

Plant ID Sheet For Walk Leaders

1 SUMAC

Clues: Shrub (small tree). Several leaflets on a stem. Leaflets have toothed edge like a saw. Twigs are thick and have soft center that can be hollowed. Red berries are found in cone shaped clumps. Staghorn sumac has fuzz on twigs, leaves and seeds.

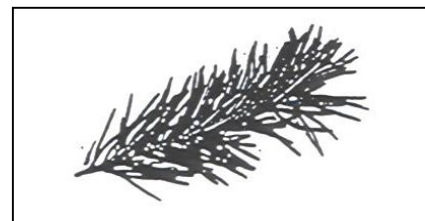


- Berries used to make a cooling drink like lemonade.
- Hollow stems were used to make flutes and spiles (hollow tubes) to tap maple trees.

2 SPRUCE

Clues: Evergreen tree. Leaves: needle like, dark green, blunt
Bark: red brown

- Leaves and inner bark used for medicine; treat coughs, heal wounds.
- Roots used for thread to sew.
- Sticky sap used to seal seams in baskets or canoes, and was even used as chewing gum.



3 BLACKBERRIES

Clues: Small bush. Stems have thorns. Underside of leaves is light green. (Raspberry leaves are whitish underneath). Dried berries may still be seen. Blackberries have a stiff stem with thorns.



- Collected for food, dried for winter use.
- Helpful as a medicine to treat diarrhea, stomach ache and tooth ache.
- *Do you see any blackberries on the plants? When could you find lots of blackberries? (Late summer.)*

4 GRAPES

Clues: Grapes grow tendrils that wind around another plant so the grape vine can climb and not lie flat on the ground. Leaves: Large leaves with three sections (like a duck foot). Fruit begins as green and turns purple.

- Collected for food, some dried for winter use.



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SUGAR MAPLE

Clues: Tree. Leaves have a distinctive shape (show illustration) with veins spreading like fingers on a hand. Leaves are OPPOSITE to each other on twigs



- Sap for sweet syrup and sugar.
- Wood used to make bows and handles for spears and stone axes.
- Wood used to carve bowls for eating

6

PIN OAK

Clues: Tree. Pyramidal shape. Leaves are glossy green which turn russet in the fall and have a distinctive shape. Their seeds are acorns which will be lying on the ground underneath the tree. Pin oak is a type of 'red oak'.

- Acorns ground for flour for bread and to thicken stews.
- Inner bark used as medicine to treat coughs.



7

CATTAILS

Clues: large, tall plant, typically 3 to 20 ft tall
Leaves: spongy, strap-like. Stems: starchy, creeping, thick
Seed heads: very distinctive furry, brown, cigar shaped

For uses: see main walk description.



8

WILD CUCUMBER

Clues: stem: long, trailing, climbing
Fruit: small, green, ovoid, very prickly

- NB: not known if used by Native Americans but Still interesting to point out to students



Plant ID Sheet for Walk Leaders : Harmful Plants

9

POKE WEED

Clues: Green plant with bright purple berries
All parts of this plant are poisonous to eat. (Exception, the first shoots in the spring, less than 6 inches high can be eaten.)



10

STINGING NETTLES (USEFUL TOO)

Clues: Plants are 3-6ft tall.
Leaves: soft, green and opposite up to 5" long and 3" wide and covered with minute, but stinging hairs.



Although this plant stings (chemicals formic acid, histamine and acetylcholine) it can be gathered using gloves and boiled for food and medicinal uses.

- **Food:** young shoots and tender top leaves can be gathered (using gloves) and dried for a potherb. Boiling the nettle destroys the irritant quality.
- **Medicine:** Root and boiled leaf decoctions were used to sooth symptoms of rheumatism. A nettle tea helped clear the lungs.
- **Technology:** Stinging nettle plants are used to produce a tan dye. Fibers from the Slender nettle (*U. gracilis*) plant are used in making string. Fibers from the False Nettle (*Urticastrum divaricatum*) plant (that does not have stinging spines) are also used in making string.

11

POISON IVY

Clues: 3 leaves with white berries. The autumn color is a vivid orange to scarlet. Otherwise colored green. The leaves are sometimes shiny, sometimes dull but always 3 in number.

Ask: *Why would it be important for Native American Children to recognize poison ivy and not pick it?*
(The same reason as today: it causes an itchy rash on many people. Even if you think you aren't allergic to it is best to stay away from it.)

