

MOUNTAIN PLAINS INDIGENOUS AND WILD PLANTS

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Mountain Plains Region includes:

Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wyoming

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»» Sumac (*Rhus typhina*)

- Gather the ripe berries in the fall to make a delicious beverage.
- Berries can be dried and stored in a breathable cloth bag or in a glass jar.
- Benefits
 - Tea made from the berries is used to treat sore throats
 - Also high in Vitamin C



»» Saltbush (*Atriplex spp*)

- Gather the leaves all year round for use as a salt substitute.
- Leaves can be laid out on a tea towel in indirect sunlight to dry for future use.
- Benefits
 - Antimicrobial
 - The leaves are made into a poultice for sore muscles



»» Lamb's Quarters (*Chenopodium album*)

- Gather lambsquarters leaves in spring, summer, and early fall, or gather the mature seeds in fall and winter.
- Leaves can be dried by laying them out on a drying screen or tea towel until dried.
- Store in a breathable cloth bag in a cool dark place.
- Benefits
 - Nutrient dense
 - High in Vitamin K



»» Ground Cherries (*Physalis longifolia*)

- Gather the ripe fruits after they turn yellow in the fall.
- Ground cherries can be mashed and dried for later use.
- Benefits
 - A tea of the ripe fruit is used to treat edema



»» Wild Onions (*Allium textile*)

- Wild onions can be identified by the grass-like leaves and stem with a bunch of white flowers sitting on top.
- Gather the leaves and bulbs in early spring before flowering. Gather the flowers in early summer. Gather the seeds in the fall.
- The whole plant minus the fibrous shell around the bulb is edible and can be frozen or dried as is or mashed and dried for future use.
- Benefits
 - Lower blood pressure
 - Are excellent lung support



» Prickly pear (*Opuntia polyacantha*)

- Gather green prickly pear pads all year long, making sure to avoid thorns. Gather the ripe prickly pears in early to late fall.
- Prickly pear can be made into jam or jelly or made into a pudding.
- Benefits
 - A tea of the fruits is used to improve digestion



» Sego Lily (*Calochortus gunnisonii*)

- Gather sego lily bulbs in mid summer.
- Sego lily petals are edible and eaten as a snack.
- The bulbs can be frozen for later use.



» Wild Mint (*Mentha spp*)

- Ceyaka prefers damp soil so it can be found by water sources like a creek. The leaves are shiny and have sharp pointy edges. Ceyaka smells very strongly of mint.
- Gather mint leaves and stems in mid to late summer.
- Cut ceyaka above the ground surface, give a good rinse, gather by the ends of the stems, use a rubber band or string to tie together then hang upside down in indirect sunlight.
- When the leaves and stems have completely dried, store in an air-tight container for future use.



»» Acorns (*Quercus macrocarpa*)

- Gather acorns in late fall and winter.
- Crack acorn, separate nuts from shell, grind nuts in a grinder and place in a storage container. Over the crushed nuts in water about 3 inches above nuts and allow it to sit in the fridge for three days to leach out any tannins that are present in the nut. Every day, use a tea towel to help separate nuts from the water it has been sitting in, rinse nuts, return to the container, and refill the water to allow it to sit another day. On the third day, after separating water, rinse and lay the crushed nuts out on a tea towel or screen to fully dry. Grind one more time to make flour.
- Store in a glass container when fully dried for future use.



»» Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)

- Gather young milkweed shoots in spring; gather milkweed flower buds and flowers in midsummer; gather milkweed seed pods in fall while still green. Buds are gathered, one set of buds, every other plant to ensure that pods will be available the following month for harvest.
- Both buds and pods are blanched in boiling water for a few minutes to remove milky sap. Remove from water, place on a tea towel to allow for excess water to drain and store in vacuum seal or freezer bags until next season.



»» Cattail (*Typha latifolia*)

- Cattails are commonly found at the edge of water (lakes, streams, ponds).
- The shoots, pollen, roots, and the female flower (when green) are all edible parts of the cattail.
- Gather cattail shoots in early spring; gather cattail pollen and immature flower stalks in late spring and early summer; gather the rhizomes in fall.

