

The Incredible Plants of the Coastal Temperate Rainforest

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Before there were doctors in white coats and medicine in bottles, there were wise women and men who were healers. For hundreds and hundreds of years, healers have found ways to make people better when they get ill or hurt. One way is to use plants, and in British Columbia the plants of the coastal temperate rainforests are amazing! These are some of the rainforest plants used by Coastal First Peoples.

Salal *Gaultheria shallon*

Evergreen shrub that grows in lush thickets. It was used as a medicine for stomach upsets and coughs, also for food (berries, dried or cooked), and dyes (purple from fruits, yellow from leaf infusion).

Oregon Grape *Mahonia nervosa*

Evergreen shrub with shiny prickly leaves like holly, clusters of yellow flowers and blue fruit. The bark and berries were used as medicine for liver, gall bladder and eye problems. Eating lots of berries was the only cure for shellfish poisoning.

Salmonberry *Rubus spectabilis*

Prickly plant with berries that look like raspberries. This is because both are edible berries in the rose family. Salmonberry bark and leaves were used for skin troubles and were also made into teas to treat diarrhea and dysentery.

Cattail *Typha latifolia*

Found in marshes, ponds and slow-flowing water. The fruit looks like a brown weiner on a stick and the fluff from it can be used as stuffing for pillows and mattresses. The leaves can be woven together and used for clothing, bedding or mats.

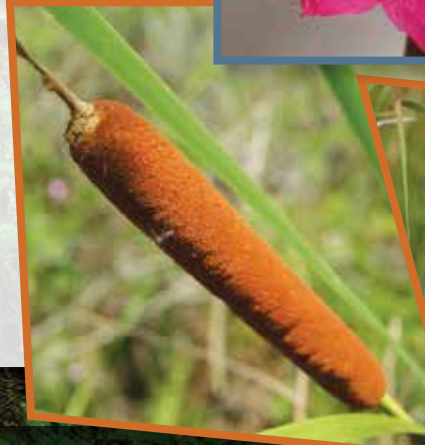


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