

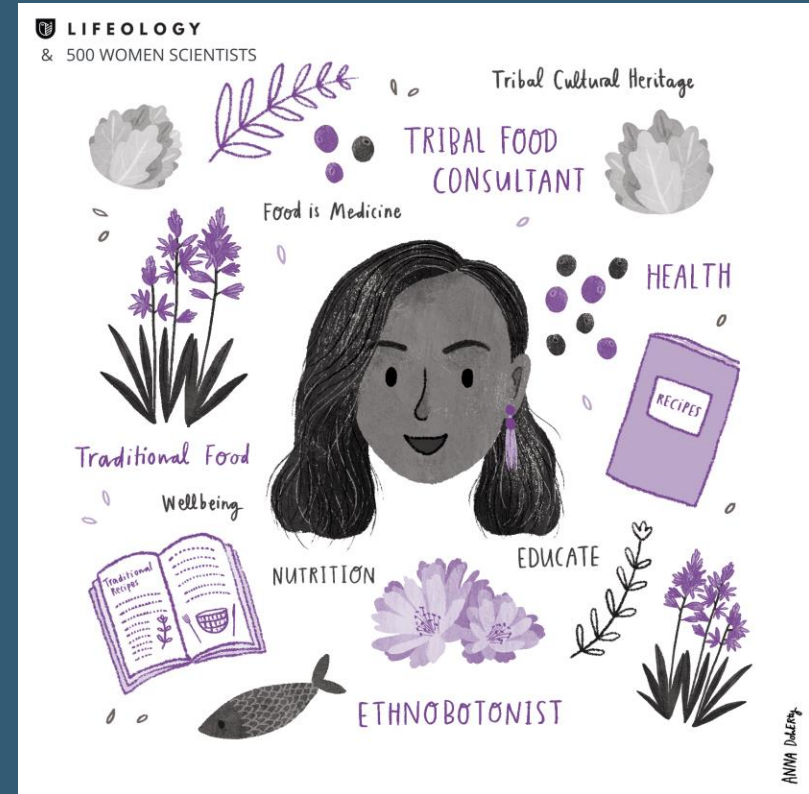


HEALING OUR ROOTS: TRADITIONAL FOOD PLANTS FOR COMMUNITY WELLBEING

By Rose Bear Don't Walk

About me

- I'm a Salish ethnobotanist!
 - PhD in Indigenous and Rural Health at Montana State University
 - M.S. Environmental Studies, University of Montana
 - B.A. Political Science, Yale University
- Masters thesis: *"Recovering our Roots: The importance of Salish ethnobotanical knowledge and traditional food systems to community wellbeing on the Flathead Indian Reservation."* 2019.
- Account Manager with Indigenous Pact, PBC.
- Founder of the Salish Plant Society online ethnobotany resource

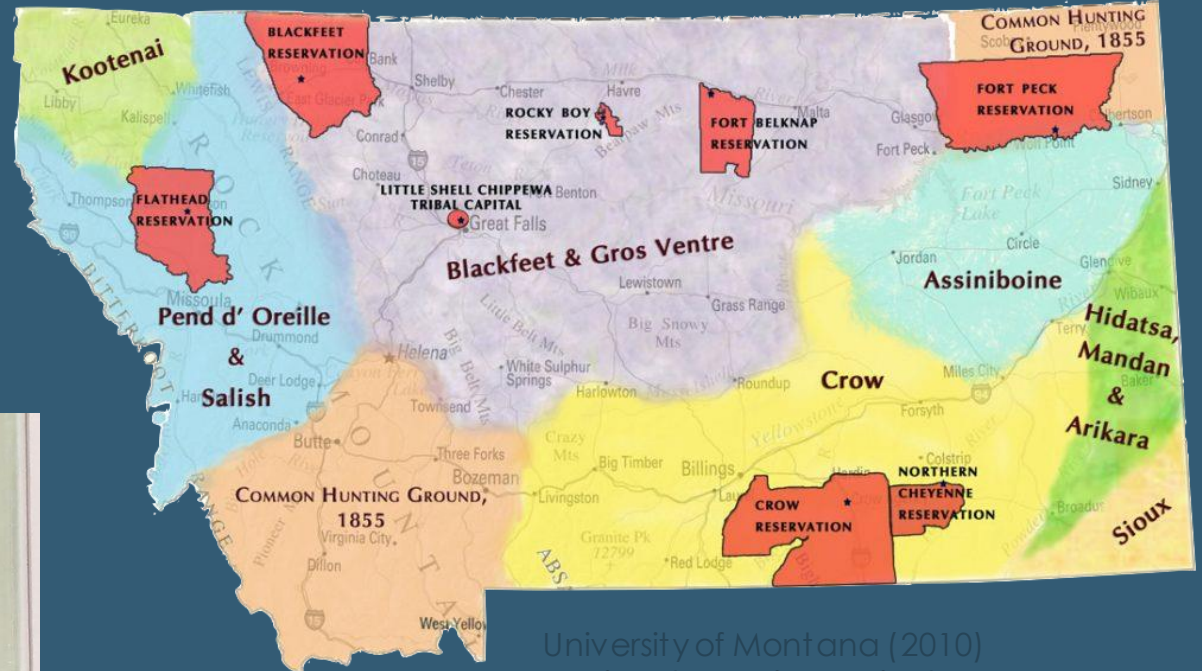


INDIGENOUS
PACT

What is ethnobotany?

- Ethnobotany is the scientific study of traditional knowledge and customs of people concerning plants and their many uses in a society.
- It's a combination of;
 - **Ethnography**: the study of customs of peoples and cultures.
 - **Botany**: the scientific study of plants including physiology, ecology, and classification.
- Plants have been utilized for food, shelter, tools, and medicines as well as for religious and ceremonial purposes in cultures around the world.
- Indigenous peoples have been ethnobotanists since time immemorial!

"In 1805, all was well in Kw̓t̓it̓ P̓up̓λ̓ m̓w̓. It was early fall and the Salish were busy plucking plump łx̓w̓ło' from low hanging branches and pounding the cherries until they formed thick cakes to be laid on rocks to dry. They kept for months once dried. Besides the ever-present preparation for winter, today the Salish discovered something new. A group of light-skinned men approaching their homesite. This was their first encounter with white males and the beginning of a new history for them."



University of Montana (2010) Regional Learning Project.

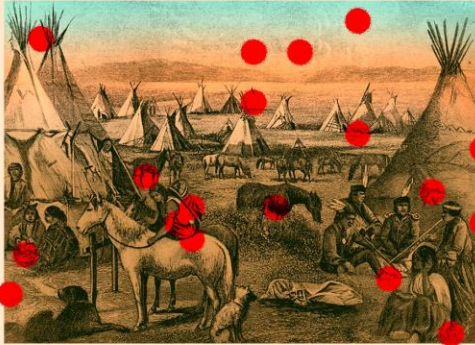
The Round

Month	Salish Name	English Name	Activities
January	sč̓eč̓tu sp̓q̓ni?	Hand Shaking Month	ceremony, medicine dance, jump dance, naming
February	č̓q̓'osqn sp̓q̓ni?	Coldest Month	trapping, ice fishing, story telling, winter essentials—clothing, tools, sleds, toys, flute
March	k̓'six̓ sp̓q̓ni?	Geese Month	trapping, ice fishing, story telling, winter essentials—clothing, tools, sleds, toys, flute
April	sč̓yalimn sp̓q̓ni?	Buttercup Month	bitterroot feast, gathering—churn, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds
May	spexm̓ sp̓q̓ni?	Bitterroot Month	bittermoot feast, gathering—churn, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds
June	sx̓'eli sp̓q̓ni?	Camas Month	bittermoot feast, gathering—churn, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds
July	es̓yapqeyni sp̓q̓ni?	Coleberry Month	bittermoot feast, gathering—churn, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds
August	s̓ts̓atq̓ sp̓q̓ni?	Huckleberry Month	bittermoot feast, gathering—churn, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds, yellowed buds
September	s̓'antq̓	summer	social gathering—dances, social games, migration increases, tool making, weapon making
October	sč̓'ey	fall	hunting—owls & moose, big game, bean water, clam, toad
November	sq̓'lluim̓ sp̓q̓ni?	Storytelling Month	hunting—owls & moose, big game, bean water, clam, toad
December	es̓'aacmi sp̓q̓ni?	Trapping Month	hunting—owls & moose, big game, bean water, clam, toad

Sqelix^w

Epidemiology

- Post-colonial disease patterns of Indigenous people: infectious disease, malnutrition, followed by obesity, cancer, heart-disease, diabetes and depression (Durie 2004).
- American Indians manifest the highest rate of diabetes, compared to other racial minorities in the U.S as well as a high prevalence of obesity (First Nations Development Institute 2014).
- Biomedicine has found direct links between obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular health and mental diseases to nutritional deficiencies (Popkin, 2009, Uauy et al. 2001, Zienczuk et al. 2012).
- **Tribes are experiencing health declines that mirror declines in use of traditional foods.**

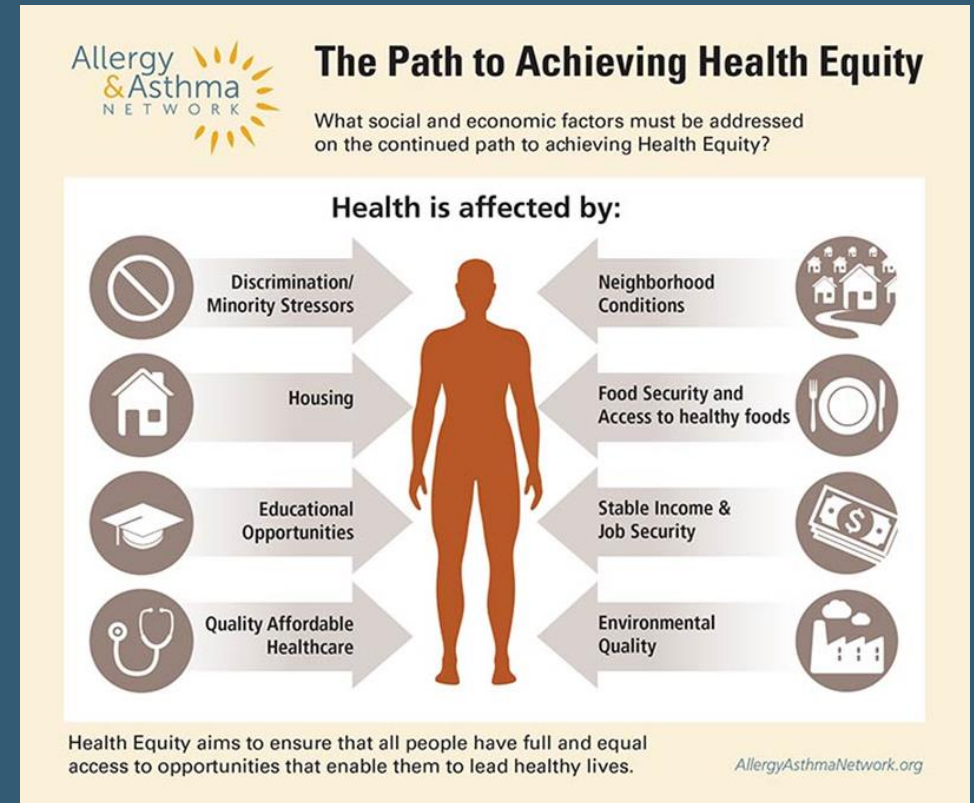


"Disease has never been just disease for Native Americans" *The Atlantic*

<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/disease-has-never-been-just-disease-native-americans/610852/>

Root of the problem

- Removal→Relocation→Assimilation
 - Introduction of western diet
- Federally subsidized foods; Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR) began trajectory of authority over food systems and introduction of foreign, poor-quality foods.
- **Overall: transition from traditional food practices and diet to an American lifestyle (wage economy, sedentary nature, non-tradish foods)=decline of traditional food knowledge and practices and subsequent health issues.**
 - Many aspects of the results of settler colonialism in North America have pointed to American Indian and Alaska Native's falling short in all areas of social determinants of health.





Why
ethnobotany?

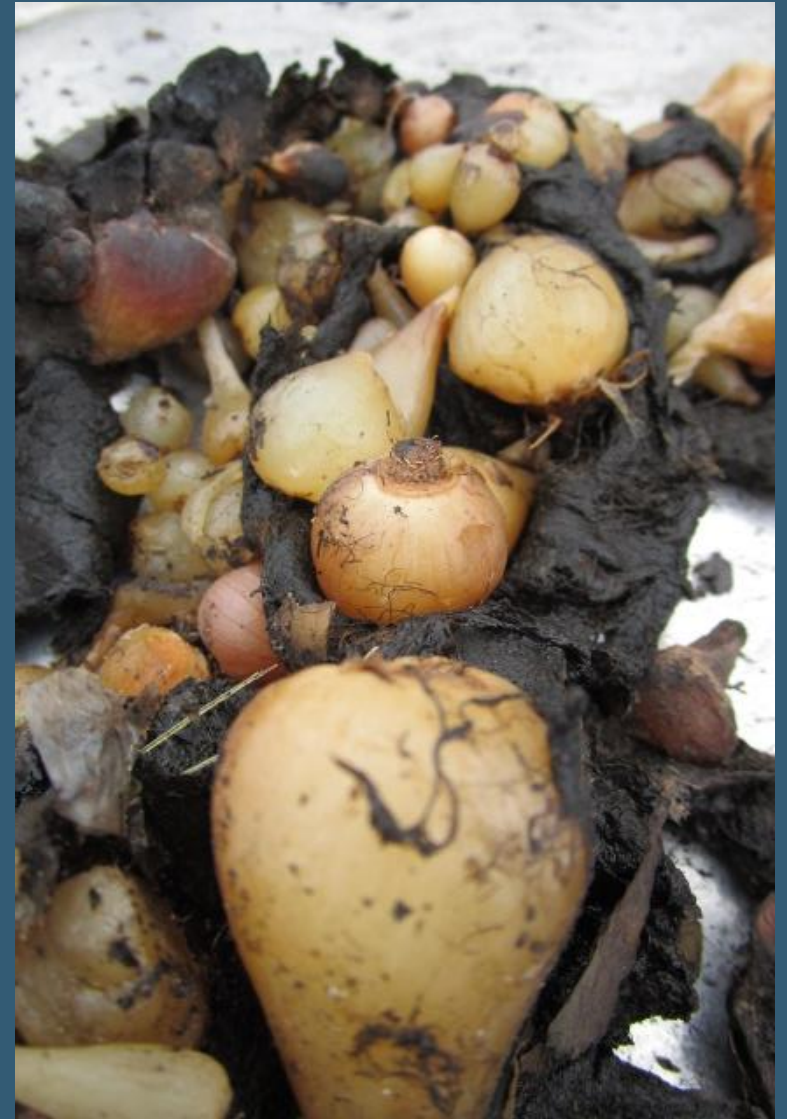


Sqelix^w Smʔem



Food as Medicine: Roots of Revival

- Small amounts of traditional food consumption improves diet quality and grants a variety of social and cultural benefits (Kuhnlein and Receveur 1996).
- Decrease in transmission of knowledge related to traditional foods negatively affects its consumption rates. (Chan et. al 2006; Kuhnlein and Receveur 1996).
- Without the ability of community members to continuously renew their relationships with the land **indigenous languages, and traditional teachings, livelihoods are jeopardized** (Cornfassel 2008; Cote 2016).



Bear Don't Walk, 2019. Camas bulbs.

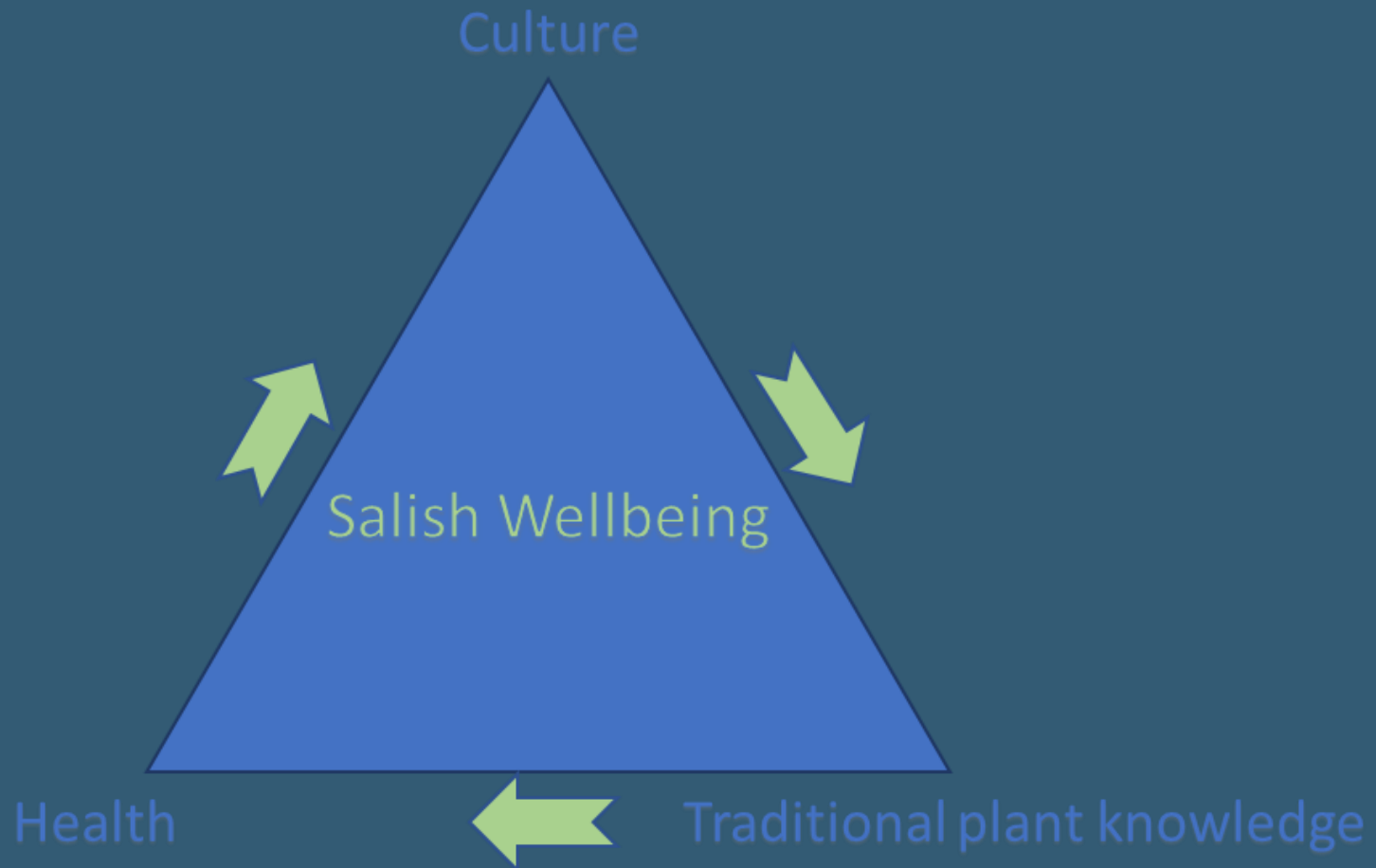


Chart 1. A Salish Ecological Triangle. (Bear Don't Walk 2019) [Chart]



What Indigenous Ethnobotany and Traditional Ecological Knowledge can teach us

- **TEK:** refers to the evolving knowledge acquired by indigenous and local peoples over hundreds or thousands of years through direct contact with the environment.
- Many Indigenous placenames acknowledge natural phenomena that occur there.
- Stories tell us how to process some plants and where they came from
- Observation of animals teaches us what to eat
- Our foraging methods seek to facilitate **future growing** for the plant through soil turnover and oxidation, seed propagation, and careful selection such that our plants return year after year.



5.3 Salish taxonomy and plant list:

Allium cernuum-Nodding Onion, *Q^wléwye?*

Amelanchier alnifolia-Serviceberry, *Slaq*

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (L.) Spreg. -Kinnikinnick, *Sk^wlsélp*

Balsamorhiza sagittata (Pursh.) Nutt. -Arrowleaf Balsamroot, *Mtčwé*

Bryoria fremontii-Black tree lichen, *Šawtmqn // sq^wlápqn*

Camassia quamash-Camas, *Sx^wé?li // itx^we?*

Daucus carota-Wild Carrot, *Sžuk^wm*

Claytonia lanceolata-Springbeauty/Indian Potato, *Snk^wnik^wi // sqáq^wocn*

Erythronium grandiflorum -Glacier Lily, *Máxe?*

Fragaria spp.-Wild Strawberry, *Qeyítqm*

Fritillaria pudica-Yellowbell, *Qáw^wxé*

Lewisia rediviva-Bitterroot, *Spełm*

Lomatium cous.-Biscuit Root, *Pčlu*

Lomatium spp.-Desert Parsley, *Čéyčⁱ*

Ledum glandulosum Nutt. // *Rhododendron groenlandicum*-Mountain Tea/Lab
Sčtx^wičn liti // sčtx^wčlliti

Matricaria matricarioides (Less.) Porter. -Pineapple Weed, *Nclclx^wqin*

Mentha arvensis-Wild Mint, *Xnxnélp*

Monarda fistulosa-Horsemint/ Bee Balm/Wild Bergamot, *Titwⁱ // tiitwⁱ*

Prunus americana-Wild plum, *Čtétéduš*

Prunus virginiana-Chokecherry, *Lx^wlo*

Sambucus cerulea Nutt. -Elderberry, *Čk^wik^w*

Shepherdia canadensis (L.) Nutt. -Foamberry/Indian Ice Cream, *Sx^wósm*

Rosa woodsii-Wild Rose, *X^wyé // x^wyélp*

Rubus parviflorus-Thimbleberry, *Polpqn*

Rubus spp.-Wild Raspberry, *Lłac*

Typha latifolia- Cattail, *Pišlp*

Traditional food plants

sqelix^w s?iln

- Major food plant categories:
 - Roots
 - Shoots (edible greens)
 - Berries
 - Nuts
 - Fungus
 - Bark
- Food groupings: primary, secondary, beverage plants, preservation plants.

Salish plant names: What do they say?

Plant names that are unanalyzable*:

Mtčwé Arrowleaf balsamroot, Oregon Sunflower (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*)

Spéłm Bitterroot (*Lewisia rediviva*)

Sx^{wé}?li // itx^{wé}? Camas (*Camassia quamash*)

X^{wé} x^{wé}elp Wild Rose (*Rosa woodsii*)

Máxe? Glacier Lily (*Erythronium grandiflorum*)

Qáwxe Yellowbell (*Fritillaria pudica*)

Q^{wé}l^{wé}ye? Nodding Onion (*Allium cernuum*)

Snk^{wé}nk^{wé} // sqáq^{wé}ocn Western Spring Beauty (*Claytonia lanceolata*)

Slaq Serviceberries (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)

Lx^{wé}lo Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*)

Titwí tiitwí Horsemint/wild bergamot, bee balm (*Monarda fistulosa*)

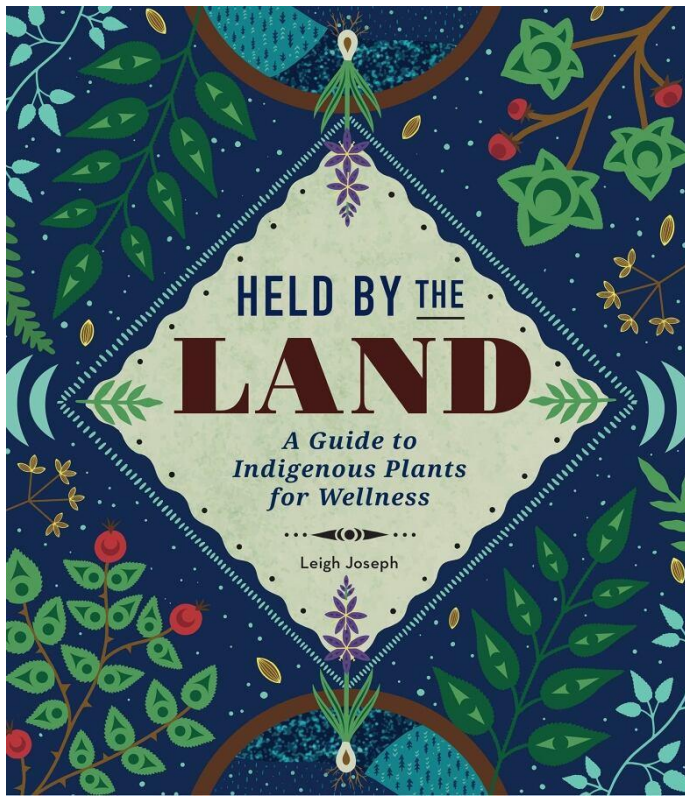
Sk^{wé}lse // sk^{wé}lsélp // sk^{wé}lis Kinnickinnick (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*)

In the study of linguistics an accepted principle is that if a word is not analyzable into an original root or meaning, it is either very old or it was borrowed from another language (Turner 2014)

Plants can provide a healthier future for the Salish people and means for cultural conservation!

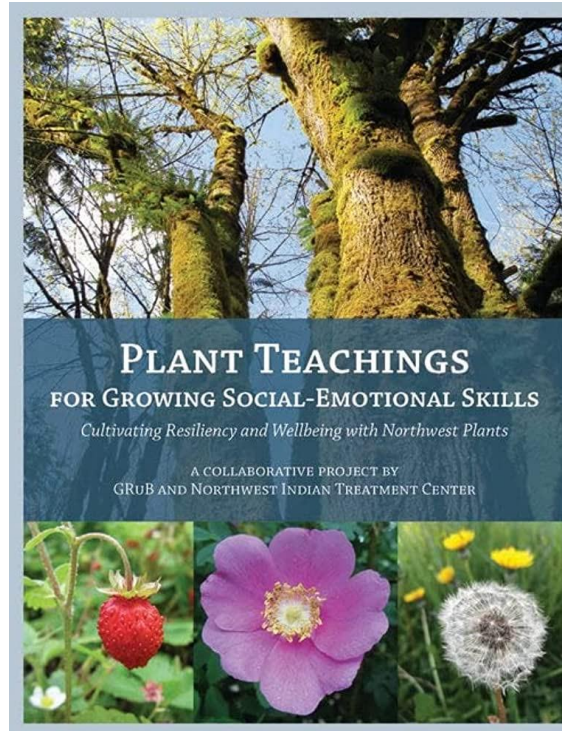
- *“Food is what nourishes all humans. When having connections to particular foods (like spēłm or sxw e?li), you come to understand aspects of creation, oral history, language, and culture.*
- *This benefits people spiritually, physically and emotionally. Food not only nourishes our bodies but established a reciprocal and honorable relationship with our traditional foods benefits us holistically.” “What you eat is so important to every aspect of life and feeling connected with your own culture is so crucial to forming your own unique identity in this world.”*
- *“The traditional plants of our area hold a sacred connection to everything that we are. Yes, it is good to enjoy them but when you take the understanding further, stories, medicine, health, it feeds all of who you are.”*

(Thesis survey respondents, 2019).



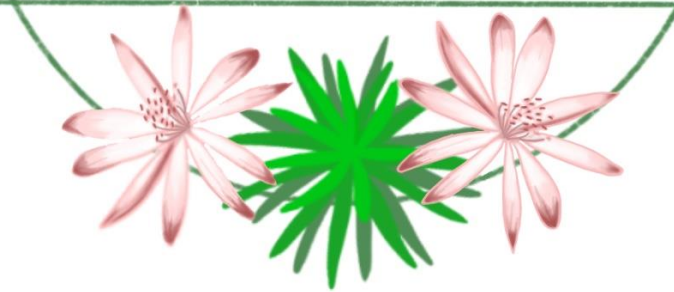
TPK in action!

- *Held by the Land* by Leigh Joseph (Squamish)
- The “Tend, Gather, Grow” K-12 traditional food plants and medicines curriculum for the PNW by GRuB (Garden Raised Bounty non-profit)
- *Plant teachings for growing social-emotional skills* toolkit and book by GRuB and the NW Indian Treatment center
- “Enacting Treaty Rights through Restoring Shoshone Ancestral Foods on the Wind River Indian Reservation” (Keith, et al. 2022)
- **Notable Indigenous ethnobotanists:** Robin Kimmerer (Citizen Potawatomi), Rosalyn LaPier (Blackfeet/Metis), Valerie Seagrest (Muckleshoot), Enrique Salmon (Raramuri)





Salish Plant Society



rose@salishplantsociety.com, @salishplantsociety on IG and FB



Lemlmts'