

Lenape Rain Garden Plants

In addition, these plants have traditional medicinal value and act as pollinators and food sources for birds and animals



choke cherry tree/aluhwakw *Prunus virginiana*

Bark: With Sweet Flag: Tea: Cough. *mjb*. [Algonquin Quebec] Berries: Juice: Diarrhea, sore throat. *jch*. [Blackfoot] Bark: Fever. Fresh Bark: Decoction: Great chill, ague. Warm Tea: First pains of labor, cough, colds, thrash. Inner Bark: Decoction: Lost voice. Root Bark: Wash for old sores and ulcers. Fruit: Boiled: Discharged blood from bowels. *pbh*. [Cherokee] *Photo: CC 4.0 Ayotte, Gilles, 1948.*

Some tribes used parts of the chokecherry plant in their rituals. A green dye was derived from the leaves, inner bark and immature fruit. A purplish-red dye was derived from the ripe fruit. Chokecherry is important to many wildlife animals. Birds, rabbits, hares, rodents and bears all seek out and eat its fruit. It provides

food, cover and nesting habitat for a variety of birds. Birds will also take advantage of its growth form for cover and nesting habitat.



button bush/xinkolepayakw *Cephalanthus occidentalis*

Inner bark, very important medicine, used as an emetic. *hsm*. [Meskwaki] Warmed Roots: Poultice: Applied to head for headaches. [Chickasaw] Bark: Strong Decoction: Favorite medicine for dysentery. Wash for sore eyes. Used as a febrifuge, tonic Chewed for toothache. *dme*. [Various Tribes] *Photo: Ryan Drake, Morris Arboretum*

Essential plant used in Lenape rain garden. Various bee pollinators include honey, bumble, cuckoo, long-horned, leafcutting, and green metallic. Hummingbird, butterflies, wasps, flies, and skippers also visit the flowers. Shore birds and over 25 species of waterfowl, including wood ducks, eat the seeds.



elderberry bush/puhwesenakw *Sambucus canadensis*

Flowers: Leaves and Stems: Blood purifier, jaundice. Flower: Tea: Infant colic. Bark scrapings: Poultice: Sores, wounds, swellings. Inner Bark: Emetic, laxative. *gtd*. [Lenape] Bark: Decoction: Diarrhea. Young Roots: Tea: Kidneys. Used for heartburn, jaundice, rheumatism. *hdc*. [Cherokee] Dried panicles of the bush: Tea: Sudorific. Called 'sweating tea' and used to eliminate poison. Flowers: Tea: Scarlatina, brings out measles rash.

Leaves: Dried and kept for dysentery. *prw*. [Other] *Photo: Anisa George*

The fruit is eaten by box turtles, mammals, and as many as 45 species of birds, including eastern bluebirds, northern cardinals, cedar waxwings, and mockingbirds. Deer browse the branches. As elderberry matures and ages, canes die, providing critical overwintering sites for our native bees in its hollow stem. Flowers provide pollen to a wide variety of insects. Elderberries are used for making pies, jams, candies, syrup, cough medicine, juice, and wine. Twigs and fruit are employed in creating dyes for basketry. These stems are dyed a very deep black by soaking them for a week or so in a wash made from the berry stems.



common ninebark/tankshkitakenakw *Physocarpus opulifolius*

Root: Tea: Emetic *dme: Gilmore*. [Chippewa] A tea or wash from the inner bark was used for treating gonorrhea and tuberculosis. The tea was also used to increase fertility. Root: Decoction: Used for fomenting and for poulticing burns, sores, and wounds. [Various Tribes] *Photo: Marion Kyde*

Ninebark is of special value to native bees. Once established it tolerates heat and drought. Bees, Butterflies, Pollinators, Beneficial Wasps and song birds rely on it for shelter and food. Toxic to humans.



dogwood, silky/tamultinakw *Cornus amomum*

Bark: Scraped: Tea: Wash for sores. Also dry and powder bark and rub on sores. Wash to make baby sleep. Boiled: Emetic. Steeped: Chest congestion, emetic. Leaves: Tobacco substitute. *jwh*. [Iroquois] Bark: Tea: Diarrhea. Decoction: Wash for poison ivy. *ceb: Walpole Island Chippewa*. [Chippewa] *Photo: Shelley DePaul*

Songbirds, insects, rodents, and even other animals like White-tailed deer will feast on the fruit.



hazel (smooth) alder/paxshakokanikekw *Alnus serrulata*

Used for pains related to birth, swellings, sprains, skin eruptions. Ingredient in tea: Menstrual period, clear milky urine. Emetic, purgative. Bark: Tea: Pains, heart trouble, cough, infant thrash, mouth soreness. Root: Tea: Wash for piles. Cold Bark Tea: Purify blood, decrease high blood pressure. Hot Berry Tea: Fever. *pbh*. [Cherokee] Bloom: Remedy for ague and inflammation, *wmb*. [Onondaga] *Photo: Will Gandy*
Alder catkins are high in protein and a bit bitter, so they are used as a survival food. Native Americans ate the inner bark in springtime. The wood is used for making furniture, carvings, and the bodies of electric guitars. The bark is traditionally used to tan leather or to make a beautiful orange dye. Wildlife

Value: This plant supports Harvester (Feniseca tarquinius) larvae which appear from February-September in the south. The Harvester butterfly does not sip flower nectar but they do feed on aphid honeydew. Harvester butterfly and carnivorous larvae eat the aphids commonly found on alder. Hazel alder is a preferred source of food for a variety of songbirds. Pine siskins, goldfinches, sparrows, redpolls, crossbills and insectivorous birds such as bluebirds, chickadees, and warblers feast on the huge variety of larvae and insects that inhabit this shrub. The bark is traditionally used to tan leather or to make a beautiful orange dye.



spicebush/kaxhaxkikw *Lindera benzoin*

Fresh Leaves: Chewed to expel intestinal worms, gas, digestive aid. *ebk.*

[Lenape] Any Part: Diaphoretic, colds, cough, phthisic, croup, female obstructions. *pbh.* [Cherokee] Twigs: Tea: Colds. Leaves and Twigs: Tea: Colds. *jwh.* [Iroquois] Branches: Tea or herbal steam: Cause sweating, aches, pains. *jrs.* [Creek] Tea: Delayed menses, menstrual pain. *fgs.*

[Rappahannock] Slim Twigs: Used to make small brushes to massage teeth and gums. Berries: Chewed to relieve thirst and as breath freshener.

[Unspecified Tribes] *Photo: Shelley DePaul*

Spicebush's reddish, one-seeded fruits are relished by thrushes, particularly the wood thrush and veery, along with about thirteen other bird species. The plant's aromatic characteristics may give it some protection against deer browsing.



swamp rose/shinkasinatae *Rosa palustris*

Bark and Root: Tea: Worms. Root: Decoction: Dysentery.

Plant: Diarrhea. *wmb.* [Onondaga] Root: Boiled: Drunk for dysentery.

Bark and Root: Tea: Worms. *pbh.* Root: Cold Tea: Dysentery. Used for loss of blood in bowels or urine. *dnc.* [Cherokee] *Photo: CC Fredlyfish4*
Attract bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Flowers are followed by pea-sized, red hips that are eaten by songbirds, quail, and wild turkeys.



winterberry/kshelleximunshi *Ilex verticillata*

Bark: Decoction: Emetic, emetic for craziness, physic. With Red Osier Dogwood Bark: Craziness. Root: Compound Decoction: Hay fever.

Retains vigor and used for biliousness. *jwh.* [Iroquois] Bark: Diarrhea. *hso.* [Ojibwe] *Photo: Haverford Arboretum*

Its berries are eaten in late winter through spring as an emergency food by many species of birds, such as robins, eastern bluebirds, cedar waxwings, woodpeckers, wood thrushes, and gray catbirds. The flowers attract bumble bees, mining bees, sweat bees, small carpenter bees, and plasterer bees.

Berries poisonous to humans.



blue flag/menekwiktekw *Iris versicolor*

Root: (External) rheumatism. (Internal) Kidney, liver disorders, scrofula, rheumatism. Compound: Gall stones. *gtd.* [Lenape] Poultice: Pulverized root and flour applied to pain. *gtd.* [Mohegan] Tea: Sedative. Wash: Bruises. *ceb:Parker.* [Seneca] Rhizomes: Macerated: Mixed with hot water: Poultice: Blood poisoning provoked by contusions.

ceb:Rousseau. [Mohawk] *Photo: CC Dlanglois*

Blue flag iris flowers attract hummingbirds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and native bees; they are rarely browsed by deer or rabbits, and can serve as a "deer-tolerant" plant species in the landscape.



blue vervain/spinkokw *Verbena hastata*

Root: Compound: chills. *gtd.* [Lenape] Used for Flux, bowel complaints, fever, sudorific, colds, coughs, female obstructions and afterpains. Root: Dropsy, tonic, tonic for breast complaints, strengthen stomach. *pbh.*

[Cherokee] Root: Used for Depression, fever, colds, epilepsy, insomnia, headaches, stomachaches, among others. *Photo: Hilary Chapman*

The nectar and pollen of Verbena hastata attracts a wide variety of native bees, honey bees, beneficial wasps, pollinating flies, small butterflies, skippers and moths. Caterpillars of the verbena moth and common buckeye butterfly feed on the leaves.



boneset/xkanasko *Eupatorium perfoliatum*

Root with Leaves: Tea: chills, colds, fever. Leaves: Tea: Powerful, stomach medicine, blood purifier. *gtd.* [Lenape] Compound Decoction: Gonorrhea, kidney trouble, spitting up blood. *fsa.* [Penobscot] Leaves: Teaq: Colds, blood purifier. *caw.* [Sand Hill Indians] Used to mend bones. *bce.* [Abenaki] Tea: Colds, sore throat, flu. *pbh.* [Cherokee] Every part of the plant was used medicinally. *gmr.* [Unspecifie Tribes]

Photo: Deb Soule

Plants are pest resistant and foliage is unpalatable to deer and other herbivores. Many different kinds of insects find the blooms irresistible, including long- and short-tongued bees, wasps, flies, butterflies, skippers, moths, and beetles. Goldfinches, juncos, and other seed-eating birds eagerly eat the seeds in fall. As a dye, it yields light yellows on cellulose yarns and fabrics. Tannin helps better attach alum to cellulose yarns and fabrics for effective results.



cardinal flower/matapipalinko *Lobelia cardinalis*

Root: Tea: Typhoid. Plant: Love charm *gtd.* [Lenape] Root: Tea: Stomach trouble, worms. Poultice: Risings. Leaves: Tea: Fever, colds, stomach, stimulant, tonic. Cold tea: Snuff: Nosebleed. Crushed Leaves: Headache. *pbh.* Flowers: Decoction: Pain, urinating blood, nosebleed, fever. *hdc.* [Cherokee] *Photo: Anisa George*

Ruby-throated Hummingbirds are the plant's main pollinator. Butterflies and bees will also visit the flowers. The flowers of lobelia, especially those with deep blue or purple hues, can be used to create natural dyes.



cardinal flower, blue/matapipalinko *Lobelia siphilitica*

Flower: Love charm. *wdt.* Root: Tea: Stomach trouble, worms. Ingredient in drink for pain. Poultice: Risings. Leaves: Tea: Reduce fever. Snuff: Cold Tea: Nose bleed. Warm Tea: Colds. Tea: Rheumatism, sores, croup, syphilis. Crushed Leaves: Poultice: Headache. *pbh.* [Cherokee] Plant: Gargle for cough. *jwh.* [Iroquois] Finely chopped roots eaten by couple to avert divorce and renew love. *hsm.* [Meskwaki] *Photo: CC Krzysztof Ziarnek*

See red cardinal flower for additional uses.



goldenrod/wisaotaek *Solidago odora*

Leaves: Chewed or Tea: Diarrhea, fever. *caw.* [Lenape]. Tea: Colds, cough, fever, diaphoretic, tonic, stimulant, nerves, measles, tuberculosis, flatulence, bloody bowel discharge. Root: Tea: Neuralgia, lung trouble, sprains. Chewed: Sore mouth, sore throat. *pbh.* [Cherokee] *Photo: Shelley DePaul*

Shelley DePaul

Mustard, orange and brown dyes can be obtained from the whole plant.

Goldenrod flowers dye a beautiful warm cream to a rich sunny yellow. It can be overdye with indigo to create a gorgeous range of vibrant greens.

Powerhouse food source for pollinators. Birds that eat its seeds: Common goldfinch, Junco, Swamp sparrow, Tree sparrow. Animals that eat its seeds and leaves: Meadow mouse, Pine mouse, Wood rat. Bumblebees, beetles, flies, moths, and butterflies also feast on goldenrod, and in turn, wasps, beetles, spiders, and birds prey on the insects attracted to the yellow-topped stalks.



horsetail/sikunikun *Equisetum hyemale*

Leaves: Smoke: Disinfectant. Fiber: Scouring material. *fdh.* [Chippewa]

Plant: Irregular menstruation. *ajb.* [Cree] Plant: Tea: Gonorrhea. *hsm.*

[Meskwaki] Plant: Tea: Diuretic, stops bleeding, heals wounds. Wash:

Poison ivy. *ajc.* [Various Tribes] Plant: Diabetes, kidney and bladder troubles. *prw.* [Other] *Photo: CC Caromallo*

Stems have rough silica-containing ridges, making it unappealing to deer and other herbivores. Host plant for some sawflies and weevils. Dragonfly perch. Natural dyeing produces sunshine yellow, woody browns and mossy greens.



marsh marigold/wehshumwistunakw *Caltha palustris*

Food: Cooked *gtd.* [Mohegan] Plant: Considered poisonous. Seeds:

Food. *dme:Rousseau.* [Abenaki] Root: Decoction: Diaphoretic, expectorant, emetic for colds. Boiled/Mashed: Poultice: Sores, scrofula sores. Leaves and Stalks: Diuretic. *fdh.* [Chippewa] Food. [Various Tribes] *Photo: Ryan Drake, Morris Arboretum*

Because marsh marigolds bloom early they are vitally important to early pollinators. Deer resistant: Mammals avoid the acrid leaves. Flowers produce a yellow dye.



aster, New England/pakalankakw *Aster novae-angliae L.*

Root: Poultice: Pain. Tea: Diarrhea, fever. Root ooze: Sniffed for catarrh.

pbh. [Cherokee] Plant: Decoction: Weak skin. Root: Decoction: All fevers. *jwh.* [Iroquois] Smudged and used to revive unconscious person.

hsm. [Meskwaki] *Photo: Shelley DePaul*

New England aster is known for attracting butterflies and moths. Asters are hugely popular among pollinator insects like bees in late autumn, stocking up before winter. Ruffed grouse, wild turkey, and tree sparrows eat the leaves and/or seeds, as do mammals like chipmunks, white-footed mice and white-tailed deer. Rabbits do not seem to like this plant.



sneezeweed/kweskwine *Helenium autumnale* L.

Leaves: Dried, Powdered: Induce sneezing. Root: Bruised: Tea: With Ironweed: Given to woman after childbirth prevents menstruation for two years. *pbh*. [Cherokee] Dried Disk Florets: Inhaled for catarrh or colds. Flowers: Tea: Stomach catarrh. Plant known to be poisonous to cattle. *hsm*. [Meskwaki] *Photo: CC Ewen Cameron*

Common sneezeweed leaves, flowers, and seeds are poisonous to humans if eaten in large quantities. Attractive to bees and butterflies. Late valuable flowers for pollinators. Native bees, honeybees, wasps, pollinating flies, butterflies and beetles seek the nectar and pollen.



milkweed, swamp/mahkhalapis *Asclepias incarnata* L.

Plant: Decoction: Kidneys, lame backs, polyuria. Root: Infusion: Stem: Dried: Make cord for extracting tooth. *jwh*. [Iroquois] Root: Infusion: Bath for strength. Fiber: Twine. *fdh*. [Chippewa] Root: Tea: Tapeworms. Carminative, cathartic, diuretic, emetic. *hsm*. [Meskwaki] White Juice: Applied to poison ivy rash. *llm*. [Mi'kmaq] *Photo: Heather Butts*

The monarch butterfly is the most well-known visitor to milkweed flowers, but milkweeds attract a large suite of butterflies, flies, beetles, bees, and wasps. Many people grow milkweeds for pollinators and other beneficial insects that feed on the plant's nectar. Deer and rabbits eat milkweed leaves.



swamp hibiscus (rose mallow)/wixewekatekw *Hibiscus moscheutos*

Dried Stalks: Tea: Applied for bladder inflammation. *lgc*. [Shinnecock] Leaves: Chewed and swallowed as a laxative, for general debility and run down conditions. Shoots and Buds: Chewed and swallowed for dry throat. *dme*. *Akaiko Akana*. [Hawaiian] *Photo: Anisa George*

The leaf buds can be cooked or eaten raw. The young leaves can be added to salads. The flowers can be eaten cooked or raw. Dark red flowering hibiscus are the most valuable for dyeing. Pink flowers give golds and tans. [Other] The blooms are pollinated by long-tongued bees like the Rose Mallow bee and provide nectar to ruby-throated hummingbirds. Swamp Rose Mallow hosts caterpillars of the gray hairstreak, painted lady butterflies, skippers, and

several moths. The seeds are eaten by many species of songbirds



birch, tree river/sipuinakw

Betula nigra

Leaves: Chewed or Tea: Dysentery. Tea: Colds. Bark: Tea: Stomach, milky urine. *pbh.* [Cherokee] Bark: Decoction: Stomach pain. *fdh.* [Chippewa] *Photo: Mark Ward*

Hummingbirds are attracted to its sap, as well as the small insects that are also attracted to the sap and often become stuck in it. River Birch is a host plant to 317 species of moth and butterfly larva, including the wavy-lined emerald, pale beauty and dreamy duskywing moths. Supports 411 species of caterpillars, including the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. Deer and other browsers feed on the foliage. Small mammals feed on the seeds.



sweetgum tree – taxkwaohokaniminshi

Liquidambar styraciflua

Gum: Drawing plaster. Bark: Tea: Nervousness, stop flooding. Rosin or Inner Bark: Diarrhea, flux, dysentery. Salve: Wounds, sores, ulcers. *pbh.* [Cherokee] Plant: Decoction: Poultice for cuts and bruises. *lat.* [Choctaw] *Photo: CC Mohamed Rezk*

Hardened gum was used by Natives for chewing gum. In spring, the sweetgum provides a source of nectar for the ruby-throated hummingbird and other nectar feeders. Sweetgum is a host plant for more than 30 species of butterflies and moths. Many birds, such as mourning doves, finches, quail, and turkey, Eastern Towhee, Carolina Chickadee, Slate-Colored Junco, and White-Throated Sparrow feed on the seed of Sweet Gum. Small mammals

such as chipmunks and squirrels also eat the seed.



willow, black tree/nushemakw

Salix sp.

Plant: Pyorrhea, tightens gums. Bark: Tea: Induce vomiting. [Lenape] Used for sore eyes. *dme: Rousseau.* [Abenaki] Root: Dysentery. *fdh.* [Chippewa] Plant: Rheumatism, emetic. Root: Fever, biliousness, malaria. Decoction: Bath for dropsy. *lat.* [Creek] *Photo: Shelley DePaul*

Preferred food and building material of beaver. Ducks, grouse, other birds, and small mammals eat willow shoots, catkins, buds, and leaves. Palatable to livestock and big game. A number bird species from American robins to kingbirds may build nests. Small birds like marsh wrens and hummingbirds may nest amid the slender twigs. Serves as an important pollen and nectar resource for insect pollinators. As a dye, the leaves of the willow yield warm pinks in the dye pot and can be modified to give shades of pinks, plumbs and mauves. Roots used to make a black dye.



hemlock tree/shintakw

Tsuga canadensis

Root: Tea: Herbal steam for rheumatism, muscular swellings, stiff joints. *gtd.* [Lenape] Leaves: Decoction or Tea: Rheumatism. *jre.* [Abenaki] Inner Bark: Tea: Colds. Boiled: Applied for eczma and other similar skin conditions. Branches: Tea, Syrup or Paste: Poultice: Arthritis. *mjb.* [Algonquin, Quebec] *Photo: Shelley DePaul*
Habitat for more than 120 different species.



oak, pin tree/kikishimenshi *Quercus palustris*

Bark: Tea: Inner bark: Intestinal pains. *gtd.* [Lenape]

Photo: Tabettha Super

Pin oak acorns are an important food for wildlife including white-tailed deer, squirrels, wild turkeys, woodpeckers, bluejays, and waterfowl. Deer prefer white oak. Being bitter creates an advantage for turkeys, but other animals leave it until the very last to eat.



oak, swamp white tree/opshinkwimenshi *Quercus bicolor*

Dried Leaves: With Dried Slippery Elm Leaves: Smoked and exhaled through nostrils for catarrh. Bark Chips: With those of American Beech, American Hornbeam, and American Hophornbeam: Decoction: Consumption. Bark: With Common Polypoddy, Eastern Hemlock, and Royal Fern: Cholera. *jwh.* [Iroquois] *Photo: Holden Blanco*
Acorns provide food for birds and wildlife. Oaks are host to numerous, inconspicuous insects, which in turn provide food for birds. Swamp White Oak provides nesting space, cover, and shelter for wildlife. Oak trees in general also provide safe and dependable habitat spaces for pollinators as well as most of the first available food in the spring.



maple, red tree– shiximenshi

Acer rubrum

Bark: Tea: Drops for sore eyes, cataracts. Complex compound: Blood purifier. *jwh*. [Iroquois] Inner Bark: Tea: Dysentery, hives. Bark: Tea: Cramps. Hot: Measles. *pbh*. Bark: Decoction: Dysentery, hives. Steam: Blindness. *hdc*. [Cherokee] *Photo: Shelley DePaul*

Sap: used to make sugar, sweetener, syrup. Fiber used to make baskets. Wood: lumber, bowls, furniture, spoons, arrowheads. Plant: Ox yokes [Various Tribes] Bark dried, pounded, sifted and made into bread. [Iroquois] Beneficial to pollinators and wildlife. Red maple is browsed by some wildlife species, including white-tailed deer, moose, elk, and snowshoe hare. The following birds nest in the red maples: American redstart, black-backed woodpecker,

downy woodpecker, purple finch, yellow-bellied sapsucker, hooded warbler, northern parula, alder flycatcher, veery, wood thrush, eastern wood-pewee, and Canada warbler.



sycamore tree/xaxakw

Platanus occidentalis

Bark: Tea: Colds. Heartwood: Tea: Prized by traditional Lenape. *caw*. [Lenape] Bark Ooze: Wash infected sore, Tea: Infant rash. Inner Bark: Tea: Measles, cough, buttons, lumber. *pbh*. [Cherokee] Bark: Decoction: Taken for pulmonary tuberculosis. *lat*. [Creek] *Photo: CC 4.0 Colsu*.

Wood used for lumber, buttons. [Cherokee] Many modern uses of wood.

Sycamores are home for many species of birds, insect pollinators, and small mammals. Because of their grand stature and proximity to water, sycamore trees are an apt choice for Great Blue Heron rookeries. The seeds are eaten by

various songbirds, including the purple finch, goldfinch, chickadees, and dark-eyed junco, and to some degree by mammals, including muskrat, beaver, and squirrels. Beavers also consume the bark. Deer occasionally browse the foliage and twigs.