



Coastal Strawberry (*Fragaria chiloensis*)

OVERVIEW:

Edible Nature

Coastal Strawberries are identified by perennial, short, trailing stems, with thick leathery leaves that are divided into three round blunted toothlets. The underside of the leaf is hairy. White, five-petaled flowers are supported on the stems that give way to small, hairy strawberries. These strawberries, like store bought strawberries, are edible but much more flavourful than their purchased counterpart. Busy some of the small seeds that cover the berry to grow future plants.



- General Information: Coastal Strawberries are a member of the Rose family and grow as a perennial herb that forms loose green carpets speckled with white flowers (2-3cm) and red berries. Horizontal runners, called stolons, emerge from the parent plant and find open ground to grow a daughter plant. Long purple, red, or brown-tinted stalks bear three parted leaves (5-20cm) (at the ends of the stalks. Coastal Strawberries have many teeth along the edge of the leaflets with noticeable veins in the leaves.
- Habitat: Coastal Strawberries grow well in sunny, sandy, disturbed sites often found along roadsides and coastal meadows.
- Horticultural Uses: Garden Strawberries found their way to Europe from Wild Strawberry varieties such as Coastal Strawberries. Coastal Strawberries are the ancestors to the modern cultivated strawberry that is found in many summer gardens.

Indigenous Uses of Coastal Strawberry

Many Coastal Indigenous peoples knew about Coastal Strawberries and enjoyed the fruits fresh from the stalks. Fruits were sometimes mixed and dried with other berries, likely due to their lower abundance and small size. Jams were often made from the berries if sufficient quantities were found. Often it was the children's duty to find and harvest Coastal Strawberries. The leaves were harvested and mixed with Thimbleberry leaves and steeped to create a sweet tea. The leaves could be used to make anti-diarrhea medicines for children, or chewed into a poultice to treat burns.



Species Uses of Coastal Strawberry

The Coastal Strawberry provides berries for bird species and pollen for native bee species. Bees are the primary pollinators of these small flowers. Bees are attracted to the small white flowers due to their height, smell, and colour. Larger birds, such as Quail, are known to feast on the juicy berries. Deer and Rabbits are known to browse the leathery leaves of the Coastal Strawberry.

Be sure to leave some for the birds and the bees and spread the seeds!



Coastal Strawberry Neature Question

Question:

Which Strawberry came first, the Coastal Strawberry or European Garden Variety?

Answer:

Coastal Strawberry is the ancestor that created the European Garden Variety.

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