be smooth or slightly wavy. They are typically bright green and can vary in size. They tend to have a reddish hue on the edges of the leaves as they age. Leaves have oxalic acid in them and need to be cooked, especially when they are uncurled and aging.

FLOWERS

Sour Dock produces small, greenish flowers that cluster in elongated spikes. The flowering occurs in late spring to early summer.

ABOUT

Sour Dock is a perennial herb that grows upright, typically reaching heights of 6 inches to 18 inches tall. It has spear-head-shaped or surfboard-shaped leaves with pointed ends and prominent veins, giving off a slightly sour scent when crushed.

Sour Dock grows in rosettes and can spread through seed and vegetative means, forming colonies. The curly dock variants can be especially aggressive and generally are not transplanted. However, the sour dock variants are easy to maintain in a garden setting.

PLANT HISTORY

Sour Dock patches have been cultivated for centuries by families and communities, valued for their culinary uses and medicinal properties in various cultures.

HARVESTING

Leaves can be harvested by cutting them at the base of the stem.
The best harvest time is early spring before flowering begins for optimal tenderness and flavor.
Fresh leaves can be stored in the refrigerator for a few days, and dried leaves can be preserved for longer use.

COOKING

Due to its oxalic acid content, the plant requires heat treatment to be edible. Once blanched, the young leaves can be used in salads, soups, or sautéed as greens. Fresh leaves can be stored in a cool, dry place or refrigerated for short-term use. They can also be simmered and then frozen.

CAUTIONS

While Sour Dock is generally safe to consume, note that it can be confused with other species in the Rumex genus that may have varying levels of oxalic acid, which has to be cooked, and may be harmful in excessive amounts. Limit consumption to two cups a day.

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FIREWEED

Latin: *Chamerion angustifolium*
Other: Willow Herb

Alutiiq: Cillqaq
Iñupiaq: Quppiqutaq
Lingít: Lóol
Tanaina: Niłdghuligi
Unangam tunuu: Chikayaasix

NUTRITION NOTES

1 cup:

- 24 calories
- 0 grams fat
- 3,146 IU Vitamin A
- 55 mg VItamin C
- 1 mg Iron
- Contains fiber, mucilage, & pre-biotics

Fireweed thrives in temperate zones of the Northern Hemisphere. It prefers moist, well-drained soils rich in organic matter and often grows alongside the edges of forests, in open areas, and next to shrubs.

ROOTS

Fireweed grows on a rhizome system, meaning many plants on one long main root, with several smaller roots anchoring in and allowing efficient nutrient uptake. This rhizome structure with a strong inner core creates a net-like pattern and protects against soil erosion.

FLOWERS

Showy, blooming in dense spires full of bright pink to purple flowers. After a forest fire, Fireweed is the first propagator and returns life to the soil by building the microbiome.

SEEDS

Ample seed production of tiny seeds surrounded by fluffy fibers that help disperse them by wind. This fluff is good for creating fire starters or tinder bundles and can be stuffed in coats or blankets to create insulation.

USES

- Medicinal
  - Used traditionally for anti-inflammatory properties and digestive health. Fireweed can help with constipation, diarrhea, gas, and bloating. This plant was prized as a digestive support, harvested across the state, and stored for winter when people ate high-fat and protein diets.
- Cultural
  - Symbolizes resilience and renewal for various Indigenous peoples.
- Culinary
  - Young shoots can be consumed raw in salads or cooked. Flowers can be used for herbal teas; leaves can be brewed for infusion.

ETYMOLOGY

Fireweed has fire in the name for a few different reasons. One, it is the first plant to germinate and populate an area after a fire. Two, because the tall spires of flowers are symbolically fire-shaped and richly colored. And three, because it is an anti-inflammatory medicine used both externally and in the body

HARVESTING

Cut or snap off tender shoots at the base. Pick new leaves and eat them raw, or selectively pick older leaves and steep them as tea.

When gathering flowers, start at the bottom and pull them off individually. The spire will continue to bloom, allowing for more harvesting as the summer progresses.

Roots can be dug at any time and are often a nutritious staple food to ward off starvation in times of food insecurity.

IDENTIFICATION is KEY

Fireweed is a commonly used plant with no known contraindications. The only consideration is that it can be confused with some inedible species; careful identification is crucial to avoid mishaps.

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YARROW

Latin: *Achillea millefolium* or *Achillea borealis*

Common name: Squirrel Tail, Bumblebee Food

Alutiiq: Caisit or Qanganaruaq
Iñupiaq: Nauriaq (general ‘flower’)
Lingít: Kagakl'eedí
Tanaina: Niłdghuligi
Dena'ina: Bask'ilt'uts'i
Unangam tunuu: Amikayax or Cingatudax
Yup'ik: Panaiyulinu'kait

DO NOT USE DURING PREGNANCY

Yarrow is an expectorant and normally is good for purging phlegm from the lungs, but it is dangerous when pregnant because it can cause a miscarriage. Caution is advised when taking blood thinners or coagulants because Yarrow may have contraindications.

Yarrow is commonly found in places with open skies, such as meadows, grasslands, and along roadsides, in North America, Europe, and Asia. Yarrow is hardy and can be found from shoreline borders to sub-alpine mountainous biomes.

ROOT SYSTEM

Typically, yarrow grows in clumps and spreads through its fibrous, rhizomatous root system, meaning that it grows from sending out shoots horizontally underground from different nodes,

LEAVES & STRUCTURE

Yarrow is an herbaceous perennial, that grows upright with a busy appearance. Their stems can reach up to 3 ft in height, and their leaves have fern-like, deeply dissected, serrated edges.

FLOWERS

Native yarrow flowers are small and dense white clusters. The clusters are usually umbrella-shaped. Cultivated yarrows can have yellow, orange, or pink flowers.

USES

- Medicinal
  - It has anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic, and analgesic properties. It is commonly used as a tea for colds and flu in Alaska. In Indigenous lifeways, it is used for first aid by applying it as a fresh compact, wet poultice, or dry powder for wound care and to stop bleeding.
- Cultural
  - For centuries, Indigenous peoples have used yarrow for its medicinal value. It is held sacred as a symbol of healing and protection, considered a good luck charm, and is used in ceremonies.
- Culinary
  - The leaves are edible when used sparingly in salads and can also be cooked as vegetables.

HARVESTING

The young leaves can be harvested in spring and are edible with caution. To harvest, use scissors or shears to cut the leaves or flowers of yarrow. Harvesting in the morning when the dew has dried but before the sun is full is best.

Depending on preference and application purposes, yarrow needs to be rinsed and then processed. It can be hung and dried to make teas, poultices, salves, tinctures, or powders. Other ways of processing include soaking in oil and straining.

IDENTIFICATION is KEY

Yarrow has look-alikes, such as poison hemlock; ensuring proper identification before use is vital.

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NORTHERN RED CURRANT

Latin: *Ribes triste*

Alutiiq: Kawirqaq qunisiq
Iñupiaq: Niviŋŋaqutaq
Lingít: Kadooheix.aa
Tanaina: Jeghdenghult'ila or Nunazk'et'i
Yup'ik: Agalrussaq

NUTRITION NOTES

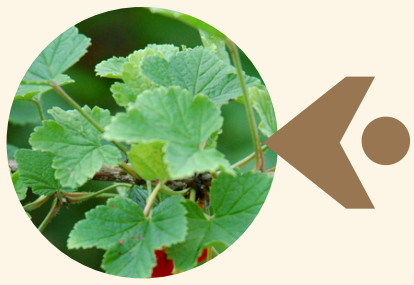
High in the following:

- Vitamin C
- Vitamin K
- Fiber
- Antioxidants
- Omega 3, 6, 9 fatty acids
- Polyphenols
- Citric and malic acid
- Copper

Northern red currants are native to the temperate regions of North America, growing from Alaska to Newfoundland and southward. They are commonly found in moist wooded areas, along roadsides, streams, and rivers.

BARK

The bark is rich in color, with burgundy shades to a dark brown outer layer that breaks and peels away, showing the inner bark that is light brown. The new growth will be varying shades of green.



LEAVES

Three to five-lobed, light green color, and serrated edges. The leaves have alternating origination points on the stem (in contrast to the highbush cranberry, which has symmetrical bilateral leaf placement on the stem.) Elders joke and say, "Alternating Current" to remember how to tell them apart.

FLOWERS & FRUIT

Small clusters of pinkish-red flowers that bloom in spring and look like hanging spray of antique lace.Bright red translucent berries hang in clusters that ripen mid to late summer.

CULTURAL AND MEDICINAL USES

Traditionally, currents are highly prized for their nutritional values and are considered a guardian of youthfulness and luck. The berries are moderate in antioxidant levels but exceptionally high in vitamins, including vitamin C, which prevents scurvy. They are also effective for digestive issues such as lack of appetite and have a mild laxative effect. They can also be used to treat rheumatism and gout. The outer bark is known as cramp bark because it can relieve menstrual cramps and regulate menses. The bark and leaves also have antirheumatic properties; rheumatism is inflammation and pain of the joints, connective tissue, and other non-gender-based muscle cramps or soreness. Drinking tea made from the bark after childbirth can also prevent blood clots.

EDIBLE PARTS

- Berries: Freshly picked berries can be eaten raw, cooked into jams or pies, dried for later use, or used as a seasoning.
- Outer Bark: Bark is traditionally harvested by scraping or peeling off the outer layer with a knife or fingernail.

HARVESTING

Harvest in mid to late summer when berries are bright red and easy to detach. The bark can be harvested at any time, but is naturally cleaner after the rainy season.

PROCESSING

Rinse the berries and remove any debris. They can then be eaten fresh, cooked, dehydrated, frozen, or processed into jams and jellies.

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INDIAN POTATO

Latin: *Hedysarum alpinum*

Iñupiaq: Masu
Lingít: Tsáats
Tanaina: Tsaath, Troth, or K'tl'ila
Yup'ik: Masu

CAUTION!

- ***Hedysarum alpinum*'s seeds are toxic; do not eat them.**
- **This plant does have poisonous look-alikes—*Hedysarum mackenzii* is inedible. To avoid potential risks, the plant should be correctly identified before harvesting. It is always recommended to consult with a knowledgeable guide or resource before foraging for wild plants.**

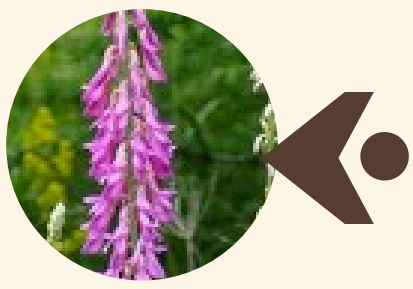
Various species of Hedysarum grow throughout North America in all soil types, from tundra to woodlands. They are commonly found on dry hillsides, talus slopes, rocky outcrops, and alpine meadows. Indian potatoes grow in various climates, from arctic to temperate regions.

ROOTS

Tubers attached to a long taproot system reaching a length of three feet or one meter underground. The roots travel down and then to the side, generally at a depth of 10 inches to one foot or 30 centimeters.

LEAVES & STRUCTURE

Indian Potato is a perennial plant that can grow up to two feet or 60 centimeters tall in warmer regions. In Arctic or alpine biomes, it grows at about the 10-inch or 25-centimeter level. It is symmetrical and pinnately compound with 15-25 leaflets. The leaflets are smooth, elongated, slender, oval-shaped, dark green, and tapering at each end.



BUDS & FLOWERS

Flower stalks originate from the base of the plant and have spires of small, light pink flowers that fade into purple. They almost look like miniature snapdragon stalks. The flowers bloom from late spring to midsummer.

CULTURAL AND MEDICINAL USES

Indian Potatoes have been a staple food for many Indigenous communities throughout North America. They are high in carbohydrates and provide essential nutrients such as potassium, magnesium, iron, and vitamin C.

PROPOGATION

Seeds are easily propagated, but dividing the tubers or plant root cuttings is much easier and more reliable. Traditionally, ethical harvesting practices for this plant were done by harvesting the plant and tubers, cutting the top of the tap root, and leaving the aerial part of the plant attached to an inch or two inches of the tap root. This would produce harvestable tubers in two years versus five years between harvesting and seed propagation.

EDIBLE PARTS

Indian Potato tubers are traditionally harvested in the early spring or late fall but can be harvested anytime. The tubers should be dug up carefully to avoid damaging them. Harvesting after a few days of dry weather is best, making removing dirt from the roots easier. They are the sweetest and most nutritious after the first frost.

PROCESSING

Rinse and scrub the tubers to remove dirt. They can then be eaten raw, cooked, dried for later use, or processed into flour. Traditional Alaska Native knowledge about this plant says it needs to be eaten with fats or oils because it is so high in fiber that can cause constipation if eaten alone.

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CURLY DOCK

Latin: ***Rumex crispus L.***
Lingít: **Tl'aak'wách'**
Tanaina: **Kashi**

GROWTH PATTERNS

Curly dock typically grows in clumps, forming dense patches in suitable environments. Attention should be paid to the location of this plant, and it is advisable not to plant it in the yard. It has the potential to be invasive because it reproduces by seed and produces from less than 100 to more than 60,000 seeds annually.

Curly dock is commonly found in disturbed areas, along roadsides, and in wet meadows throughout North America. It prefers moist, fertile soils but can adapt to various soil types, including clay and sandy soils. Remember, do not harvest directly next to the road or downhill from a road.

ROOTS & SHOOTS

Curly Dock has a deep, hardy taproot that allows it to break through hard soil and access nutrients and water from deeper layers. The young shoots are tender and can be utilized in culinary preparations before they mature.

LEAVES & STRUCTURE

The basal leaves are long, lance-shaped, and distinctively curly. They often grow to 12 inches or 30 ½ cm in length and turn reddish as the season wanes. Curly Dock is characterized by its leafy appearance and tall flower spikes, which make it visually distinct from other plants.

FLOWERS

The inner, winged tepals enclose the three-sided flowers. They are small, clustered, and greenish-yellow, appearing in elongated spikes during summer.

CULTURAL AND MEDICINAL USES

Traditionally, curly dock has been used for its astringent properties and to assist with digestive issues. The application is to cool inflamed intestines and as a laxative. Curly dock has been used for centuries in traditional medicine and cuisine.

HARVESTING

Only pick young leaf shoots. The leaves can be harvested by hand, ensuring no damage to the plant. As they get older, their fiber becomes tougher, too thick for digestion, and the oxalic acid content increases. For the best taste and texture, leaves should be harvested in spring before the plant flowers.

COOKING

Due to its oxalic acid content, the plant requires heat treatment to be edible. Once blanched, the young leaves can be used in salads, soups, or sautéed as greens. Fresh leaves can be stored in a cool, dry place or refrigerated for short-term use. They can also be simmered and then frozen.

CAUTIONS

Curly dock has look-alikes, such as other species of dock and some plants in the Polygonaceae family. Care should be taken to harvest and process this plant due to the Oxcylic Acid content in the leaves. Overconsumption can cause digestive issues. It is always recommended to consult with a knowledgeable guide or resource before foraging for wild plants.

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TLINGIT/HAIDA POTATO

Latin: ***Solanum tuberosum***
Haida: **Xaadas sgúusadaa**
Lingít: **K'úntz**

CAUTION

Be cautious of green potatoes, as they contain solanine, a toxic compound. Additionally, ensure that any poisonous berries from the plant flower or leaves are not consumed.

Potatoes are originated in South America and prefer temperate zones. The Tlingit/Haida were traded for pre-contact and are being grown being grown in Southeast Alaska and Southcentral Alaska. This potato grows successfully because of its tenacity and hardiness against heavy rainfall.

IDENTIFICATION

Tlingit/Haida Potatoes look like the general agrarian potato plants but are genetically distinct. They can be identified by their broad, dark green leaves and small white to purple flowers, which typically grow in clusters. The potato or tuber is long and thin with many eyes and knobs.

ROOTS, STEMS, LEAVES

Potatoes develop a tuberous root system that anchors the plant and facilitates efficient nutrient absorption. New shoots emerge from the tubers and have a greenish hue, eventually developing into stems. The upright stems can grow to around two feet tall or 60-90 cm. The potato leaves are compound and can vary in shape from ovate to lobed.

FLOWERS & SEEDS

The star-shaped flowers are usually white or purple and have a yellow center. Seeds may be found within the flowers and berries, but propagation typically occurs through the tuber Because the seeds will cross-pollinate with other potato varieties.

CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Tlingit potato holds cultural and agricultural significance for the Tlingit and Haida Peoples of Southeast Alaska. Adapted over centuries to thrive in the region's rainy climate, the Tlingit potato is naturally pest-resistant. While once thought to have been introduced by Russian fur traders in the 1700s, genetic testing has disproved this theory, instead highlighting the extensive horticultural history of the Tlingit and Haida Peoples, who likely brought these potatoes from South America through traditional trade and cultivation methods. Today, this variety remains a symbol of cultural resilience and agricultural innovation, representing a critical connection between Indigenous traditions and the broader history of global crop exchange.

HARVESTING

Harvesting is done when the foliage begins to yellow and die back, usually 90-120 days after planting. Harvesting is typically performed by hand or with tools that carefully lift tubers from the soil. Traditionally, a digging stick, generally two feet long, was used for harvesting. It was pointed at one end and forked on the other end. The best time to harvest is late summer to early fall, depending on the planting date and local climate conditions.

STORAGE

To store, keep tubers in a cool, dark, and dry place to prevent sprouting and spoilage. According to the USDA Forest Service, the Tlingit stored potatoes in "potato cellars," which were underground storage pits that maintained a cool and dark environment. The potato cellars were filled with a layer of damp soil at the bottom, followed by a layer of potatoes, with additional layers of soil and potatoes added on top. The soil helped to insulate the potatoes from extreme temperatures and prevent rot.

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CHOCOLATE LILY

Alutiiq: Láqaq
Gitxsanimx: Gasx
Lingít: Kóox
Tanaina: Qinazdli or Qinaydli
Unangam tunuu: Saranax̂

Latin: *Fritillaria camschatcensis*

Common name: Kamchatka fritillary, wild rice, Indian Rice, or northern rice root

Chocolate Lilies can be identified by their distinct flowers, which are bell-shaped at the base and open to a star shape. The flowers are rich chocolate-brown to dark mahogany, typically with yellowish stamens and yellow spotted markings. Chocolate Lilies are especially identified by their pungent smell. The plant typically grows from 8 to 12 inches or 20 to 30 centimeters in the wild.

In western North America, Chocolate Lilies are commonly found in moist meadows, loamy soil, open to the sky, and near streams. Rice Lilies were traditionally cultivated in estuaries and can also be found there now.

ROOT SYSTEM

This plant is called Indian Rice because the root system consists of a pearly white bulbous structure with many smaller fleshy bulblets that snugly fit around the core and have an appealing geometric pattern. The cluster of bulbets that create a larger bulb structure stores energy and nutrients, enabling the plant to survive in varying conditions.

LEAVES

The plant features narrow, lance-shaped leaves that grow in a whorl around the stem. They have a smooth texture and a glossy appearance. Generally, two to three levels of leaves skirt the stems

FLOWERS

The flowers are drooping and bell-shaped at the base and open to a six-petaled star. They can appear solitary or in pairs and bloom from spring to early summer. Three seed pods are arranged in long, papery shafts with two chambers that fit together. They are full of small, dark seeds that are typically dispersed by wind or animals. When the seeds are ready to harvest in late summer, they are loose in the papery cups, roll around, and resemble a natural rattle.

USES

- Medicinal
  - It has tannins, which are phenolic compounds that are astringent and helpful against drying maladies by producing mucus in the gastrointestinal tract. Tannins are anticancer, antiviral, antioxidant, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory. Tannins have applications such as being anti-diabetic, wound healing, cardiovascular protection, and antidiarrheals.
- Cultural
  - Indian Rice is a culturally significant plant as a primary carbohydrate. Some Indigenous communities cultivated estuaries to produce high yields in quantity and size of bulbs.
- Culinary
  - The bulblets are typically processed and cooked because when it is raw, it is very bitter and dry.

HARVESTING

The proper way to harvest chocolate lilies is to dig an area around the stalk, generally a foot in diameter. When the bulbs are identified and found, Indigenous ethno-herbalism says to scatter some of the bulblets in the area and cover them with the disturbed dirt and plant material. Using the bulblets to repopulate the plants will shorten the duration of bulb production compared to using the seeds. The germination of seeds to harvestability is five years, while bulblets will grow into harvestable bulbs in two to three years.

Harvesting is best done in late summer when the foliage begins to die or has died back entirely. It is a singular stalk with papery rattle seed pods on top. These seed pods look similar to the Iris seed pods; however, they are shorter, the pod walls are thinner, and the root system morphology is entirely different.

IDENTIFICATION is KEY

Chocolate Lily seed pods look like Iris seed pods; however, the morphology of the roots is entirely different. Avoid eating the raw bulbs and bulblets in high quantities because very large amounts of tannic acid can cause stomach irritation, nausea, and vomiting.

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WATERMELON BERRY

Latin: *Streptopus amplexifolius*

Common name: Watermelon Berry, Wild Cucumber, or Twisted Stalk

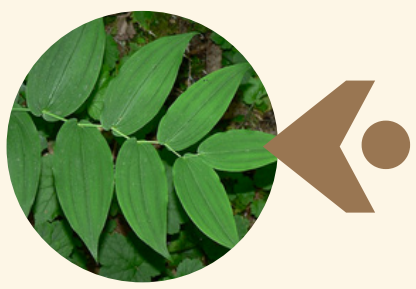
Alutiiq: Muuguaq
Eyak: XAwaalAXAdee'Gi'giyah
Lingít: Tleikw kahínti
Dena'ina: łicheq'a giga or Ggagga gek'a
Tanaina: Qinazdli or Qinaydli
Unangam tunuu: Taangamchiida-x̂
Yup'ik: Atsarrluk or Agautaq

The Watermelon Berry, also known as Twisted Stalk, is a flowering plant in the lily family. It grows in clusters, spreading through rhizomes, producing new shoots, and forming colonies over time.

Watermelon berries are common in Alaska, and they prefer temperate climates with cool, shady, and damp growing conditions. They can also be found throughout the continental United States and Canada. This plant thrives in forests and woodlands with rich soil and organic matter, preferably in Birch, Willow, and Cottonwood forests. It often grows near streams.

STRUCTURE

The plants grow from 1 to 3½ feet or 30 to 90 centimeters high and have branching stems. The name "Twisted Stalk" comes from the stalk zig-zagging, changing direction at the base of each petiole.



LEAVES

The oval leaves are 2 to 5 inches long, broadest toward the base, and grow in an alternate pattern.

FLOWERS & FRUIT

The Watermelon Berry typically emerges in late spring and produces hanging flowers that are light green, white, or rose-colored for the lanceolate variation from early summer to mid-summer. The berries are small and oval, varying in color from green to red, resembling miniature watermelons.

USES

- Medicinal & Cultural
  - In some places, the seeds of the Watermelon Berry plant are not swallowed, but spit out because they are laxatives. This effect increases with the amount eaten. The young shoots are a favorite in the spring. This plant is known for its cooling effect and anti-inflammatory properties.
- Culinary
  - Watermelon Berries are rich in antioxidants, vitamin C, and trace minerals like iron. They are also a good source of fiber and low in calories, making them a healthy snack option. Raw watermelon berries may cause mild stomach upset in some individuals, so it is best to consume them in moderation.

IDENTIFICATION is KEY

Watermelon Berry shoots have look-alikes; Soloman's Seal, false Solomon's Seal, and False Hellebore. False Hellebore is very poisonous. It is crucial to correctly identify any plant before consuming it.

HARVESTING

Harvesting the berries is simple as they can be easily plucked by hand. The berries must be fully ripe before picking them for optimal flavor. It is recommended to leave some berries behind for natural reseeding and future plant growth.

The Watermelon Berry typically emerges in late spring with bright green shoots. Producing hanging flowers from early summer to mid-summer. The berry produces and ripens over the summer and is ready to pick in late summer.

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