

Indigenous plant walk at Brooklyn with Suzanne Camp (rough notes were taken as I followed Suzanne on several walks around Brooklyn forest - Lynn Swift. For more details see book references at bottom of this document.



**Cedar: Tree of Life**

**In general:** older, second growth forest. Evidence - trees are the same species, same size and you could see stumps of much larger trees with notches from the first growth forest.

Invasive plants - introduced to the area (not native) take over the area. In this forest there are holly plants, broom and Himalayan blackberry plants that are invasive species.

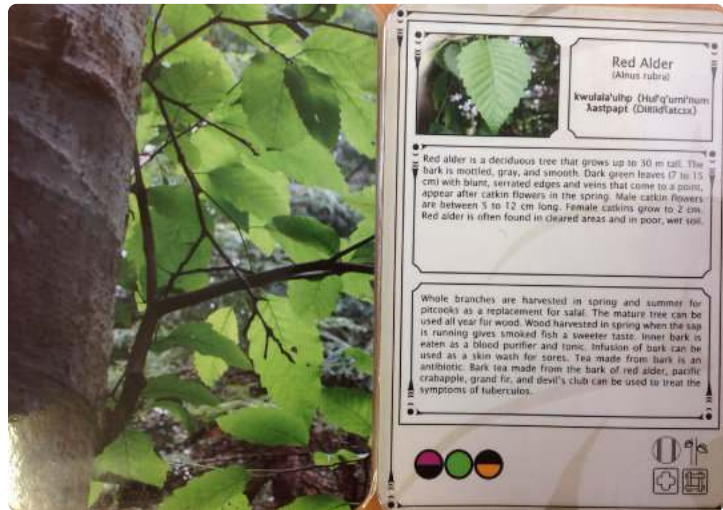
**Cedar tree** can live at least 1500 years

**Mini ecosystems in the Comox Valley** - there are many of these mini-ecosystems around the valley. Generally Comox is 2-3 weeks ahead of Cumberland. The very thick, branchy part of the tree which is used as a tie.

Cedar trees can be culturally modified to provide house planks. Cedar was used to make clothing, baskets, tools, canoes, totem poles and houses. Rest also used for weaving baskets and hats (spruce roots were used for hats too). Thuja Plicata - Latin name for cedar. Plicata means braided together- look at the branches and how they look braided. Whole trees were cut down for house poles, canoes.



**Alder tree**



**Red Alder**

**Alder tree-** natural plant dye for Red Cedar Bark ceremony items. Chewed to create dye. Alder was used for smoking fish, especially when harvested in the spring when the sap was running. It gave the fish a sweet flavour. The bark was removed first. When the forest is in it's natural state, Alder is the tree that is supposed to come in and establish when land is disturbed. Alder tree is a nitrogen fixer and the leaves dropping over several decades creates an ideal growing environment for evergreen trees. When the alder tree dies, the young ever green trees soak up the light. When the leaves drop and die they create soil and provide nutrients for new plants to grow. The new trees and plants come in just as the Alder is dying off.



**Oceanspray or Ironwood**



**Ironwood/Ocean Spray-** very strong wood, used for digging sticks, pegs, tool handles and to hold salmon while it was cooking. Pannicles are the dried flower part (helps to identify the plant)



**Yarrow - used as medicinal plant**



**Yarrow**

The leaves and flowers of the Yarrow plant can be used to make a tea to soothe the nerves and muscle spasms.



**Salal plant**

Berries from **Salal** were dried into berry cakes.

Children were the berry pickers of the village. Salmon berries, thimble berries, Oregon grape, trailing blackberries, blueberries and salal berries were picked in season. The berries could be made into jellies. They are high in pectin. The leaves of the salal plant were used to line cooking pits.



**Oregon Grape**

**Oregon grape**- the berries were eaten fresh or mixed with salal berries in a berry cake for tartness. The inner bark of stem and root can be used to make a yellow dye. The berries were used to make a purple dye.



**Nurse tree - provides nutrition for new plants**

A **nurse tree** is a fallen tree that is rotting and it becomes a place for new trees and plants to grow.



Tree growing on a stump



**Holly plant - introduced species**

Introduced species are plants that are not Indigenous to the area but have been brought in from another place. They can be quite invasive and will take over some of the native plants causing changes to the mini ecosystems. Holly, English Ivy, Himalayan Blackberry and Scottish Broom are some introduced plant species that grow in the Comox Valley.



**Trailing blackberry**

**Trailing blackberry** are the small blackberries that grow on thin runners in the ground. The larger blackberry bushes that we see around the Comox Valley are an introduced species called Himalayan Blackberry. Berries were eaten fresh, or dried into berry cakes for winter use. Berry cakes could be eaten with Eulachon (oolichan) oil to soften the cakes.



**Huckleberry**



|

**Indigenous roses-** Nootka rose and Bald hip roses. Tiny, pink single petal flowers. The rose hips were dried to make tea rich in vitamin C.



**Pitch - used to seal boxes and baskets together and for fires.**



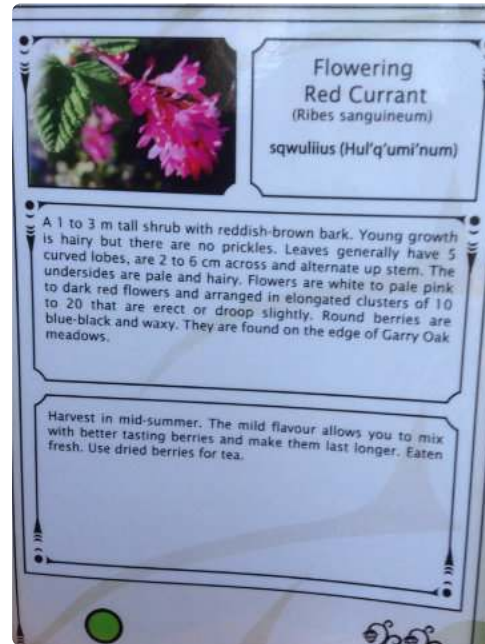
**Evidence of old growth forest**

The notch in the stump is where the loggers would have placed a platform to stand on while they cut the tree down.



**Flowering red currant -**

The berries were eaten fresh, dried berries were used to make a tea.



**Red Currant**



**Cherry Tree**

The bark from the cherry tree was used to make fish hooks



**Maple**

There is no evidence that people on the Northwest coast collected syrup from maple trees. Maple wood was used to make canoe paddles, bowl and spoons.





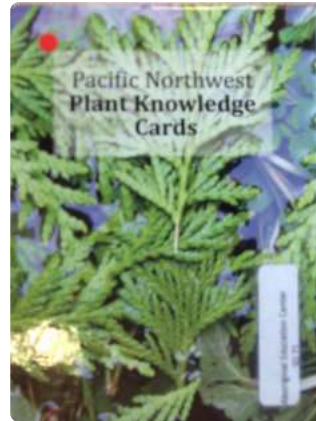
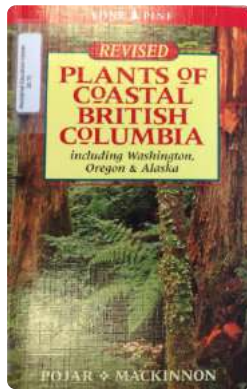
**Honeysuckle - vines were used to tie things together.**



**Sword Fern**

Sword fern fronds were used to line the pits in pit cooking. They were also used to serve salmon on during the important salmon ceremonies. These were celebrations of the first salmon of the season. The salmon ceremony is the only time that children were permitted to eat first.

**Reference  
information -  
excellent local  
plant information.**



Ordering information: <http://www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca/2013/06/pacific-northwest-plant-knowledge-cards/>