



PLANTS ALONG SHOUP BAY TRAIL  
AND TRADITIONAL NATIVE USES  
CREATED BY VALDEZ ADVENTURE ALLIANCE



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The Valdez Adventure Alliance seeks to improve the quality of life for residents and visitors of all ages through outdoor recreation access, resources, education, and events.

## INTRODUCTION

### WARNING

Do NOT eat or handle plants without supervision by a knowledgeable adult.  
Many DEADLY plants look similar to some edible plants.

This is a work in progress. The intention is that it will be added to and/or revised as new photos and information are available. It is written for fourth grade level, though we hope everyone will learn something from it.

#### Languages:

The languages of Yup'ik and Alutiiq are used for additional names of the plants simply because those are the languages I had available in my research books. The addition of other native languages or names is welcomed.

Another note: Just like your friends in another state may call a plant something different than you call it, the Yup'ik people from different villages know similar plants by different names.

#### Source Materials:

Chugachmiat Heritage Kit: Gathering Plants to Eat

[Gathering Plants to Eat.pdf \(chugachheritageak.org\)](http://chugachheritageak.org/Gathering_Plants_to_Eat.pdf)

Chugachmiat Heritage Kit: The Healing Power of Alaska's Plants lessons

[https://chugachheritageak.org/pdf/Healing Power of Ak Plants.pdf](https://chugachheritageak.org/pdf/Healing_Power_of_Ak_Plants.pdf)

*Alaska's Wilderness Medicines: Healthful Plants of the Far North* by Eleanor. G. Viereck

*Edible and Medicinal Plants of Southwest Alaska* by Ann Fienup-Riordan, Alice Rearden, Marie Meade, and Kevin Jernigan

*English Bay and Port Graham Alutiiq Plantlore: An Ethnobotany of the Peoples of English Bay and Port Graham, Kenai Peninsula, Alaska* by Priscilla N. Russell

#### Special thanks to:

Don Bickley

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Wild Chamomile  
*Matricaria matricariodes* (scientific)  
*Atsaruat wall'itemkeciyaat* (Yup'ik)  
*Alam'áaskaag* (Alutiiq)



This plant is also called “pineapple weed”.

It is also known as *atsaruat* (“pretend *atsat* [berries]”).



Leaves and flowers were added to soup.

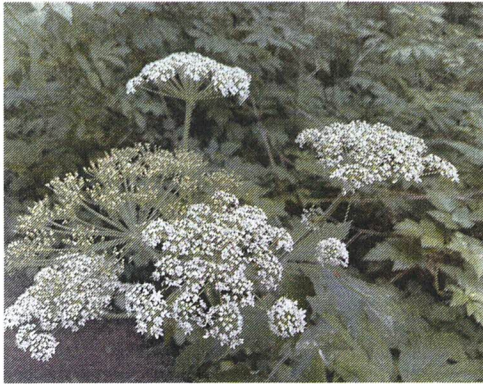


The above-ground parts (not the root), were made into a tea and given to new mothers and babies, or to anyone who needed a laxative. The tea was also used as a wash for eyes and skin.

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Cow Parsnip, Wild Celery  
*Heracleum lanatum* (scientific)  
*Ikiituut tarnat-llu* (Yup'ik)



Most people use cow parsnip and wild celery as names for the same plant, though some people make a distinction based on where they grow and minor differences.

**Do not eat this plant. It is similar to the poisonous water hemlock.**



Newly grown stems were eaten.

The root was rubbed on skin for pain relief, as it has a numbing effect.

The root was burned as a mosquito repellent.

Fun fact:

People speak of “male” and “female” plants.

Since cow parsnip grows year-round, the “female” are probably plants that have not reached the reproductive stage.

In Alutiiq

ugyuuteq = the whole plant

kangaaq = male, flower-bearing stalks

arnaqiitaa = female stalks with leaves but not flowers

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# Devil's Club

*Oplopanax horridum* (scientific)  
*cukillanarpak* (Alutiiq)



The roots and stems are used, but the leaves and berries are thought to be poisonous.



The Chugach Eskimos of Prince William Sound used the ashes to treat burns.

Kenai Tanainas boiled stems and branches to make a tea to treat fever.



Fun fact: The modern medical world has been interested in devil's club since the 1930's, due to the discovery of the possible presence of an insulin like substance in the plant that seems to help in the maintenance of diabetes.

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# Fireweed

*Epilobium angustifolium* (scientific)

*Ciilqaaret* (Yup'ik)

*cillqaq* (Alutiiq)



Young shoots and flowers were eaten raw.

Many people still make jams out of the flowers.



Leaves were made into a tea that was used for stomachaches and restlessness.



Dried roots were mixed with grease and spread on infected sores or bites.

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Highbush Cranberry  
*Viburnum edule* (scientific)  
(Yup'ik)  
*qalakuaq* (Alutiiq)



The berries from this plant are very sour, but can be made into juice, jellies, and sauces.



The jelly could also be used for coughs, sore throats, and colds.

Fun fact:

One elder suggests that the Alutiiq name, *qalakuaq*, refers to a person making a face when eating something sour.

One common name is crampbark because it works to relax muscles and stop cramps.

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Salmonberry  
*Rubus chamaemorus* (scientific)  
*Atsalugpiat wall'naunrat* (Yup'ik)  
*alagnaq* (Alutiiq)



Salmonberries were an important food source.

Fun fact: The Alutiiq have the same name for “berry” and “salmonberry”. This shows the importance of the salmonberry.



Kodiak Alutiiq would place the undersides of green or dried salmonberry leaves to “draw out” an infection. It would also be made into a poultice to go on wounds that wouldn't heal.

Today people primarily eat salmonberries raw, sometimes mixed with seal oil. Many people make jam and jelly with them, sometimes adding rose petals to the salmonberry jam.

Young stems are also edible.

Some people report that this plant can be used as medicine for breathing problems and as a wash for skin problems.

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Shield Fern  
*Dryopteris dilatata*  
*Cetuguat wall'ceturquuraat (Yup'ik)*  
*(Alutiiq)*



Some people call this the fiddlehead fern, though the term "fiddlehead ferns" is a general description for several different species. You can see how they got the term.



Fun facts:

Ferns do not have true stems.

Their leaves are called fronds.

Shield Fern fronds are wide and spreading and grow 2-4 feet long.



The young curled fronds are said to be good cooked, especially added to soups.

In some areas, fern roots are also eaten. One person described it as a sugary taste and another person described it as like a potato.

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# Valerian

*Valeriana capitata* (scientific name)  
*Teptukuyiit* (Yup'ik)



Because of its strong scent, valerian was sometimes put in the nose or worn in the hair to get rid of headaches.

The roots were boiled to make a tea to reduce anxiety or breathe the scent to reduce throat congestion.



Some people added the leaves to salmon soup or other cooking for flavor.

Nowadays, valerian root is sold as an herbal remedy to treat anxiety and sleeplessness.

Fun fact:

Teptukuyiit is from "teptu-" which means to be odoriferous (stinky).

The odor has been described as similar to stale sweat.

The roots were sometimes attached to fishing nets, as the odor helped to attract fish.

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# Yarrow

*Achillea millefolium* (scientific)

*Anuqetuliar* (Yup'ik)

*qanganaruaq* (Alutiiq)



Some people avoid the flowers because they think they are poisonous.



Other people boil the flowers with the stems and leaves and use for external problems such as rashes and cuts.



People chewed yarrow roots to treat sinus infections and asthma.

Some would chew roots and swallow the saliva to treat sores in the mouth and sore throat.

Chewing the root of some yarrow makes the mouth numb.

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