

Ethnobotany

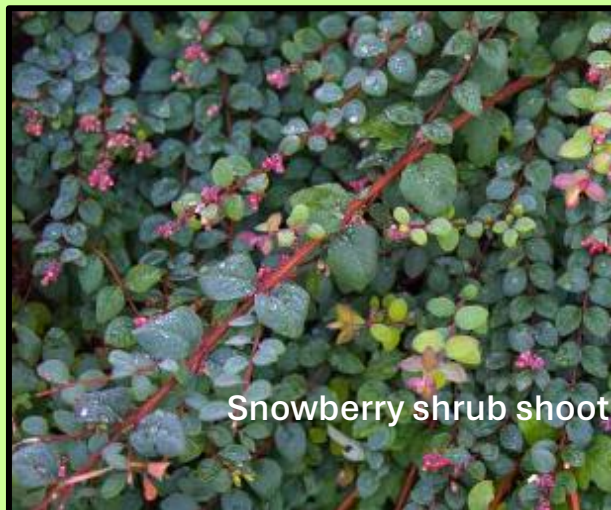
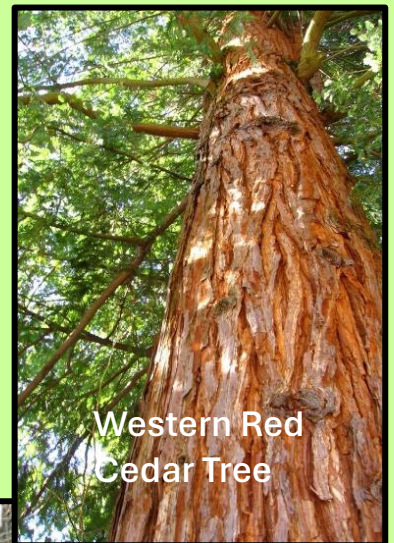
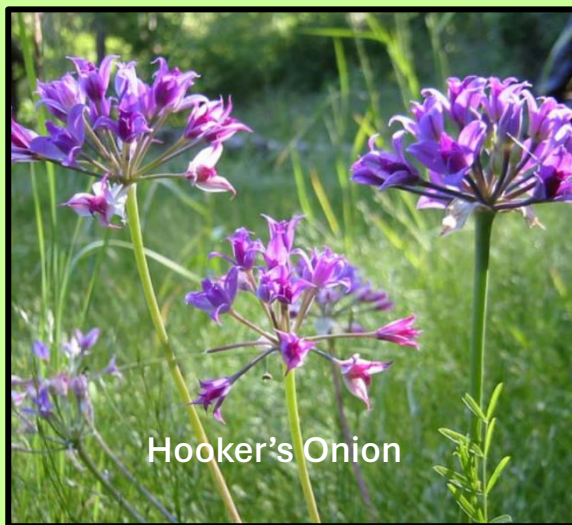
Indigenous people used many local plants in their daily lives

Age: All ages

Time: 30 minutes

Here's How:

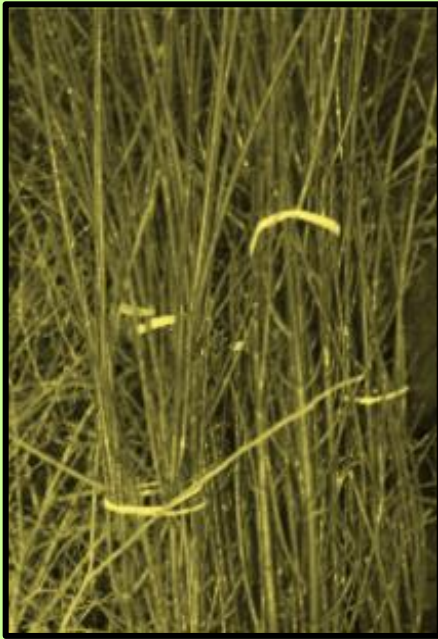
1. Look at the 6 photos of plants below and try to find these plants in the Tribal Life Trail.
2. Think about how Native Americans might have used them.
 - Choose from food, baskets, arrows, fish traps, and totem poles.
3. Discuss your guesses with others, and then read on to find out some ways the plants were traditionally used by Indigenous people.



The Back Story:

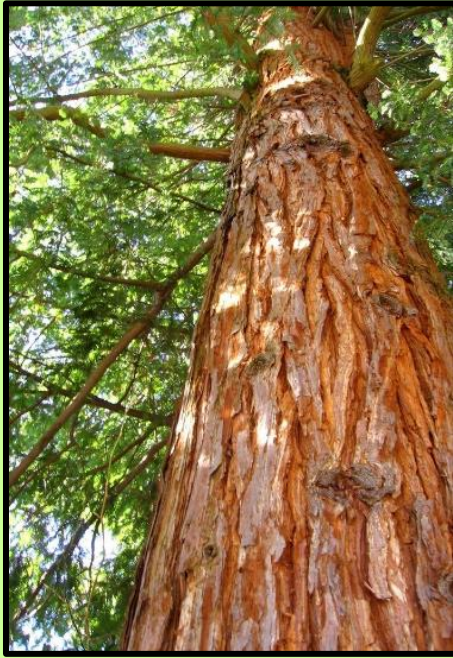
Ethnobotany is the study of how people traditionally used plants for food, medicine, tools, ceremonies, and construction. Indigenous people used many of the plants along the Tribal Life Trail in their daily lives. Today you are an ethnobotanist as you study the purposes of these plants.

Vine Maple Fish Trap



Indigenous people around the world made fish traps using plant stems and branches. A traditional fish trap has a funnel shape: fish swam towards bait inside the funnel and then were trapped. In this area, Indigenous people made fish traps using Vine Maple stems and branches, which are plentiful. They gathered the stems and cut them to desired lengths. They used flexible vines to bind the stems.

Western Red Cedar Totem Pole



Totem poles are 3-dimensional symbols that commemorate ancestors, recount familiar legends or notable events, and signify prestige. In this area, Indigenous people often used Western Red Cedar tree trunks to construct totem poles because the wood is rot-resistant and straight-grained and easy to carve. A tree was chosen for its beauty, then felled, and the bark was removed before carving. The tools for carving were stone, bone, and metal including adzes, axes, chisels, and carving knives.

Bear Grass Basket



Well-made baskets are helpful because they are durable and lightweight. Indigenous people used baskets in daily life to gather, cook, and store foods, and carry clothing, personal items, and children. They also used baskets in ceremonies. It was common for Indigenous people in this area

to use cedar bark and roots, Oregon grape roots, cat tail, and Bear Grass to weave their baskets. To prepare grasses for weaving, women gathered grasses in the fall and laid them out to dry. When the women were ready to weave a basket, they soaked the grasses in water so the grasses wouldn't crack and break.

Snowberry Shrub Arrow Shaft



Indigenous people used many arrows for hunting and warfare. They made arrows using thin, straight shoots, including from the Snowberry Shrub. They gathered the shoots and branches, then shaved, sanded or heated and bent them straight.

Serviceberry Jam



Serviceberries grow on shrubs and trees. Their nickname, sugarberries, indicates how tasty they are! Indigenous people used the Serviceberry in basketry and arrow making (stems and branches) and for medicine (inner bark, fruit). They also ate Serviceberries raw or dried them in the sun and mashed and pressed them into cakes. They cooked the berries slowly to make jam.



Hooker's Onion

Hooker's Onion is a perennial wildflower. The bulb, flower, and stalk are all edible. Indigenous people harvested the largest underground bulbs in either early spring or late fall as a food source. They usually roasted them in pits or added them to stews.

Now think of how plants are part of your daily life. What plants are used to make clothing, food, medicine, furniture, tools, art?