

# DAKOTA AND OJIBWE USES OF NATIVE PLANTS

## ST. OLAF NATURAL LANDS

This pamphlet serves to aid a different type of tour, one that focuses on the interaction of the land and people. We highlight the many plants in the Natural Lands that have been used by the Dakota and Ojibwe for centuries. This list is not meant to be exhaustive. Instead, we focus on the plants that are more commonly mentioned in indigenous writing on botany and history.

To simplify this guide, it is split up into two sections. This page follows plants that are primarily in the southern, forested side of the Natural Lands while the back page highlights the north side near Big Pond and the Prairie.



### Acknowledgement

In creating this guide, we hope to create a space for reflection and healing through honest storytelling. We start by acknowledging that St. Olaf college rests on the stolen land of the Wahpekute Band of the Dakota Nation. Although we recognize that acknowledgement does not reverse the continued atrocities against the Dakota people, the statement helps preserve the fact in our cultural memory so as to never deny that these injustices exist.

All images from Minnesota Wildflowers. For a full list of sources, see Pohl, Braden, Istephanous, Isabel. "Ethnobotany of the Dakota and Ojibwe in Minnesota" 2020.

<https://wp.stolaf.edu/naturallands/research-papers/prairie-research-papers/>

## NORWAY VALLEY AND WINDMILL TRAIL



Common throughout campus: 

***Impatiens capensis***  *jewel weed, omakakiibag*

Jewel weed is used by the Ojibwe to treat itches and stings. The watery stems of the plant are broken up and rubbed on the infected place. If you want to find this plant, look for it hiding near stinging nettle.



***Sanguinaria canadensis***  *bloodroot, ojiibik, pougkone*



The red sap of bloodroot does more than give it an apt name. Both the Ojibwe and Dakota have used this plant as a dye, while the Ojibwe create a lozenge out of bloodroot to treat sore throats and a tea to soothe menstrual cramps.

***Rosa sp.***  *wild roses, oginii-waabigwaniin, uŋžinžin tka hú*

Rose hips, abundant in vitamin C, are used to create teas and tonics to treat colds and coughs by both the Ojibwe and Dakota.



***Betula papyrifera***  paper birch, wiigwaasaatig

The skill with which the Ojibwe can craft birch bark is well known. From canoes (jiimaan) to storage bags (makak), the tree is essential to every aspect of life. The bark can also be used to make a red dye.



***Echinacea sp.***  echinacea, ičháŋpe hú



*Echinacea* is a powerful medicinal plant. The Dakota use it for many ailments, especially for treating pains as in toothaches, wounds, and sores.

***Larix laricina***  tamarack, mashkiig-mitig

Tamarack is a strong diuretic and has been used by the Ojibwe as a laxative by ingesting the inner bark. The needles are usually collected in the fall and used in a tea to treat arthritis.



***Prunus virginiana***  chokecherry, osisaweminaatig, čhaŋphá



Chokecherry is especially important for the Dakota, who use every part of the plant in the Sun Dance. The leaves are made into a tea and the twigs str used in an offering. The cherries are also used to make Wojapo, a kind of sweet pudding.

***Acer saccharum***  sugar maple, inaatic, čhaŋhásan

The sugar maple appears almost ubiquitous across the St. Olaf campus, and in the spring you may even see many being tapped for their sugar. This is an old process, one started by the First Nations, including the Dakota and Ojibwe.



