

IOWAY LANGUAGE LESSON

Lance Foster

PLANTS

One of the things the language and culture study group at White Cloud will be looking at is medicinal and edible plants, and plants used to make houses and regalia: their use, identification, and protecting the resources (where they grow), as part of our heritage

Here are some of the edibles (**warúje** (wah-ROO-jay) food) they ate in traditional days and the loway words for them:

VEGETABLES/EDIBLE PLANTS = **máwota** (MAH-woe-tah)

Mushroom = **má[^]oste** (mah-OH-shtay) like the morel mushroom; the morel is called “stare sore” among the Omaha, mikai xthi, and the loway version of this word would be **bikáx[^]e xri** (bee-KAH-khay khree)

Tree Ears (fungus that grows on trunk of tree) = **na nándwa** (nah-NAHN-dwa)

ROOTS

Wild potato = **dó** (DOE/DOH/DOUGH)

Wild Turnip = **dó-gwéhi** (DOE-GWAY-hee)

Wild Onion = **Shíⁿ** (SHEE)

Yellow Pondlily = **shára** (SHAW-raw) (The name of the river Chariton in Missouri comes from the loway Word shara-to(n) which indicates there were a lot of these plants in that river once)

GREENS

Milkweed = **ma[^]íⁿje** (mah-EEN-jay)

There is no word for “greens in general like we use “greens” in English, the loway and other tribes used the specific name for the plants, or different people might use the words **xámi** (grass), **náwe** (leaves), or **peshe** (herbs)

FRUITS = **waxgú** (wah-XGOO)

Strawberry = **Hášje** (HAHsh-jay)

Wild Plum = **Kánje** (CON-jay or KHAN-jay)

Wild Crabapple = **shé** (SHAY)

Chokecherry = **námpa** (NAHM-pah) (later used nampainye to distinguish from cultivated big cherries)

Berries (in general) = **hádhe** (HA-they)

Blackberry = **hádhe thewe** (HA-they THAY-way) (there are some other words for

IOWAY LANGUAGE LESSON

Lance Foster

blackberry too, but for starters this is the easiest to remember = hadhe 'berry' + thewe 'black'

Red raspberry = **nádwegrane** (NAH-dway-grahng-ay)

Currants = **hadhé thúiñe** (ha-THEY THOO-een-yay)

Gooseberry was called "Coon sprouts" = **minké rabriñske** (meen-KAY rah-BREEN-skay)

[remember the "r" in Ioway doesn't sound like the "r" we use speaking English, it is more "flapped" like the Spanish "r" or, when we say "here kitty kitty" it sounds kind of like the sound we make for the t in "kitty"]

Elderberry = **dú[^]uxu** (DOO-oo-xu) The x is like the 'ch' in German "ACHTUNG!"

Hackberry = **gówe** (GO-way) (the hackberry tree is called gohu)

Wild grape = the only word we have for grape is the same as for berry "**hádhe**" although we may have had a particular word at one time which specifically meant grape but which has been forgotten

Wild rose = **washúje** (wah-SHOO-jay) rosehips were used

NUTS and SEEDS

Walnut = **táge** (TAH-gay)

Hazelnut = **kwáiñe** (KWAH-een-yay)

Hickory nut = **ithágre** (ee-THA-gray)

Ground bean or Wild bean = **ónyi mandótasta** (O-nyee mahn-DOE-ta-stah)

SUGAR

Nányi = NAH-nyee (tree water) sugar was made from the sap of maple trees, including boxelder which is a type of maple
(We will cover the kinds of trees in a different post)

There are other plants used for food at various times, but that's good for now!

Wild plants used for food and medicine need specific kinds of growing conditions for them to grow and replenish themselves. Some need water, some moist or swampy conditions, some shady areas in woodlands, some in the open prairie. They are particular about where they grow and much of their habitats are lost to development and agricultural uses, especially if herbicides are used to kill weeds. So it takes thought and choices to balance the needs of farming and culture, if people want to preserve what is left, for times of emergency as well. Maybe there could be designated areas on the reservation of different habitat types for cultural plant use that are left for culture and education, and still address agricultural needs.