



Plants



Native peoples use plants for many things including medicine, food, housing, canoes, baskets, and tools. Native peoples pay close attention to the season and know when the plants are ready to harvest. Tribal activities and movement along with the gathering of seasonal food resources is called Seasonal Rounds. After the plant material is harvested, Native peoples also have to process, prepare, break-down, and store the materials. A lot of the materials need to be stored for a year before they can be used.

Native peoples also place a large importance on taking care of the earth and being Stewards of the Land. To help plants grow stronger and eliminate invasive species, the Tribes occasionally set fire to the meadows in order to get rid of insects and underbrush. When it is time to gather, the people of the Tribes travel to the known areas where the specific plants needed grew. The knowledge of harvesting locations is passed down through families, making them special places for many people.

Native peoples of the Pacific Northwest live very close to the land and use many different plants in their everyday life. Some of these plants include hazel, juncus, cedar bark, maple bark, cedar root, spruce root, stinging nettle, dogbane, camas, acorns, wapato, tarweed and berries. The Tribes always make sure to not over-harvest the plants as they know how important it would be for the plants to return in years to come. They make sure the earth and plants know how much they appreciate their sacrifices for the lives of others.



One of the most useful uses of plants is for baskets. These baskets can be used for gathering, carrying water, transporting supplies, and even for cooking. The Native peoples of the Grand Ronde Tribes often use hazel, juncus, cedar bark, maple bark, cedar root and spruce root to build their baskets. Hazel is the most commonly used plant material for making baskets in Grand Ronde. Spruce roots and cedar roots are also used for making watertight baskets because the roots have the ability to swell when water comes into contact with them. After the plants have been gathered, the bark must be peeled off - making them easier to shape and weave. The plants will also be soaked in water to make them more flexible. Most plants need to be stored for a year before they can be woven with.



Many plants are also important food sources. Some of the plants used for food include camas, acorns, wapato, tarweed and berries. Camas bulbs are dug up and



roasted for 3-5 days outdoors in an oven built in the ground. Acorns are gathered, dried, shelled, leached with water and then ground into a powder. This powder is often used in soups. Wapato is gathered in swampy areas. Historically, the Native women would wade in the water and would hold onto the side of a canoe. They would dig the wapato with their feet and the plants would rise to the top of the water. They would then gather them up

and put them in the canoe. Wapato is very similar to potatoes. Tarweed seeds can be gathered from the Tarweed plant. They are grinded down and the oil they produce is used in foods. There were many berries that were used for food. The berries can be eaten right away but they can also be dried or made into jam so that they can be eaten in the winter.