

April 2026

Indigenous Education Online Newsletter



From the NIDES Indigenous Education
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Welcome Spring!

We hope that you have had a lovely start to spring. The weather is warming up and there are many signs of spring.

We wish you continued success in your learning and would like to remind you that we are here to support your journey in any way we can. We hope you enjoy the April newsletter offerings. Our community of learners come from across British Columbia and we hope to foster a sense of community and connection with the information and contents included in this newsletter.

Reminder: Registration is open for the 2026-2027 K-9 programs. Grade 10-12 registration is open year-round.

<https://www.navigatenides.com/>

New 🌱: This spring, students will have the opportunity to order a complimentary activity kit. This order is in lieu of our mail out parcel that we have done in past years. We hope that it will offer families more choice and personalization. Look for an information email from Allison Schilling about how to order items. If you would like any assistance or have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Newsletter Contents:

- ★ April calendar of events
- ★ Earth Day Activities and Crafts
- ★ Spring seasonal information and harvesting information
- ★ Resources to Support Online Learners



APRIL 2026

Upcoming events



LINK FOR FRIDAY ZOOMS

FRIDAY
APRIL

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We will have samples of the options available for the spring activity kit order opportunity. Come and check them out!

12:00-12:30 Chat and Chew

Spring Activity Kit showcase

Zoom link Meeting ID: 412 182 4521

FRIDAY
APRIL

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We will use the Strong Nations yoga cards to guide us through a fun body break.

12:00-12:30 Chat and Chew

Body Break

Zoom link Meeting ID: 412 182 4521

April 10th- No online events

Every Wednesday- Open Zoom
Open Zoom Meeting ID: 683 0033 4324



Happy



Earth Day



April 22, 2026



Ways to help the Earth

Earth Day is April 22. It is a special day to care for our planet.

Here are some things you can do to help the Earth on Earth Day and every day.



Pick up trash. Take a garbage bag and help clean the park or beach.



Plant something. Plants help clean the air.



Save energy. Turn off things when you are not using them.



Put waste in the right place. Use trash cans for garbage. Use recycling bins for paper, plastic and glass.

Adapted from CBC Kids News • Photo: Pixabay/FIDigitals, Pexels/Thirman, Pexels/Tara Winstead, Pexels/SHVETS production

Name: _____

Earth Day Word Search



B O O R G R A S S D F
L I T T E R R Z P F G
N J I T R E E R R R P
E B A T W C D E I L R
T W P O S Y U U N S E
B R L S J C C S G N S
D F A D W L E E T E E
Y L N S I E V V T T R
G A T O H A K S G T V
S K S P S N A T U R E
H E W G M W E A R T H

clean
earth
flowers
glass

grass
green
lake
litter

nature
planet
plants
preserve

recycle
reduce
reuse
save

trash
tree
waste
water



First Nations Health Authority
Health through wellness

Food Safety tips for Fiddleheads



Fiddleheads are the curled, edible young shoots of the ostrich fern. Fresh fiddlehead ferns are harvested in spring. Similar to a lot of vegetation and wild plants, fiddleheads are nutritious. Fiddleheads have high concentrations of antioxidants and polyunsaturated fatty acid and hold a cultural significance amongst Indigenous peoples. Historically, First Nations peoples taught white settlers how to find, pick and prepare fiddleheads in the spring.

Health risks

Fiddleheads can be an excellent source of vitamins and nutrients. Like many harvested foods, there are protocols and precautionary steps to take. For fiddleheads, it is not advisable to eat them raw as they can cause food poisoning. A number of foodborne illness outbreaks or food poisonings have been reported in Canada and the United States due to improper preparation of fiddleheads. The cause of these illnesses is from an unidentified natural toxin in the fiddlehead.

Symptoms usually begin 30 minutes to 12 hours after ingestion. They may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and headaches. Despite the benign and self-limiting nature of the toxic side effects, dehydration can be a concern to vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly and those with medical conditions.

If symptoms persist, contact the Poison Control Centre.

Other types of ferns such as foxglove and bracken should not be consumed because they may be toxic or carcinogenic.

Food preparation

Through proper handling and thorough cooking, the potential for foodborne illness can be reduced.

CLEANING

- Using your fingers, as much as possible remove as much of the brown papery husk on the fiddlehead
- Wash the fiddleheads in fresh clean water several times to remove any residual husk or dirt

COOKING

- Cook fiddleheads in a sufficient amount of boiling water for 15 minutes or steam them for 10 to 12 minutes until tender. Discard the water used for boiling or steaming as it may contain the toxin
- Cook fiddleheads by boiling or steaming before sautéing, frying, baking or using them in other foods like mousses and soups

FREEZING

The following steps should be followed for proper freezing

- Clean fiddleheads properly
- Blanch or boil them for 2 minutes
- Plunge the fiddleheads into fresh potable cold water and drain
- Discard cooking water
- Pack the fiddleheads in freezer containers or bags. Store fiddleheads in the freezer for up to one year for best quality
- Follow cooking instructions before serving
- Never re-freeze thawed food

PRESERVING

Fiddleheads should not be preserved using a pressure canner at home because safe process times have not been established for home-preserved fiddleheads.

References

Food safety tips for fiddleheads. Health Canada (2015).

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/food-safety-fruits-vegetables/fiddlehead-safety-tips.html>.

Accessed May 30 2022.

Fiddleheads. British Columbia Drug and Poison Information Centre (BC DPIC). (2011).

<http://www.dpic.org/faq/fiddleheads>.

Accessed May 30 2022.

Respectful Harvesting

Respectful Harvesting Protocols

“Our Elders remind us that we are related to everything around us: the earth, the plants and the animals. We came last. Our existence is dependent on our relatives, and we must always remember to give respectful thanks, when we harvest. Prior to going out to harvest, we must first have the knowledge of how to harvest without harming. We need to consult with community to make sure we are stewards of the land, and not destroying a sensitive area or denuding a community harvesting location. For example, in harvesting birch bark we consult our Elders to find out protocols (only take what you need), the correct time of year (in spring when the sap is running), how deeply to cut (just short of the cambium layer),

what part of the tree (the north side is the thickest – a piece with few knots) and what tools to use (traditionally stone knife – modern steel knife). You might also need to know where the stand of large birch trees are. Finally, equipped with this basic knowledge, we can prepare to harvest. Different nations have different protocols for showing respect in harvesting but generally the idea of giving thanks is universal.

Some nations have gathering songs traditionally sung by women while harvest. Similarly, some nations use drum songs prior to harvest to honour our relatives, the plant people.” (excerpt from SD #83)

Plant Harvesting Tips, from book, *Feasting for Change* (www.indigenousfoodsvi.ca)

- There are knowledge keepers who have practised and learned from their elders and from practise on how to successfully and respectfully harvest plants.
- Could bring an offering such as water (traditional offerings are the tobaccos plant) for Mother Earth and offer a prayer and thanks before harvesting.
- Try to harvest in the morning,
- Be gentle and tread softly, plants are living.
- Take only what you need and leave some for the animals.
- Share your harvest with others.
- Don't pollute

Safety Tip

Ask someone or refer to a plant identification book or plant cards if you are unsure if a plant is edible



...and from , Alaska Native Healers, (http://accs.uaa.alaska.edu/files/botany/publications/1999/Medicinal_Flora_Alaska_Natives.pdf)

- Think about or say your intentions when gathering plants and leave something after you disturb them. Talk to the plants and share your plans for usage.
- Traditionally people learn how to use plans by going out with someone else who uses them.
- The time of year when you harvest plants is important. Different parts of the plant are stored at different times of the year. Know your intended use of the plant and when it is most appropriate to harvest that plant.
- The plants show themselves in abundance when they want to be picked. If plants are scarce in an area in an area, it may be best to search somewhere else rather than pick the few plants that were found.

Resources for Online Learners

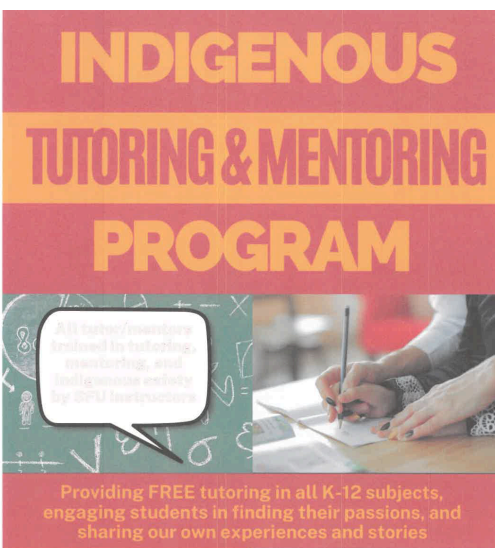
Our Indigenous Education Online Support team can connect you with a variety of resources including academic tutors, mentors, mental health supports, and food security supports. Please reach out to a team member at any time.

Food support: If your family is in need or you know of another NIDES family that is facing food insecurity, please reach out to our Indigenous Support team or another NIDES staff member. We will help to connect you with support.

Academic Support:

Reach out to a member of the Indigenous Support team for personal academic support or goal-setting.

Indigenous Tutoring and Mentoring Program is available for free for all Indigenous students in British Columbia. This program is a volunteer-run organization and connects volunteer tutors with students. Visit <https://www.itmp.ca/> for more information.



Mental Health supports:

KUU-US Crisis Line Society provides crisis services for Indigenous people across BC. Phone (adults and Elders): 250-723-4050 Phone (Youth): 250-723-2040 Phone (toll-free): 1-800-588-8717 Website: www.kuu-uscrisisline.com.

Hope for Wellness Help Line offers immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention by phone or online chat. Phone (toll-free): 1-855-242-3310 Website: hopeforwellness.ca.

Métis Crisis Line is a service of Métis Nation British Columbia. Phone: 1-833-MétisBC (1-833-638-4722)

Foundry virtual access provincewide virtual services for youth under 24 and their caregivers. All services are free and confidential, and may be accessed through the Foundry BC app or chat. Phone: (1 833 308-6379) or video calls. <https://foundrybc.ca/virtual/>

Kids Help Phone Get 24/7, immediate counselling, support, information and referrals. Phone: 1 800 668-6868 or Text: TALK to 686868 Texting support for adults available by texting TALK to 741741

General Resources:

Métis Nation B.C. <https://www.mnbc.ca/>

First Nations Health Authority:

<https://www.fnha.ca/>

B.C. 211: <https://bc.211.ca/>

2-1-1 connects individuals to non-emergency community programs and social services in their areas.