



Native Garden



NATIVE GARDEN AT WASHITA BATTLEFIELD NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE. PHOTO: OLIVIA SALMON

For centuries, native tribes have used plants, trees, and shrubs for a variety of purposes, including medicine, food, ceremonies, and domestic needs. At Washita Battlefield National Historic Site, the National Park Service has partnered with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes Language Program to showcase some of these plants in a native garden. The design of the garden is a medicine wheel and includes 21 plant and tree species significant to the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes for spiritual and practical uses. The garden provides education about native plant species and highlights their importance to tribal communities. The ultimate vision for the Washita Battlefield Native Garden is to have the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes continue to prosper spiritually and physically from its crop.

Medicine Wheel

The medicine wheel, sometimes called the sacred hoop, is a ceremonial circle used by many Native American tribes. It has spiritual and astronomical significance, and is used for healing rituals and as a source of peace and clarity. The wheel is oriented with the cardinal directions, and its quadrants portray the four seasons. Along with its representation of the year's seasons, the medicine wheel also celebrates life and all of its cycles. At the Washita Battlefield Native Garden, each quadrant of the medicine wheel represents a different use of native plants. Planning the Native Garden within the framework of a medicine wheel emphasizes the sacred, central role of local plants in the physical and spiritual lives of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes.



Interpretive display at Washita Native Garden. Photo: Olivia Salmon

DAILY LIVING



Slender Greenthread

ma'óomêhá'eonôtse ceneetéewofooninook

Slender greenthread is a perennial herb that tolerates drought well. As its name suggests, it is characterized by its slender green leaves. Cheyenne people dry the leaves, often right before the plant flowers, and steep them to make a mild, slightly sweet tea. The Cheyenne name for the plant means "Indian tea."



Russell's Horsemint

heo'keméotsestôtse woxhooxwóhoono'

Russell's horsemint is a showy perennial plant with clusters of lavender, white, or pink flowers that sit on top of open-branched stems. Cheyenne people dried the blossoms and leaves for

perfume, which they put in a small bag. It was also used for medicinal purposes. The leaves would be bundled together in a packet that was placed in the ear to treat an earache. The Cheyenne name for the plant means "Indian perfume."

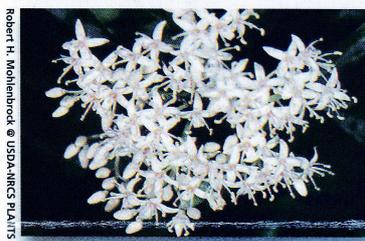


Yucca

hestáhpánó'e síinceneewoxú'

Yucca is a member of the agave family. Its flowers grow on spikey stalks and bloom between May and July. Yucca roots were used by Cheyenne people as soap for

cleaning and to soak buffalo hides in the tanning process. The leaves and fiber were also used to make needles and thread.



Roughleaf Dogwood

hotamemenó'êstse bo'óoceibiss

Roughleaf dogwood is a small tree with clusters of white flowers that blossom in the spring. Cheyenne people use dogwood branches to make lacing pins for their tipis. The inner bark is used in an herbal blend for traditional ceremonies. This particular species of

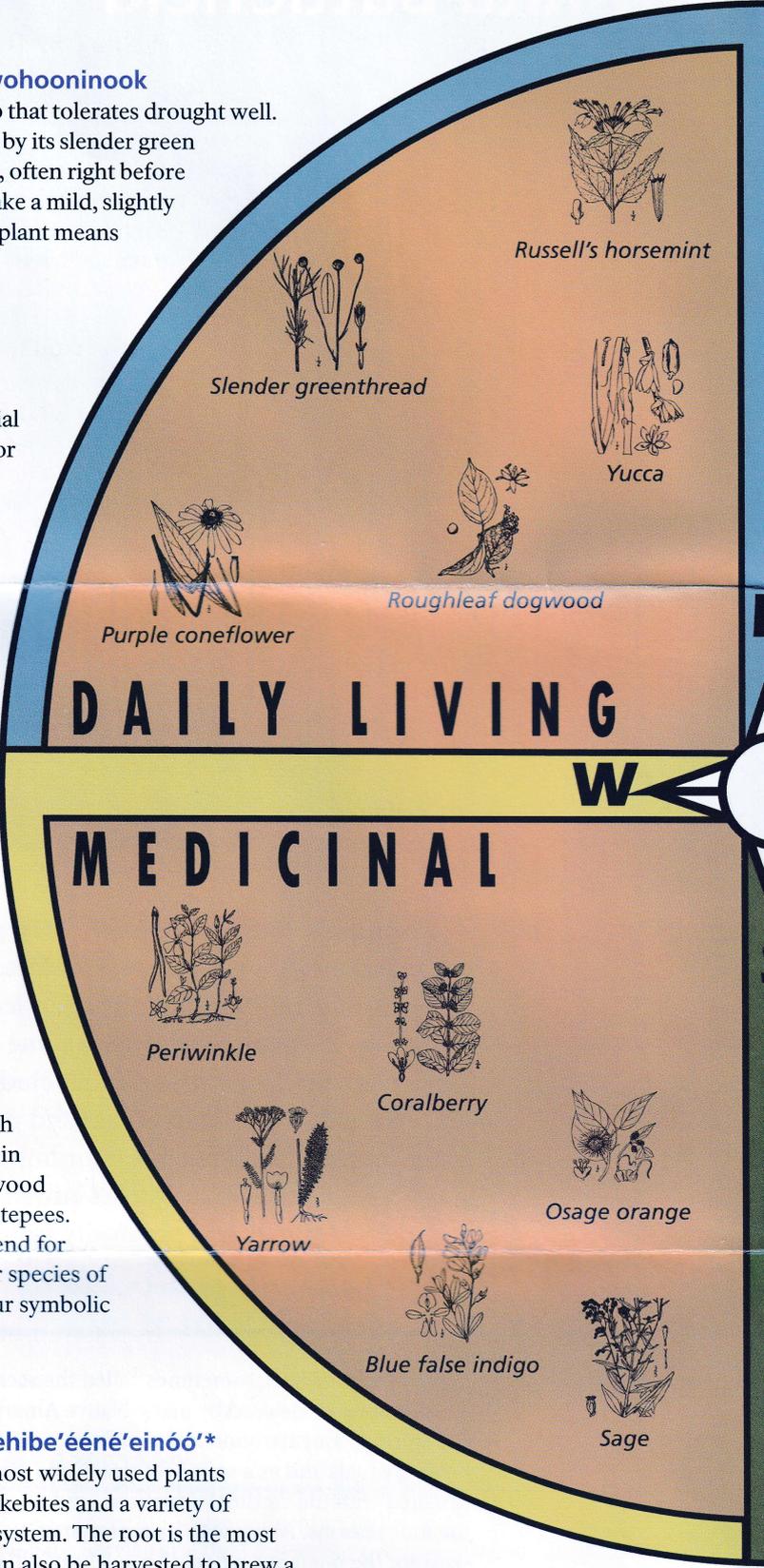
dogwood can be recognized by its rough textured leaves and is one of four symbolic trees to the Cheyenne and Arapaho.



Purple Coneflower

mo'óhtávêheséeo'ôtse 3ouuhetehibe'ééné'einóó'*

The purple coneflower is one of the most widely used plants of Plains Indian tribes. It can treat snakebites and a variety of infections. It also boosts the immune system. The root is the most commonly used part, but the leaves can also be harvested to brew a tea.

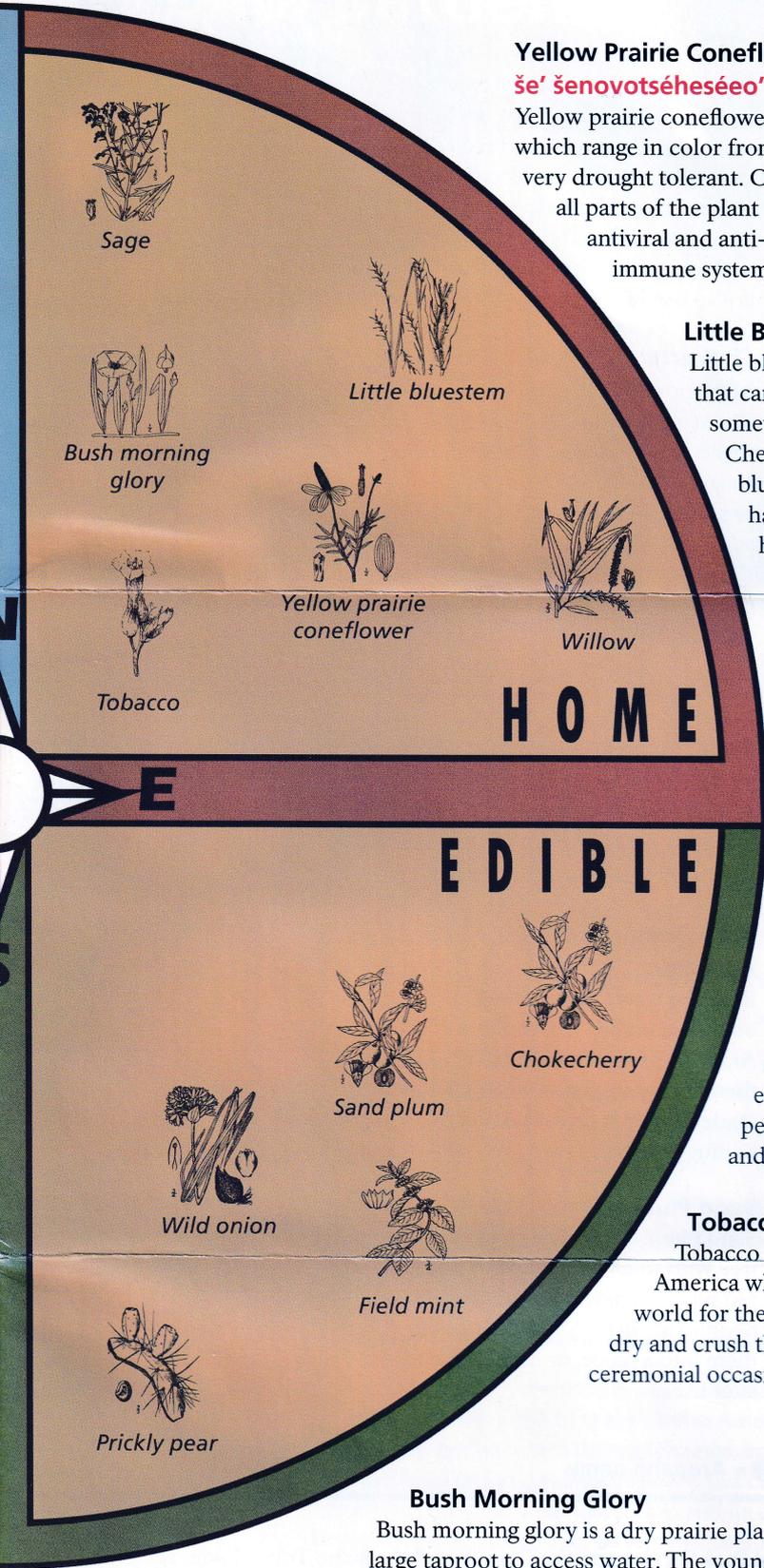


● = Cheyenne name



Explore an interactive version of the Washita Native Garden at: southwestlearning.org/products/multimedia/native_garden

All plant illustrations from: Britton, N.L., and A. Brown. *Canada and the British Possessions*. 3 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1913.



Yellow Prairie Coneflower

še' šenovotséheséeo'ôtse 3ouunihooné'einóó'*

Yellow prairie coneflower is a tall perennial plant with flowers which range in color from yellow to purplish-brown. It is very drought tolerant. Cheyenne and Arapaho people used all parts of the plant for a variety of purposes — as an antiviral and anti-bacterial agent, to help boost the immune system, and to treat a variety of infections.



J.S. Peterson © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Little Bluestem ma'ö'éstse béé'woxu'

Little bluestem is a fine-textured bunchgrass that can grow up to three feet high, sometimes higher in favorable conditions. Cheyenne and Arapaho people used Little bluestem as forage grass and for winter hay. It was also grazed by buffalo and horse herds.



Norman G. Flieg © LAJ Wildflower Center

Sage vánó'éstse nookhoosé'

Fresh sage is traditionally used in Cheyenne and Arapaho ceremonies. When wrapped in red cloth and placed above an entry to the home, it is said to ward off “bad” spirits and purify the guests.



Margaret Williams © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Willow ménó'ke yóókox

Willow grows near rivers, ponds, or lakes and plays a major role in stabilizing soil and preventing erosion. The young leaves and inner bark of willow have a compound similar to aspirin and are used extensively by Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples. Willow limbs and leaves are also used to construct shade arbors and have ceremonial purposes.



Larry Albin © USDA-NRCS PLANTS Database

Tobacco tse'némoo'o siisoowoo

Tobacco is a branched herb native to Tropical America which is cultivated throughout the world for the nicotine it contains. Cheyenne people dry and crush the leaves to smoke in pipes during ceremonial occasions.



The Nicotiana Project, nicotianaproject.net

Bush Morning Glory

Bush morning glory is a dry prairie plant with funnel shaped flowers and a large taproot to access water. The young root served as a good food source for Cheyenne people. The older plant root was used as a fire starter.



Sally and Andy Wasowski, LAJ Wildflower Center

● = Arapaho name

1913. *An illustrated flora of the northern United States*, Brewer's Sons, New York.

*The number “3” is used in the Arapaho language to represent a “th” sound.

MEDICINAL

EDIBLE



Periwinkle **šee'eeháséto** **hoho'biiteiséénook**

Periwinkle is a perennial plant introduced to the Americas by Europeans. The Cheyenne used it to treat various types of hemorrhages, especially during childbirth. Recent scientific studies suggest that certain periwinkle species may suppress the growth of cancerous tumors.



Yarrow **he'haéheséeo'ôtse** **no'ou-tihii**

Yarrow is a member of the sunflower family. Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples used yarrow as a cold remedy and as a stimulant. Cheyenne people also rubbed the leaves on their skin as an insect repellent and placed the leaves in the ear to treat an earache.



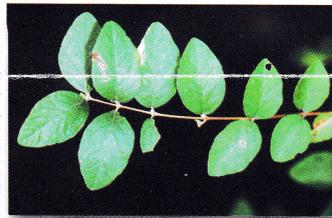
Blue False Indigo **otá'tavóma'óhtsevéhpôtse** **ceenetéénece'einoo'**

Blue false indigo is a member of the pea family. It is a bushy perennial that produces blue-purple flowers. The Cheyenne and Arapaho used the leaves and flowers of the plant as a source of blue dye.



Osage Orange **ma'tšêškehohtsêstse** **béé'exootí'**

Osage orange is a medium-sized tree that produces green, inedible fruits that are about the size of an orange. The branches have thorns of up to an inch in length. Some Plains Indian tribes use the wood from this tree to make their bows.



Coralberry **vo'kaa'eo'e** **nisicebiis**

Coralberry is a small deciduous shrub that usually grows to about four feet. It produces pink or purple berries which remain on the bush throughout winter. Cheyenne people ground or crushed the berries to yield a dye for painting. The long new runners were used in basket weaving.

● = Cheyenne name

● = Arapaho name

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