

A photograph of a field of purple flowers, likely lupines, with a blurred background. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, with some showing distinct petals and stamens. The overall scene is bright and natural, with green foliage interspersed among the purple blooms.

Lummi Healing Spirits Garden





HEALING SPIRITS GARDEN

Q'ay'tl'et seli'



Indigenous Agriculture happens in landscapes as varied as forests, prairies, mountain meadows, canyons, swamps and anywhere that has soil. Because it did not fit the European ideas of what constituted agriculture, European settlers did not believe that Indigenous Peoples were civilized enough to have agriculture. Therefore, ecosystems which had been altered by native people for food production were ignored and destroyed. Native land was turned into vast stretches of modern agricultural monocrops. Agriculture came to be a means of oppression and assimilation for Native Peoples.

Indigenous Agriculture involved moving native Wild Strawberries, Trailing Blackberry, Thimble, and Salmon Berries, Black cap Raspberries, Currants, Gooseberries, and many others to grow closer to living spaces. One of the most notable staple foods of the Pacific Northwest is Camas (both small and large Camas). There are stories of canoes laden with Camas bulbs and large meadowlands swaying like the ocean with blue flowers. These beautiful and healthy food meadows were no accident. Indigenous Peoples used prescribed fire to keep these meadows from becoming full of trees. Prescribed burning also enriched the soil. Selective harvesting and replanting of camas bulbs increased rather than destroyed the productivity of the meadows. This method and ideology of agriculture allows a place-based culture to subsist in place for generations

The loss of traditional diets has drastically affected our health, including our spiritual health, by severing us from land-based foods that require reciprocal relationships and the imperative to live in balance with each other. This garden is an example of what can be, even though it is small and incomplete.

The traditional diet of the Pacific Northwest coast is varied and healthy. Returning to a traditional diet is one of the key ways to fight diabetes and increase food sovereignty. Growing and gathering these traditional foods and other crops helps carry on cultural traditions, aids knowledge transmission and is often a family affair where language and spiritual practices can be shared.

This garden is here to teach and reconnect people to their food. Growing and gathering our own food in a regenerative way connects us to our lands, our ancestors and most importantly, to the best parts of ourselves.

While in this garden you may come across some of these important traditional food and medicine plants.

"Food is the center of our culture...it feeds our bodies and spirits. Food brings people together, and that is where healing takes place." - Vanessa Cooper

Sponsored by: Lummi Diabetes Prevention Program



Wild Strawberry

Fragaria chiloensis, F. vesca

Small but sweet. Strawberries spread and create large patches on various terrains. Leaves make sweeter teas and the plants can be grown successfully in gardens.



Red Huckleberry

Vaccinium parvifolium

Harvest berries in the summer and eat fresh or dry like raisins. The bush prefers forest understory and rich soil. Juice stimulates appetite. Bark and leaves can be made into a gargle.



Salmon Berry

Rubus spectabilis

Sprouts and berries eaten by coastal people. The ripening of Salmon Berries is associated with the arrival of the migratory Swainsons thrush. Some Native coastal languages call this bird "Salmon Berry Bird."



Salal

Gaultheria shallon

Growing on the edges of forests and producing leathery leaves, Salal has many uses. The berries are tasty, nutritious, and plentiful. They can be made into jams, dried, or mixed with hooligan/animal grease. The leaves work as a mild appetite suppressant when chewed. Berries and new leaves are high in vitamin C.



Camas

Camassia quamash, C. leichtlinii

While edible Camas can have white flowers at times due to genetic variation, it is best to avoid harvesting Camas with white flowers unless an expert at identification is with you to avoid picking Death Camas. Edible Camas typically has purple/blue flowers.

Camas may be the most well-known of all the native foods other than Salmon. They are a Lily, and the bulbs should be harvested in early spring before it flowers. They can also be harvested throughout the season as well but the flavor changes. These are traditionally steamed in pits and when cooked thoroughly can be quite sweet. They are eaten like a potato and can also be stored. Traditional harvesting methods increased yield as smaller bulbs were separated and replanted leaving more space for the plants to spread out. Controlled burning was also used to increase yield in meadows.



Hookers Onion (Nodding Onion)

Allium cernuum, A. acuminatum

All parts of this plant are edible and delicious. These wild Onions can be used any way a garden Onion is used. The bulbs are quite small so if harvesting replant the smaller onion bulblets. This is becoming rare in the wild and is better to only harvest in special settings. Treat rare plants with respect and do not confuse this foliage with Death Camas which looks similar. Make sure leaves and bulbs smell like onions.



Indian Plum

Oemleria cerasiformis

One of the first plants to flower and last to ripen. Their flowers and berries provide important food for wildlife. The fruits are bright purple when ripe and can be eaten fresh or mixed with hooligan grease and other foods. The leaves can be used in salad. The plant has a distinct cucumber taste but should be used in moderation as indigestion can occur.



Oregon Grape

Mahonia aquifolium, M. nervosa

Berries were used to treat poisonings from paralytic shellfish. Used for purple dye. The bark from the stem and roots can be used for a tea to lower blood sugar from diabetes.



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Harvests

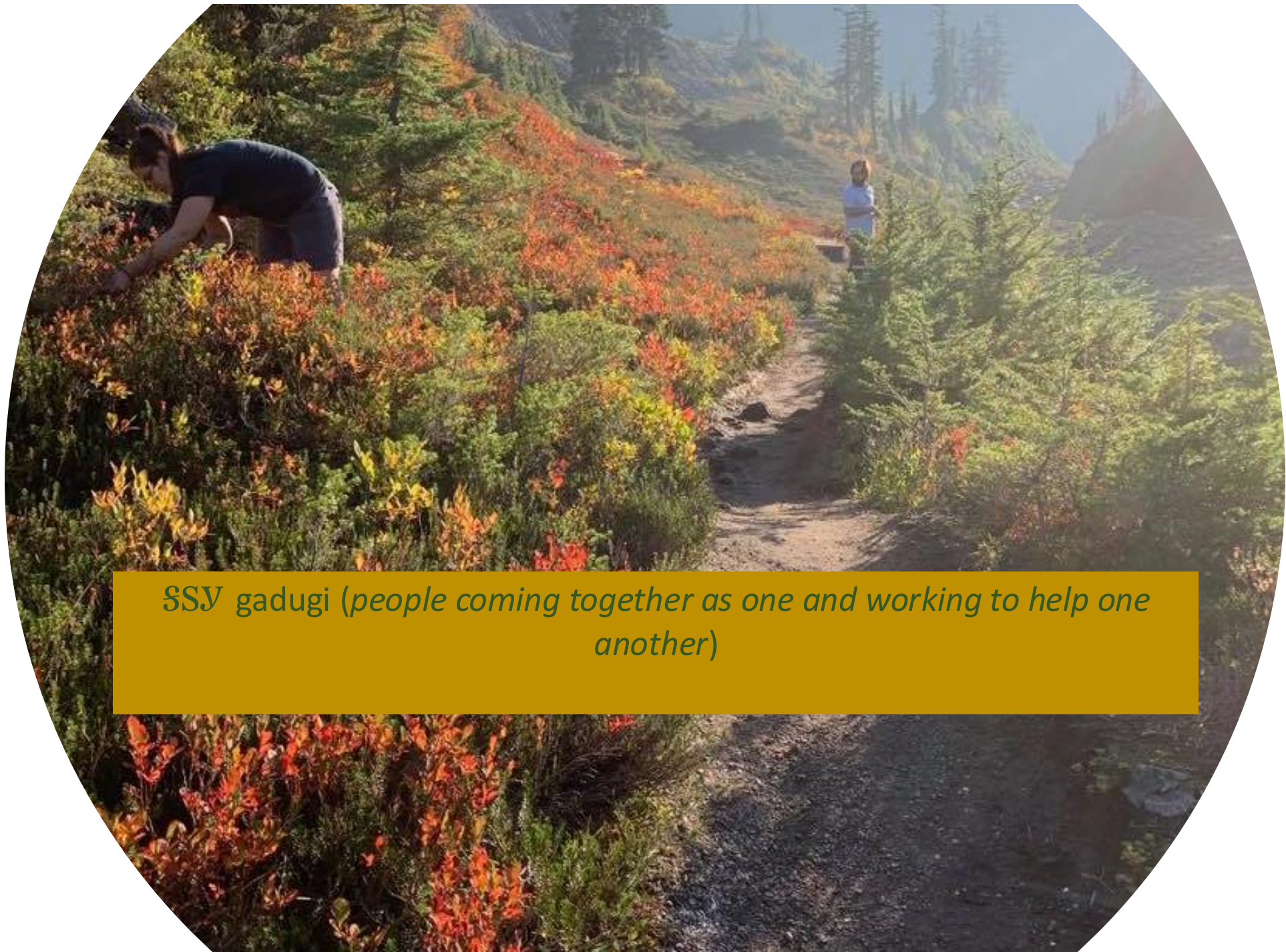
Gifts in the Garden



Food Worldview- food sovereignty

- Relatives
- Interconnected
- Placed based
- Reciprocity
- "Responsibility to protect, engage with and utilize traditional foods, not as commodified resources but as spiritual being or persons."
- "Rights to take food and practices back from a colonial political structure. A legal and political framework for place-based, indigenous food access"
- Physically, mentally and spiritually nourishing





SSY gadugi (people coming together as one and working to help one another)

Native Food Facts

- 60% of the world's food originated in Native diets including vegetables now associated with other cultures such as Tomatoes with Italy, Potatoes with Ireland and Chocolate with Germany.
- Many commonly used medicines are taken from Indigenous pharmacopeias.
- Indigenous Peoples were not just “hunter-gatherer societies” but engaged in many forms of agriculture, aquaculture, forestry and trade (and continue to do so).
- There are literally thousands of edible food plants that make up traditional diets and each of those plants holds an extensive history of use among different peoples. Medicinal, food, ceremonial.
- Native diets are diverse, seasonal, nutritious and delicious. Fungi, insects, land and sea animals, birds, all manner of plants.

Camas Meadow Planting 2023- Regeneration Lummi Nation Youth





Camas Meadow 2024





This produce is provided through a collaboration with the Linnell Diabetes Prevention Program, Community Support, and the Linnell Food Bank.



- Scorched Earth warfare and policies intentionally destroyed our food supply and created dependence on processed and non-Native food systems.
- Controlling food controls a population. We can fight back by eating.
- Eating traditional foods is essential for all areas of our health, but it is also revolutionary, an act of resistance and of cultural continuance. Eat those berries!

Next steps?



Ceremony



Practice reciprocity (giving and receiving in community)



Learn the plant/food names in your language (if possible)



Incorporate traditional food into your diet. Start small and regional, then expand.



Connect with Native food distribution, Tribal food banks, food sovereignty organizations and source from within your community.



Express support for and back up Tribally run projects with funding and labor

Interactive Activity

- Can you name 5 foods that originated in the Americas?
How about 10?
- What Is Tribal food sovereignty?
- How is understanding Tribal food Sovereignty important to providing appropriate community services?

