

# SALMONBERRY



Gorge Waterway Action Society



## Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*)

### OVERVIEW:

### Edible Nature

Salmonberries are identified as a deciduous erect or leaning shrub with weakly prickled stems. Compound leaves are composed of three sharply toothed leaflets. Pink to magenta flowers are borne in open clusters and develop yellowish-orange or red berries. This largely depends upon the stand of berries. These berries are edible and delicious. Toss a few berries aside each time you harvest to assist in propagation and future harvests.



- General Information: Salmonberry is a deciduous, rhizomatous shrub typically growing 1-4 metres tall. It has dense prickly stems that are green with new growth and turn golden-brown to rust-red in colour as they age and become woody. The flowers are large (3-4cm) and a deep pink rose-like flower. These shrubs bear raspberry-like, round, yellow to orange to deep-red, delicious berries.
- Habitat: Salmonberry grows in moist places and wetlands, and is often abundant along streams and riparian areas at elevations below 1400 metres.
- Horticultural Uses: Salmonberry is often used in restoration and bank stabilization. It is used to restore degraded sites and provide slope stability to prevent against erosion.

## Indigenous Uses of Salmonberry

Salmonberry fruits are edible and delicious! They are often considered too soft and dry. They are best described as a mushy raspberry-like fruit. The fruits and young shoots were widely consumed by all northwest coast peoples of British Columbia. The berries are among the first to ripen, making them a highly important food source. Large quantities of these berries were picked and often served at feasts. Some groups mixed the berries in oolichan grease or dried salmon spawn, and the berries were often consumed with salmon due to their similar arrival time. Salmonberry patches were often owned by families or individuals and exclusively harvested by their owners until they had enough to host a feast, after which point all were able to harvest. The young shoots were harvested from April to early June. They were snapped with one's finger, peeled, and eaten raw, steamed or boiled. These were often eaten in accompaniment with dried salmon or meat. The new growth on the stems are noted to have a sweet and juicy flavour. The leaves were also boiled with fish for additional flavouring.



## Species Uses of Salmonberry

Salmonberry fruits are ripe from June to August and ranked as highly beneficial foods for wildlife and bird species. The early blooming flowers, blossoming from March to June, are an important source of nectar for bees, butterflies, insects, and hummingbirds. Berries are eaten by many species including songbirds, bears, and small mammals. The stems are used as forage by herbivorous species. The dense foliage provides habitat for birds and small mammals. Songbirds often nest in these thickets. Sit and listen near the shrubs to hear the songbirds sing!



## Salmonberry Neature Question

### Question:

Why were Salmonberries given their respective name?

### Answer:

Salmonberries are named as such because their arrival coincides with the arrival of spring Chinook salmon runs on the lower Columbia River. The berries were eaten with salmon meat and roe.

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