

A – a

**abils** *n.* apple. This fruit is new to the Gitksan, brought in by the settlers. *From:* English

**amgiikw** or **giikw** *n.* hemlock tree. *Tsuga Heterophylla*. Ref: PNBC pp 22. The hemlock is one of the most important trees of the Gitksan people. It has many usages; e.g. a). In the early Spring the cambium is scraped off and dried and made into cakes and stored. This is called “**xsuu'w**”. b). the leaves are used as tea. C). The branches of a small hemlock tree is put in the water at the Coast to get herring roe. D). The tips of the branches are used for bedding when out camping. E). the wood is used for carving dishes, pots and spoons. F). the bark, after its burnt, is used by the young girls to darken their eyelashes as makeup.

**amhaawak** *n.* birch tree. See: **haawak**.

**amhat'a'l** *n.* cedar tree

**amhoo'yxs** *n.* balsam fir tree. See; **hoo'yxs**

**amk'ooxst** or **k'ooxst** *n.* trembling aspen. *Populus tremuloides*. Ref: PNBD pp 24. The cambium is used as a drug in early Spring just as the leaves begin to bud from the new top growth of poplar tree. It is mixed into a hard paste and chewed or held in the mouth. It gives energy like a steroid. The bark and the

roots are chewed and can also be used to stop wounds from bleeding. The dried and rotten wood is used for firewood in the smokehouse to dry salmon. It is also used as a sign to tell if a storm is coming. In the calm of the day if you hear the leaves trembling or making a noise, that's a sign that a storm is near. In our area we call **amk'ooxst** the poplar tree.

**amluux** *n.* alder tree. See: **luux**

**am'mal** *n.* cottonwood tree. *Populus batsimifere ssp. Trichocarpa*. Ref: PNBC pp24. The large cotton wood is used for making dugout canoes. The outer bark is used for firewood and as fuel for drying fish.

**amwish** *n.* 1) big roots. 2) entire root of a tree.

**ant'ipgan** *n.* tree stump.

**anxisgan** *n.* windfall.

**ax.** *n.* rootstock of the spiny wood fern. *Dryopteris expansa*. Ref: PNBD pp 292. The root of this plant is roasted in a small pit that is dug out and lined with birch bark, covered, and a fire is built on top.

B - b

**baxbok'** *n.* dandelion *Traxacum officinale*. Ref: PNBD pp 97. This plant is used as medicine to control acne (pimples). This is done by cutting the stem off, waiting for a milky-like fluid at

the cut end and putting it on the pimple, or by eating the stems. Also used for making home brew.

**bilana** 'watsx *n.* 1) running club moss. *Lycopodium clavatum*. Ref: PNBC pp 287. This plant is used as a drying agent for wounds, nosebleeds, and diaper rash. It is also widely used by the shaman to dramatize his healing powers by putting the powder in fire to create a fireworks-like effect, because the spore powder is very flammable. 2) ground pine. 2) buttercup.

**binana** *n.* banana. This fruit is new to the Gitxsan. It does not grow in our area.

#### D – d

**damt** *n.* fiddlehead fern (ostrich fern). *Matteucia struthiopteris*. Ref: PNBC pp 291. This fern grows along streams and rivers, edges of swamps and is used as an undermat for cutting and cleaning fish. It is also used for covering food. For medicine it is mixed with plants, roots and bark. I.e., it is mashed together with the bark of balsam fir, devil's club, a little pitch of pine tree and root of skunk cabbage. It is put on moss and warmed a little and applied to boils and ulcers. It is also put on the chest to control hemorrhage of the lungs.

**dawa maa'y** *n.* frozen fruit. Freezing food is a modern way of keeping them longer.

**daxdo'ohl** *n.* 1) Labrador tea. 2) Hudson Bay tea. *Groenlandicum*. Ref: PNBC pp 40. The leaves of this plant are used as a tea beverage or a tonic. They are boiled and the first batch is used as medicine i.e., a laxative. The second batch is also a mild laxative and is also used for kidney problems. The third batch is used as a tea drink.

**diih'lxw** *n.* polypore, or a fungus that grows on birch trees or on hemlock trees. This fungus was put on a sore spot on the knee, elbow, wrist, ankle, or on the shoulder for moxibustion treatment of arthritis and for fomes ignores. It is also used by young girls as a type of makeup. It is scraped with a knife into a powder and applied dry on the skin. Also, when the dust is burnt, it makes black powder which the girls used to darken their eyebrows and eyelashes.

**Dilawsa** *n.* gooseberries. *Ribes oxycanthoides*. Ref: PNBC pp 32. These berries are eaten fresh and are good preserved.

#### G – g

**gam** or **gyam** *n.* saskatoon. *Amelanchier alnifolia*. Ref: PNBC pp46. These berries

are eaten fresh or dried. The fruit is very sweet.

**giikw** *n.* hemlock tree. See: **amgiikw**.

**giist** *n.* mountain alder tree or shrub.  
*Alnus incana ssp. Tenuitolia*. Ref: PNBC pp38. The mountain alder and all the other alders are used as a dye. When boiled and the inner bark of the cedar is put in, it turns reddish yellow. It is also used as fuel for smoking salmon and meat, because it has no pitch of its own. The bark is good for basket making and wood for carving.

**gleeps** *n.* grapes. This fruit does not grow in our area.

## G – g

**gahldaats'** *n.* water lily (yellow pond lily). *Nuphar lutea ssp. Polysepala*. Ref: PNBC pp 223. The waterlily plant is used medicinally. The rhizomes (or roots) are peeled, sliced, air-dried and stored. The dried slices were soaked and applied as a poultice on aching joints, skin ulcer, and to broken bones. Some elders used this plant for heart conditions. When mixed with **wa'umst** (devil's club) it was used for a person with tuberculosis.

**gan** *n.* 1) any tree. Trees are very important to the Gitxsan people because we use trees for food, clothing, shelter, transportation, cooking and storing. Last but not least, it is used for medicine. *Pl:*

**gangan**. 2) a stick. 3) a totem pole. This pole is usually carved from a cedar tree.

**gangan** *n.* plural of **gan**. Trees

**gapk'oop** *n.* bunchberry. *Cornus canadensis*. Ref: PNBC pp 214. This berry is very useful to our people, because it is mixed with other berries when preparing them for drying, especially saskatoon. Two or three handfuls of bunchberry, when mixed with other berries, will act like a thickening agent, holding the berries together and keeping them from cracking.

**gasx** *n.* wild rice, chocolate lily bullets. *Fritillaria camschatcensis* Ref: WFBC pp 39. The root of this plant is edible but has a very strong unpleasant aftertaste, this is why we call it **gasx** (unpleasant). The roots are ready for gathering on or about June 15<sup>th</sup>. They are washed and spread on a woven mat and dried for winter use.

**gayda ts'uuts'** *n.* 1) any mushroom. 2) toadstool. 3) fungus that grows on hemlock resembling a coral or sponge.

## Gw – gw

**gwalaxan** *n.* 1) dead tree, Dry trees are usually found at a burn site, a timber stand that a forest fire went through. What is left, after the fire, which has dried out. 2) A snag.

**gwalgwa gan** *n.* dried out tree, dry wood. These dry trees that are still standing make good firewood.

**gwilahl ganaa'w** *n.* Lungwort, a lichen. *Lobaria pulmonaria*. Ref: PNBC pp 322. This lichen was not used too much by our people; it has some medical usage; it is applied to the chapped skin of babies. It is also used as a dye. It is boiled with mountain goat wool to make the wool yellow.

**gwilt** *n.* any dry evergreen needles. The dry needles are gathered in the fall. When ants are all gone, these ant piles are put into bags and spread on top of potatoes for insulation against frost.

#### H – h

**haast** *n.* fireweed *Epilobium angustilium* Ref: PNBC pp 213. The young plant is peeled and the marrow is eaten raw or mixed with soapberries. The stems are dried and twisted into twine for fishing nets.

**haawak** or **amhaawak** *n.* birch tree. *Betula Papyrifera* Ref: PNBC pp 24. The birch is another tree that is widely used. The bark is great for starting a fire, food storage, to wrap or to envelope a corpse, birch bark torch for light, making baskets. The wood is excellent for carving, i.e., masks, spoons, and other utensils, toboggans, firewood.

**hababa'a or hap'iba'a** *n.* bracken fern *Pteridium aquilinum*. Ref: PNBC pp 292.

**habasxw** *n.* 1) grass 2) hay. The tall grass or hay is used as undermat for bedding or as a tablecloth to put food on when out camping.

**habasxwim t'ax or habasxum t'ax** *n.* 1) small flowered bulrush. *Scirpus microcarpus*. Ref: PNBC pp 276. This bulrush is used to weave baskets and floor mats. 2) reeds.

**hagingasxw** *n.* creamy peavine. *Lathyrus ochroleucus and nevadensis*. Ref: PNBC 00 168-9. This plant is used when cleaning fish. In the olden days, the fish were not washed but wiped with this plant to show respect to one of the laws of how to clean the fish.

**ha'mook** *n.* 1) cow parsnip. *Heracleum lanatum*. Ref: PNBC pp 181. 2) wild celery. 3) rhubarb.

**ha'mookhl ganaa'w** *n.* 1) larkspur. 2) meadow rue. 3) little meadow-foxtail. *Alopecurus aequalis*. Ref: PNBC pp 238.

**hat'a'l** *n.* the inner bark of the cedar tree. Ref: PNBC pp 23. The inner bark of the cedar is the most widely used and versatile of all tree bark. It is used for making baskets, mat coats, raincoats, floor mats, cedar ropes, mats for picking soapberries, bags for water and cooking, and many other things.

**hinak** *n.* skunk cabbage. *Lysichiton americanuj.* Ref: PNBC pp 224. This plant's leaves are used for lining steam pits for cooking, and also used to line pits where berries are kept for winter.

**higahldaatsxw** *n.* water arum *Calla palustris.* Ref: PNBC pp 224. Water arum is almost like skunk cabbage, but the leaves are heart-shaped with a white spathe, red berries, and grows in bog pools.

**higantxwit or hisgantxut** *n.* 1) northern wormwood. *Artemisia campestris ssp. Borealis.* Ref: PNBC pp 106. This plant is put on the fire in the evening to drive away mosquitoes. It is also put between bedding to drive away bedbugs and other insects, and kept in the house for its pungent aromatic fragrance. 2) pink spirea, hardhack. *Spiraea douglasii ssp. Menziesii.* Ref: PNBC pp 45. The twigs of this little tree is used for drying fish strips, as well as for blades, scrapers, and for roasting sticks. Harlan Smith's description: "a bush with a spike the colour of raspberries and cream."

**Hishaasxwit** *n.* Columbia Lewisia forma rosea. *Lewisia columbinana.* Ref: 1c pp 134.

**Hishaawakxwit or hishaawakxut** *n.* yellow mountain-avens. *Dryas drummondii.* Ref: PNBC pp 89.

**Hishabasxw** *n.* common harebell. *Campanula rotundifolia.* Ref: PNBC pp 222.

**Hishinakxwit or hishinakxut** *n.* round leaved rein-orchid. *Plantanthera orbiculate.* Ref: PNBC pp 138.

**Hisk'awtsxwit or hisk'awtsxut** *n.* sweet-cicely. *Osmorhiza chilensis h. & a.* Ref: WFBC pp 355. The root of this plant is used by bunters as a perfume to hide human scent. It has a sweet licorice-like odor. The seed of the plant are black, slim with numerous hooks that hook on clothing and on animals.

PNBC = Plants of Northern British Columbia by Mackinnon – Pojar – Coupe

WFBC = Wild Flowers of British Columbia by Clark, Lewis J.

PC = Pacific coast by Bayard H. McConnaughey and Evelyn McConnaughey

