

Turner, Nancy J.: *Food Plants of Coastal First Peoples* (Royal British Columbia Museum Handbook). Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995, (Second edition of *Food Plants of British Columbia Indians. Part 1. Coastal Peoples*. 1975). ISBN 0-7748-0533-1 Paper CDN \$24.95.

*Food Plants of Coastal First Peoples* is an expanded and updated edition of Turner's 1975 British Columbia Provincial Museum Handbook on the food plants of British Columbia's coastal peoples. Much of the information is based on Dr. Turner's own original fieldwork. It is intended for two target audiences. Outdoors people and adventuresome diners will be interested in trying out some of the traditional plant foods of the First Nations peoples living on the Pacific Northwest coast. Young First Nations people will find it a very readable and useable source of information on one aspect of traditional culture in need of preservation and promotion, both from the viewpoint of cultural heritage and from the nutritional importance of edible plants.

The Introduction provides a brief overview of the physical environment of the British Columbia coast, local Indigenous cultures and their territories, the role of plants in the traditional diet of First Nations people, methods of harvest and preparation, seasonal differences in plant use, a few traditions surrounding edible plant use, and their importance as items of trade long ago.

The main part of the book consists of a listing of edible wild fruits, roots, and shoots, arranged in botanical order. For each plant, the author provides the English common name(s), scientific species and family names, a photograph of the plant (most are in colour), a botanical description, habitat, distribution in British Columbia, and a summary of Aboriginal uses. There are two appendices, one describing some of the uses of introduced food plants by First Nations people, and a second one on plants which Native people consider to be poisonous or inedible. A glossary explains the technical terms used in the book, which are kept to a bare minimum to improve readability for the general public. Finally, there is an index and a very helpful list of references for those interested in further reading about traditional uses of edible plants.

This book and its companion volume, *Food Plants of Interior First Peoples* (1997), also a new revision of a British Columbia Provincial Museum Handbook, fill an important niche in the popular press, being complementary to Dr. Turner's more technical publications such as *Traditional Plant Foods of Canadian Indigenous Peoples: Nutrition, Botany and Use* and her numerous peer-reviewed journal articles. It makes readily available to the public information on food plants learned through many

years of close collaboration between Dr. Turner and Elders from a number of British Columbia First Nations. The mutual respect shared by Dr. Turner and the Elders is clear from the detailed information which they have provided to her and the care with which she has presented it. She emphasizes the need for paying attention to strictly sustainable harvesting, taking precautions against excessive consumption or incorrect preparation, and recognizing the intellectual property rights of First Nations peoples. *Food Plants of Coastal First Peoples* is an excellent book for showing people of any culture the continuing value of traditional ecological knowledge.

Robin J. Marles  
Department of Botany  
Brandon University  
Brandon, Manitoba  
Canada, R7A 6A9

### References

Turner, Nancy J.

- 1997 *Food Plants of Interior First Peoples*. Seattle: University of Washington Press Press.
- 1991 *Traditional Plant Foods of Canadian Indigenous Peoples: Nutrition, Botany and Use*. Philadelphia: Gordon and Breach Science Publishers.

Waselkov, Gregory A. and Kathryn E. Holland Braund (Editors): *William Bartram on the Southeast Indians*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995, ISBN 0-8032-4772-9 Cloth USA \$46.50.

William Bartram, born in 1739 to Pennsylvania Quaker parents, grew up in a household filled with enthusiasm for and knowledge of botany and natural history. His father, John Bartram, was "the best-known gardener and plant taxonomist in Britain's North American colonies and a correspondent of Linnaeus" (p.3). The younger Bartram had the opportunity to accompany his father on an expedition to survey the vegetation of East Florida commissioned by King George III in 1765. This trip sparked a strong interest in the region, its flora and fauna, and its Aboriginal population in the young man. In 1772 William Bartram sought and obtained the patronage of Dr. John Fothergill, a London Quaker with important business and scientific connections in Britain, to collect botanical specimens in the southern colonies. Bartram journeyed for the next four years in the region, and was