

Skunk Cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*)



One of the first plants to appear in the spring, skunk cabbage can be found in wet woods and swamps. Early leaves can be dried and eaten as a cooked green, while the roots can be dried and used as flour.

The young leaves of this tree are an essential component of Creole cooking. Once dried they are ground into a powder known as file', which is used as thickener for gumbos and soups.



Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)



This non-native, pervasive blue flower can be found along roadsides and in fields. While the roots have been long treasured in the South as a coffee substitute, its young leaves can also be eaten raw in a salad or as a cooked green.

Broad-leaved Cattail (*Typha latifolia*)

A recognizable plant found in marshy, wet areas, the cattail is one of the most valuable foraging edibles. Nearly all parts of this starchy and protein-rich plant can be eaten in some way; as a raw or cooked vegetable, pickled, or made into flour.



EDIBLE PLANTS OF BANSHEE REEKS NATURE PRESERVE

Violets (*Viola spp.*)

A common blue, yellow or white spring flower rich in vitamins A and C, violets are typically found in woody areas. The edible flowers can be candied and used as decorations. The early leaves can be eaten in a salad, as a cooked green, or infused into a nutritious tea.



Spring Beauty (*Claytonia virginica*)

This is a familiar spring flower that can be easily found in moist woods before leaf-out. The tiny roots can be eaten raw or boiled and served in the same manner as potatoes.



Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)



Compiled by Christina Ojala
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Indigenous cultures hunted and gathered in the Virginia area for thousands of years prior to the coming of Europeans in the 1600's. It is likely that the Algonquian Tribes in the Banshee Reeks area passed on many of their gathering secrets to the new settlers. We may never know who discovered that the cattail plant growing in watery areas could have so many uses, but we do possess a centuries-old treasure trove of information about the uses of local native plants.

In addition, many plants that you now see growing in the preserve would be unrecognizable to an indigenous gatherer 500 years ago. Various non-native or invasive species are crowding out native plants. However, quite a few of these non-native plants are also edible, and were indeed brought over from other continents primarily for that purpose. Any part of the humble dandelion, for instance, can be eaten, while the leaves of clover are rich in protein.

Whether for discovery, survival or the pure pleasure of eating food that would normally be overlooked by most people, foraging for edible plants can be a wonderful way to get outside. Feel free to explore the edibles at Banshee Reeks, but please leave what you find for others to see!

This document has been prepared in partnership with the Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, the Friends of Banshee Reeks, and the Virginia Master Naturalist Program.

Edible Plants That Can be Found at Banshee Reeks

American Beech.....*Fagus grandifolia*

American Hackberry.....*Celtis occidentalis*
 Anise Root.....*Osmorhiza longistylis*
 Arrowhead, Duck Potatoes.....*Sagittaria latifolia*
 Asiatic Dayflower.....*Commelina communis**
 Black Cherry.....*Prunus serotina*
 Black Huckleberry.....*Gaylussacia baccata*
 Black Locust.....*Robinia pseudo-acacia*
 Black Walnut.....*Juglans nigra*
 Brambles (Raspberry, Blackberry, Wineberry, etc.).....*Rubus spp.*
 Broad-leaved Cattail.....*Typha latifolia*
 Butterfly Weed.....*Asclepias tuberosa*
 Campion.....*Silene latifolia**
 Catnip.....*Nepeta cataria**
 Chestnut.....*Castanea dentata*
 Chickweed.....*Cerastium arvense*
 Chicory.....*Cichorium intybus**
 Common Mallow.....*Malva neglecta**
 Common Milkweed.....*Asclepias syriaca*
 Common Mulberry.....*Verbascum thapsus*
 Common Sorrel.....*Rumex acetosella*
 Common Strawberry.....*Fragaria virginiana*
 Dwarf/Winged Sumac.....*Rhus copallinum*
 Early Saxifrage.....*Saxifraga virginiana*
 Eastern Hemlock.....*Tsuga canadensis*
 Red Maple.....*Acer rubrum*
 False Solomon's Seal.....*Smilacina racemosa*
 Field Garlic.....*Allium vineale**
 Gill-over-the-ground.....*Glechoma hederacea**
 Goose Grass.....*Galium aparine*
 Greenbrier.....*Smilax rotundifolia*
 Harbinger of Spring.....*Erigenia bulbosa*
 Honewort.....*Cryptotaenia canadensis*
 Jewelweed.....*Impatiens capensis*
 Lady's Thumb.....*Polygonum persicaria**
 Marsh Marigold, Cowslip.....*Caltha palustris*
 May Apple, Mandrake.....*Podophyllum peltatum*
 Mountain Mint.....*Pychanthemum tenuifolium*
 Paw Paw.....*Asimina triloba*
 Pennsylvania Bittercress.....*Cardamine pensylvanica*
 Persimmon.....*Diospyros virginica*
 Pokeweed.....*Phytolacca americana*
 Queen Anne's Lace, Wild Carrot.....*Daucus carota**
 Red Clover.....*Trifolium pretense**
 Redbud.....*Cercis canadensis*
 Sassafras.....*Sassafras albidum*

Shagbark Hickory.....*Carya ovata*
 Shepherd's Purse.....*Arabis laevigata* Poir.*
 Skunk Cabbage.....*Symplocarpus foetidus*
 Smooth Sumac.....*Rhus glabra*
 Solomon's Seal.....*Polygonatum biflorum*
 Spearmint.....*Mentha spicata**
 Spring Beauty.....*Claytonia virginica*
 Star Chickweed.....*Stellaria pubera*
 Sugar Maple.....*Acer saccharum*
 Sweetflag.....*Acorus calamus*
 Sweetgum.....*Liquidambar styraciflua*
 Toad Trillium.....*Trillium sessile*
 Trout Lily.....*Erythronium americanum*
 Violet Wood Sorrel.....*Oxalis violacea*
 Violets.....*Viola sp.*
 White Clover.....*Trifolium repens**
 White Oak.....*Quercus alba*
 White Pine.....*Pinus strobus*
 Wild Garlic.....*Allium canadense*
 Wild Ginger.....*Asarum canadense*
 Wild Grapes.....*Vitis vulpina*
 Wild Mint.....*Mentha arvensis*
 Wood Nettle.....*Laportea canadensis*
 Yarrow.....*Achillea millefolium**
 Yellow Nut Grass.....*Cyperus esculentus*
 Yellow Pond Lily.....*Nuphar advena*
 Yellow Wood Sorrel.....*Oxalis stricta*

*Denotes Non-Native Species

PLEASE NOTE: THIS LIST IS FOR IDENTIFICATION PURPOSES ONLY. DO NOT COLLECT ANY PLANTS FROM BRNP!