



# Naa káani NATIVE PROGRAM

## Self-Heal

Lushootseed name unknown due to cultural loss / colonization

**(*Prunella vulgaris* ssp. *lanceolata*)**

Also known as: all-heal, heal-all, Brunella



### Meet Our Relative...

Self-heal habitat is primarily found in coastal open forests, meadows/fields, and disturbed ecosystems and is wide spread across the Pacific Northwest. Self-heal is a perennial plant that hosts relatively few smooth or obscurely toothed leaves that are opposite of each other along the length of the stem, are lance-egg-shaped to oblong or elliptic, and minutely hairy to hairless. It has a perennial life cycle and grows to a height of 4-16 inches. Self-heal flowers are tubular, purplish to pink, grow in a spikes at the end of the stem, and bloom in late spring through summer. Flowers and leaves are harvested spring through early fall.

**Warning:** Native and non native lookalike subspecies (*ssp. vulgaris*) are often found growing together along roadsides, in parking lots, and in ditches. Harvesting self-heal from these areas should be avoided since it is known to accumulate and concentrate toxins from the environment, lead in particular.

### Nutritional/Medicinal properties...

Self-heal is rich in Beta-carotene, vitamin B1, vitamin C, vitamin K, zinc, flavonoids, pentacyclic triterpenes, rosmarinic acid, essential oils, and tannins which support a healthy immune system and healthy kidney and liver function. Self-heal is also antibacterial, antibiotic, antiseptic, astringent, and has anti-inflammatory properties.

### Traditional uses...

Traditionally, self-heal greens and flowers were gathered and eaten as spring greens utilized as a potherb. However, like its name indicates self-heal's main uses are for pain relief and wound treatment. The leaves and flowers are made into medicinal teas that are used to soothe soar throats, reduce fever, relieve upset stomach, vomiting and diarrhea, and cold and cough symptoms. Both hot and cold infusions of the flowers and leaves that can be taken internally or applied topically to generally reduce swelling and pain. Topically, medicinal poultices, salves, and decoctions are used to treat bumps, bruises, sprains, muscle strains and tension. Self-heal is also used to cleans and promote healing of cuts, scrapes, scratches, and open wounds such as boils, blisters, acne, and diabetic sores. The plants were historically also used in steambaths that allowed the medicine to be taken in both internally and externally simultaneously.

Fun fact... Self-heal is also a part of traditional veterinary care, the plant has historically been used to treat saddle and back sores on horses.

# Great Camas

Northern Lushootseed: *čabid*  
(*Camassia leichtinii*)

Also known as: Large Camas or Blue Camas

## Meet Our Relative...

Great camas (*Camassia leichtinii*) is the largest of the three native camas species that grow from southern British Columbia to northern California, and east to Montana, Wyoming, Nevada, Washington, and Utah. Great camas grows on both sides of the Cascades crest but is found in greatest abundance on the west side of the state. Great camas is a spring-flowering bulbous perennial that typically grows on moist slopes and moist mountain meadows and prairies. Great camas has linear, grass-like leaves up that grow up from the base of the plant. Camas is a member of the lily family with beautiful star shaped six-petaled purple flowers that grows to two feet tall. The layered bulbs grow four to eight inches beneath the ground surface and resemble small dense onions or other lily bulbs. The flowers bloom in April through June, depending on the season and elevation. This is the time they are harvested for food and medicine.

**Warning: Death camas (*Zigadenus venenosus*) can be confused with edible camas bulbs and is toxic. The safest time to harvest camas is when it is flowering, edible camas has blue/purple flowers while death camas has white flowers. Be sure of your identification of camas bulbs before eating them!**



## Nutritional/Medicinal Properties...

All species of camas are a prized traditional food for the Indigenous people who share the land with them. Eating this traditional food connects Native people to the land, to each other, to our relatives, and to our ancestors while providing amazing nutrition. Camas is healthy starch that is high in inulin which when cooked at lower temperatures over a long period of time converts to simple sugars that not only make the root sweet and tasty but are easily digested, promote good gut health, help regulate insulin and in turn blood sugars which can help prevent type two diabetes. Camas also rich in fiber, vitamins, and minerals, including calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium. When we consider that traditional foods are medicine, camas more than just a food it is a medicine that feeds the body and promotes physical, mental, social, and cultural health for Indigenous people.

## Cultural Connections...

Camas digging and cooking is honored work traditionally done by Native women. Women gather the roots with digging sticks made of fire hardened wood with handles often made of deer or elk antler. Sticks are long providing leverage that allows the women to dig out the roots more easily. Dug bulbs are peeled and baked over several days in earth ovens, dried and braided for storage or trade, and/or pounded to a flour like consistency to be used in traditional cooking. Camas was historically harvested in great quantities, up to 50 pounds of camas could easily be harvested in a day.

Camas was a central part of the Pacific Northwest Indigenous Peoples' thriving trade economy prior to settler arrival and subsequent separation from this cultural keystone species due to colonization, assimilation, and ecosystem destruction. Camas prairies were shaped and tended by local Indigenous traditional land management practices. Cultural burning of camas prairies in the Fall by men followed by tending the land while gathering by the women in the spring create rich camas meadows and prairies that also produced a great variety of foods and medicines for harvesting while benefitted wildlife, insects, and more! Despite the barriers faced and challenges to stay connected with this plant relative today camas continues to be served, traded, and gifted at cultural events and ceremonies such as potlatches, root feasts, weddings, funerals, naming ceremonies, etc.

Photo source: <https://edibleidaho.ediblecommunities.com/food-thought/roots-camas-tribal-origins-and-sweet-sustenance>





# Western Yarrow

Northern Lushootseed: *šišəl'ác*  
(*Archillea millefoliom*)

Also known as: Yarrow or Common Yarrow

## Meet Our Relative...

Western Yarrow (*Archillea millefoliom*) is a widely distributed medicinal perennial wildflower that grows from Alaska to California and east to the Atlantic coast. Western Yarrow grows 4 to 39 inches in height, has alternate lacey leaves that are pinnatifid with a fern-like in appearance. Yarrow produces a flat to dome shaped umbel clusters of many small white flowers. Flowers bloom April to October depending on location and elevation.

## Nutritional/Medicinal Properties & Traditional Uses:

Yarrow is a highly aromatic medicinal plant that contains vitamins, minerals, flavonoids, and other antioxidants. It is rich in vitamin A and vitamin C, iron, magnesium, and potassium.

Pacific Northwest Indigenous peoples have traditionally pounded and heated leaves to heal breast abscesses, skin burns, skin boils. A poultice of leaves has been used to treat bronchitis and rheumatism. An infusion of the plant has been taken internally or rubbed on the body to relieve gastroenteritis.

A decoction of the leaves, flowers, and stems has been taken as a cold remedy, sore eye wash, and snake-bite remedy. A poultice of chewed leaves has been applied to relieve swollen areas, toothaches, muscle sprains, and as a blood purifier. The juice has been swallowed to relieve coughs, sore throats, stomach issues, diarrhea. An infusion of roots has been taken to relieve headaches. The leaves have been used in steam baths to treat rheumatism. The leaves and stems have been used in a smudge to deter mosquitoes. While all parts of the plant are used medicinally, the best time to collect yarrow for tea is right before the flowers are produced, using only the new succulent leaves.

**Did you know?** The leaves, stems, and flowers can be used to preserve fish.

### Definitions of Key Terms:

**Poultice:** A soft usually heated mash that often contains medicine, is spread on cloth, and is applied topically for treatment

**Decoction:** Is a method of extraction by boiling herbal or plant material (which may include stems, roots, bark, and rhizomes)

**We chose to highlight these three species** from the prairie mix because they are cultural keystone species that are a critical part of Indigenous food and medicine cultures in the Pacific Northwest. We have a close relationship with these plant relatives that have ensured the health and wellbeing of our people since time immemorial.

## Pacific Northwest Native Prairie Mix

### Annual Wildflowers 16%

*Globe Gilia* (*Gilia capitata*), *Farewell to Spring* (*Clarkia amoena*)

### Perennial Wildflowers 14%

*Self Heal* (*Prunella vulgaris*), *Western Yarrow* (*Achillea millefolium*), *Large Camas* (*Camassia leichtinii*), *Riverbank Lupine* (*Lupinus rivularis*), *Wooly Sunflower* (*Eriophyllum lanatum*), *Showy Fleabane* (*Erigeron speciosus*)

### Native Grasses 70%

*Roemer's Fescue* (*Festuca romerii*), *Tufted Hairgrass* (*Deschampsia cespitosa*), *Meadow Barley* (*Horedum brachyantherum*), *Blue Wild Rye* (*Elymus glaucus*), *California Brome* (*Bromus carinatus*), *Red Fescue* (*Festuca rubra*)

Photo source: <https://depts.washington.edu/propplnt/Plants/Achillea.htm>

## References/Sources:

- Aleksoff, K. C. 1999. *Achillea millefolium*. *Fire Effects Information System*, [Online]. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Sciences Laboratory. Accessed from; <https://www.fs.usda.gov/database/feis/plants/forb/achmil/all.html>
- Borchers, A.T., C.L. Keen, J.S. Stern, & M.E. Gershwin. 2022. Inflammation and Native American medicine: the role of botanicals. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 72, Issue 2, Pages 339-347. Accessed from; <https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcn/72.2.339>
- California Native Plant Society staff. N.d. Common Yarrow. Calscape. Accessed from; [https://calscape.org/loc-California/Achillea%20millefolium%20\(Common%20Yarrow\)?newsearch=1](https://calscape.org/loc-California/Achillea%20millefolium%20(Common%20Yarrow)?newsearch=1)
- Cunningfolk, A. J. n.d. Thriving Everywhere: Self Heal Plant Profile. *Worts and Cuning Apothecary*. Accessed from; <http://www.wortsandcuning.com/blog/self-heal-plant-profile#:~:text=Reducing%20inflammation%20can%20be%20a%20key%20component%20to,well%20as%20by%20acting%20as%20a%20blood%20tonic.>
- Jagdev, Dr. S.J. 2021. *Achillea Millefolium (Common Yarrow) Medicinal Uses*. *Ayur Times*. Accessed from; <https://www.ayurtimes.com/achillea-millefolium/#:~:text=Achillea%20millefolium%20is%20a%20therapeutic%20herb%20that%20contains,The%20minerals%20found%20are%20iron%2C%20magnesium%2C%20potassium%2C%20etc.>
- Kruckeberg, Arthur R. 1994. *The Natural History of Puget Sound Country*. University of Washington Press.
- Leopold, E. B. & R. Boyd. 1999. An Ecological History of Old Prairie Areas in Southwestern Washington. *Indians, Fire and the Landscape in the Pacific Northwest*. Oregon State University Press.
- McIntyre, A. 1996. *Flower Power: Flower Remedies for Healing Body and Soul through Herbalism, Homeopathy, Aromatherapy, and Flower Essences*. New York: Henry Holt and Company.
- Museum of Anthropology. n.d. *Achillea millefolium*. *Native American Ethnobotany Database*. University of Michigan. Accessed from; <http://naeb.brit.org/uses/search/?string=Achillea%20millefolium&page=1>
- Museum of Anthropology. n.d. *Prunella vulgaris*. *Native American Ethnobotany Database*. University of Michigan. Accessed from; <http://naeb.brit.org/uses/search/?string=prunella+vulgaris>
- OregonFlora staff. 2023. Common Yarrow. OregonFlora. Dept. Botany & Plant Pathology, Oregon State University, Accessed from; <https://oregonflora.org/taxa/garden.php?taxon=2414>
- OregonFlora staff. 2023. *Prunella vulgaris* L.. OregonFlora. Dept. Botany & Plant Pathology, Oregon State University, Accessed from; <https://oregonflora.org/taxa/index.php?taxon=7672>
- Pojar, J. & A. MacKinnon. 1994. *Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast: Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Alaska*. Lone Pine Publishing.
- Rey-Vizgirdas, E. n.d. Common Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). *Plant of the Week*. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). Accessed from; [https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/achillea\\_millefolium.shtml](https://www.fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/plant-of-the-week/achillea_millefolium.shtml)
- Stevens, M., D.C. Darris, & S.M. Lambert. 2000. Plant guide for common camas (*Camassia quamash* ssp. *breviflora*). USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Plant Data Center. Accessed from; [https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/plantguide/pdf/pg\\_caqub2.pdf](https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/plantguide/pdf/pg_caqub2.pdf)
- Turner, N.J. 2005. *The Earth's Blanket*. The University of Washington Press.
- Young-Mathews, A. 2012. Plant fact sheet for lance selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris* ssp. *lanceolata*). USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service. Corvallis Plant Materials Center. Accessed from; [https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/factsheet/pdf/fs\\_prvul2.pdf](https://plants.usda.gov/DocumentLibrary/factsheet/pdf/fs_prvul2.pdf)

