

Wetland Food & Medicine

Humans have used wetland plants and animals for food and medicine for thousands of years.

- **Leeches** *Hirundo medicinalis* are still used today for relief from abscesses, painful joints, glaucoma, and myasthenia.
- **White Willow** *Salix alba*, the original source of salicylic acid, the precursor of aspirin, is also used in skin care products.
- **Labrador Tea** *Ledum palustre* can be picked year round. High in Vit C, it has been used historically as a tonic and restorative.

- **Marsh Marigold** *Caltha palustris* is toxic if eaten raw, but the leaves are a good survival food when boiled. The flower buds are delicious pickled.



- **Cattail** *Typha latifolia* is a wetland supermarket, with every part of the plant useful for food and/or medicine. Pounded roots are



soothing on sores and burns. When cooked the roots make a porridge that tastes like slightly sweet cream of wheat. The yellow pollen, easy to collect by just shaking into a paper bag, is highly nutritious (bursting with Vit. A). It has a sunflower seed flavour when added to pancakes and biscuits.

- **Stinging Nettle** *Urtica dioica*

is an iron-rich pot herb. It can only be used when young. Germans have been using the root to treat prostate cancer and the Russians have used the leaves, preserved in alcohol, to treat hepatitis.

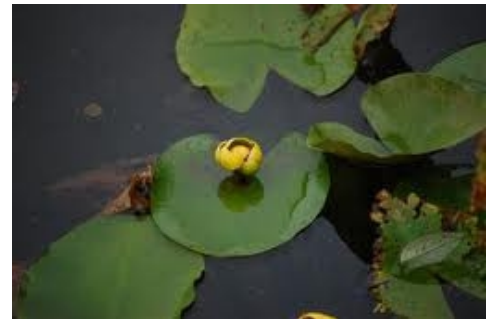


Rat Root/Sweet Flag/Pepper Root *Acorus calamus* has been used on every inhabited continent against coughs, colds and asthma. It has been known for centuries for its ability to purify standing water. Genghis Kahn would only allow his horses to drink from ponds and



sloughs that had a healthy growth of sweet flag. The Germans crystalize it and it's known by other Europeans as 'German Ginger'. In medieval times the long leaves were used as a sweet smelling floor covering for the packed earth floors. Modern research has shown *Acorus calamus* to have neuroprotective effect against stroke and chemically induced neurodegeneration in rats.

Spadderdock *Nuphar lutea* has black seeds that are highly nutritious. They can be ground into flour or popped like popcorn. This plant is often mistakenly called 'yellow waterlily'.



- **Bee Balm/Bergamot** *Monarda didyma* is the flavour maker in Earl Grey Tea. The leaves have significant antiseptic properties; thymol is the primary active ingredient. The leaves can be crushed and applied to infected sores.

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