

Red Elderberry

Sambucus racemosa



"In the ancient Germanic pantheon, the goddess of life and death... lived in the elder tree. "



3,800 years ago, people in British Columbia paved the bottom of a pond with stones and began to raise wapato (*Sagittaria* sp.), which develops a starchy tuber of primary importance as a food source and trade item. The paving made harvest easier, as it limited the depth to which the wapato tubers could grow. Along the banks of the pond they planted Red elderberry. This is the oldest evidence in North America of deliberate human manipulation of an ecological niche - farming - by people previously considered to be hunter-gatherers.

Elderberry is known as a "Grandmother Plant" because it creates a micro-environment that allows other plants and people to thrive. All parts of the elderberry have been used for food and medicine for millennia.

Red elderberry MUST be cooked and the seeds removed before being ingested, as the raw plant and berries can cause severe gastric distress. All parts of the plant contain cyanide-producing glycosides which change in the gut to hydrogen cyanide. This can cause upset stomach, diarrhea and vomiting. In large doses it can actually be lethal.

"The entire elder plant—flowers, bark, berries and leaves—has sustained generations as a source of food and medicine. Archaeologists found elder seeds in a Neolithic dwelling in Switzerland, and European villagers have planted the shrubs close to their homes for many centuries. Throughout North America, the plant was highly prized by native tribes, who ate the dried berries as a winter staple and used the twigs and fruit in basketry and the branches to make arrows and musical instruments. Native Americans also used elderflowers and berries to treat colds, joint pain, fever, skin problems and more." (<http://www.motherearthliving.com/>). Modern medical research has verified that elderberry is an exceptionally rich source of Vitamin C and antioxidants, with significant anti-inflammatory and antiviral attributes.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sambucus_racemosa

<http://www.motherearthliving.com/Cooking-Methods/elderberries-grow-cook-heal-with-elder>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5176348/>