

Tools for Survival: Plants on the Frontier



Ribwort or Broad Leaf Plantain: Can be used as an emergency food or it can be mashed and used on abrasions. Ribwort is also known as “White Man’s Foot.” This name was given by Native Americans who noticed that this plant followed the path of European settlers.



Violet Leaves: Can be used as spring and summer greens, which were wonderful after a winter of eating fatty foods. These leaves are also vitamin rich! ****Caution:** Violet leaves often grow near to and are confused with Buttercup Leaves. The buttercup leaves have kidney shaped leaves with small yellow flowers and may cause stomach problems!



Black Walnut: The nuts of this tree would have been quite useful. The nuts were cracked in the fall, possibly by young girls. Picking the nut meat from the hull was a tedious job and the men were probably busy harvesting crops, leaving this labor-intensive but necessary task to the women.



Paw Paw Tree: The bark of the tree is being researched as an insecticide. The fruit of this tree is also edible and tastes like vanilla. The bark has some cordage properties and can be used to bind things.



Sassafras: Has three distinctly different shaped leaves. The roots can be used to make root beer and the leaves thicken soups and stews.



Raspberry: The roots of this plant are used medicinally and a tea can be made of the leaves. The berries can also be eaten.



Daisy Flea Bane: This plant looks very similar to a daisy and is known as flea bane because it gets rid of fleas.



Queen Ann's Lace: The roots of the plant were used like carrots.
****Caution:** This plant has poisonous relatives that look similar to it. They include water and poison hemlock.



Virginia Creeper: The berries of this plant are useful medicinally and the leaves can be used to make a black dye. This plant is often confused with poison oak.