

The Edible Wild

By Tricia Edgar

British Columbia's forests and fields grow food for hummingbirds, deer, and bumblebees, but did you know that they grow food for people as well? These delicious wild foods have provided food for people in British Columbia for thousands of years.



Credit - Chancelrie, CC

Trailing Blackberry

(*Rubus Ursinus*) Most of us know the so-called Himalayan blackberry, but BC has a smaller cousin, the native

trailing blackberry. This blackberry's vines run along the ground but its berries are also very tasty. The trailing blackberry grows in both wet and dry areas of southern British Columbia.



Credit - Rosemary Taylor, B.C.



Salal

(*Gaultheria shallon*)

This small plant with waxy leaves is common in British Columbia's coastal forests. The berries are blue-black and are not really berries at all, but a thick part of the flower, or sepal. Salal has been a staple food for Coastal First Peoples for thousands of years.

Credit - Todd Carnahan, B.C.



Thimbleberry

(*Rubus parviflorus*)

These berries are just the right size to fit on the tip of your thumb. Peeled thimbleberry stalks are a sweet treat in the springtime. They grow from the south coast into the central interior of British Columbia.

Credit - Todd Carnahan, B.C.



Salmonberry

(*Rubus spectabilis*)

The sweet, orange-red berries of the Salmonberry grow in wet coastal rainforests. Coastal First Peoples enjoyed salmonberry plant shoots as an early spring food. Credit - Todd Carnahan, B.C.

Huckleberry

(*Vaccinium spp*) Quick - what

colour is a huckleberry? While some huckleberries are red, others are so dark that they're called black huckleberries.

All of them have a sweet-tart flavour. If you think that they look like blueberries, you're right, they're closely related to the popular blue fruit. Huckleberries grow in many parts of our province. You can find huckleberries near the ocean and on mountaintops.

Credit - Rosemary Taylor, B.C.



Eating Wild Foods - some tips

- Always check with an adult first.
- Get permission to harvest food in that area.
- Only pick a little from each plant to leave food for other animals as well.
- Learn about these plants by adding them to your own garden. The local wildlife will thank you!



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