

Aquatic Plants

Cattail (*Typha latifolia*, *Typha angustifolia*)

Identification – Long, slender stalk to 10' tall. Flower is elongated green spike turning brown. Fluffy fruit, tiny seeds

Edibility – Scrape starch off roots and use like flour. Pull plant and eat shoot raw before plants reaches 4' tall. Green spike boiled, eaten off cob



Wild Rice (*Zizania palustris*)

Identification – Grass grows to 8' tall. Cluster of long, narrow leaves float around stem. Flowers branch off stem in open clusters. Grains purplish-brown

Edibility – Grains removed from plant, dried, parched, hulled, then winnowed. Boil grains for 45 min. to 1 hour



Spices

Sweet Gale (*Myrica Gale*)

Identification – Bushy shrub to 4' tall along shorelines. Leaves ½" wide by 3" long fragrant when crushed. Flowers are light green catkins. Fruits are tight, clustered nutlets

Edibility – Leaves dried, used for spice or tea. Nutlets are used as a spice. Use nutlets sparingly



Wintergreen (*Gaultheria procumbens*)

Identification – Short, creeping plant to 6" tall. 2-5 1" wide by 2" long leaves. Dark green on top, light green undersides. ¼" white and pink flowers. ¼" red berries persist through winter

Edibility – Berries eaten raw. Leaves dried and added for flavor. Tea from dried leaves



Invasive Species

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Identification – Short plant to 12" tall. Rosette of sharp toothed leaves to 3" wide by 8" long. Yellow flowers rise from long, leafless stems. Fruit is fuzzy white hairs. Secretes white, milky substance when cut

Edibility – Whole plant is edible raw or cooked



Plantain (*Plantago major*)

Identification – Short plant to 12" tall. Rosette of broad, smooth leaves to 3" wide by 7" long with 5-7 parallel veins. Tiny purplish-green, elongated flowers on leafless stalk to 2' tall. Produces many seeds along flower stalk

Edibility – Leaves raw or cooked. Seeds can be ground into flour



Canada Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*)

Identification – Grows 2-5' tall. Alternate spiny, toothed leaves to 1" wide by 7" long getting smaller towards top. ½"-1" purple-ish flowers on top of plant. Fruits are tiny seeds with light fuzzy hairs

Edibility – Leaves raw or cooked. Roots of 1st year plant raw or cooked. Stem, peeled and boiled



Burnt Areas

Fireweed (*Chamerion angustifolium*)

Identification – Tall plant to 8'. Alternate leaves ½" wide by 4" long have connecting circular veins. 1" elongated pink-purple flowers 1" have 4 petals with 4 stamens. Fruits are slim and long with many seeds and long hairs

Edibility – Leaves and flowers eaten raw or cooked. Pith raw



Edible Wild Plants of the



Boundary Waters Canoe Area

Created by Mark Zimmer
www.zimmerpamphlets.weebly.com

In this pamphlet you'll find 20 different edible plants located within the Boundary Waters Canoe Area. All plants listed are abundant and should be easily found during your travels. All natural foods are very high in vitamins and should be eaten in moderation. Only harvest what is necessary as we are not the only species using these foods to survive. Make sure to properly identify each plant for your own safety. Consume a small amount of a plant and wait a few hours to make sure you have no ill effects. Enjoy and happy foraging!

SPRING

Ostrich Fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*)

Identification – Brown, paperlike shell covering the frond of the fiddlehead. Deep, U-shaped stalk free of paperlike shell. Grows from a single root 5-9 fronds forming a funnel like pattern. Grows to 6' tall

Edibility – Early spring, before fronds fully unfurled, or around 20" tall. Snap off fiddlehead at its base. Eat raw or boil shortly



Canada Mayflower (*Maianthemum canadense*)

Identification – Short, 3"-5" plants. Normally 1-2 smooth leaves with parallel veins. Carpets the ground. Flowers early spring with small 1/8" white flowers, elongated cluster. Berries green in summer turning bright red

Edibility – Leaves edible raw or cooked. Berries edible in fall



Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)

Identification – Short, 2"-6" plant. 3 compound, serrated leaves. White flowers from single stem, with 5 petals and many yellow stamen. Small 1/2" red berries with tiny seeds pitted on surface

Edibility – Leaves and berries can be eaten raw. Leaves can be dried and used for a tea



Bluebead Lily (*Clintonia borealis*)

Identification – 2-4 large, smooth basal leaves, To 3" wide by 9" - long. 2-5 greenish-yellow bell-like flowers with 6 petals, rising from leafless stalk to 16" tall turning to a 1/4" round, blue berry in fall

Edibility – The leaves are edible raw or cooked in early spring. Best before fully unfurled.



SUMMER

Blueberry (*Vaccinium angustifolium*)

Identification – Shrub to 24" tall. 1/2" wide by 1 1/2" long highly serrated leaves alternate on branches. 1/4" white-pink bell shaped flowers. 1/2" round berries turn from green to blue when ripe. Bog Bilberry (looks similar) has darker, slightly smaller edible berries slightly less flavorful

Edibility – Berries eaten raw, dried, or cooked. Leaves for tea



Dewberry (*Rubus flagellaris*)

Identification – Short, creeping plant to 12" tall. 3 compound, serrated leaves 3" wide by 1" long. White flowers, rising from single stem, with 5 petals and many light stamen with dark tips. Berry turns dark red when ripe

Edibility – Berries eaten raw or cooked. Leaves dried for tea



Red Raspberry (*Rubus strigosus*)

Identification – 2'-6' tall plant with prickles along stem. 3 or 5 compound, serrated leaves with large single leaf on end of branches. 1/4" white flowers in spring. 1/4"-1/2" berries turning red when ripe

Edibility – Berries eaten raw or cooked. Leaves eaten raw early in Spring or dried for tea



Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)

Identification – Shrub to 6' tall. Large 4"-8" serrated, maple-like green leaves with pale underside. Flowers are white, 1"-2" with 5 petals and many yellow stamen. 1/2"-1" berry turning red when ripe

Edibility – Berries eaten raw, dried or cooked. Leaves dried for tea. Young shoots peeled eaten raw



SUMMER/AUTUMN

Bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) (Kinnickinick)

Identification – Short, creeping shrub to 12" tall. 1/2" wide by 1" long smooth oval leaves alternate on woody branches. 1/4" white-pink bell shaped flowers. Small berries turn bright red when ripe and contain 5 hard nutlets

Edibility – Berries raw or cooked. Leaves dried for tea or smoked in a pipe as the Natives and settlers did



Bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*)

Identification – Short 3"-6" plant. 2 larger, 4 smaller leaves opposite each other surrounding single stem. 4 white bracts surround tiny green flowers. Cluster of red berries with 1-2 hard seeds ripening in summer

Edibility – Berries edible raw but better boiled and strained



Wild Roses (*Rosaceae* family, *Rosa* Genus)

Identification – Multiple species to 8' tall. 5-9 leaflets, 3/4" wide by 1 1/4" long, on thorny stems. 1"-2" round pinkish-white to pink flowers with many yellow stamen. Fruits, 1/2"-3/4" round, turn red in fall with many light colored seeds

Edibility – Fruits (hips) eaten raw, cooked, or dried. Tea from flowers



Baked Hazelnut (*Corylus cornuta*)

Identification – Shrub or small tree to 20' tall. Oval, serrated leaves, 2" wide by 3" long with hairy undersides. Nuts enclosed in a green husk that looks like a beak. Flowers are small catkins in fall.

Edibility – The nuts, removed from the shell, are edible raw, baked, ground to flour

