



**piith papírish**  
**Four Native Healing**  
**Plant Foods**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please keep in mind that this booklet reflects the intellectual property of the Karuk people. We trust you will respect that fact, as well as respect and honor the plant resources themselves. **Yôotva!**

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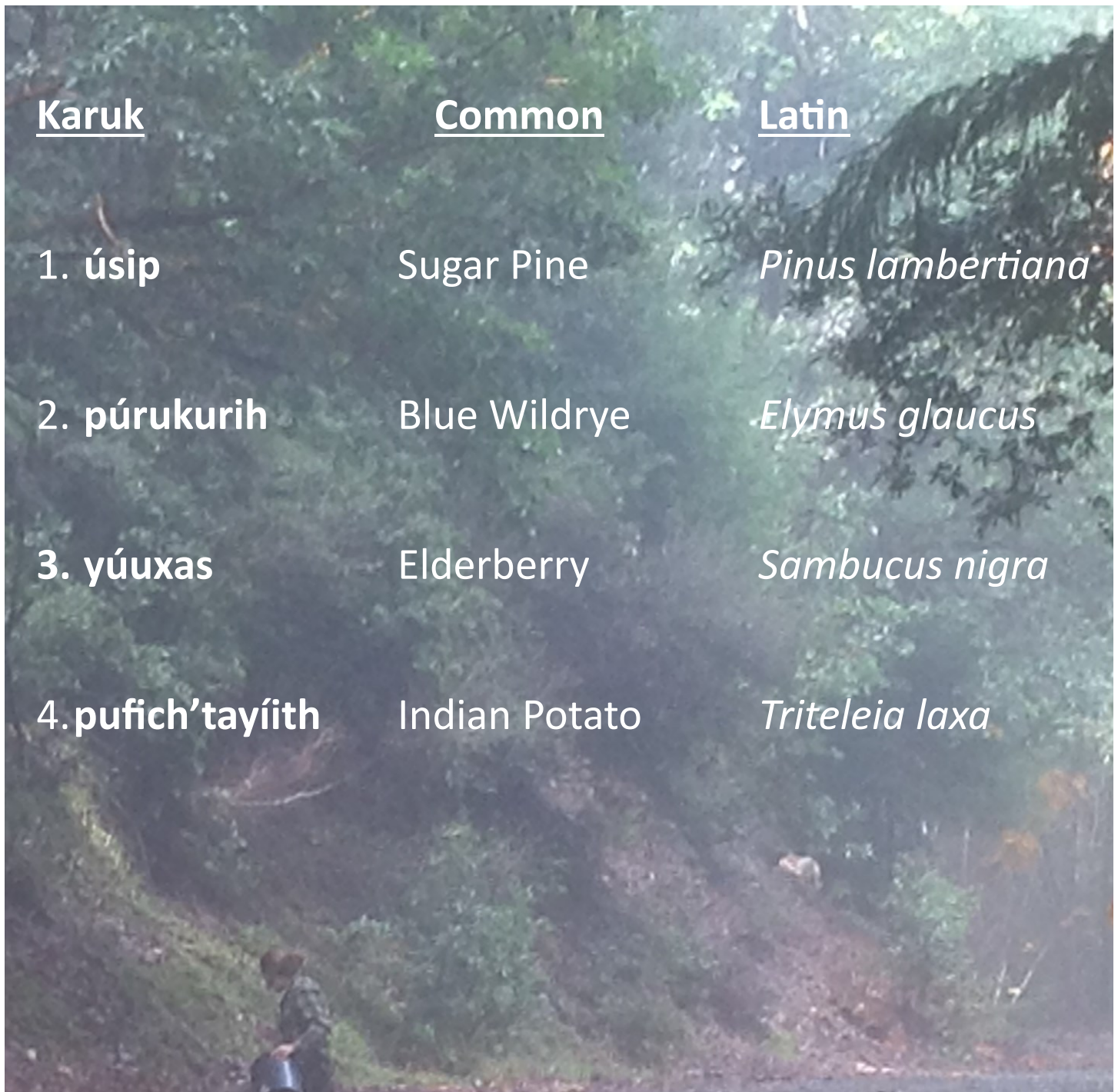
[www.karuk.us](http://www.karuk.us)

Layout and design: Lisa Hillman

# piith papírish

## Four Native Healing Foods

### *Names*



<u>Karuk</u>	<u>Common</u>	<u>Latin</u>
1. úsip	Sugar Pine	<i>Pinus lambertiana</i>
2. púrukurih	Blue Wildrye	<i>Elymus glaucus</i>
3. yúuxas	Elderberry	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>
4. pufich'tayíith	Indian Potato	<i>Triteleia laxa</i>

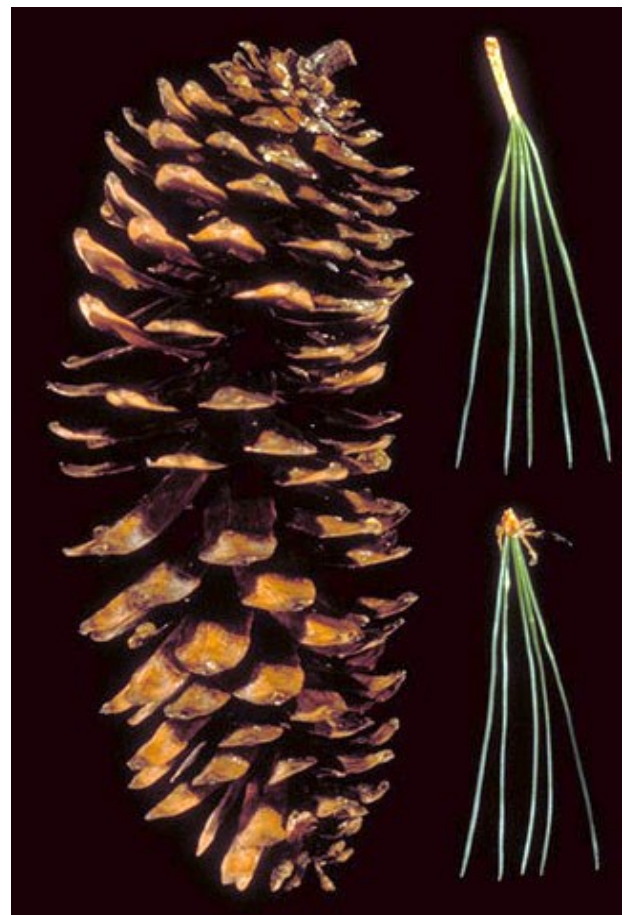


**úsip**      Sugar Pine      *Pinus lambertiana*

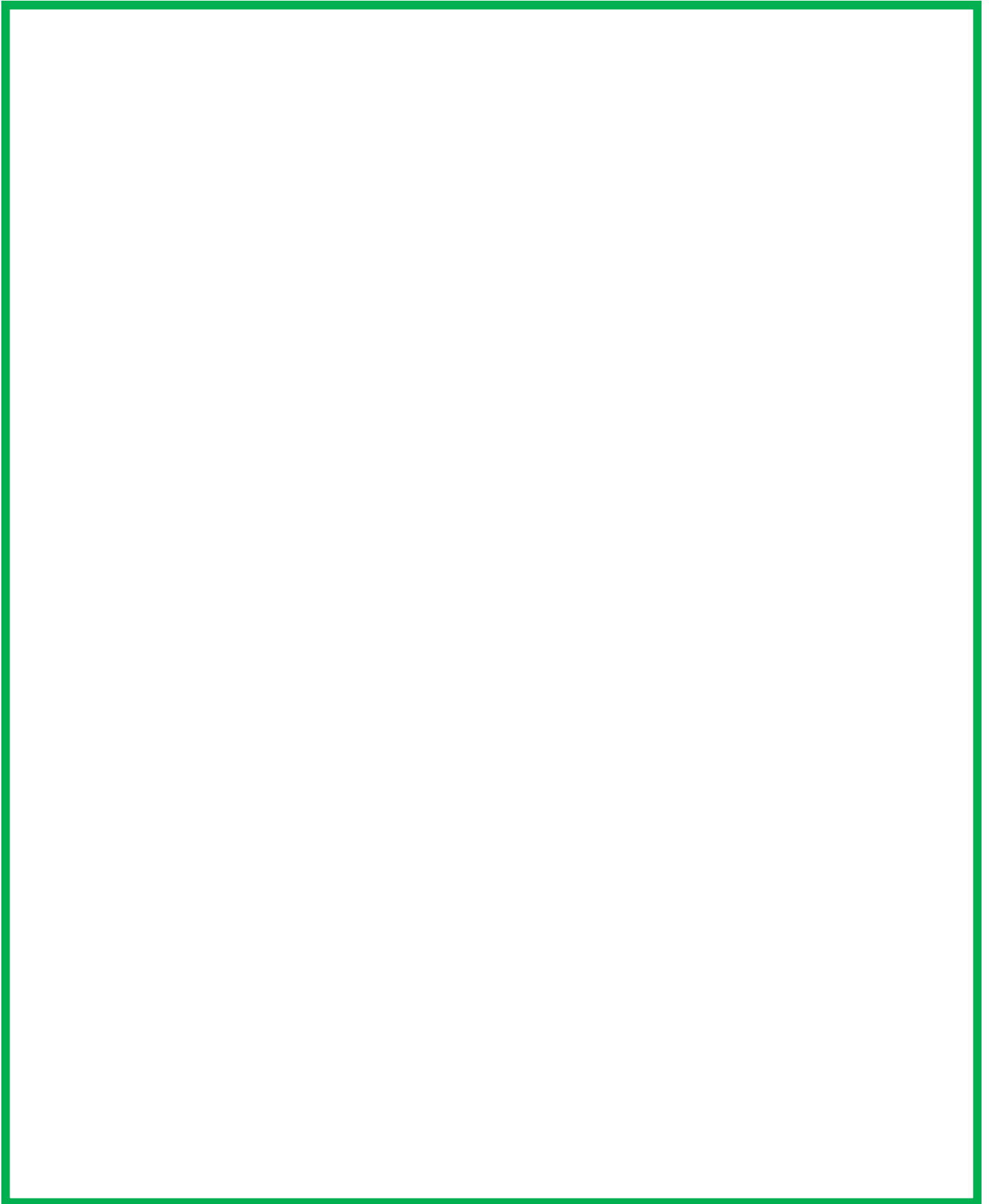
Sugar pines have the longest cones and are the tallest and most massive pine tree species, but were formerly more abundant than they are now. The fallen trunks of this tree is, as is cedar wood, made into planks to build an *ikrívraam* (women's "living house"). In *Pikyávish* (World Renewal Ceremony), sugar pine is one of the woods not used for firewood by the priest.

The pitch of the tree is used as an adhesive, and the sugary sap (*asúxiim*) is gathered from hollow trees and eaten. It is also used as a remedy to treat problems with digestion.

The Karuk highly value its nuts (*úus*) for food: it is rich in calories and numerous health promoting vitamins and minerals. The places where the sugar pines grow are owned by individuals. When it is time to gather the cones, each owner invites his family and friends to come with him. Then, when the cones are gathered, they are divided equally among the relatives and guests. *chôora uus nu'áxanvi* (Let's go and bite the nuts), is the Karuk way to say "Let's go gather sugar pine nuts!"



*Draw or tape pressed and dried plant specimens here:*



**púrukurih**

Blue Wildrye

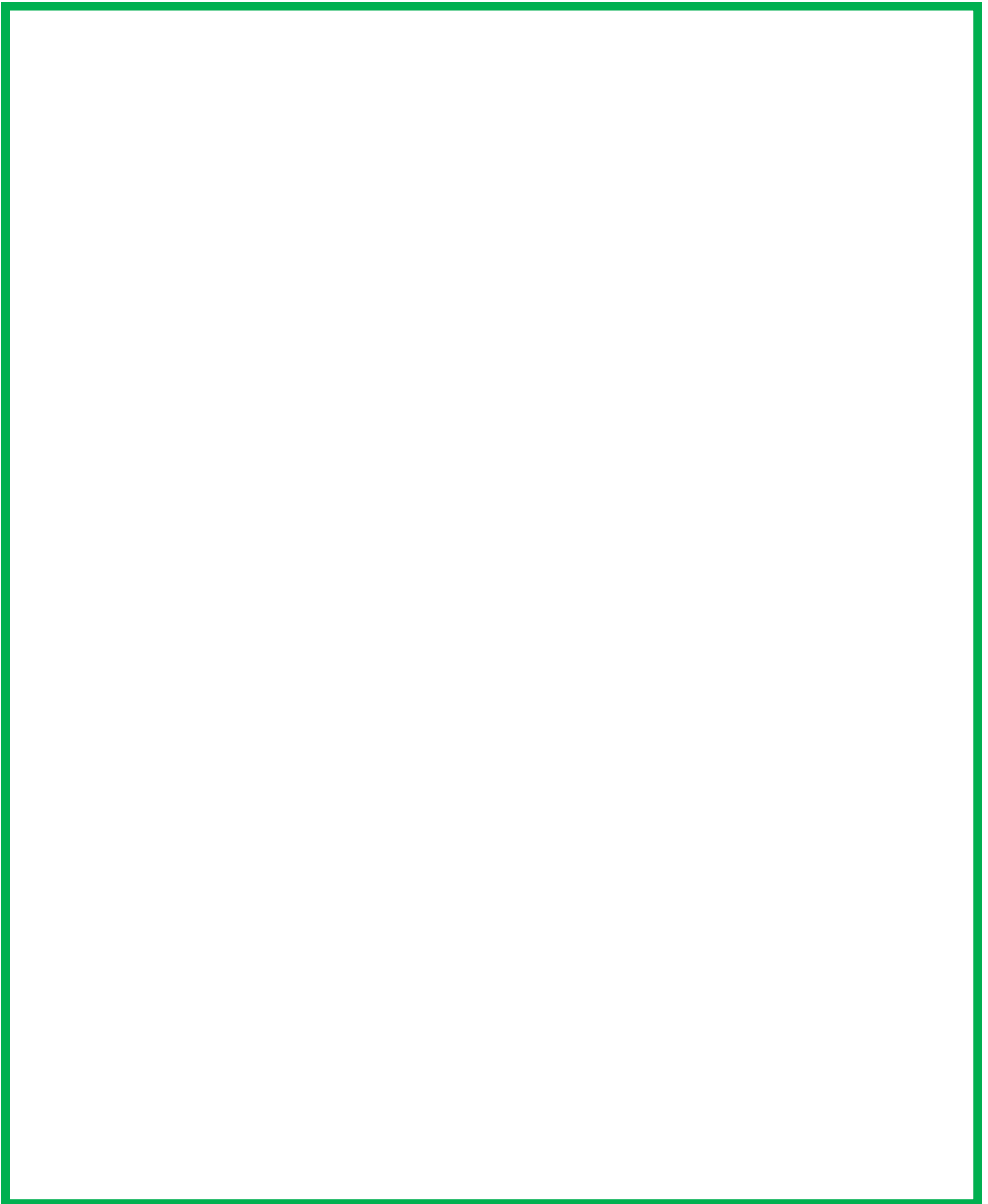
*Elymus glaucus*



This perennial grass provides not only excellent wildlife habitat and forage for many animal creatures, it also yields edible seeds that are traditionally gathered in the late spring and early summer, roasted with coals and then pounded into flour by local Indians. The flour is mixed with water and eaten as a paste. The Karuk also use it as "medicine" to settle quarrels between families or individuals. "This medicine can be made only once, but it works." (unknown Karuk informant)

Karuk people used to gather and process this nutritious grain in large quantities. However, there are few places where this plant grows nowadays, since the flora of the landscape has changed dramatically as a result of the settlers' ban on cultural burning and the government's push to use meadowlands for tree plantation purposes. As a result, the traditional ecological knowledge about this valuable resource has dwindled.

*Draw or tape pressed and dried plant specimens here:*





**yúuxas**

Blue Elderberry

*Sambucus nigra*

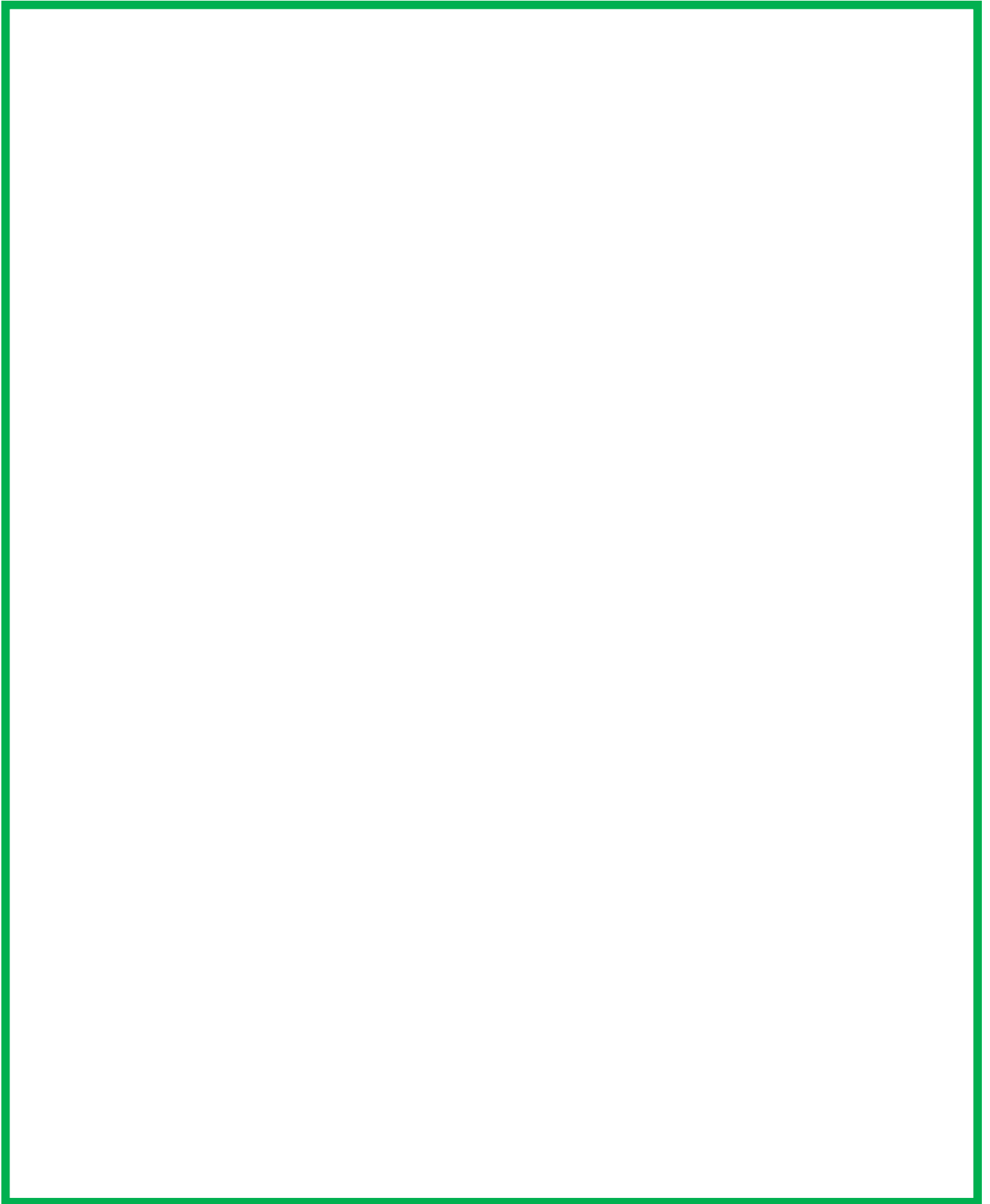
Both the berries and the flowers can be eaten. Fresh or dried, the flowers are steeped to make a potent tea to reduce fever. The berries are eaten for food and contain high amounts of vitamin C. Since they can be dried and stored, large quantities are gathered and then prepared with a little water and sometimes mashed to make a sweet paste.

The core of lower branches is pithy and easily hollowed out, making this wood good for making traditional vertical four-holed flutes.

During the Brush Dance for a sick child, some medicine women have been known to use a branch of this plant to sprinkle the child with their own personal medicinal formulas.



*Draw or tape pressed and dried plant specimens here:*



**pufich'tayíith**

Indian potato

*Triteleia laxa*

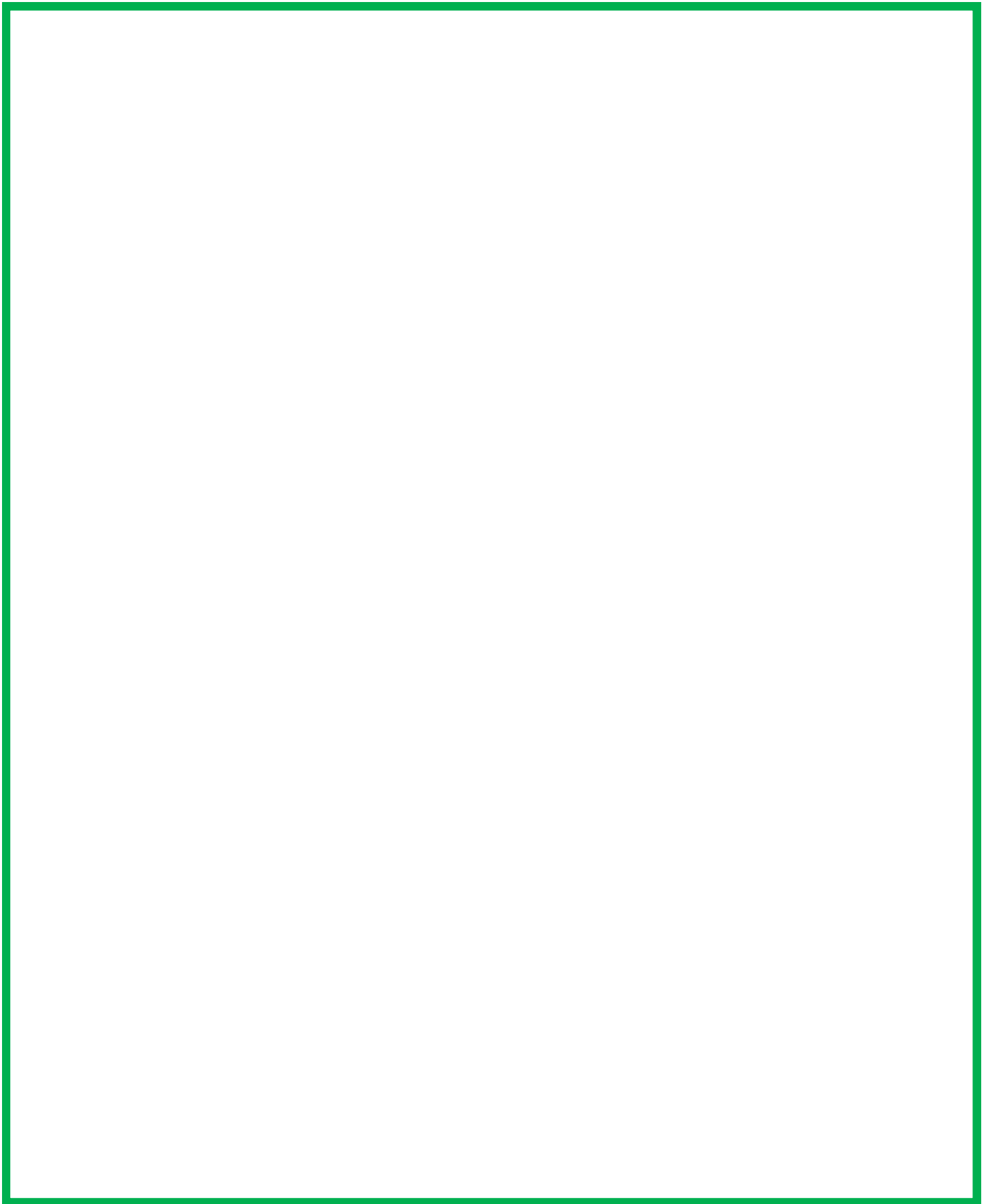


Tasty, abundant, and nutritious, various kinds of tubers, corms and bulbs used to be a mainstay in the diet of many tribes— including the Karuk. The corms of several varieties of “Injun potatoes” are traditionally gathered with a digging stick and then baked in an earth oven: First, a pit is dug and lined with rocks. Next, a fire is built over the rocks, and as soon as the fire is out, the ashes are removed. A mat of maple leaves is laid over the hot rocks, and then the cleaned corms are put on it and covered with another mat.

Madrone leaves are laid over this, then more hot rocks placed over the whole layered stack. Finally, the pit and hot rocks are covered with earth, and then another fire is built over the top. The next day when the pit is opened, the bulbs are eaten. The corms contain high amounts of protein and valuable calories.

A species of the lily family, this perennial plant has beautiful flowers that are traditionally used to decorate the hair of an *Íhuk* maiden, a new woman who is celebrating the “coming of age” ceremony widely known as the Flower Dance. As this ceremony is traditionally celebrated in the spring when the flowers are abundant, signaling the first harvest, its use in this dance is also used symbolically to reflect the woman’s role of harvesting and preparing these as well as a great many other Native foods.

*Draw or tape pressed and dried plant specimens here:*



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*We hope you've enjoyed this booklet, and would like you to know that the goal of the Karuk Tribe's Cultural Information Policy is to "restore Karuk People as the rightful authorities over our cultural materials and traditional knowledge. (...) While we will continue to encourage efforts to improve Karuk access to our cultural materials that are legally owned or possessed by non-Karuk entities and individuals, .... [W]e aim to regain our rightful place as the central decision maker for controlling the access to, and use of, our cultural materials and knowledge."*

For more information about the Karuk Tribe's Cultural Information Policy, please see our website at [www.karuk.us](http://www.karuk.us). **Yôotva!**



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