

# Fire as Tool: How Cultural Burns Support Plants and People

**Lifeways: How a group of people live, work and play together.**



# Learning Outcomes

- I understand the function of different plant parts.
- I understand Oregon Tribes observe what plants need to survive and grow.
- I understand Oregon Tribes use fire as a tool to support plants.

# Success Criteria

- I can identify ways plant parts help plants survive and grow.
- I can explain how Oregon Tribes observe plant problems and use fire as a solution.
- I can give an example of how Oregon Tribes help plants with fire today.

# Key Words and Ideas

- **Lifeways:** How a group of people live, work and play together.
- **Cultural Burn or Planned Burn:** A small, safe fire that Native people start on purpose to help plants, using knowledge passed down for thousands of years.
- **Plant Parts:** The different pieces of a plant (roots, stem, leaves, flowers) that help it live and grow.
- **Problem and Solution:** When something needs to be fixed (problem) and finding a way to fix it (solution).



# Essential Questions

**Why do Oregon Tribes use fire to help plants grow?**

# Parts of a Plant

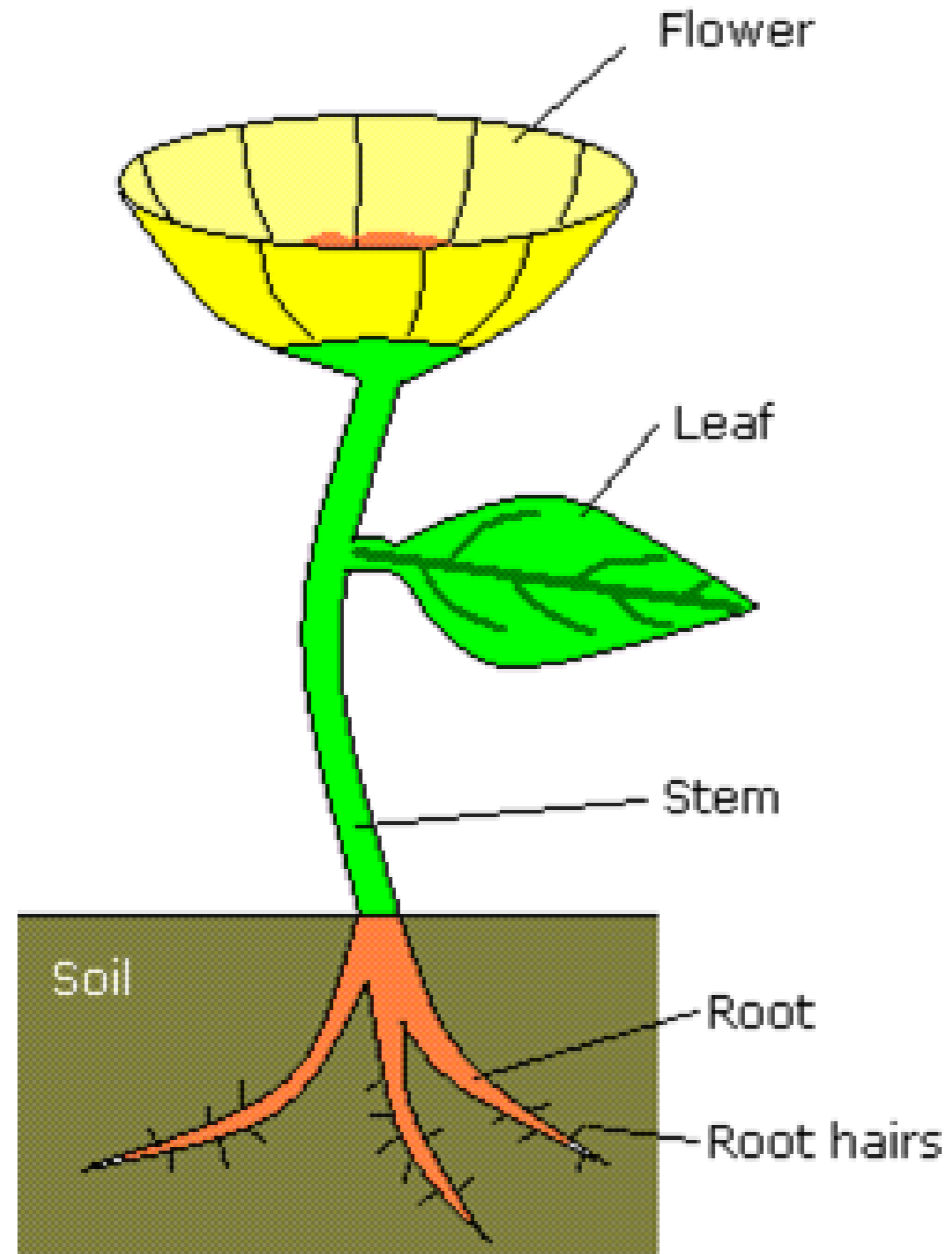


Image Courtesy of [RobinH](#) at the [English Wikipedia](#)

# What do you see? What do you wonder?

## No Controlled burns



Photo by Jim Choate, Courtesy Oreg. Hist. Soc. Research Library, OrHi 102218

## Evidence of Cultural Burns



Photo courtesy Oreg. Hist. Soc. Research Library, OrHi 102218

# Camas root is dug up after 4 years of growth to eat.



Image Courtesy of Walter Siegmund, CC BY-SA 3.0  
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Wikimedia Commons



Camas before processing. Photo courtesy of CTCLUSI.

## How Fire Helps

- Camas grows better after a fire because the fire clears away other plants.
- This means more food for people.

# Tarweed seeds are ground into flour to make cake. The leaves are used to treat poison ivy.



Image Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

## How Fire Helps

- Fire removes the sticky resin, making it easier to harvest the seeds.
- Fire opens seeds to go into the earth to grow.

# Hazelnuts can be roasted, ground into flour or eaten out of the shell.



Hazelnut Harvest, 2014 Jacki-Dee  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/werms/15436457696/in/photostr eam/>

## How Fire Helps

- Fire makes soil healthier, providing more nutrients for the trees.
- Fire helps trees grow more new shoots, which are good for basket weaving.

# Huckleberries are delicious. Oregon Tribes dried them and used them for trading.



Evergreen Huckleberry Photo Courtesy of Willamette Biology  
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/willamettebiology/5048944242/in/photostream/>

## How Fire Helps

- Huckleberry plants need open sun to grow.
- They are fire adapted and grow back quickly and healthy after a fire.

# Cultural Burns at Smithfield Oaks: Re-kindling a Relationship with Fire



Luckiamute Watershed Council

# Thank you!

