

Cultural Use of Plants from the Baker Wetlands

Prepared for the Technical Outreach Services for
Native American Communities (TOSNAC) at
Haskell Indian Nations University

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Introduction

This report on cultural uses was compiled for the Technical Outreach Services for Native American Communities (TOSNAC) at Haskell Indian Nations University upon request in an effort to report on potential ethnobotanical uses of plants at the Baker Wetlands. We have only provided uses of those species that were listed in the South Lawrence Trafficway EIS (Vol. 2, pages 73-75) as occurring on the list of species for Baker Wetlands Delineation.

We have reported on historical uses of the plants that occur at the Baker Wetlands and we believe that many of these plants were used by Native American students, staff, and elders at Haskell Indian Nations University. We also believe that many of these uses continue today. In addition, we are only reporting on those uses that have been documented in the literature, while we know, based on personal observation, that many uses within what has traditionally been an oral culture, rather than written culture, have not been recorded. We believe that this documentation is important in indicating that there are many traditional uses of plants at the Baker Wetlands.

For this study we have gleaned the available literature and found information on 71 species. While we have cited many references, much of our work is based on compiling works by Kindscher (1987 and 1992) and Moerman (1998).

Cultural Uses of plants from the Baker Wetlands

Acalypha virginica (Euphorbiaceae)

Virginia Threeseed Mercury

Uses: The Cherokee used the root as a kidney aid for “dropsy.” The root was also used as a remedy for pox and also as a urinary aid for “gravel” (Moerman 1998).

Acer negundo (Aceraceae)

Box Elder

Uses: The Cheyenne burned the wood as an incense for making spiritual medicines. They also used the wood to make bowls and burned it for cooking meat (Hart 1992). The Mesquakie and the Ojibwa used an infusion of the inner bark as an emetic. The Ojibwa also mixed the sap of the box elder with that of a maple tree and drank it as a beverage. The inner bark was utilized by many tribes, including (but not limited to) the Cheyenne, Apache, Pawnee, Dakota, and Winnebago as a versatile sweetener (Moerman 1998).

Acer sacharinum (Aceraceae)

Silver Maple

Uses: The Cherokee used an infusion of the bark as an analgesic taken for cramps, dysentery, hives and as a wash for sore eyes, and an infusion was taken for the measles. The Cherokee also used the maple wood to make baskets and furniture. The inner bark was used to make a variety of sweeteners (Moerman 1998). The Chippewa boiled the bark as a dermatological aid used as a wash for chronic sores. They also used silver maple to make sweeteners (Gilmore 1933). The Mohegan used an infusion of the bark taken from the south side of the tree as a cough medicine (Moerman 1998). The Ojibwa used an infusion of the root bark for gonorrhea and used a decoction of the

inner bark for diarrhea (Hoffman 1891). The maple was used by many tribes as a sweetener.

Ambrosia artemisfolia (Asteraceae)

Ragweed, common ragweed, short ragweed, hogwort, and stammerwort

Uses: The Lakotas applied a tea made from the leaves to swellings (Buechel 1983). The Dakotas made a tea from the leaves and small tops of the plant to cure bloody flux and stop vomiting (Gilmore 1913). White Horse, an Omaha medicine man, reported that common ragweed was an Oto remedy for nausea (Gilmore 1977). For this treatment, the surface of the patients abdomen was scarified, and a dressing of the bruised leaves was placed on it (Kindscher 1992).

Ambrosia trifida (Asteraceae)

Giant Ragweed

Uses: The Cherokee used this in (ceremonial) green corn medicine, rubbed the crushed leaves on insect stings and the juice of wilted leaves on infected toes, and made an infusion of the leaves to rub on hives and to drink for pneumonia and fever (Moerman 1998). The Mesquakie, or Fox, chewed the root to drive away fear at night (Smith 1928). Archaeological evidence suggests that the giant ragweed was a food source and was even cultivated (Wedel 1955; Kindscher 1987). The Cheyenne used an infusion of leaves and stem of *A. psilostachya* for colds, bowel cramps, and bloody stools (Grinnell 1905).

Andropogon gerardii (Poaceae)

Big Bluestem

Uses: The Omahas and Poncas used the thick, jointed stems in their earth lodge constructions. Young boys used them to make arrow shafts. These two tribes also used the plant medicinally using a decoction of the finely chopped lower blades. This decoction was drunk in cases of general debility and languor without a definite known cause, also it was used for bathing in case of fevers (Kindscher 1992). The Chippewas boiled the root in water to make a tea for stomachache and indigestion (Densmore 1974).

Andropogon scoparius (Poaceae)

Little Bluestem

Uses: The Comanches used the ashes to treat syphilitic sores (Carlson and Jones 1939). The Kiowa-Apaches used bundles of switches in the sweat lodge. They believed that switching one's arms, neck, and shoulders would cure aches and pains and drive evil spirits away (Jordan 1965).

Amorpha fruticosa (Fabaceae)

Bush Wild-Indigo

Uses: The Kiowa used the long stems as foundation for bedding material (Vestal & Schultes 1939). The Lakota used the stems to make arrows (Rogers, 1980), and the Pawnee set meat on it while butchering to keep the meat clean (Gilmore 1977).

Apocynum cannabinum (Apocynaceae)

Dogbane, Indian Hemp Dogbane, Prairie Dogbane, Black Indian Hemp, Canadian Hemp, American Hemp, Dropsy Weed, Bitter Root, Choctaw Root

Uses: The Blackfeet boiled the root as a laxative and a wash to prevent hair loss (McClintock 1909). The Mesquakie used it for dropsy, ague, and as a universal remedy, and used the fibers of its stem as thread (Smith 1928). The Kiowa made chewing gum from its sap (Vestal & Schultes 1939). Botanist Constantine Rafinesque reported vaguely in 1828 that “Southern Indians” valued it as a “tonic, emetic, alterative and antisyphilitic” and other unspecified Native Americans used it as an oral contraceptive (De Laszlo & Henshaw 1954). European settlers used it for dropsy and as a hydrogogue cathartic and diuretic (Lloyd 1921a). It is still used in Appalachia as a tonic and remedy for migraine, colds, pleurisy, constipation, and to induce abortion, as well as in mixtures to treat rheumatism, bursitis, arthritis, and liver, stomach, and lung ailments (Bolyard et al. 1981). Dogbane root was popular among early American doctors as a treatment for “bronchitis, asthma, dyspnoea, and in jaundice or dropsy, all of cardiac origin” (Ellingwood 1902).

Asclepias incarnata (Asclepiadaceae)

Swamp Milkweed

Uses: The Lakota used the pulverized root made into a salve applied to scrofulous swellings (Kindscher 1992).

Asclepias verticillata (Asclepiadaceae)

Whorled Milkweed

Uses: The Lakota made a tea of the whole plant to be drunk by mothers unable to produce milk (Rogers 1980). This use is an example of the Doctrine of Signatures, the belief that certain characteristics of a plant signify its uses. In this case, the milky sap of the plant is thought to signify that milkweed can promote the production of milk in mothers (Kindscher 1992).

Aster praeltus (Asteraceae)

Willowleaf Aster

Uses: The Navajo and Ramah used a decoction of the plant in ceremony as a medicine for snakebites. Cold infusions of the whole plant were used as a ceremonial eyewash, and ingested for stomachache. The dried leaves were smoked for good luck in hunting (Vestal 1952). The Mesquakie used the willowleaf aster as a stimulant to revive an unconscious patient (Smith 1928).

Baptista lactea (Fabaceae)

Wild White Indigo

Uses: The Mesquakies used this plant to promote vomiting and to treat eczema. They also boiled it and applied it to chronic sores and also to the inflamed mucous membrane of the nose produced by catarrh. A Mesquakie medicine man, John McIntosh, used the plant it as one of many ingredients in a medicine made for use internally (Kindscher 1992).

Carex brevior (Cyperaceae)

Fescue Sedge

Uses: An infusion of the plant was used by the Iroquois as a gynecological aid, taken for evacuation of the placenta (Herrick 1977).

Cephalanthus occidentalis (Rubiaceae)

Common Buttonbush

Uses: The Chickasaw and Choctaw used parts of the plant as eye medicine; and the Choctaw chewed the bark for toothaches; the Koasati took a decoction of the leaves for rheumatism and enlarged muscles (Moerman 1998). The Kiowa took a decoction of roots for hemorrhages (Vestal & Schultes 1939). To the Mesquakie the inner bark was a very important medicine, used as an emetic (Smith 1928). The Seminoles took a decoction of the bark for fevers, headaches, and stomach aches; a decoction of the roots or berries for horse sickness (nausea, constipation, and blocked urination); a decoction of the roots for menstruation sickness (yellow eyes and skin, weakness, and shaking head); and a decoction of the plant for wolf ghost sickness (diarrhea and painful defecation) (Moerman 1998).

Cicuta maculata (Apiaceae)

Spotted Water Hemlock

Uses: The Cherokee used this potentially poisonous plant ceremonially. The root was chewed and if the person became dizzy it was believed he would die soon, if not then he would live a long life. The roots were also eaten for four consecutive days in order to "become sterile forever." Women commonly chewed and swallowed roots as a form of contraception. An infusion of the root was used to soak corn before planting as an insecticide (Moerman 1998). The Iroquois used a poultice of the smashed roots applied for lameness, running sores, or cuts. Also used in the form of a decoction as a floor wash to prevent disease (Herrick 1977).

Cirsium altissium (Asteraceae)

Tall Thistle

Uses: The Cherokee took an infusion of the leaves for neuralgia, and as an aid gastrointestinally for someone who overeats. A poultice of the bruised plant to ease pain in a sore jaw. The down was used as the tail for blow darts (Moerman 1998).

Cornus drummondii (Cornaceae)

Roughleaf Dogwood

Uses: The Iroquois took an infusion of the switches for gonorrhea (Herrick 1977).

Cyperus esculentus (Cyperaceae)

Chufa Flatsedge

Uses: The Pima chewed the root for colds and coughs; also a poultice of chewed roots was applied to snakebites and in horse's nostrils as a stimulant (Moerman 1998). The Navajo and Ramah Indians used this plant in ceremonies and as an emetic (Vestal 1952). Pomo and Kashaya Indians used the tubers on the rootstock and ate them raw, baked, or boiled much like potatoes (Moerman 1998).

Desmanthus illinoensis (Fabaceae)

Illinois Bundle-Flower

Uses: The Pawnee made a wash from the boiled leaves for itchiness, and Pawnee and Omaha boys used the mature seed pods as rattles to mimic native dances (Gilmore 1977). The Moapa Paiutes placed five seeds in each eye at night and washed it out in the morning for trachoma (Train et al. 1941).

Elymus canadensis (Poaceae)

Canadian Wild-Rye

Uses: The seeds were gathered widely by the Gosiute (in Utah) for food (Chamberlin 1901).

Erigeron strigosus (Asteraceae)

Daisy Fleabane

Uses: Used for sick headache by the Ojibwa (Smith 1932) and infusion of roots taken for heart troubles by the Catawba (Moerman 1998).

Fraxinus pennsylvanica (Oleaceae)

Green Ash

Uses: The Algonquin took an infusion of the inner bark to combat depression and as a stimulant to combat fatigue (Moerman 1998). The Ojibwa scraped the cambium layer into long, fluffy strips and cooked. They say that it tastes like eggs (Smith 1932).

Geum canadense (Rosaceae)

White Avens

Uses: The Chippewa used the root for "female weakness" (Densmore 1974). The Iroquois used the plant as a "love medicine," and used a compound infusion both internally and externally as a "little water medicine" (Herrick 1977).

Gleditsia triacanthos (Fabaceae)

Common Honey-Locust

Uses: The Cherokee used the seed pods of this tree to sweeten worm medicine and as an infusion for measles. Compound infusions of the bark were taken for whooping cough, and the seed pulp was used to make a drink (Moerman 1998). The Delaware made compounds containing the bark for general tonics and to treat a severe cough (Moerman 1998). The Mesquakie used an infusion of the bark for measles, fevers, and especially smallpox, and an infusion of twig bark for bad colds. They also made a decoction of the bark to help a patient regain strength and flesh (Smith 1928).

Helianthus annuus (Asteraceae)

Sunflower

Uses: Cultivated varieties with larger seed heads and seeds are used for the production of oil, food, and birdseed. The Teton-Dakotas boiled flower heads as a remedy for pulmonary troubles (Gilmore 1977). Pawnee women who became pregnant while still nursing another child took a mix of pounded sunflower seeds mixed with a variety of other roots as a medicine to prevent sickness in the child (Kindscher 1992).

Helianthus grosseserratus (Asteraceae)

Sawtooth Sunflower

Uses: The Mesquakies made a poultice from the flowers to heal burns (Smith 1928). Zuni medicine men cured rattlesnake bites by chewing fresh or dried root, then sucking the wound (Camazine and Bye 1980).

Hordeum jubatum (Poaceae)

Fox-Tail Barley, Squirrel-Tail Grass

Uses: The Chippewas used the root in a compress for sties or inflammation of the eyelid (Densmore 1974). The Potawatomi used the root for unspecified ailments (Smith 1933). The Ramah Navajo considered the plant poisonous and taught children to avoid it (Vestal 1952).

Iva annua (Asteraceae)

Marsh Elder

Uses: Thought to be a staple of their diet, Indians during prehistoric times probably processed the seeds by roasting and boiling to extract the seeds from the inedible shell. The seeds are quite nutritious. They are oilseeds that contain almost 2,500 calories per pound and also contain several vitamins and minerals (Asch and Asch 1978).

Juncus dudleyi (Juncaceae)

Dudley Rush

Uses: The Hopi ceremonially associated this plant with water (Whiting 1939). The Ojibwa used the tiny rush *J. dudleyi* in the finest mat work and for small pieces (Smith 1932).

Juncus tenuis (Juncaceae)

Poverty Rush

Uses: The Cherokee used a decoction “to dislodge spoiled saliva.” An infusion was frequently given to babies to prevent lameness and used as a wash to promote strength. Also used to make string to tie up dough wrapped in oak leaves for cooking bread (Moerman 1998). The Iroquois used a decoction as an emetic to promote vomiting (Herrick 1977).

Lespedeza capitata (Fabaceae)

Round-Head Bush-Clover, Round-Head Lespedeza

Uses: The Omaha and Ponca used the stem of the plant as a moxa for neuralgia or rheumatism (Gilmore 1977). The Kiowa-Apaches made a beverage tea from the leaves that was thought to be beneficial to sick people (Jordan 1965). The Mesquakie used the plant as an antidote for poison (Smith 1928). The plant appears to lower blood cholesterol levels and remove nitrogenous compounds from the blood of people with hyperazotemia (Tin-Wa, Farnsworth, and Fong 1969).

Liatris pycnostachya (Asteraceae)

Kansas Gayfeather

Uses: Edwin James, botanist for the Stephen Long expedition, reported in 1819 that Indians from the St. Louis area used this “pine of the prairies” as a cure for gonorrhoea. *Liatris* works as a mild stimulant to the stomach and also as an antispasmodic to the gastrointestinal tract, thus relieves colic and soothes irritation of the intestines. It is useful in assisting the removal of the waste products of disease to restore healthy glandular action. It is a strong diuretic and an effective eliminator used in curing syphilis and scrofula, and also aids in relieving kidney irritation (Ellingwood 1902).

Lycopus americanus (Lamiaceae)

American Water-Horehound

Uses: The Mesquakie used a compound containing the entire plant for stomach cramps (Smith 1928).

Lythrum alatum (Lythraceae)

Winged Lythrum

Uses: An infusion was used by the Cherokee “for kidneys” (Moerman 1998).

Morus rubra (Moraceae)

Red Mulberry

Uses: The Cherokee took an infusion of bark for worms, dysentery, as a purgative and as a laxative. The berries were used to make juice and were also used to make

dumplings and jam (Moerman 1998). The Creek used an infusion of the roots as an emetic, also used to strengthen the weak and taken for urinary problems (Swanton 1928). The Mesquakie used the root bark as a medicine for any sickness (Smith 1928). The Rappahannock rubbed the tree sap on the skin as a cure for ringworm (Moerman 1998). The berries were used by many different tribes in a variety of fashions such as for use in pies, mashed into conmeal cakes, preserved as a jam and also as a dried fruit (Moerman 1998).

Parthenocissus quinquefolia (Vitaceae)

Virginia Creeper

Uses: The Iroquois used the twigs in a compound to ingest and to use as a wash to counteract poison sumac; they also took a compound decoction of the plant for difficult urination, and applied a poultice of the vines to swellings on the wrist (Herrick 1977). The Chippewa used the sweetish substance between the bark and the wood of the stalks for food (Densmore 1974). The Kiowa used the fruits as pink paint for the skin and feathers worn in the war dance (Vestal & Schultes 1939). The Mesquakie took a decoction of the root for diarrhea (Smith 1928). Native Americans in Montana ate the ripe fruit like grapes (Blankinship 1905). The Ojibwa cooked and ate the root (Smith 1932).

Penthorum sedoides (Saxifragaceae)

Ditch Stonecrop

Uses: The seeds were used by the Mesquakie to make a cough syrup (Smith 1928). The Cherokee used the leaves as a potherb (Moerman 1998).

Phalaris arundinacea (Poaceae)

Reed Canarygrass

Uses: The Okanagan-Colville used this plant to make hats for Indian doctors to wear during ceremonies. Also used to make mats for eating and for drying roots and berries. The grass was also used for making fishing weirs (Moerman 1998).

Polygonum amphibium (Polygonaceae)

Swamp Smartweed, Knotweed

Uses: The Sioux ate the young shoots in the spring as a relish. The seeds were a prehistoric food source (Blankinship 1905). The Cree applied a poultice of fresh roots directly to blisters in the mouth. Powdered roots used in many herbal remedies and used for various ailments (Moerman 1998).

Polygonum pensylvanicum (Polygonaceae)

Pennsylvania Smartweed

Uses: The Chippewa used an infusion of the plant tops as an anticonvulsive for epilepsy (Gilmore 1933). The Menominee used an infusion of the leaf for hemorrhaging of blood from the mouth, also taken to aid in postpartum healing (Smith 1923).

Populus deltoides (Salicaceae)

Plains Cottonwood

Uses: The Blackfeet made a tea of the bark for women about to give birth, and also for symptoms resembling heartburn or for general discomfort (Helson 1974). In Montana, Native Americans used the inner layers of bark as "a mucilaginous and anti-scorbutic food" (Harvard 1877). The Lakota used the bark to feed horses (Rogers 1980). The tribes of the Upper Missouri River attributed a mystic character to the cottonwood, because "they could ever hear the rustling of cottonwood leaves by the passage of little

vagrant currents of air. And the winds themselves were the paths of the Higher Powers, so they were constantly reminded of the mystic character of this tree” (Gilmore 1977). The cottonwood has been used in folk medicine as a tonic and febrifuge (Burlage 1968). As a member of the willow family, it contains salicin and populin, the precursors of aspirin. In the southwest, the leaf tea was used for reducing fever and inflammation, and the bark tea (which is more effective, but also more bitter) was also used for diarrhea. Cottonwood buds were made into a salve by soaking them in olive or almond oil for a week, then adding a little melted beeswax for a thickener (Moore 1979).

Rhus tribolata (Anacardiaceae)

Skunkbush Sumac

Uses: The Blackfoot dried the berries, ground them and dusted the powder onto smallpox pustules (Johnston 1987). The Cheyenne used the plant as a protective covering for hands when removing dog meat from a boiling pot. The leaves were also used for head colds and a decoction of the leaves as a diuretic. The fruit was chewed for toothaches. Also thought to be an aphrodisiac (Hart 1981). The Hopi used the twigs for ceremonial purposes. The roots were used as a deodorant or perfume. They also used the root as a remedy for tuberculosis (Moerman 1998). Several tribes including the Apache, Acoma, Mescalero, Atsuwegi and Cahuilla (to name a few) used the berries in a variety of ways as one staple of their diet.

Rosa palustris (Rosaceae)

Swamp Rose

Uses: The Cherokee used an infusion of the bark and root for worms and a decoction of the root was taken for dysentery (Moerman 1998).

Rumex altissimus (Polygonaceae)

Pale Dock, Water Dock

Uses: The Lakota used it for diarrhea, stomach cramps, and hemorrhages, and applied a poultice of the green leaves to boils (Rogers 1980; Gilmore 1913). The introduced *R. crispus* L. had a wide repertoire of uses in Europe, and after it became naturalized in North America many Native American groups adopted it as well, as a food, medicine, and dye (Moerman 1998). It was also used by American physicians in the 19th century as a laxative, a tonic, for alterative and depurative purposes, and in the treatment of skin diseases (Vogel 1970).

Rumex crispus (Polygonaceae)

Curly Dock

Uses: Was listed in the US Pharmacopoeia from 1863 to 1905. Used for the treatment of skin diseases and for alterative and depurative purposes; also used as a laxative and a tonic (Vogel 1970).

Sagittaria latifolia (Alismataceae)

Broadleaf Arrowhead

Uses: The Cherokee Indians used an infusion of leaves as a wash to bathe a feverish baby; baby was also given one sip to drink (Moerman 1998). The Chippewa took an infusion of the root for indigestion (Densmore 1974). The Iriquois had a variety of uses for this plant. An infusion of the plant was taken for rheumatism. A compound decoction

was taken for boils on the abdomen of children and also used as a wash on itchy skin parts. The decoction was also used as a laxative (Herrick 1977). The Chippewa, Cocopa and the Dakota (among others) used the tubers of this plant much like a potato (Moerman 1998).

Salix amygdaloides (Salicaceae)

Peachleaf Willow

Uses: The Cheyennes drank a tea from the leaf for diarrhea and other ailments (Hart 1981). They also fastened a strip of willow bark around a cut to stop the bleeding (Kindscher 1992). Crow Indians chewed the bark of a willow to clean teeth and to relieve headaches (Hart 1976). Willow reduces inflammation of joints and membranes because of its valuable levels of glycosides salicin and populin. Tea made from the willow bark is useful as an analgesic to the urethra and bladder. Willow bark is a strong but being antiseptic and can be used as a poultice or a wash (Moore 1979).

Salix nigra (Salicaceae)

Black Willow

Uses: Native Americans used many species of willow as medicine and for a variety of other purposes as well: making dye, furniture, mats, baskets, drums, stirrups, tipi pegs and pins, fox and fish traps, hunting lodge poles, and meat-drying racks. The Blackfeet made a tea from the crushed fresh root of *Salix* species to treat internal hemorrhage, throat constrictions, swollen neck glands, bloodshot or irritate eyes, and for symptoms described as “waist trouble” (Helson 1974). The twigs were also gathered and preserved. Steeped in boiling water, they were made into a tea to cure fever or alleviate pain (Johnston 1970; Blankenship 1905). The Nez Perce and Crow Indians used the willow as an emetic in conjunction with the sweat bath for an internal cleansing regime. The Crow also chewed willow bark to clean teeth, to prevent cavities, and to relieve headaches (Hart 1976). The willows were also used by many other tribes, including the Choctaws, Delawares, Osages, Cherokees, and Cheyennes as chew sticks to clean the teeth (Elvin-Lewis 1979). The Kiowas made a tea of willow leaves that they rubbed on the body to cure pneumonia and relieve rheumatic aches. They also chewed the bark to relieve toothache (Vestal & Schultes 1939). The Comanches used the ashes of burned willow stems to treat sore eyes (Carlson & Jones 1939). The Dakotas drank willow-bark tea to restore themselves both physically and mentally (Andros 1883). The willow family also has a long history of folk medicine use in Europe. All willows contain salicin, the well-known painkiller that was the precursor to aspirin. Black willow also contains an astringent (Kindscher 1992).

Silphium laciniatum (Asteraceae)

Compass Plant, Rosin Weed, Gum Weed, Pilot Weed

Uses: The Pawnees used a tea made from the pounded root for “general debility.” The Santee Dakotas used a tonic made from the plant to as a de-wormer for horses. The Omahas used the dried root in a treatment called “ashude-kithe” to alleviate head colds or pain in any part of the body. In this treatment fat and some of the dried root were placed on hot coals. The affected body part was then covered with a blanket and placed over the coals so the rising smoke would “permeate the affected part” (Gilmore 1913, Gilmore 1977). The Omahas and the Poncas believed that lightning strikes commonly near a compass plant so this served as a guide when marking camp sites. They also burned the dried root during a storm and this was thought to help avoid being struck by lightning (Gilmore 1977). The Mesquakies boiled smaller roots and drank the cooled

liquid as an emetic. The children of several tribes used the resinous sap as chewing gum (Smith 1928).

Solanum carolinense (Solanaceae)

Carolina Horse Nettle

Uses: The fruits and berries were used by medical doctors as a sedative and an antispasmodic. It was listed in the National Formulary from 1916 to 1936 (Kindscher 1992). The horse nettle has been found to produce antibacterial activity against common bacteria (Moerman 1998).

Solidago canadensis (Asteraceae)

Canadian Goldenrod

Uses: The Iroquois used an infusion of the roots and flowers for side pains (Moerman 1998). This infusion was also used as an emetic. Used a love medicine a compound infusion of the roots was taken to kill a love. Also used as a sedative a compound infusion was given to babies that startled easily during sleep (Herrick 1977). The Mesquakie used a compound decoction as a wash for a child who does not talk or laugh (Smith 1928). The Zuni chewed on the blossoms for a sore throat and made an infusion of crushed blossoms for various body pains (Stevenson 1915).

Solidago gigantea (Asteraceae)

Giant Goldenrod

Uses: The Potawatomi used an infusion of the blossoms for fevers (Smith 1933).

Spartina pectinata (Poaceae)

Prairie Cordgrass

Uses: The Omaha used this grass as a fiber to support earth coverings of lodges in permanent villages. The Ponca used it as roof thatching and as an earth covering (Gilmore 1919).

Tripsicum dactyloides (Poaceae)

Eastern Gama Grass

Uses: The seeds are a good food source once separated from the tough hulls. It is thought that the seeds were also popped in order to make them edible. The protein content of the seeds is over 27% and the carbohydrate content is over 51% (Kindscher 1992)

Typha angustifolia (Typhaceae)

Narrowleaf Cattail

Uses: The Micmac and Malecite Indians used the infusion of one root for gravel (Moerman 1998). The Hopi chewed the mature heads with tallow as a gum (Whiting 1939). The Pima baked the pollen into brownish biscuits and ate the tender white stalks raw (Curtin 1949).

Typha latifolia (Typhaceae)

Broadleaf Cattail

Uses: The Algonquin and Quebec Indians applied a poultice of the crushed roots to wounds and infections (Black 1980). The Cheyenne used the leaves ceremonially in the Sun Dance (Hart 1981). An Infusion of the dried and pulverized root with the white base of the leaves was taken for abdominal cramping (Grinnell 1962). The Dakota used the

down as a dressing for burns and scalds. The down was also used on infants to prevent chafing (Gilmore 1919). The Delaware and the Oklahoma used the root to dissolve kidney stones (Moerman 1998). Many different tribes used the roots of this plant in an extensive number of ways as a diet staple.

Ulmus americana (Ulmaceae)

American Elm

Uses: The Iroquois used the bark in compounds for broken bones, to facilitate childbirth, and for “summer disease—vomiting, diarrhea, and cramps.” An infusion of root bark was taken for excessive menstruation, and the twigs were used in a compound for internal hemorrhage (Herrick 1977). The Delaware took an infusion of inner bark for colds and severe coughs (Moerman 1998). The Mesquakie applied a decoction of root bark to sore eyes as an eye lotion (Smith 1928). Native Americans in Montana used the inner bark as an emollient for tumors (Blankinship 1905). The Potawatomi used the bark for cramps and diarrhea (Smith 1933). The Cheyenne used the red inner bark to make a coffee-like beverage, and pregnant women took an infusion of bark to insure stability of children (Hart 1981). The tribes of the Upper Missouri River region used forked trees as posts in building the earth lodge, and used the wood as fuel and making numerous objects (Gilmore 1977).

Ulmus rubra (Ulmaceae)

Slippery Elm

Uses: The Alabama used a decoction of the bark mixed with gunpowder taken as a sympathetic magic for delayed labor. A decoction of the bark was taken for prolonged labor (Swanton 1928). The Cherokee took a decoction of the inner bark to soothe dysentery. A poultice of the inner bark was used for burns, sores and a variety of wounds. Decoctions also used as an eye wash, a remedy for coughs and colds, to soothe an upset stomach, used as a laxative, as a respiratory and also as a tuberculosis remedy (Moerman 1998). The Iroquois used a decoction as a blood purifier and as an emetic to clean stomach. A decoction of the root was also used to facilitate birth and for parturition, also taken for kidneys and as a stimulant. An infusion of the bark was used as a wash for sore eyes. The leaves were smoked and exhaled through the nose for catarrh. The bark was chewed for sore throats and a poultice of the bark placed on swollen glands. A decoction was used for tuberculosis (Herrick 1977). The Omaha used the bark cooked in fat as a preservative (Gilmore 1913).

Vitis cinerea (Vitaceae)

Graybark Grape

Uses: The Dakota, Kiowa, Omaha, Pawnee, Ponca and Winnebago tribes ate the fruit fresh and also dried the fruit in large quantities for use over the winter (Moerman 1998).

Vitis riparia (Vitaceae)

Riverbank Grape

Uses: The Omaha ate the fruit raw and also dried during the winter (Gilmore 1913).

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