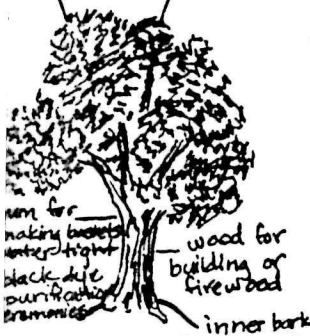


rats food collected in fall  
 needles for cold medicine or diuretic



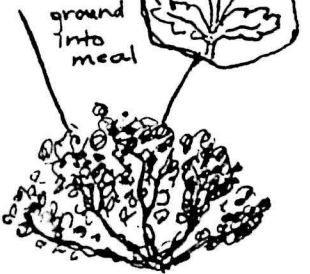
Pinyon  
 inner bark for emergency food source

leaves eaten fresh or dried  
 black paint for pottery  
 medicine for insect stings or headache  
 seed pods used as food



Rocky Mountain Beepoint

Berries used for lemon-flavored juice  
 ground into meal



Squawberry

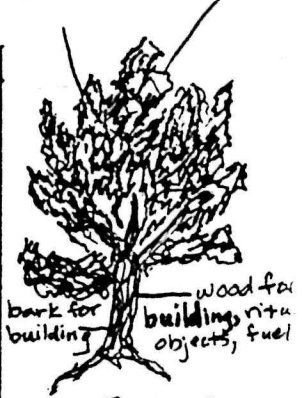
LIVING OFF THE LAND

For many who visit Chaco Canyon this appears to be an inhospitable land. But people have been occupying and "making a living" off this land for two thousand years! When the Chacoans were living in the San Juan Basin they sustained themselves by farming. Some of the crops grown were corn, beans, and squash. The diet was supplemented by hunting game such as deer and rabbits; and by gathering wild foods.

Chaco Canyon itself has limited potential for arable land and providing wild game, so additional food was probably brought in from outlying areas. Food crops may have been imported from as far away as Salmon or Aztec to the north near Farmington, or perhaps from Kin Ya'a, 30 miles to the south. Or, perhaps to economize on transportation costs, food may have come from outliers closer to Chaco such as Kin Bineola or Bis sa'ani. Wild game may have been supplied from the Chuska Mountains where bear, elk, and deer were more abundant. The demand for many of the natural resources at Chaco was heavy, and it appears that some resources may have been used up, such as the tabular sandstone used to build the great towns and the stands of pinyon and juniper growing on the mesa tops. The game populations on Chacra Mesa diminished. Agricultural lands may have been damaged by intensive farming techniques over a period of years. Perhaps the Chacoans also exploited too heavily the native plants that were depended upon for food, medicine, utilitarian objects, and ceremonial uses.

When archeologists excavate a ruin it is difficult to determine exactly how a plant was being used. The only plant parts that remain are those most resistant to decay, or fragments which were carbonized in fire hearths. But comparisons can be made since contemporary pueblos have utilized many of the same plants traditionally for hundreds of years. Perhaps the pueblo-building Chacoans used these plants in similar ways.

foliage for medicine  
 berries for food, dye



Juniper  
 wood for buildings, ritual objects, fuel  
 bark for building

Fruits for sweet beverage  
 Young pads for food or dressing for wounds

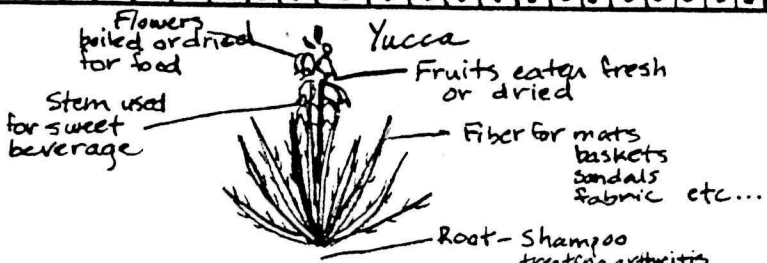


Prickly Pear

leaves used for salt-flavored seasoning  
 medicine for insect stings  
 yellow dye



Sattebush  
 seeds ground into ash used for leavening agent



Yucca  
 Flowers boiled or dried for food  
 Fruits eaten fresh or dried  
 Fiber for mats, baskets, sandals, fabric etc...  
 Root - Shampoo  
 treats no arthritis  
 Stem used for sweet beverage