



**Fleming College
Arboretum**



**School of Environmental &
Natural Resource Sciences**
Frost Campus | Fleming College

Traditional Tree and Shrub Uses in Indigenous Culture

Fleming College Arboretum Workshop

Aanii, Boozhoo, Hello

Fleming College weni munpii nogojiwang megwaa'ige Anishinabeg Michi Saagiig akii'ing. Miigwech endum nimi Michi Saagiig abimadizijig gii'aabegwa munpii dush gidaa anukii-mimiwin. Fleming college weni mumpii nogojiwang megwaa'ige awibimaadizijig miinwa akii'ing munpiige Williams Treaty miinwa Treaty 20 gii-zhinkaazo.

Fleming College respectfully acknowledges that we are situated on Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg lands and territory. G'chi miigwech to the Michi Saagiig peoples for allowing us to continue our work in your territory.



Collaboration Acknowledgments

- This workshop has been developed by Indigenous and non-Indigenous students of Fleming College Ecosystem Management Technologist program.
- All Indigenous traditional knowledge throughout this workshop was shared by Anishnaabe and Nehiyaw students and traditional medicine knowledge keepers.
- Indigenous partners gave consent to Fleming College Arboretum to use traditional knowledge and teachings throughout this workshop and to facilitators.

Agenda



In-class session



15 min break



Outdoor activity



15 min break



Indoor activity



Workshop wrap-up

A close-up photograph of a vibrant purple iris flower in full bloom, set against a background of lush green grass. The flower's petals are detailed with delicate veining. A white, rounded rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the image, containing the title text.

*Indigenous Land
Connections*

History of Michi Saagiig Anishinaabeg

- Michi Saagiig (*Mississauga*) Anishinaabeg (*Ojibwe*) have lived in the nogojiwang (*Peterborough*) and surrounding areas for hundreds of years.
- This territory falls within the Williams Treaty 20, signed in 1923.



Traditional Land Uses

Anishinaabe live closely with the land and waters, utilizing the majority of the flora for the following:



Language connection



Foods, herbs and spices



Teas



Lessons and teaching



Craftsmanship



Building materials



Medicine (external and internal)



Current Land Use

- Plant collections, medicinal purposes, and cultural practices
- Some Anishinaabe Indigenous peoples of this area live or have connections to:
 - Curve Lake First Nations, Alderville First Nations

The background of the image shows two white flowers with five petals each, covered in small dew drops. They are surrounded by vibrant green, serrated leaves. The scene is set against a dark, blurred background of more foliage and branches. A white, rounded rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text "Indigenous Medicines".

Indigenous Medicines



Doctrine of Plant Signatures

- "People have interpreted signatures through the resemblance of a plant part to the organ it treats, the similarity of plant color to the color of symptoms, and by equating plant action to medicinal action. The idea has strong foundations in oral history and traditional healing, which can be intensely localized or even individualized" ~ (Diamond, 2014)
- Examples:
 - Tree veins for blood circulation
 - Heart shaped leaves for cardiovascular health
 - Bark of trees for skin care

Traditional Medicinal Remedies



Salves



Herbal Baths



Smudging



Traditional Tea



Salves

What is it?

- Made using a combination of oils or waxes as a base, with other ingredients like bark, buds, sap, flowers, leaves, roots reduced to form a consistency of a balm or cream
- Common base used is coconut oil (beeswax is also used)

Benefits

- Salves have been used in Indigenous culture to treat various topical skin ailments and infections.
- Ex. Psoriasis, eczema, acne scars, burns, skin abrasions, dry skin, lymph node cleansing

Herbal Bathing

What is it?

- Involves submerging your body in a tub of warm-hot water infused with various plant species and parts
- You can add the plant materials directly to your bath, but the best method is to steep a large pot of tea and add it to your bath water

Benefits

- Used to improve mental, physical and spiritual wellbeing
- A 20-minute herbal bath can help alleviate one or more of the following symptoms:
 - Blood/Lymph node circulation, digestion/stomach pain, migraine, body pain, viruses etc.



Examples of Herbal Bathing

Birch Bark

- Adding primarily birch bark to bath water helps to diminish persistent skin eruptions or skin disorders (scars, psoriasis, eczema etc.)

Cedar Leaves

- Boosts Vitamin C absorption through skin soothing soreness in the body
- Works with circulatory system and lymph nodes to pull toxins out of the body
- Detoxifying and clears sinuses combating symptoms of colds and flus
- Relieving for menstrual cramps





Smudging

What is it?

- The use of plants as a smoke medicine, used by some Indigenous peoples across Canada
- Primarily in prayer and ceremonies

How is it done?

- By lighting plant medicine, to smoulder and smoke, cleansing the body physically, spiritually and mentally
- To cleanse a person, place or thing
- Can be done with one or all the four sacred medicines, or 34 other plants used for smoke medicine



Teas

Traditional Uses:

- One of the more commonly known remedies and can be used for many different ailments
- Brewed with a single plant or a combination of plants. Ingredients can be dry or fresh
- Typically, stronger tasting, longer brewed teas contain more potent medical properties
- Can treat headaches, colds/flu, indigestion, stress, body pain and/or cramping

Different Parts of Plants



Flowers & Leaves



Bark



Roots



Leaves & Flowers

- Used primarily in teas as they are the most palatable. However, they are also used for tinctures, salves, baths, food etc
- Most plants lose their leaves in winter. Harvesting should be done between May-September
- Pearly everlasting is an understory forb used for its leaves and flowers in traditional medicine



Bark

- Popularly used because it can be harvested year-round
- Often used in teas and is commonly used in bathing, tinctures and salves
- Barks of some tree species are not used as they may not be palatable, containing toxins or high levels of tannins
- Know your tree species before collecting!



Roots

- Can also be used for tea
- Contain stronger medicinal properties therefore possess a stronger effect on the body
- There are high levels of nutrients stored in the roots of a plant, especially during winter
- The collection of roots should occur in spring after soil thaw

A photograph of a snowy landscape, likely a campus arboretum, with several young trees and wooden stakes. The scene is set against a clear blue sky. A white rounded rectangle is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the text "Frost Campus Arboretum" and "Indigenous Connection".

Frost Campus Arboretum

Indigenous Connection

What is in the Arboretum?



Balsam Poplar



Eastern White Cedar



Staghorn Sumac



Red Osier Dogwood



River Birch



Balsam Fir



Sugar Maple



Striped Maple



Redwood Cedar



Choke Cherry



White Spruce



Trees and Shrubs of Focus

- Eastern White Cedar
- White Birch
- Staghorn Sumac
- White Pine
- Red Osier Dog Wood



Giizhigaa'aandak – Thuja occidentalis - Eastern White Cedar

Traditional Uses:

- Considered one of the four sacred medicines
- Commonly used as part of sweat lodge ceremonies and in medicine bundles
- Also used in prayer, healing, dreams, cleansing, and protection against disease and infection
- Depending on the region, like these lands, cedar is used as a ceremonial plant medicine



Wiigwaaswaatik - Betula papyrifera - White Birch

Traditional Uses:

- Bark used for constructing various commodities such as bowls and baskets for: cooking, storing and transporting food
- Was commonly used to build canoes and as a writing/painting canvas
- Is used for crafting and art, like bark biting
- Can be used in construction; it can be wrought into twine, rope and mats



Pakwaanaatik – Rhus Typhina – Staghorn Sumac

Traditional Uses:

- The berries, roots, inner bark and leaves were used to make dyes of various colours
- Also used as teas or poultices for relieving upset stomach, diarrhea and other ailments
- Cold tea made from the fruits taste like lemonade
- The leaves were mixed with tobacco and smoked by many tribes across Canada
- The pith of the tree is almost hollow-like, filled with sugars. Can be used for straw, pipes, blow gun etc.



Shingwaak - Pinus strobus - Eastern White Pine

Traditional Uses:

- The inner bark was consumed as an emergency food source
- The resin can be used to seal canoes
- Tea derived from the bark helps prevent communicable diseases
- The Haudenosaunee Confederacy in Ontario refers to it as the Great Tree of Peace



Mskwabiimnagohns - Cornus sericea - Red Osier Dogwood

Traditional Uses:

- The inner bark was used to create mixtures for red, black and yellow dyes
- Red Osier Dogwood has been used to clean teeth by chewing the twigs
- The pliable twigs are often used to for dream-catchers
- The pith can be used to relieve pain, especially labor pains



Respectful Harvesting

Why Respectful Harvesting is Important

Improper harvesting can leave trees vulnerable

- More susceptible to diseases and pest species
- Disturb the transportation of water and nutrients throughout the tree

Negative impacts on species population

- Overharvesting from mature, reproductive trees can impact a species ability to regrow





Harvesting Techniques

- Collect leaves/needles/twigs using cutting shears
 - Clean cuts allow trees to heal quickly in comparison to ragged cuts
- Collect bark that is easy to remove, but not thicker sheets that provide resistance when pulled
 - Taking bark from freshly fallen trees is also acceptable
- Collect samples from a selection of trees
 - This will prevent irreparable damage from occurring to an individual specimen
- Staghorn sumac should be harvested in August



15-minute break
before Outdoor Activity



15-minute break

A close-up photograph of pine needles, showing their sharp, needle-like structure and green color. The image is slightly blurred, creating a soft, natural background. The text is centered within a white rounded rectangle.

In Class Activity: Tea Time



Tea Time

Clean the harvested plant supplies

- Enjoy the prepared tea from the class!
- Create your own tea blends!

Talk about your tea blends:

- What did you make?
- Why did it interest you?
- Do you intend on harvesting your own tea medicine in the future?



Actions

- Attend Indigenous events open to the public
 - Annual Elders Gathering at Trent University

Want to Learn More?

- Attend future Arboretum workshops
- Trees and Shrubs ID workshop: if you want to learn to identify more vegetation, so you can find more natural medicine
- Seed Bank workshop: to learn how to grow your own medicine



Workshop Debrief

- *Take away:* Let the flora tell you a story. The natural world has much to teach us, spend time each day to listen, learn and reconnect
- Share your newfound knowledge with friends and family, and encourage participation and awareness of Traditional Ecological Knowledge

Want to learn more?

- Edible & Medicinal Plants of Canada – Available at the Fleming College Book Store

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Thanks for Attending the Workshop!
miigwech, kinanâskomitin!

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