






## Native Plants of Significance to the Cherokee in the HBS Cherokee Garden

Common name (Cherokee name)	Latin name	Description  =food use  =material use  =medicinal use
American Beech (Ku sŭ́ u' ta na)	<i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	Tea made with twigs and bark used to flush the system; beech nuts chewed to rid the body of worms 
Basswood (I tā ha')	<i>Tilia americana</i>	Strips of bark used for rope; wood for carving; in mixture for diarrhea and snakebite; good for honey   
Black Snakeroot (U li düsti' utönoö)	<i>Cimicifuga racemosa</i>	Used in a formula "for chills;" roots used to relieve arthritis pain 
Bloodroot (Gi' li wă' ta)	<i>Sanguinaria canadensis</i>	Used as basket dye; paint; root used for coughs and catarrh (eye ailments), externally for poison ivy  
Butterfly Weed (Gu gu')	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Root tea made for diarrhea, pleurisy (lung ailment), heart conditions 
Club Moss	<i>Huperzia</i> spp.	Powder from spores used for diaper rash (repels liquid) 
Devil's Walking Stick (U <sup>d</sup> za ki da')	<i>Aralia spinosa</i>	Berries used for dye (pewter color); roots in a decoction as an emetic, for toothaches, in a bath for paralysis  
Dogbane, Indian Hemp (An do la kü')	<i>Apocynum cannabinum</i>	Fibers used for cordage, bow strings, in weaving grave blanket (shroud); poultice for arthritis  
Dog Hobble (E wa su hi')	<i>Leucothoe fontanesiana</i>	Used in a formula for muscle soreness; leaf decoction in a mixture for arthritis pain; used to weave grave blanket  
Dogwood (Ka na si ta')	<i>Cornus florida</i>	Tea made from boiled inner bark boiled and drunk for high fever, malaria; bark chewed for headaches; decoction for chicken pox; wood for carving  
Doll's Eyes (U li das ti' us ti' ga)	<i>Actea alba</i>	Root tea gargle for sore throat; hot tea bath for insect bites 
Dutchman's Pipe (U düi u' ta na)	<i>Aristolochia macrophylla</i>	Used in a formula for urinary problems 
Foamflower (An dân ka la gí skí u' ta na)	<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	A tea held in the mouth to remove the white coat from the tongue 
Hearts-a-bustin ( <sup>d</sup> U wüdü' ũ)	<i>Euonymus americanus</i>	Used in a formula for "irregular urination;" root steeped and taken a bedtime to treat venereal disease; seed crushed to treat lice. 
Hepatica (Uni skwüli' <sup>d</sup> un sti')	<i>Hepatica acutiloba</i>	Root tea to treat intestinal trouble; dried leaves smoked for heart trouble; leaf tea held in the mouth for toothaches 
Holly (Kâ lû güt li ski us dí ga)	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	Used to scratch Cherokee stickball players to administer medicine before play, and to treat broken bones 
Hydrangea, 7 Bark (Di düñälüwöski)	<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i>	Inner bark tea soothes vomiting in children, bark poultice for sore or swollen muscles 
Jack in the Pulpit (Tú yas tí')	<i>Arisaema triphyllum</i>	Root poultice for headaches; caustic, never used internally 
Joe Pye Weed, also Blow Gun Weed (Am di tá tí)	<i>Eupatorium fistulosum</i>	Root tea for kidneys as a diuretic; stem used to administer throat medicine, and to draw water from shallow water  
Mayapple (U nâskwātu g' ũ)	<i>Podophyllum peltatum</i>	Seed corn soaked in mayapple mash to repel insects; used for bowel trouble; fruit edible, other parts highly toxic  

Milkweed (Us ti ga li')	<i>Asclepias syriaca</i>	Bark for bowstring drill; used with Virgin's Bower for backache  
New Jersey Tea (Elishgŭlŭ')	<i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	Used for coughs, colds; root tea for bowel complaints; in Cherokee lore, snakes are more apt to strike when in flower 
Partridgeberry (Tüdis ti' u ni gis ti')	<i>Mitchella repens</i>	Roots used in a mixture for intestinal trouble; root tea for menstrual pain; used to strengthen uterus for childbirth 
Persimmon (Sa li')	<i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	Fruit for food; coffee made from roasted seeds, used to treat kidney stones, sore throat; used to treat indigestion, toothache, thrush in children  
Pokeweed ( <sup>d</sup> ay it ag' ũ)	<i>Phytolacca americana</i>	Early leaves eaten in salad; root tea used externally for eczema; berries or berry wine used to treat arthritis  
Rattlesnake Master (Sâli kwöy'a)	<i>Eryngium yuccifolium</i>	Root tea held in the mouth for toothaches; decoction given to children to prevent whooping cough 
River Cane (I hya')	<i>Arundinaria gigantea</i>	Used in making baskets, blowguns, arrow shafts; large canebrakes create habitats that attract wildlife 
Spicebush (Ná tŭ tli)	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Ground dried fruit as cooking spice; twigs for breakfast tea; used to treat fevers, hives  
Spotted Wintergreen (U stas ti')	<i>Chimaphila maculata</i>	Crushed roots in a poultice for headaches, other pain; tops and roots in a tea for colds and fever
Summer Grape (Tälŭa di')	<i>Vitis aestivalis</i>	Liquid in the stems for "safe water" and for hair tonic (conditioner); fruit for food  
Sweet Birch (Atsŭ' kí)	<i>Betula lenta</i>	Bark infusion for the stomach, headaches and fever; in a mixture for kidney stones; in "SSS Tonic" (commercially available) 
Tall Coneflower (Söcha ni')	<i>Rudbeckia lacinata</i>	Eaten as spring greens 
Tulip tree (Tsi yu')	<i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	Leaf buds used in a salve for burns, or in an infusion for arthritis; wood used for carving and building material  
Virgin's Bower (I ga gŭ' tí)	<i>Clematis virginiana</i>	Included in a mixture for urinary problems 
Virginia snakeroot (Una stet sti yă)	<i>Aristolochia serpentaria</i>	Root tea to treat headaches, stomachaches, fever; root externally used for snakebites and toothaches 
White Oak (Ta la')	<i>Quercus alba</i>	Bark used in basket making; acorns used for flour; bark tea for diarrhea and skin irritations   
Wild Cherry (Tá ya)	<i>Prunus serotina</i>	Bark decoction used for fever, colds, cough, measles; wood for carving; fruits edible  
Wild Ginger, Heartleaf (Skwá li u' ta na)	<i>Asarum canadense</i>	Root tea for heart problems (increases circulation), colds, and menstrual pains; dried leaves used for snuff  
Wintergreen (Atsŭ' kí ga nu lŭ' hí)	<i>Gaultheria procumbens</i>	In a mixture for indigestion; dried leaves as a substitute for chewing tobacco  
Witch Hazel (Ka na su da süwa')	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	Used to treat coughs, colds, sore throats; in a mixture for fever. Bark collected on eastern side of plant makes stronger medicine 
Yaupon Holly	<i>Ilex vomitoria</i>	Native to lower elevations, received by trade; used to make the Black Drink for ceremonial cleansing 
Yellow Buckeye (U' ni skwŭ tŭ')	<i>Aesculus flava</i>	Bark tea is taken to speed child delivery; salve from nuts for sores; wood for carving  
Yellowroot (Da lâ ni una stet si)	<i>Xanthorhiza simplicissima</i>	Root tea for mouth or stomach ulcers; has antibiotic and anti-inflammatory properties; fabric dye  

Note: many medicinal and food plants can be toxic unless prepared and administered correctly; please do not apply or ingest these plants. Sources: Banks, W.H. 2004. *Plants of the Cherokee*. Great Smoky Mountains Association; Schmitt, D. 2005. *Medicine Trail. Our State*.

## European Introductions

The Cherokee adopted many plants into use that were introduced to this country by European settlers. Many of these are considered nuisance plants or weeds. Some of these are:

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)  
 \*Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)  
 Plantain (*Plantago major*)  
 Mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*)  
 Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*)  
 Comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*)  
 Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)

The following are a few simple recipes using several of these plants (always be sure to wash plants thoroughly and do not use if pesticides were sprayed):

### Dandelion Flower Tea

1 cup dandelion petals  
 Juice of ½ lemon  
 1 tbsp. honey

Pour boiling water over petals, cover, and steep until cool. Add lemon and honey and serve over ice.

### Yarrow Mayonnaise

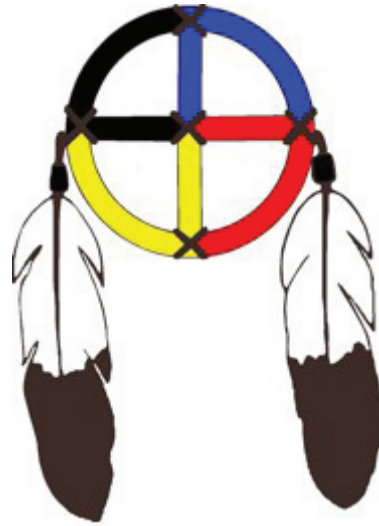
Chop yarrow leaves very finely and mix with mayonnaise and bits of mint. Use over fruit salad.

### Candied Mint Leaves

Use fresh leaves of spearmint or catnip. Be sure there are no insect holes or blemishes. Wash well and pat dry. Dip each leaf in lightly beaten egg white and then in granulated sugar. Repeat until well coated and let dry on a flat surface.

Recipes reprinted with permission from: Hatter, Ila. 2001. *Roadside Rambles: A Collection of Wild Food Recipes*. Ironweed Productions, Robbinsville, NC.  
 \*some botanists consider this to be a native species

## Plants of the Cherokee



This garden honors the Cherokee people and how they use native and introduced plants in their daily lives. It contains a small representation of significant plants and a few examples of the ways in which they are used. The plants in this garden are used not only in healing, but in all aspects of Cherokee life: clothing, tools, food, ornament, crafts and more.

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HIGHLANDS  
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## Cherokee Medicine

The Cherokee pharmacopoeia includes more than 600 species of native plants. Much of this traditional knowledge is not widely shared; recipes for medicines were gifted to certain people, and by sharing medicinal knowledge, it was thought that the medicine could lose its power. Cherokee medicines are more than just herbal remedies; healing involves a person's physical, spiritual, and emotional self as well as his or her environment. When all of these things are in balance, an individual is healthy.

There are four common ways of processing plants for medicinal use:

**Decoction** – plant material is placed in large amounts of water and boiled for a period of time. Plant material is strained and discarded; liquid is retained for use.

**Infusion** – the plant material is placed in boiled water for a short time, similar to making tea.

**Macerate** – plant material is pounded or shredded and then soaked in cold water.

**Poultice** – plant material is prepared by boiling or macerating and then wrapping them in a cloth, which is then applied to the ailing spot.



Witch hazel  
*Hamamelis virginiana*

Basket weaving is an art that has endured among the Cherokee people to the present day. A variety of locally grown materials are used for constructing baskets.



River Cane  
*Arundinaria gigantea*



White Oak  
*Quercus alba*



Bloodroot  
*Sanguinaria canadense*

Natural materials traditionally used to dye Cherokee baskets include: bloodroot (red) and black walnut and butternut (black). These colors are now supplemented by numerous natural and commercial dyes. Dyeing takes from one to eight hours depending on the hardness of material being used, dye strength, and color intensity desired.

Six types of baskets are commonly made: Pack baskets, fish baskets, rib baskets, covered baskets, low-sided rectangular baskets, and double weave baskets.



Dogwood  
*Cornus florida*