



Yaana.eit

Wild Celery



“When I was younger, I just thought that Yaan.eit was the common name for Indian Celery. That’s just what we always called it. I probably didn’t find out until I was an adult that Yaan.eit was a Tlingit word.”

Wild Celery in Abundance

Wild celery is a very common plant that grows in abundance in Southeast Alaska. It also grows in many other places in North America and has been called other names like cow parsnips or Indian celery. The Tlingit name is Yaana.eit.

Some may find it odd that they can be eaten because some people have adverse skin reactions when they come into contact with them; however, eating them can be beneficial. There are other plants such as nettles that can be used

for consumption as well. The celery is picked in the early spring. Later in the year its qualities become less desirable. Like many other plants, you have to harvest it before it goes to seed otherwise it will become woody and its taste begins to decline. The stems are the part of the plant that is eaten. The stems are peeled before consuming and they can be eaten raw or cooked. It can be used as a replacement for regular celery often purchased at the grocery store. They taste great in

stews, casseroles, and other vegetable dishes. This food does not keep well so it is best to eat within a few days. If you plan it right and pick it at the correct time of year, it would make a great gift to those who do not have the means to collect it themselves.



CAUTION!!!
Be sure to identify wild celery correctly!
There are similar looking plants that are deadly poisonous such as water hemlock.

Haa Atxaayí Haa Kusteeyíx Sitee
“These do not keep but for only two days, but we would cut a lot of them and bring them over to Kake and give them away. The grand-folks remarked that being in indirect sun and being close to salt water has a great deal to do with the success and taste of the wild celery.”
-quote from Henry Katasse derived from [Haa Atxaayí Haa Kusteeyíx Sitee, Our Food is Our Tlingit Way of Life](#)

Benefits of Harvesting Your Own Food

Many Native foods do not have documentation about their nutritional content. Although this trend is common, many traditional foods are healthier than processed foods since they do not contain high quantities of added-chemicals and preservatives. Some are more in ease when they know how their food has

been handled before it gets to their plate. As long as the plants have been identified correctly, it is likely that it is a healthy option considering the typical American diet tends to lack sufficient amounts of fruits and vegetables. Most plant foods are high in fiber and low in sodium and saturated fat.

Harvesting traditional foods ties us with the land and gives us a reason to spend time in the outdoors. Plus, bringing food to the table can give us a legitimate sense of accomplishment. For the Tlingit people this lifestyle is nothing new; food is simply a way of life.