A Harvester’s Handbook
A guide to commercial non-timber forest products in British Columbia
COASTAL EDITION

Royal Roads University
Centre for Non-Timber Resources
A Harvester's Handbook
A guide to commercial non-timber forest products in British Columbia

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This handbook was developed by the Centre for Non-Timber Resources (CNTR) at Royal Roads University with the purpose of demonstrating the diversity and year-round potential of harvesting botanicals from the forest. Although all of the information could be useful for recreational or cultural harvesting, the main goal is to illustrate some of the economic potential of these plants and products.

Therefore, the species included are some of the ‘best bets’ for commercial use of common non-timber forest products (NTFPs). The term NTFP generally refers to all of the understory (ie under the trees) plant and fungi species of the forest, including their associated products, and excluding conventional wood products such as timber, pulp and shakes.

Although only harvestable products are listed in this guide, you should also consider that services are NTFPs too. Eco-tourism, cultural tourism, and recreation offer year round opportunities for entrepreneurs and do not require plants to be removed from the wild. Consider knowledge as a product. Offering nature tours as part of a bed and breakfast, classes on florals and crafts, or cultural history of an area provide added value while also being a sustainable NTFP endeavour.

This version of the guide should be considered as a starting point. It is presented in loose-leaf format, for binders, in anticipation of adding many more species. Check out the CNTR website for any updates and additions.

The CNTR believes the information provided in this handbook to be accurate at the time of publication. The NTFP sector is very dynamic, however; prices, buyers, and product demand may change quickly, so you should be sure to verify information such as prices and required product quality from local sources before you begin harvesting. Royal Roads University is not responsible for any costs or damages that may be incurred as a result of the use of information in this handbook.

This handbook is part of a growing series of NTFP guides and databases, including:

A guide for harvesters, including the how-to’s of harvesting, handling and marketing NTFPs

Buy BCwild
Directory of Buyers and Sellers of NTFPs in British Columbia

Adding Value to Floral Greens
A handbook for entrepreneurs to explain the ‘value-added’ concept, and to illustrate how basic floral greens can be crafted into other products, creating additional business opportunities and revenue

Adding Value to Wild Foods
A handbook for entrepreneurs to explain the ‘value-added’ concept, and to illustrate how basic wild foods can be crafted into other products, creating additional business opportunities and revenue

Incorporating Non-Timber Forest Products into Sustainable Forest Management
An overview for forest managers, providing examples of how to include NTFPs in forest planning and management

‘Who’s Who’ directory for the NTFP sector
An on-line, searchable directory of NTFP projects and players in Canada, including research projects, researchers, managers, organisations, producers, buyers and processors

Compendium of NTFP Law & Policy
A plain language compendium of legislation, regulation and policy governing NTFP production, processing and marketing in Canada

For more information or to download these documents, visit the Centre for Non-Timber Resources’ website at www.royalroads.ca/cntr
This handbook is divided into the four seasons: spring, summer, fall and winter. Each section lists a few ideas for species that can be harvested during the season. Non-timber forest product harvesting is not neatly divided by season, however. Harvesting times may be affected by weather, location, and even market demand. Further, many of the species can be harvested during more than one season but for the sake of convenience, they are listed only under the most relevant season in this handbook. For an overview of seasonal harvesting times for each species, see Appendix I.

The species listed in this handbook are a small taste of what is possible. Further, this industry can be quite dynamic in terms of products, specifications and prices. Therefore, we have organized this handbook in sections to allow for new species to be inserted or old ones changed. Check the CNTR website for additions and updates.

This handbook includes both common and Latin names for the species. Although the use of Latin names may be frustrating for those more comfortable with the common name, it is a good idea to become familiar with proper botanical names. This will decrease the possibility of confusion or misidentification of a species, help you to search out additional information on the species, and potentially increase the confidence of buyers in you and your knowledge of the product.

This handbook is designed to be used in conjunction with other plant identification books. The descriptions included here are, therefore, basic and should be confirmed with an identification book such as Pojar and McKinnon's *Plants of Coastal British Columbia* (1994) or a mushroom identification book such as David Arora's *All That the Rain Promises and More...* (1991). For more sources of information, see Appendix 2, References and Internet Resources. Further information on harvesting techniques, processing and market requirements can be obtained in a number of ways, including:

- Talking to buyers, growers, and other experienced harvesters. You could try approaching various local retailers and wholesalers or find commercial buyers who operate in your area. The Ministry of Agriculture, Small Woodlands Program put together a list of non-timber forest product buyers for the BC Coast. This can be found on the internet at: [http://www.swp.bc.ca/html/mktgdocs/nontimbr.html](http://www.swp.bc.ca/html/mktgdocs/nontimbr.html). Note that due to the nature of the industry, this information can change quickly – use it as a starting point.

- Taking classes or workshops on plant and mushroom identification or one of the NTFP workshops offered by a variety of organizations, including the Centre for Non-Timber Resources. Colleges, recreation associations, mycological and natural history societies are some sources for educational opportunities in NTFPs.

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Photo: Michelle Schroeder
Sustainable Harvesting

- Ecological well-being is the basis for economic well-being. Harvest only what is sustainable for the plant and the area.
- Be aware of the ecosystem. Some plants, such as mosses, harbour or feed entire communities of plant and animal organisms.
- Never harvest large amounts of any plant from one area. The rule of thumb is to harvest no more than 25 percent of a plant or its foliage from a site. If there are very few plants in an area, refrain from harvesting. See individual species listed in this handbook for further information on harvesting methods and cautions.
- If doing whole plant extraction, harvest only in areas which are slated for development – such as road development – where the plants would likely not survive the disturbance.

Land Access

- Always be aware of the territory on which you are harvesting. Harvesting of most NTFPs is not restricted on Provincial crown land, but there are potential exceptions, such as some Community Forest Tenures. Harvesting by the general public is not permitted in parks. For more information on harvesting rights, see the Compendium of NTFP Law & Policy on the CNTR website. Check with your local Forest District prior to doing any harvesting (to find branch locations, see website below under Finding Land Access Information). They will be able to provide information on the forest manager for the area (for example, a forest company, BC Timber Sales, or a Community Forest Association). The forest manager may be able to provide advice as to where certain plants can be found, and can tell you when they will be doing logging or road building. Forest managers can also advise on safety considerations, and even provide harvesting tips.
- Respect gates and ‘no picking’ areas, which include research plots (the land manager will be able to identify these areas). Do not pick along recreational trails without permission, and always keep your picking and camping areas clean.
- It is illegal to harvest NTFPs on private lands without permission from the landowner. Some private landowners offer access through a permit system, and some will allow low levels of sustainable harvest, if permission is obtained in advance.
- Be aware of First Nations traditional areas. Permission is legally required for conducting any activity on an Indian Reserve. Throughout the traditional territory, cultural gathering has ethical priority over commercial harvesting. Notify First Nations of your plans and always be respectful of other harvesters and their harvesting areas.
Finding Land Access Information

› Contact your local Forest District. For a listing of Forest District websites and contact information see: http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/mof/regdis.htm


› For overall maps of BC, visit the BC Government website, Land Information BC. It provides links to maps and software, some of which are free and some of which can be ordered.

Safety Considerations

› Many logging roads have active hauling traffic. Notify industrial users, and follow their road use instructions.

› Don’t work alone or without a check system (someone who knows where you will be and who you can check in with throughout the day and when you return). Wear suitable clothing and footwear, and be aware of wildlife and weather.

› Always follow best practices when harvesting, transporting, storing and producing any NTFPs, particularly those destined for consumption or medicinal purposes. This includes correct identification and labelling (see guides such as Good Practices for Plant Identification for the Herbal Industry, available on the web at http://www.saskherbspice.org/Good%20Practices%20for%20plant%20identification.pdf), using commercial kitchen facilities if selling your products, and meeting all required health regulations. For more information on regulations and policies for BC, see the Compendium of Law & Policy for NTFPs available through http://www.royalroads.ca/cntr.
Spring Greenery

Spring is the growing season for most plants. There are only a few species which are harvested in the spring for floral greenery. Most plants will have soft new leaves and twigs that damage easily, and buyers will not buy greenery at this stage. Furthermore, harvest during the growing season may be less sustainable as it can affect the plant’s ability to grow and flourish.

There are a few floral greenery products which can be harvested in the spring. For example, the first flush of new growth creates the pussy willow product (the soft ‘paws’ are the new buds). Another spring product is moss, primarily used for hanging baskets. There are a wide variety of mosses that can be found in the forest, some of which have current commercial value. Other species, although not used commercially at present, may have potential. Moss, however, is part of a very sensitive ecosystem – be aware of its role in the forest and never over-harvest an area.

Spring Mushrooms

Although most edible mushrooms sprout in the fall, spring rains brings the delicious morel mushroom. For commercial volumes, keep track of areas which had burns the previous year.
Pussy willow (*Salix spp.*)

**How do I identify this species?**
These willows are deciduous shrubs or small trees up to 26 feet (8m) tall (Hooker’s willow, Sitka willow) or 40 feet (12m) tall (Scouler’s willow). The twigs are brown to dark brown to grey, hairy or velvety. The leaves are egg-shaped to oval, rounded on the ends and pointed where they connect to the stem. You will be harvesting while the shrub is leafless, but identification of a pussy willow is easy by the presence of the short, hairy white “cat paws” on the branches.

**Where do I find this species?**
**Distribution** Sitka and Scouler’s willows are found all along the Pacific Northwest Coast, but Hooker’s willow only extends about a third of the way up BC.

**Habitat** Willows like wet, boggy areas and are often found at the edges of rivers or lakes or in disturbed areas such as roadsides and clearings.

**How is the species used?**
The willow branches, when the buds are just bursting and forming ‘cat paws,’ are used in the floral industry.

**When should I harvest?**
Harvest pussy willows when the buds are just beginning to open on the branch. Depending on the weather and locality, you can usually start harvesting in January and harvesting can extend as late as March.

**How should I harvest?**
Break or clip off stems of 28–32 inches (71-81 cm) in length. Bundle 20 stems into a bunch. For the larger branches, some buyers prefer 39 inches (100cm) length, bundled into 10 stems. Handle gently to avoid breaking off the ‘cat paws.’ Keep the stems cool in order to preserve the buds.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
The branches must be kept cool and moist (not wet). An industrial cooler set at a temperature of 4–5 degrees Celsius is ideal, but a carport or shed storage is fine for the cold spring months.

**How much will I be paid?**
A buyer will purchase the stems for about $2 per bunch. Retailers may purchase individual stems or bunches at a higher rate.

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LATIN NAMES: *Salix spp.* (S. hookeriana; S. scouleriana; S. sitchensis)
COMMON NAME: Pussy willow (Hooker’s willow; Scouler’s willow; Sitka willow)
LIFE FORM: Shrub
PLANT PART USED: Branches

Photo: Mary Ellen (Mel) Harte, [www.forestryimages.org](http://www.forestryimages.org)
There are hundreds of moss species in the forests of the Pacific Northwest. The mosses listed here are grouped according to the end product rather than the actual species, as mosses are often mixed together and almost never identified by actual species' name by the buyers. Even moss experts get some of the mosses confused. It is important to check with the buyer prior to harvest as there are many different uses for moss and many different requirements. Check if the buyer prefers the moss to be fresh or dried, the type of moss, what qualities of moss the buyer is looking for, and what the end product is.

**Moss products include:**

- Moss used as a floral product in early spring to line hanging baskets. In this case the buyer is looking for consistent colour and quality sheets of moss (usually referred to as 'green moss'); non-dried moss is often acceptable.
- Moss used through the year as a craft or floral decorative (e.g. on top of potted plants, in arrangements, etc), in which case the buyer is looking for the same species as for the hanging baskets. The buyer will be looking for consistent colour and quality 'green moss' sheets, but in this case, almost always as a dried product.
- Moss used for specific crafts, such as for miniature model sets, in which case the buyer is looking for a specific moss, such as running club moss, or moss/lichens on twigs, and prefers it dried.
- Moss used as a growing medium for orchids, in which case only sphagnum is used, usually as a dried product.

Each buyer has specific requirements for what they will buy. A buyer will also provide information on how to treat and store the moss once picked. Don’t forget to ask the buyer for bag size specifications.

**Cautions**

Moss is part of an extremely sensitive ecosystem, and contributes greatly to the soil moisture and the many organisms that live on and around it. Harvest in areas that are slated for development, such as road building or logging. If it is not salvage, never clean out an area – be selective and pick in small patches or rows so that the moss will be able to regenerate. Take moss from tree trunks and branches wherever possible instead of the ground. Try to focus on value-added opportunities rather than bulk sales when harvesting mosses.

**How do I identify these species?**

With this product, you are looking for uniform, green moss sheets. More mosses than are listed here will fit the criteria. However, use these species as a guideline. Cat-tail moss is pale green and its form can be quite variable. The stems can be short, and form creeping sheets of moss on top of branches or logs, or be long and narrowly tapered to form long, branched strands hanging down from tree branches. Beaked moss is darker or olive green with closely branched stems which range from about 2 1/2-12 inches (6-30 cm). Beaked moss has an overall uniform, feathery appearance, and forms mats on the forest floor. Neckera moss species are olive green and glossy, with multiple, irregular, narrowing branches. It is not as ‘tidy’ looking as the other mosses, but does form good, thick mats on tree trunks and branches. Lanky moss grows in loose mats on the forest floor, up to 6 inches (15 cm) high with yellow green to dark green branches that are widely spaced and taper to fine points. The stems are very stiff and give an overall tidy appearance. The leaves are up to 1/8 inch (4 mm) long and somewhat curved with an overall narrow egg-shape and a long, slender point. The leaves are also noticeably pleated.

**LATIN NAMES:** *Isothecium spp., Kindbergia spp., Neckera spp., Rhytidiadelphus spp.*

**COMMON NAMES:** ‘Green’ moss, including cat-tail; beaked; Neckera; and lanky moss

**LIFE FORM:** Moss

**PLANT PART USED:** Whole plant
Green Mosses (Isothecium spp., Kindbergia spp., Neckera spp., Rhytidiadelphus spp.)

Where do I find these species?

**Distribution** All of these mosses are extremely common along the entire west coast of British Columbia as far north as Alaska and south to the state of Oregon.

**Habitat** Lanky and beaked moss tend to be the predominant mosses on the forest floor on the coast, though they share the forest floor with step moss (Hylocomium spendens), which, because of its brownish colour and messy appearance, is not commercially harvested. Cat-tail moss and Neckera are epiphytic, meaning they grow on tree bases, trunks and branches. All are found at low to mid-elevations in mature forests; young forests tend to have too closed a canopy to allow for good moss growth.

How are the species used?

These mosses are used in both the floral and the craft industry, and for both of these uses the moss must be a uniform sheet and have a good green colouring. The moss is desired for both aesthetic purposes and to hold moisture. As a floral product, moss is used to line hanging baskets and to cover potted plant soils. As a decorative product, it is dried and sold in small to large packages in retail craft stores. Lanky moss (Rhytidiadelphus loreus) is a preferred moss, but it is okay to have some other mosses, such as beaked or Neckera moss, mixed in with the lanky moss. Cat-tail moss is epiphytic (grows on trees), and is considered a good product because it is clean. Also it is generally recognized that harvesting from trees has less of a negative effect on the ecosystem.

If you are selling to the market, be creative. The potential for products is unlimited, and the more creative you are, the more money you can make from a little bit of moss. There are many easy value-added ideas such as dying, making into wreaths, pre-packaging, or combining species. As cat-tail moss grows on trees, it is easy to find moss-covered twigs, which are also a product in fairly high demand in the craft industry. Check with the buyer to see which size of twig is desired, and perhaps offer samples of other sizes to diversify your product.

When should I harvest mosses?

Moss is generally picked February to September, but you must be aware of the seasonal demand. In the spring it is used mostly in the floral industry, and therefore some buyers do not need the moss to be dried; they purchase it wet by the bag. The rest of the year, moss tends to be used for the craft market, and therefore should be dried. Moss is usually picked in the summer months because this decreases the drying process; it is possible to pick moss all year round but there is less demand outside of the spring and summer.

How should I harvest mosses?

Each buyer has specific requirements for what they will buy. A buyer will also provide information on how to treat and store the moss once picked.

The most desired ‘green’ moss is lanky moss, but it is okay to have beaked moss mixed in with lanky as long as the overall appearance is uniform and clean. It is not okay to include step moss, Hylocomium slendens (easily identified by its light green to brownish colour and a ‘stepping’ or untidy appearance), so avoid harvesting step moss with the lanky and beaked moss.

If picking for the floral industry in the spring, the moss can be sold either wet (price per bag) or dry (price per pound). Select clean, uniform, green moss which forms a blanket-like covering. When putting the moss into a bag, try to avoid including any debris or soil.

Moss used for crafts and houseplants is usually purchased dried. The best time to pick this moss is in the summer to decrease processing and thereby increase the quality of the moss. It is best to pick after 2-3 days of sunny hot weather. To dry completely, the moss can be spread on pavement in the sun until dried (usually about 2 days) or in a dry room.

To ensure cleanliness of the moss, pick from tree bases and off of rocks. It can be picked from the ground as well, though this should be avoided wherever possible.

Moss covered sticks can be collected from anywhere in the forest and dried. Sticks should be 24-30 inches (61-76 cm) long.

How do I store and transport this product?

Both wet and dry bulk moss are stored and transported in large plastic bags (about garbage bag size – ask buyer for specifications).

If selling wet moss, it must be sold within a day or two of harvesting to avoid rot.

If selling dry moss, it can be stored for a longer period before taking it to the buyer. Once completely dry, moss is packaged into large clear plastic bags. Small holes are punched in the bags to allow the condensation moisture to escape, and the bags must be stored in a dark place to maintain the moss colour.

How much will I be paid?

If selling to a buyer, wet moss is purchased for about $3-4 per bag (bags are about 20 x 30 inches (51 x 76 cm)).

Dried moss is usually sold by weight, and is about $0.35/pound. Some buyers buy dry moss by the bag, and prices are around $4-5 per bag.

If selling to a wholesaler or retailer, prices will be slightly higher than the normal bulk products, and will range considerably for anything else. For example, dyed moss might sell for $10 a bag.
Black Morels & Yellow Morels (*Morchella elata* & *Morchella esculenta*)

**How do I identify these species?**

Morels resemble pinecones on a stalk and are, therefore, often difficult to see on the forest floor. They have a fairly distinctive shape, with a long cap with deep pits and ridges. Morels range in colour from pale tan (*Morchella esculenta*) to dark brown or black (*M. elata*). Unlike their look-alikes, morels are hollow, and the honeycombed cap is intergrown (part of) the stalk along its full length. Morels also do not have a sack or cup at the base of the stem.

**Caution** Poisonous look-alikes include false morels (*Gyromitra*) which have wrinkled but not pitted caps, and thimble morels (*Verpa*) have a pitted cap but the cap is skirt-like instead of attached. Always consult an expert in mushroom identification before eating any kind of wild mushrooms for the first time. All wild mushrooms – and particularly morels – should be cooked before being eaten.

**Where do I find these species?**

**Distribution** Although morels are much more common in interior BC, they can be found in drier areas along the coast.

**Habitat** Morels are known for their prolific fruiting after a forest fire, though they are found in a variety of disturbed areas such as old orchards and meadows, within forests (both deciduous and coniferous) and on roadsides. They grow best in dry, well drained or sandy soil.

Due to the fruiting response after a fire, a good idea is to check out the Ministry of Forest data on where forest fires occurred over the previous year. This won’t be foolproof on the coast, but combined with information on the location of drier sites (check with local forest company operations offices, or the Ministry of Forests district office), this should be a good start for finding likely morel habitat.

**How are the species used?**

As a food. It is often considered a gourmet or specialty food in restaurants and supermarkets. They can be sold fresh or dried.

**When should I harvest?**

Unlike many other mushrooms, morels grow in the spring. The exact fruiting time varies depending on the location, elevation and weather, but usually will begin around early May, though fire-initiated morels tend to develop later than ‘natural’ morels. The morel season will last as long as three months in the interior. In one area or burn, they can fruit for approximately eight weeks depending on weather conditions.

**How should I harvest?**

Morels are very difficult to find because they blend into the forest floor – once you develop the ‘pattern (or search) recognition’ it will become easier. Morels must be cut at the base of the stem with a sharp knife, but visit a buyer first for exact specifications and quality requirements. Make sure the morels are clean and free of dirt or needles, but never wash them.

**How do I store and transport this product?**

As with other mushrooms, morels should be taken to a buyer immediately after harvest, preferably at the end of the day. If being stored for a day or two (not recommended), they must be kept in a cooler. Depending on who is buying your mushrooms, you can also dry them for longer term storage. Transport the morels in shallow mesh baskets (often available from the buyer) to prevent damage to the mushrooms.

Do not wash the mushrooms. Never transport or store mushrooms in buckets or plastic bags, as they will rot. Do not store or transport very wet mushrooms, as again, they will spoil quickly.

**How much will I be paid?**

Prices average around $4–5 per pound, and can be up to $12 for fresh mushrooms directly to the retailer or consumer.

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Photo: Richard Winder

LATIN NAMES: *Morchella elata*, *Morchella esculenta*  
COMMON NAME: Morels  
LIFE FORM: Fungus  
PLANT PART USED: Mushroom (fruiting body)
**Summer Berries**

Wild berries abound in the summer. There are many possible products, limited only by the imagination. Some of the more common berries are listed here but this is not an exhaustive list. Berry quality can vary greatly depending on habitat. Sample a variety of areas and bushes before gathering. All of the berries can either be sold fresh, or made into a variety of value-added products, such as preserves, baked goods, and even wine.

With the exception of blueberries and huckleberries, most wild berries do not currently have a large commercial market (that is, it may be difficult to find a buyer for your berries). Therefore, it is difficult to estimate prices that might be obtained for the various berries. Check with local operations to see if anyone is purchasing wild berries. The best option for fresh berries is to sell directly to a restaurant, grocery store or at a farmers’ market. This will also increase the price paid per litre, especially if the berries are of high quality and clean.

There are many species in the *Rubus* genus (the Raspberry clan), all of which have edible berries. Included in this guide are some of the most common, but check out plant identification books, such as Pojar and MacKinnon (1994) for more. It is interesting to note that the new shoots (branches) of most *Rubus* species can be eaten in the spring when they are still soft and bendable. Peel the skin and eat raw or cooked. The shoots do not store well and have therefore not yet become a popular commercial product. All the species of *Rubus* have leaves and twigs that make a good tea when dried, and were used by many Aboriginal peoples for a variety of health ailments. Leaves and twigs can be harvested any time but are best when harvested in the late fall.

Processing berries can add value to your product. Wild berry jam generally sells for around $6 per 250 ml jar (with about 4 jars of jam from 1 litre of berries, plus the cost of jar, label and sugar). Note that any preserves sold commercially must meet food standard regulations. Contact BC Agriculture and Food or the Municipal Food & Health Inspector for guidelines and regulation information.

**Summer Greenery**

There are not many floral greenery species ready for harvest in the summer, particularly in the early months. Many of the species, such as salal and Oregon grape, are still growing in the summer and the new branches are too soft to be harvested. Others species, such as the deciduous huckleberries and re-do-sier dogwood, have leaves on them in the summer; however, it is the bare branches of these which are the desired product. Sword fern, however, can be harvested if you have a buyer lined up.

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*Photo: Mark Creery*
Bunchberry (Cornus canadensis)

How do I identify this species?
Bunchberry is very short, from 2 to 10 inches (5 to 25 cm) tall, with erect stems which are somewhat woody at the base. The leaves are more or less evergreen and 4–7 appear in a whorl on the tip of the plant. Leaves are oval and up to 3 inches (8 cm) long with a whitish underside; like all Cornus, bunchberry leaves have parallel veins. Its flowers are small and greenish-white and are surrounded by 4 white leaves that make it look like a single big blossom. The berries are bright red, fleshy, and form a cluster.

Where do I find this species?
Distribution Bunchberry is very common and can be found in coastal BC and Vancouver Island from valley bottoms to subalpine elevations.

Habitat Bunchberry has a wide range of habitats, from open meadows, clearcuts, swampy areas, to disturbed roadside areas. It can often be found on downed logs and stumps, and can be very prolific in some open areas.

How is the species used?
These berries can be eaten fresh or preserved. As there is currently not much of a commercial market, there is potential for a niche market to develop. Also, as this berry has a very mild/subtle taste, it could be mixed with a strong flavoured berry, such as Oregon grape, in order to cut or dilute the strength of the stronger berry.

When should I harvest?
The fruit ripens in late summer, generally around August.

How should I harvest?
Simply collect from the plant, being careful not to step on this ground covering plant.

How do I store and transport this product?
To maintain quality, the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler, as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, it is recommended to freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berries.

How much will I be paid?
See notes at beginning of section.

LATIN NAMES: Cornus canadensis
COMMON NAME: Bunchberry
LIFE FORM: Herbaceous plant
PLANT PART USED: Berry
**Salal**  (*Gaultheria shallon*)

**How do I identify this species?**
Salal is a shrub which varies in height, averaging between 1/3-6 1/2 feet (0.2m and 2m). It has branched stems which are light green when young, turning reddish-brown when older. Its leaves are evergreen, leathery, shiny and egg-shaped. Salal flowers are white to pinkish, and the berries are dark purple, slightly hairy and up to 1/2 inch (1cm) broad. They appear in clustered rows at the end of the branch, with all of the berries hanging down.

**Where do I find this species?**

**Distribution** You will find salal growing in thickets along all the coastal areas between Oregon and northern British Columbia, including Vancouver Island and the many islands between.

**Habitat** Look for very young forests, canopy openings, stream and lake sides for the best berry production. Many salal berries can be found in clearcuts but these tend not to have the size or sweetness of those found in partial shade. Avoid picking next to roads due to dust and pollution.

**How is the species used?**
Salal berries make excellent jams, syrups and – if mixed with other berries such as blackberries – good wine. Although the quality varies, they are often very sweet, and can be used like the common blueberry.

**When should I harvest?**
Salal berries ripen late July through to September. The berries are ripe when they turn deep purple and round. The berries will stay on the bush into the winter, but can often become wormy.

**How should I harvest?**
The berries can be removed individually, but this can be slow. Breaking off the short stem holding the berries will not hurt the plant, and can improve picking time. When sorting, the berries must be pinched rather than pulled off of the stem to avoid losing the meat of the berry.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
To maintain quality the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler, as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, it is recommended to freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berries.

**How much will I be paid?**
See notes at beginning of section.

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**Photo: Robert Turner**

**LATIN NAMES:**  *Cornus canadensis*
**COMMON NAME:**  Bunchberry
**LIFE FORM:**  Herbaceous plant
**PLANT PART USED:**  Berry
How do I identify these species?
Oregon grape are evergreen stiff-branched shrubs. The leaves are similar to holly: leathery, shiny and dark green with prickly edges. Some leaves turn a beautiful red in winter. The bark, wood and roots are yellowish. Both species have bright yellow flowers that turn into clusters of blue berries, with each berry about 1/2 inch (1cm) wide. Dull Oregon grape (*Mahonia nervosa*) is shorter than tall Oregon grape (*M. aquifolium*), and has leaves which are less shiny. Both species are fairly similar in appearance and edibility.

Where do I find these species?
**Distribution** You will find Oregon grape in the southern parts of BC including the southern tip of Vancouver Island, and down through to Oregon.

**Habitat** Oregon grape tends to prefer drier areas, and like the other berries, produces best in partial sun. Look for it mainly in second growth forests with Douglas fir on open, well-drained slopes. Dull Oregon grape is found predominantly within forests, while tall Oregon grape is found in more open, drier areas.

How is the species used?
Oregon grape is a rather tart berry, so it is not usually eaten fresh. It can be made into jam, syrup and baked goods on its own, but is best mixed with sweeter berries (such as salal or huckleberry).

When should I harvest?
The berries will ripen in late July and remain on the plant usually until October. The berries will turn blue earlier in the summer, but are not actually ripe until they become round and plump. As they are very tart even when ripe, it is best to judge ripeness on the size and on the time of year.

How should I harvest?
Oregon grape berries are very easy and quick to pick. Hold a container under the berry bunch and shake the branch to dislodge the ripe berries.

How do I store and transport this product?
To maintain quality, the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler, as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, it is recommended to freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berry.

How much will I be paid?
See notes at beginning of section
Blackcap Raspberry (*Rubus leucodermis*)

**How do I identify this species?**
The blackcap raspberry is an erect shrub with long arching vine-like branches, growing up to 6.5 feet (2m) tall. The stems are covered with curved, flattened prickles. Each leaf is usually made up of three leaflets, each of which is egg-shaped with white undersides and sharp-toothed edges. Its flowers are white to pinkish. The berries are hairy, about 1 cm across, and resemble a raspberry. They are red when young but turn purple to black when fully ripe.

**Where do I find this species?**

**Distribution** This raspberry is found in southern BC and on Vancouver Island, down into Washington and Oregon. It is found at low to middle elevations.

**Habitat** Blackcap raspberry is found most often in disturbed areas, such as clearcuts and road edges, but also within open forests.

**How is the species used?**
Blackcap raspberry is similar to, and can be used in all the same ways as, blackberry or common raspberry.

**When should I harvest?**
Berries ripen from mid to late July through to September. They will be purple-black and juicy when ripe.

**How should I harvest?**
Pick berries individually by hand – watch for thorns on the bush.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
To maintain quality, the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler, as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berry.

**How much will I be paid?**
See notes at beginning of section.

LATIN NAME: *Rubus leucodermis*
COMMON NAME: Blackcap, black raspberry
LIFE FORM: Shrub
PLANT PART USED: Berry
Thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*)

**How do I identify this species?**
The thimbleberry grows in thickets similar to salmonberry, but unlike salmonberry has no prickles. The large, distinctive leaves are shaped like maple leaves, and are soft and fuzzy. Thimbleberry flowers are white, and the red fruit resembles a shallowly domed, ‘mushy’ looking raspberry. The fruit leaves a thimble-like core behind when picked.

**Where do I find this species?**
**Distribution** The thimbleberry is common along coastal BC, from low to sub-alpine elevations.

**Habitat** Thimbleberry is found in open, damp areas such as field and lake edges, clearcuts, and roadsides.

**How is the species used?**
Thimbleberries are not yet considered a commercial berry. As with salmonberry, fresh thimbleberries tend to become mushy very quickly. However, their taste can be very appealing and they have good potential as a value-added product (preserves, etc).

**When should I harvest?**
Thimbleberry usually ripens around the beginning of July. The fruits are dark red when ripe.

**How should I harvest?**
Collect the whole berry by hand. If the berries are very ripe, hold the bucket under the berries you are picking and be careful not to shake the bushes, or the berries will fall off the bush onto the ground before you have a chance to pick them. Pick carefully as the berries are delicate and crumble easily.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
To maintain quality, the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler, as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berry.

**How much will I be paid?**
See notes at beginning of section.
Salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*)

**How do I identify this species?**
Salmonberry grows in thickets, with erect branches up to 13 feet (4m) tall, though averaging about 5 feet (1.5m). Older branches have shredding, light-coloured bark and the occasional prickle. The leaves, like other *Rubus*, are compound, made up of three sharply-toothed leaflets; if the top (middle) leaflet is folded back, the bottom two leaflets create a butterfly shape. The flowers are bright pink to reddish-purple. Salmonberry fruits are similar in shape to a raspberry, and range in colour from golden yellow to very dark red when ripe.

**Where do I find this species?**
**Distribution** Salmonberry are very common all along coastal BC, from low up to sub-alpine elevations.

**Habitat** Salmonberry thrive in wet areas – stream sides, lake edges, depressed areas within forests, and also on disturbed sites.

**How is the species used?**
Salmonberries have a high moisture content, so don’t store as well as other berries when fresh (they become mushy very quickly). Although they are often considered more of a ‘weed’ than a delicacy, they are actually very tasty and have good commercial potential. They make a sweet jam with a distinctively beautiful colour.

**When should I harvest?**
The salmonberry is one of the earliest ripening berries, beginning around May and usually ending in late July.

**How should I harvest?**
Collect the whole berry by hand. If the berries are very ripe, hold the bucket under the berries you are picking and be careful not to shake the bushes, or the berries will fall off the bush onto the ground before you have a chance to pick them.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
To maintain quality, the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler, as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berry.

**How much will I be paid?**
See notes at beginning of section.

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LATIN NAME: *Rubus spectabilis*
COMMON NAME: Salmonberry
LIFE FORM: Shrub
PLANT PART USED: Berry
How do I identify these species?

Trailing blackberry is indigenous (local) to coastal BC, and is a smaller version of the large, introduced Himalayan blackberry. Himalayan blackberry is very common on disturbed sites – both in forests and in urban areas.

Both species are vine-like, often horizontal, though Himalayan blackberry has stronger, thicker, ridged stems that allow it to stand more vertically before arching to the ground. The branches are up to 16.5 feet (5m) long and armed with very prominent, curved prickles. Both species have compound leaves (each ‘leaf’ is made up of a number of smaller leaflets), with three leaflets per leaf for the trailing blackberry and up to five leaflets on the Himalayan blackberry. The leaves are alternate and deciduous. The flowers are up to 1.5 inches (4cm) across and white or pink, with loose-looking, round petals on the Himalayan and narrower petals on the trailing. The fruit for both species are recognizable as the common blackberry – although the trailing blackberries are slightly smaller than the Himalayan blackberries.

Where do I find these species?

Distribution Both species are predominantly found south of mid-Vancouver Island and in the Fraser Valley on the mainland at low to middle elevations.

Habitat Both species of blackberry are quite abundant within their range. Trailing blackberry is often found within drier forests, though it needs light from gaps in the canopy in order to produce fruit. Himalayan blackberry can be found at stream or lake edges, and both species are very common in disturbed areas such as clearcuts and road edges. Himalayan blackberry grows in dense thickets.

How is the species used?

Trailing blackberries are smaller and more difficult to find than the Himalayan blackberry, but are said to be sweeter. Both can be used in a multitude of ways, including fresh, preserved, pastries, wine, etc.

When should I harvest?

Blackberries ripen in the late summer; generally late July through to September. The berries are dark purple to black, and juicy and sweet when ripe. The berries of trailing blackberry do not become as large as the Himalayan blackberries.

How should I harvest?

The thorns on trailing blackberry are not as large as on the Himalayan blackberry, but beware of them when picking. Trailing blackberry tends to run along the ground, so be careful not to step on the small berries when picking. Himalayan blackberries tend to grow in very dense thickets. Try dropping a ladder or plank into the thicket in order to access more berries.

How do I store and transport this product?

To maintain quality, the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berry.

How much will I be paid?

See notes at beginning of section.
Red Elderberry *(Sambucus racemosa)*

**How do I identify this species?**
The red elderberry grows up to 20 feet (6m) tall with soft, pithy twigs and reddish brown, warty bark. The leaves have a characteristic odour, are opposite, large and divided into five to seven leaflets. They are lance-shaped and up to 6 inches (15cm) long. Elderberry flowers are whitish to creamy in colour and also have a distinctive odour. Although the individual flowers are very small, they appear in larger, pyramidal-shaped clusters. The bright red berries are small, with smooth seeds inside each berry. The blue elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*) occurs more rarely in southern BC. It is very similar to red elderberry but with blue berries.

**Where do I find this species?**

**Distribution** You will find this treelike shrub along the coast of British Columbia and on Vancouver Island from sea level to middle elevations.

**Habitat** Red elderberry is most often found in moist or swampy open areas, forest edges and along streams, lakes, and roadsides.

**How is the species used?**
Elderberries cannot be eaten raw as they may cause nausea. Preserves, juice concentrates, and wine have some commercial value, and the berries are purported to have anti-inflammatory properties. The flower clusters are also used in making beverages and jellies and have a limited market as a medicinal herb.

**When should I harvest?**
The flowers appear in May to June. The fruit ripens June to July.

**How should I harvest?**
Collect the whole berry (or flower) stem or shake the berries into a container. Be gentle when harvesting as the limbs break easily and do not regenerate quickly.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
To maintain quality, the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler, as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berry.

**How much will I be paid?**
See notes at beginning of section.

**Caution**
Do not eat berries raw. Also, the leaves and branches of red elderberry are toxic because they contain cyanide-producing glycosides - they should not be consumed.

**Photo: Bev Hall**

**LATIN NAME:** *Sambucus racemosa*

**COMMON NAME:** Red elderberry

**LIFE FORM:** Shrub

**PLANT PART USED:** Berry
There are a variety of huckleberry and blueberry species which grow in the Pacific Northwest, including Alaskan blueberry (Vaccinium alaskaense), red huckleberry (V. parvifolium), oval-leaved blueberry (V. ovalifolium) and evergreen huckleberry (V. ovatum) at lower elevations, and black huckleberry (V. membranaceum) and Cascade huckleberry (V. deliciosum) at higher elevations. All are edible and delicious.

How do I identify these species?
These shrubs grow to approximately 6.5 feet (2m) in height. Alaskan blueberry, red huckleberry and oval-leaved blueberry have light green deciduous leaves that are oval to egg shaped, thin, with or without teeth, and between 1 and 2.5 inches (3 and 6cm) long. The flowers appear early, generally around the development of the leaves, and are round to urn-shaped. The colours of the berries vary between black (V. alaskaense), blue (V. ovalifolium) and red (V. parvifolium). They are round and between 1/4 and 1/3 inch (6 to 10mm) across. They appear as single berries on the shrub and never in clusters. Evergreen huckleberry has dark, leathery, sharply-toothed leaves which remain on the bush year-round. The bell-shaped flowers are pink, and the berries are dark purplish-black.

Black huckleberry has longer, pointier leaves than the other three deciduous species (those that lose their leaves in the fall), and dark, purplish-black, shiny berries. They are usually considered to produce the most delicious berries of all the huckleberry species. Cascade huckleberry is a shorter shrub, with narrow, bright green deciduous leaves and dusky blue berries.

Where do I find these species?
Distribution Huckleberries and blueberries are very common and appear along the whole coastal area of British Columbia. Red huckleberry and evergreen huckleberry occur at low elevations, with evergreen huckleberry often found close to the ocean. Alaskan blueberry and oval-leaved blueberry occur from low to sub-alpine elevations, and black huckleberry and Cascade huckleberry are found at middle to high (alpine) elevations.

Habitat Although huckleberry and blueberry bushes will grow in the shade, they require light to produce berries. Good berry bushes are found most often in clearcuts and young forests, mature forests where there are gaps in the canopy, along forest edges, and along streams and lakes. Berries found in partial shade tend to be juicier and sweeter than those produced on plants growing in direct sunlight (such as in a clearcut).

How are the species used?
Berries are used both fresh or as a value-added product. Huckleberry preserves are very popular, but the range of possible products is limited only by your imagination.

When should I harvest?
The time of ripening varies slightly between the species, but is generally June for red huckleberries, and late July or early August through to September for the others. Red huckleberry is the first to ripen, and is red when ripe. The other huckleberries are deep blue or purple when ripe. Ripeness is indicated by size and how easily they come off the stem, but the best way is simply to taste them for sweetness. Evergreen huckleberry are said to be tastiest in the fall after a frost.

How should I harvest?
Picking the berries individually by hand results in the least amount of damage to the plant, though this method can be quite slow. A small berry comb can be dragged through the bush, pulling off the berries. Berry combs can be purchased or simply use a wide-toothed hair comb or pick. Combs should be used carefully to avoid excessive damage to the foliage.
Using a comb also requires sorting the berries once picked to remove leaves and imperfect berries. A standard method of sorting is to roll the berries down a wet board or rough blanket – the leaves will stick to the board or become caught in the blanket while the berries roll to the bottom.

**How do I store and transport this product?**

To maintain quality, the berries should be cooled (recommended to about 5 degrees Celsius) as soon as possible after picking. Do not wash the berries prior to storing them in a fridge or cooler, as this will decrease their storage life. Berries should be taken to a buyer within a day or two after picking, unless they are frozen. When transporting, take care to use wide shallow containers or baskets to avoid crushing.

If you plan on making preserves, freeze the berries first as this helps break the cell walls of the berry.

**How much will I be paid?**

See notes at beginning of section.

LATIN NAME: Vaccinium spp.
COMMON NAME: Huckleberry, wild blueberry
LIFE FORM: Shrub
PLANT PART USED: Berry
How do I identify this species?
This type of fern can grow up to 5 feet (1.5m) tall with erect, leathery, dark green evergreen fronds (leaves) that form a crown growing from a stout, woody base. Its leaves are lance-shaped and compound with alternate leaflets. The leaflets are attached to the stem at one single spot, with a small lobe at the bottom and a pointed tip, giving them the appearance of tiny swords.

Where do I find this species?
**Distribution** You will find sword fern throughout coastal BC, but more abundantly in the south. It grows from low to middle elevations.

**Habitat** Sword fern can be quite abundant in moist forests. It grows in young to old growth forests, though is much more common in mature forests. It grows well on stream and river slopes.

How is the species used?
Sword fern is used as floral greenery. It can be sold to local wholesalers and retailers, or to floral greenery buyers who ship throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. Due to a variety of factors, the market for sword fern is much smaller than it was in the past.

When should I harvest?
Sword fern is generally harvested beginning in July with harvesting continuing throughout the winter until mid-April. Sword fern goes through a second growing season in the fall; picking should be avoided during this time to decrease the impact on the species.

How should I harvest?
Sword fern fronds have traditionally been harvested using a ring knife, which is the most efficient and easy way to harvest. Fronds can also be broken by hand. Each frond must be deep green, have very few to no sori (the brown circular cases containing spores on the underside of the frond), and be free of imperfections such as insect bites and brown tips. The bottom of the frond is stripped free of leaflets to have a smooth stem. Sword fern is purchased in bunches of 55 stems stacked flat together, with each stem 26–28 inches (66-71cm) long.

Do not pick all the fronds of one plant, and for any given site, pick only 25% of the species to ensure a sustainable harvest for future years. A study by the US Department of Agriculture (Isaac, 1945) demonstrated that harvesting more than 25% of the plant led to shorter frond lengths and fewer fronds. The study also found that it is better for the plant if harvest is done in the spring or summer.

How do I store and transport this product?
The fronds must be kept cool and moist (not wet). An industrial cooler set at a temperature of 4-5 degrees Celsius is ideal. A carport or shed storage is fine during the winter, but in the summer the greens should be put into a refrigerated cooler within 24 hours after being picked.

How much will I be paid?
As with all floral greenery products, the price for sword fern fluctuates during the year based on supply and demand. In general, the price range is $0.60 to $1 per bunch.

**LATIN NAME:** *Polystichum munitum*
**COMMON NAME:** Sword fern
**LIFE FORM:** Fern
**PLANT PART USED:** Foliage
Fall Mushrooms

The fall rains bring the mushrooms – chanterelles and boletes in the wetter forests, pine mushrooms in the drier forests. Depending on location, the harvest usually begins in late August and runs through until early November, during which time buyer shacks and sometimes whole campsite villages will pop up like the mushrooms themselves. Look for temporary signs – often hand-written – along roads and highways that will point you to the buyers.

When picking mushrooms, a few items of gear will make life a lot easier. A knife and large bucket with small holes in the bottom of it are the basics, but having a few mushroom baskets (you can often borrow these from the buyer) will keep the mushrooms from becoming squashed at the bottom of the bucket and decreasing their value. Placing a few of the mushroom baskets into a backpack makes for easier carrying. Having a compass and map (and knowing how to use them!) also allows you to search farther for unpicked areas. With all of the mushrooms, prices range depending on the world market, and can change week to week and even daily.

**Caution** Some mushrooms have look-alikes which are poisonous, and some have poisonous as well as edible species within their families, such as the boletes. It is essential that you consult a buyer and use a very good reference guide, such as David Arora’s *All That The Rain Promises and More…* (1991) before you begin harvesting.

Always consult an expert in mushroom identification before eating any kind of wild mushrooms for the first time. All wild mushrooms should be cooked before being eaten.

Floral Greenery

Floral greenery species have now hardened up and are ready for harvest. The salal harvest is in full swing, and although prices are often lower in the fall than at other times of the year, there is usually an abundance of good quality leaves and branches to be found. Some floral greens, such as red-osier dogwood and huckleberry branches, make a beautiful red addition to Christmas greenery; value-added bundles, wreaths or swags which contain both could be sold directly to retailers.

Evergreen boughs are in high demand during the Christmas season. Some species are preferred over others, based on appearance, tenacity of the needles, and scent. For example, western hemlock (*Tsuga heterophylla*) is not used as the needles tend to fall off very quickly, and yellow cedar (*Chamaecyparis nootkatensis*) is generally not used due – ironically – to the intensity of its scent.
Boletes  \((Boletus\ spp.)\)

**How do I identify this species?**
Boletes have a fleshy cap, light to dark brownish (sometimes even yellowish) and a central firm stalk. The underside of the cap does not have gills, but instead has a distinctive sponge which consists of hundreds of pores but appears smooth when young. These mushrooms grow out of the soil, and can become very wormy as they age.

**Caution**
Some boletes are poisonous, notably those with reddish pores. Do not pick or eat any boletes with red pores. Always consult an expert in mushroom identification before eating any kind of wild mushrooms for the first time. All wild mushrooms should be cooked before being eaten.

**Where do I find this species?**

**Distribution** Low to high elevations, in coastal areas.

**Habitat** Boletes are most often found within coniferous forests, especially pine, fir and spruce. They tend to be found in mature forests.

**How is the species used?**
As a food. It is often considered a specialty food in restaurants and supermarkets. These mushrooms can be sold fresh or dried.

**When should I harvest?**
In the fall. The exact fruiting time varies depending on the location, elevation, and weather.

**How should I harvest?**
The mushrooms can be picked or cut. They must be picked young, as they tend to become infested with insects. If in doubt, slice the mushroom open to check for worm holes.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
Boletes should be taken to a buyer immediately after harvest, preferably at the end of the day. If being stored for a day or two (not recommended), they must be kept in a cooler. Depending on who you are selling to, you can also dry them for longer term storage. Transport boletes in shallow mesh baskets (often available from the buyer), to prevent damage to the mushrooms.

Do not wash the mushrooms. Never transport or store mushrooms in buckets or plastic bags, as they will rot. Do not store or transport very wet mushrooms, as again, they will rot.

**How much will I be paid?**
There are usually four grades of boletes. Prices range according to grade, time of season, and world market prices. The price can range from as little as $0.25 per pound for a grade 4 bolete in a saturated market, to $16 per pound for a grade 1 in a good market. The average price is around $8 per pound.

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**Photo:** Joseph O’Brien, USDA Forest Service, www.forestryimages.org

**LATIN NAMES:**  \(Boletus\ spp.\)

**COMMON NAMES:**  Boletes

**LIFE FORM:**  Fungus

**PLANT PART USED:**  Mushroom (fruiting body)
How do I identify this species?
The cap of the chanterelle mushroom is usually vase- or trumpet-shaped with a smooth edge and shallowly wrinkled gills underneath. Note that the gills are more like veins than knife edges, and run down the stalk. The stalk is fibrous but solid. Yellow, ochre to orange in colour and seldom wormy, chanterelles can grow up to 6 inches (15 cm) tall and wide. The fruity smell (often described as like a pumpkin or apricot) is very characteristic.

Caution
Poisonous look-alikes include the jack-o-lantern (Omphalotus olivascens), which has thinner sharper gills which do not run down the stalk and no white flesh, and the false chanterelle (Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca), which also has thinner, sharper gills and a less solid stalk. Always consult an expert in mushroom identification before eating any kind of wild mushrooms for the first time. All wild mushrooms should be cooked before eating.

Where do I find this species?
Chanterelles are most commonly found in young to mature coniferous forests, from around 30 years old in some areas to about 80 years old. Look for Douglas fir, hemlock, or spruce forests with mossy floors, particularly up-slope from a riparian area.

How is the species used?
Chanterelles are one of the most common commercial food mushrooms on the coast, particularly in wet areas such as northern Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands. Chanterelles are considered a specialty food in restaurants and supermarkets. They can be sold fresh or dried.

When should I harvest?
In the fall. The exact fruiting time varies depending on the location, elevation, and weather.

How should I harvest?
The cap should be opened and larger than a loonie. Cut the mushroom at the base with a sharp knife – pulling may damage the mycelium. Ensure that the chanterelles are clean, with no substrate or needles attached to them, but never wash them.

How do I store and transport this product?
As with other mushrooms, chanterelles should be taken to a buyer immediately after harvest, preferably at the end of the day. If being stored for a day or two, they must be kept in a cooler. Depending on who you are selling to, you can also dry them for longer term storage but the market is stronger for fresh chanterelles at this time. Transport the chanterelles in shallow mesh baskets (often available from the buyer), to prevent damage to the mushrooms.

Do not wash the mushrooms. Never transport or store mushrooms in buckets or plastic bags, as they will rot. Do not store or transport very wet mushrooms, as again, they will rot.

How much will I be paid?
Prices range from $1 to as much as $8 (though this is rare) per pound. The average price is around $2 per pound.

LATIN NAMES: Cantharellus spp.
COMMON NAMES: Chanterelles
LIFE FORM: Fungus
PLANT PART USED: Mushroom (fructifying body)
How do I identify this species?
The cap of this mushroom is white to yellowish, sometimes with brown or cinnamon stains. The gills are white when fresh and do not run down the stalk. The flesh on this mushroom is very firm and the spores are white. The pine mushroom has a very strong odour, spicy or cinnamon, and grows out of the soil.

Caution
Very poisonous look-alikes include some Amanita species. Unlike pine mushrooms, the Amanitas have a bulb (swelling at the base of the stalk) and/or volva (sack or scaly ring at the base). Always consult an expert in mushroom identification before eating any kind of wild mushrooms for the first time. All wild mushrooms should be cooked before eating.

Where do I find this species?
The pine mushroom is associated with older forests, and grows in association with pine, fir, hemlock, and Douglas fir trees. They are sometimes difficult to see as they grow below the moss or duff layer before finally bursting through. If you see one mushroom, check the area for small bumps in the duff layer to find more.

How is the species used?
Pine mushrooms are one of the most economically important wild mushrooms in BC, but are less common in the wet coastal areas than in the interior of BC. They are much prized wherever they are found. They can be sold and consumed locally, but most are purchased by buyers for shipment to Japan.

When should I harvest?
In the fall. The exact fruiting time varies depending on the location, elevation, and weather.

How should I harvest?
Pine mushrooms must be harvested and stored very carefully, as the state of the mushroom affects its commercial value.

Pine mushrooms must be plucked – never cut. Although pine mushrooms are more difficult to find than other commercial mushrooms such as boletes or chanterelles, the forest floor should never be raked or significantly disturbed in your search. The mushroom you harvest is the ‘fruit’ of the plant – like an apple. The rest of the fungal body – the mycelium – lies within and beneath the duff layer of the forest floor. Damage to this area can be likened to cutting down the apple tree, and will result in the destruction of the fungus.

Pines have a few levels of commercial grading, usually:

- Grade 1: Entire veil intact
- Grade 2: More than 50% of veil intact
- Grade 3: Must have the veil still partially attached, but less than 50%
- Grade 4: Veil broken, but the cap is still turned down
- Grade 5: Mature mushroom with flat cap
- Grade 6: Overmature mushroom, with cap turning up

How do I store and transport this product?
It is particularly important to take pine mushrooms to a buyer immediately, as they lose value once the veil opens (which they may do in storage). For intermediate storage and transport, they must be kept in a cooler. Transport the pines very carefully to avoid breaking the veil. As with the other mushrooms, they should be kept in shallow mesh baskets.

Do not wash the mushrooms. Never transport or store mushrooms in buckets or plastic bags, as they will rot. Do not store or transport very wet mushrooms, as again, they will rot.

How much will I be paid?
The amount of money obtained for a pine mushroom will depend on the grading, location, time of season, and mostly on world prices. Prices for pine mushrooms have historically ranged from as little as $5 to upwards of $200 per pound. The average is around $12 to $25.
Red-Osier Dogwood  (*Cornus stolonifera*)

**How do I identify this species?**

Red-osier dogwood is a freely spreading shrub with many branches, growing up to 20 feet (6m) tall. The branches that lie along the ground (recumbent) often root and send up new stems. The young stems are smooth and round and often bright red – especially after a frost. Like all *Cornus*, the red-osier dogwood has sharply pointed leaves with parallel veins. The leaves can be up to 10cm long, and, like the branches, grow in an opposite pattern. The white to greenish flowers are small and grow in flat-topped clusters at the end of the branch. The fruits are white and quite small, with a flattened pit.

**Where do I find this species?**

**Distribution** You will find red-osier dogwood all along the BC coast, from valley-bottoms to middle elevations.

**Habitat** Red-osier dogwood is most often found in moist or wet areas, such as boggy meadows, stream and lake sides, and in moist, open, disturbed areas.

**How is the species used?**

The red tinged branches – without leaves – are used in the floral industry, particularly at Christmas when the red colour is perfect for the season.

**When should I harvest?**

All year except during the growing season. Harvesting is generally done in the fall and winter when branch colour is at its best and the leaves are off the plant.

**How should I harvest?**

Break off stems of 28–32 inches (71-81 cm) in length. Bundle 20 stems into a bunch. Some buyers (including local retailers) prefer longer, sturdier branches to be used alone or in large displays – check with them before harvesting.

**How do I store and transport this product?**

The stems of red-osier dogwood are a little more resilient than those of other floral greens, but they should still generally be kept cool and moist. An industrial cooler set at a temperature of 4–5 degrees Celsius is ideal. Outside or shed storage is fine if the weather is cool enough and they are protected from the weather (sun, wind, snow, rain).

**How much will I be paid?**

A buyer will purchase the stems for about $0.80 –$1 per bunch. A wholesaler will pay about $1.25, and a florist may pay $2.50–$3. Prices are higher for longer branches.

**LATIN NAMES:** *Cornus stolonifera*  
**COMMON NAMES:** Red-osier dogwood  
**LIFE FORM:** Shrub  
**PLANT PART USED:** Branches
Salal  (*Gaultheria shallon*)

**How do I identify this species?**

Salal varies greatly in height, but averages between 0.2m and 2m tall. It has branched stems which are light green when young, turning reddish-brown when older. Salal leaves are evergreen, leathery, shiny and egg-shaped. Salal flowers are white to pinkish, and the berries are dark purple, slightly hairy and up to 1cm across. The berries are clustered in rows, hanging downwards from the end of the branch.

**Where do I find this species?**

**Distribution**
You will find salal growing in thickets throughout the coastal areas between Oregon and northern British Columbia, including Vancouver Island and adjacent islands.

**Habitat**
For commercial quality salal, look for either young forests (15 to 25 years) particularly if fertilized, or older forests with large canopy openings. It is often found along lake and road sides, though you should avoid picking next to roads if the salal foliage is dusty. Salal grows best in moist but well drained (sloped) areas.

**How is the species used?**

Salal is the most commonly purchased floral greenery on the Pacific Northwest Coast. It is essential that you check with the buyers first to see what their standards are, and what type of salal they are currently buying (size of preferred leaf, tips versus regular length, etc). Buyers will also demonstrate what commercial quality salal looks like, suggest methods of harvest, and probably suggest areas to pick. There is some demand for dyed and glycerine preserved salal.

**When should I harvest?**

All year except during the growing season, which is mid-spring to mid-summer (about April to July). Although the new leaves harden up in June, it is recommended that the plant not be harvested until the fall to allow the plant to complete its growth. This also allows the plant to use the new leaves for photosynthesis during the increased light period of the summer, and build reserves for the following year’s growth.

**How should I harvest?**

Although salal is very common, the commercial quality required is often more difficult to find. Quality salal must grow in partial shade, which allows for longer, cleaner branches and fewer leaf blemishes. Salal branches must have a minimum of 4 current-year leaves, with all older leaves removed. The leaves must be perfect and free from blemishes, fungus, or insect bites. The branches are picked by hand, breaking off the branch near the base of the stem and avoiding any woody, brown stems.

Salal is picked in two different lengths: a regular (or ‘long’) length is 28–30 inches (71-76cm) and a “tip” is 20–24 inches (51-61cm) long. The salal branches are bundled with all leaves facing up in a flat spray, and secured at the base with an elastic band. The bunches should be about 1.5 pounds for regular length (a large handful), and 0.75 pounds for tips (a small handful). The branches can either be straight (singles) or branched (sprays).

Salal must be taken to a buyer at the end of every day unless properly stored. Salal needs to be kept in a cool, dark environment, and kept slightly, but not overly, moist. The foliage can spoil in a matter of hours if left in the sun, heat, or wet.

**Cautions**

Knowing how and what to harvest will greatly reduce waste and will decrease the long term effect of harvesting, as will avoiding harvest during the spring and summer months.
How do I store and transport this product?

The branches must be kept cool and moist (not wet). An industrial cooler set at a temperature of 4–5 degrees Celsius is ideal. A carport or shed storage is fine during the winter, but in the summer the greens should be put into a refrigerated cooler within 24 hours after being picked.

It is best to take the salal branches to the buyer as soon as possible. The bunches should be tied together in bales of 20, with 10 bunches on either side and the bare stems together in the middle to form a flat rectangular bundle.

How much will I be paid?

Salal prices vary depending on the time of year and demand. In general, you will receive less per bunch in the summer and fall than you will in the spring. On average, the price range tends to be: Regular (long) bunch: $1.25 to $2.20. Tips: $0.70 to $1.20.
Dull Oregon Grape  (Mahonia nervosa)

How do I identify this species?
This evergreen, stiff-branched shrub grows up to 24 inches (60cm) tall. The leaves are similar to holly: leathery and shiny dark green with fairly prominent spiny teeth along the edges of the leaflets. They often turn purplish or reddish in winter. The bark, wood and roots are yellowish. Dull Oregon grape has bright yellow flowers that turn into clusters of blue berries.

Where do I find this species?
**Distribution** Dull Oregon grape is found exclusively in the southern parts of coastal BC including the southern part of Vancouver Island, and down through to Oregon.

**Habitat** Dull Oregon grape tends to prefer drier areas, and like the other berries, produces best in partial sun. It is especially common in second-growth Douglas fir forests on open, well-drained sites at low to middle elevations. Like salal, the best foliage is found in partially shaded forests.

How much will I be paid?
As with other floral greenery products, price varies over the year but averages about $0.40 per bunch.

How do I store and transport this product?
The branches must be kept cool and moist (not wet). An industrial cooler set at a temperature of 4–5 degrees Celsius is ideal. A carport or shed storage is fine during the winter, but in the summer the greens should be put into a refrigerated cooler within 24 hours after being picked.

How much will I be paid?
As with other floral greenery products, price varies over the year but averages about $0.40 per bunch.

How is the species used?
Oregon grape is used for floral greenery. It is not as commonly used as other floral greens, so make sure that there is a buyer who will purchase it before you pick.

When should I harvest?
The leaves can be harvested year round, except during the growing season in the spring (May to July).

How should I harvest?
Break or cut the leaves in lengths of 12–15 inches (12-15cm). Secure 26 stems into a bunch using an elastic band. Do not harvest all of the leaves from one plant, nor all of the plants in the area. The general rule is to harvest no more than 30% of a given site.

Dave Powell,
USDA Forest Service,
www.forestryimages.org
Huckleberry & Wild Blueberry  \((Vaccinium\ spp.)\)

**How do I identify these species?**

These shrubs grow to approximately 6.5 feet (2m) in height. Alaskan blueberry, red huckleberry and oval-leaved blueberry have light green, deciduous leaves that are oval to egg shaped, thin, with or without teeth, and between 10 and 20 inches (3 and 6cm) long. The flowers appear early, generally around the development of the leaves, and are round to urn-shaped. The colours of the berries vary between black \((Vaccinium alaskaense)\), blue \((V. ovalifolium)\) and red \((V. parvifolium)\). They are round and between 1/4 to 1/3 inch (6 to 10mm) across. They appear as single berries on the shrub and never in clusters. These three species have deciduous leaves which are lost in the fall. The branches are usually intricately branched, and often turn an attractive red shade in the fall – hence their appeal as a floral greenery product. \(V. ovatum\) is evergreen, and has darker, leathery, sharply-toothed leaves.

**Where do I find these species?**

**Distribution** Huckleberries and blueberries are very common and appear along the whole coastal area of British Columbia. You will find them in low to subalpine \((V. alaskaense)\) elevations.

**Habitat** Huckleberry and blueberry bushes are found across a fairly wide range of habitats from young forests to mature forests, in the understorey and on open sites. They often grow where there are gaps in the canopy, along forest edges, and along streams, lakes, and bog edges. Evergreen huckleberry \((V. ovatum)\) is only found at low elevations, generally close to the ocean.

**How is the species used?**

Both the evergreen huckleberry and the deciduous species are used in floral displays and for crafts. The red branches of the deciduous huckleberries which develop in the fall are particularly desired for Christmas displays.

**When should I harvest?**

Harvesting can be done all year round, except in the spring growing season. It is best to harvest the deciduous species in the fall and winter when the branches are free of leaves and the beautiful stem colour is most developed (November through April).

**How should I harvest?**

Branches can either be broken off or cut, and should be 28-30 inches (71-76cm) long. Branches are picked by hand in singles or in sprays (branched lengths). Branches are gathered into bunches of approximately 1.5 pounds (like salal), and held with an elastic.

**How do I store and transport this product?**

The branches must be kept cool and moist (not wet). An industrial cooler set at a temperature of 4–5 degrees Celsius is ideal. A carport or shed storage is fine during the winter, but in the summer the greens should be put into a refrigerated cooler within 24 hours after being picked.

As with other floral greenery products, the branches should be taken to a buyer as soon as possible, especially if proper storage is not available.

**How much will I be paid?**

Prices vary over the year based on supply and demand, but tend to be around $1.10 to $1.40 per bunch.

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**LATIN NAME:** Vaccinium spp  
\((V. parvifolium, V. alaskaense, V. ovalifolium, V. ovatum)\)  
**COMMON NAME:** Huckleberries, wild blueberries  
**LIFE FORM:** Shrub  
**PLANT PART USED:** Foliage
**Winter Greenery**

The demand for conifer boughs used as Christmas greenery for wreaths and other decorations continues to grow. Rather than simply selling boughs in bulk, harvesters can add significant value by making swags, wreaths and garlands. Swags require no equipment to make – simply wire together three to five pieces of bough (of one species or many), add decorations such as ribbon and cones, and put a hook on the back so that the swag can be attached to a door.

This product will sell for $4.50 through wholesalers, and up to $12 at craft shows. To make large numbers of wreaths and garlands, special equipment is required (a wreath machine is approximately an $1,800 to $2,000 investment), but the wreaths and garlands sell for more money. Depending on experience, approximately three garlands can be made per hour (excluding bough harvesting time), and sell for $25–$30 for a 50 foot (15m) length. Wreaths range in price depending on species, level of decoration, and the market to which you are selling. Generally, wreaths sell for approximately $6 for a plain 8 inch (20cm) wreath to as much as $30–$40 for a decorated 20 inch (51cm) wreath.

Although legislation relevant to bough harvesting remains unclear as this handbook goes to press, it is generally recognized that harvesting boughs can affect timber values. The Forest Range and Practices Act (S52(1)) states that “A person must not cut, damage or destroy Crown timber unless authorized to do so.” You must check with the land manager (eg forest company, Aboriginal band) before any harvesting, and harvest only according to their requirements. Because forest companies have maps and information on trees species, ages and locations, it is usually very helpful to visit their operations office and ask for suggestions on the best areas in which to harvest.

**Landscape and Horticulture**

Although most native plants used in landscaping and restoration are propagated from seed, there is a potential to harvest some plants from the wild. While this industry could be an important part of economic diversification and income in communities, it is very important to be aware of the potential ecological impacts of native plant harvest. Removing whole plants from the wild has much more impact than removing parts of the plant. The only whole plant harvest that should be done is salvage – where whole plants are removed only from areas that are destined for development such as logging, road development, or building sites.

In order to be successful in the plant salvage business, it is necessary to have a thorough understanding of the plants and what they require to survive transplanting. Research is of key importance with this NTFP opportunity. Visit nurseries to ask for information and to see what commercial native plants should look like.

Native plant salvage is also a very specific industry in terms of demand for product. There is not a constant demand by large scale buyers and landscapers, as with most floral greenery. Instead, it is necessary to wait for a buyer to request a certain species (with numbers and quality) before harvesting the plants. Most plants will not survive long in storage if not handled properly.

For all of the species included here, the plants can either be sold as bare root or potted. It may be best to sell bare root plants if selling in large quantities to a buyer, as they require less space and weight for transporting. However, potting a plant will increase the value, and you can make more money from each plant, especially if selling to local wholesalers or retailers. Plants are usually potted in 1 to 2 gallon pots. For potting mixtures, you can either use composted bark mixed with time release fertilizer (which is popular in the nurseries and inexpensive) or obtain free potting mix information from the Ministry of Agriculture (http://www.gov.bc.ca/agf/). Commercially prepared potting mixtures are likely too expensive for a plant salvage operation.
**The Firs (Abies spp.)**

**How do I identify these species?**

These firs can grow 165 to 260 feet (50m to 80m) tall. The younger bark is smooth with resin blisters, and is whitish grey with white patches. The bark of grand fir becomes distinctly ridged as it ages. The needles are flat and about 1.25 inch (3cm) long. For both grand fir and amabilis/silver fir, the needles are dark green on top with distinct white lines on the underside; subalpine fir needles have white lines on both the top and underside. Amabilis/silver fir and subalpine fir needles tend to grow upward in direction; grand fir needles grow in a flat plane. The needles are not prickly, and the needles of all the species, particularly grand fir, have a citrus flavour (grapefruit) when chewed. Like all fir species, the cones grow upright on the branches and collapse into pieces before dropping off the branch.

Note Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), despite its name, is not a true fir. It is sometimes used for boughs, but is less in demand than the true fir species.

**Where do I find these species?**

**Distribution** You will find Amabilis/silver fir from the Alaska border south through coastal BC including most of Vancouver Island. It is found at middle to high elevations (300m to 1000m) in the southern parts of BC, down to sea level in the north. Grand fir is found further south and on the east side of Vancouver Island, from low to middle elevations. Subalpine fir, true to its name, is found at higher elevations from northern BC down through Washington state.

**Habitat** Amabalis fir is found on well drained slopes in wetter forests such as those on northern Vancouver Island. Grand fir is found within both moist and well-drained habitats, and is often associated closely with Douglas fir. Although subalpine fir is a high elevation species, it can be found at lower elevations along major rivers with cold air drainages in northern BC.

**How are the species used?**

True firs are the most popular and preferred source of boughs for Christmas floral greenery.

The cones, due to their fragile and early decaying nature, cannot be used as a floral product.

**When should I harvest?**

The demand is seasonal; boughs are only harvested in the fall up until Christmas. The general purchase period is late September to November, but if you are selling directly to wholesalers or local retailers, this may be extended into December.

**How should I harvest?**

You must check with the land manager (e.g. forest company, Aboriginal band) before harvesting boughs, and harvest only according to their requirements.

As is the case with other Christmas greenery, it is best to find a plantation of younger trees (10–25 years) for easier access to boughs of the proper quality.

Boughs are cut in lengths of 27–36 inches (69-91 cm) and are sold bulk to buyers. Some buyers will purchase specific bough lengths for garland making, and require each bough to be exactly 24 inches (61 cm). Each ‘hand’ (secured by wire or elastic) should be about 2–2.5 pounds, with at least three branches. Ten hands are secured with twine to create a bale. To make a bale, lay hands flat with stems in the middle, alternating foliage out both sides. Secure centre with twine.
The Firs  \textit{(Abies spp.) cont’d}

\textbf{How do I store and transport this product?}

If harvested in September, the boughs must be kept in a cooler (4–5 degrees Celsius) if being stored for any amount of time. Around mid-October when the temperature cools, the boughs may be kept outside but should be covered to prevent sun damage. A shed is best for protection. The bales of boughs should be stacked on skids or pallets, with air spaces between the stacks to prevent the boughs from heating up.

\textbf{How much will I be paid?}

Buyers will pay slightly more for true fir boughs than other Christmas greenery. Prices will range around $0.25–0.35 per pound for loose product or $10 for a bale, and slightly higher for the special garland length. See Winter Greenery introduction for value-added prices.
**Western White Pine (Pinus monticola)**

**How do I identify this species?**
Western white pine is a medium sized tree, growing up to 130 feet (40m) in height. The bark is dark grey to nearly black, and cinnamon-coloured underneath. The long needles appear in bundles of five, and are light bluish-green; they can grow up to 4 inches (10cm) long, and are slender and flexible. The cones are 4-10 inches (10–25cm) long and yellow-green to purple when young, becoming reddish-brown and woody as they age.

**Where do I find this species?**
**Distribution** South of Bella Coola on the coastal mainland and on Vancouver Island, from near sea level to subalpine elevations.

**Habitat** On the coast, particularly on northern Vancouver Island, Western white pine tends to be found in drier forests; in areas with less rainfall, this species is found in moister forests. Ask the forest company tenure holder for your area for information on where to find this tree.

**How is the species used?**
The foliage of western white pine is used for Christmas floral greenery. The pine cones are also commonly used for crafts and decorations.

**When should I harvest?**
The demand is seasonal; boughs are only harvested in the fall up until Christmas. The general purchase period is late September to November, but if you are selling directly to wholesalers or local retailers, this may be extended into December.

**How should I harvest?**
You must check with the land manager (eg forest company, Aboriginal band) before harvesting boughs, and harvest only according to their requirements.

As is the case with other Christmas greenery, it is best to find a plantation of younger trees (10–25 years) for easier access to boughs of the proper quality.

Boughs are cut in lengths of 27–36 inches (69-91cm) and are sold in bulk to buyers. Some buyers, such as Hiawatha, will purchase specific bough lengths for garland making, and require each bough to be exactly 24 inches (61cm). A ‘hand’ of proper length boughs is 2–2.5 pounds, and secured by wires or elastics on the stems. Ten hands are tied together with twine to make a bale. To make a bale, lay hands flat with stems in the middle, alternating foliage out both sides. Secure centre with twine.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
If harvested in September, the boughs must be kept in a cooler (4–5 degrees Celsius) if being stored for any amount of time. Around mid-October when the temperature cools, the boughs may be kept outside but should be covered to prevent sun damage. A shed is best for protection. The bales of boughs should be stacked on skids or pallets, with air spaces between the stacks to prevent the boughs from heating up.

**How much will I be paid?**
Buyers will pay around $0.20–0.30 per pound for loose product, and about $10 for a secured bale. For the special garland length, they will pay slightly higher (about $0.35).

Cones are worth about $2 for a bag of 8–10 at a wholesaler. They will fetch higher prices if sold to local floral retailers or at Christmas craft shows – particularly if presented attractively in baskets. See Winter Greenery introduction for value-added prices.
Western Redcedar (*Thuja plicata*)

**How do I identify this species?**

This tree grows up to 60m tall, and has J–shaped, spray-like branches. It has dark grey to reddish brown bark that tears off in long fibrous strips. The leaves are scale-like and are closely pressed to the stem in overlapping shingled arrangements. They are glossy yellowish green and turn brown with age. The cones are egg shaped, about 1cm long and appear in loose clusters. They become woody and brown with age.

**Where do I find this species?**

**Distribution** All along the coast of BC, including Vancouver Island, at low to medium elevations.

**Habitat** Cedar grows in moist forests, valleys, and low-lying, wetter areas. Ask the forest company tenure holder for your area for more information on where to find this tree, as many areas are now plantations.

**How is the species used?**

Commercially, the most popular NTFP product is as floral greenery, particularly at Christmas. The cones are very small, but can be desirable as a floral product or decoration when presented in clumps on the branches. Another commercial use for cedar foliage is for oil extraction.

Cedar is termed the 'tree of life' by the coastal Aboriginal peoples, because of its many uses. The trunk, branches, bark and roots have been used since time immemorial – and continue to be used - for a multitude of uses, including clothing, building materials, arts and spiritual purposes.

**When should I harvest?**

For Christmas greenery, the purchase period is late September to November.

**How should I harvest?**

You must check with the land manager (eg forest company, Aboriginal band) before harvesting boughs, and harvest only according to their requirements.

As is the case with other Christmas greenery, it is best to find a plantation of younger trees (10–25 years) for easier access to boughs of the proper quality. Boughs are cut in lengths of 27–36 inches (69-91cm) (24 inches (61cm) for garland length) and are sold in bulk to buyers. Each 'hand' should have 5–6 stems, and weigh 2–2.5 pounds. As with other Christmas greenery, ten hands are secured together to create a bale (see western white pine).

**How do I store and transport this product?**

If harvested in September, the boughs must be kept in a cooler (4–5 degrees Celsius) if being stored for any amount of time. Around mid-October when the temperature cools, the boughs may be kept outside, but should be covered to prevent sun damage. A shed is best for protection. The bales of boughs should be stacked on skids or pallets, with air spaces between the stacks to prevent the boughs from heating up.

**How much will I be paid?**

Buyers will pay around $0.20–0.30 per pound or $10 for a bale. For the special garland length they will pay slightly higher (about $0.35). See Winter Greenery introduction for value-added prices.
Maidenhair Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*)

**How do I identify this species?**
Maidenhair fern is rather delicate and small, to a maximum of about 24 inches (60cm) in height. The dark brown to purplish-black, erect stems divide into two, and these stems hold palmately branched fronds (the fronds are arranged on the stem similarly to fingers on a palm). The fronds ('leaves') are 4-16 inches (10–40cm) across and are comprised, like the other ferns, of many individual leaflets.

**Where do I find this species?**
**Distribution** Maidenhair fern is found along the entire BC coast at low to middle elevations.

**Habitat** Maidenhair fern grows best in shady, very moist areas. It is often found on rocky cliffs close to streams within the forest.

**How is the species used?**
Maidenhair fern is used in landscaping and horticulture.

**When should I harvest?**
For transplanting whole plants, the best time to maximize survival rates is in the late fall or winter after it starts to get cold and the plants go into dormancy. This period generally runs from November through to March.

**How should I harvest?**
Maidenhair fern can be difficult to harvest because it tends to grow on rocky, shallow-soiled outcrops. Be very careful when extracting the roots, and try to disturb both the roots and the surrounding ecosystem as little as possible.

As with the other ferns, ensure a central main root with fibrous roots remain. Shake the soil off the roots. If selling bare root, cut back the fronds, leaving about six inches or so of frond. If potting up to sell, you can leave the fronds on the plant to keep it attractive. The plants can be stored in burlap bags, in sawdust, or potted. It is very important that they do not dry out or freeze.

**Note** Maidenhair fern is often requested by nurseries but is not as common or abundant as other commercial ferns such as sword and deer fern, so it may be impacted more by harvesting activities. Further, as it tends to grow in riparian areas, it is not as common to find areas from which this fern can be salvaged prior to road, timber, or industrial development.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
The plants can be stored in burlap bags, in sawdust or potted. It is very important that they do not dry out or freeze. If selling bare root (see above), the plants can be stored for a month or so in the winter before selling to the buyer. You must protect the roots from drying out or freezing and this can be done best with bark mulch. In a pile of bark mulch (an outside location works well), dig long shallow trenches. Place the roots of the ferns into the trench, and fill in with more mulch. To transport, pull ferns out of the bark mulch and place in burlap bags. If storing for a short time, put the root balls in burlap bags and place the filled bags on pallets in an area protected from freezing. Do not let the roots dry out completely.

If selling in pots, the pots can be left outside; there is no need for a shed. Ensure that the pots do not dry out (water when needed) or freeze (place pots in bark mulch if it is very cold). To transport, simply load pots into a van or truck in a single layer.

**How much will I be paid?**
For selling bare-root plants in bulk, the price is usually about $0.65–$0.85 per fern. Potted ferns generally sell to wholesalers or retailers for around $3.50 for a one gallon pot to $7.50 for a two gallon pot.

**Latin Name:** *Adiantum pedatum*
**Common Name:** Maidenhair fern
**Life Form:** Fern
**Plant Part Used:** Whole plant
Deer Fern (*Blechnum spicant*)

**How do I identify this species?**
Deer fern is evergreen with fronds that are long and often recumbent (lay on the ground). Deer fern is distinctive from other local ferns, in that it has two types of fronds: the vegetative fronds droop over, while the reproductive fronds are very upright in the center of the fern, and have spores on the back. Do not expect to see the reproductive fronds on every plant. Both the vegetative and reproductive fronds have 35–70 pairs of leaflets, which produce an overall lance-like shape (each frond is narrowed at the top and at the bottom). Every leaflet is attached to the stem with its full base.

**Where do I find this species?**

**Distribution** You will find deer fern along the entire BC coast at low to subalpine elevations.

**Habitat** Deer fern is fairly abundant in moist forests on the coast. It can be found in young to old growth forests, though is much more common in mature rather than very young forests. It likes moisture, and grows in moist depressions within the forest, and in riparian areas.

**How is the species used?**
Deer fern is very popular in the horticultural and landscaping industry.

**When should I harvest?**
For transplanting whole plants, the best time to maximize survival rates is in the late fall or winter after it starts to get cold and the plants go into dormancy. This period generally runs from November through to March.

**How should I harvest?**
Using a sharp spade, cut around the fern – some of the roots can be cut through as long as there is a central mass of main root and fibrous root remaining. Shake the soil off of the roots. If selling bare root, cut back the fronds, leaving approximately 2–4 inches (5–10cm) of frond to protect the fiddleheads. If potting up to sell, you can leave the fronds on the plant to keep it attractive, though these will usually die back after potting. ‘Bare root’ balls should be approximately fist-sized for a 1 gallon pot, which is the most common size. Deer fern rhizomes are smaller than sword fern and almost never need to be split.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
The plants can be stored in burlap bags, in sawdust or potted. It is very important that they do not dry out or freeze. If selling bare root (see above), the plants can be stored for a month or so in the winter before selling to the buyer. You must protect the roots from drying out or freezing and this can be done best with bark mulch. In a pile of bark mulch (an outside location works well), dig long shallow trenches. Place the roots of the ferns into the trench, and fill in with more bark mulch. To transport, pull ferns out of the bark mulch and place in burlap bags. If storing for a short time, put the root balls in burlap bags and place the filled bags on pallets in an area protected from freezing. Do not let the roots dry out completely.

If selling in pots, the pots can be left outside; there is no need for a shed. Ensure that the pots do not dry out (water when needed) or freeze (place pots in bark mulch if it is very cold). To transport, simply load pots into a van or truck in a single layer.

**How much will I be paid?**
For selling bare-root plants in bulk, the price is usually about $0.60–$0.85 per fern. Potted ferns generally sell to wholesalers or retailers for around $3.50 for a one gallon pot to $7.50 for a two gallon pot.
How do I identify this species?
This fern grows up to 5 feet (1.5m) tall with erect, leathery, dark green fronds (leaves) that form a crown from a stout, woody base. Its leaves are lance-shaped and compound with alternate leaflets. The leaflets are attached to the stem at one single spot, with a small lobe at the bottom and a pointed tip, giving them the appearance of tiny swords.

Where do I find this species?
Distribution You will find sword fern all along coastal BC, but more abundantly in the south. It grows at low to middle elevations.

Habitat Sword fern can be quite abundant in moist forests. It grows in young to old growth forests, though it is much more common in mature forests. It grows well in riparian areas, particularly on stream and river slopes.

How is the species used?
Sword fern is used in the horticultural and landscaping industries, and as with the other ferns, is a good option for native plant salvage because it survives transplanting well and is slow to propagate. Sword fern is very popular because it is relatively hardy and is good for restoration and landscape projects.

When should I harvest?
For transplanting whole plants, the best time to maximize survival rate is in the late fall or winter after it starts to get cold and the plants go into dormancy. This period generally ranges from November through to March.

How should I harvest?
Using a sharp spade, cut around the fern. Some of the roots can be cut through as long as there is a central mass of main root and fibrous root remaining. Shake the soil off of the roots. If selling bare root, cut back all the fronds, leaving about 3–5 inches (8-13cm) of frond – this makes it easy to handle the plants and the remaining frond material helps to protect the fiddleheads. Check with the buyer prior to harvesting to determine the size of rhizome (‘root’) required. If it is for a 1 gallon pot (the most common) the rhizome ball needs to be about the size of a fist. Sword fern rhizomes will often be much larger than this. Confirm with the buyer that it is okay to split rhizomes – some buyers will not want this, as it affects the appearance of the following year’s growth. To split, use a very sharp machete and slice vertically through the rhizome. There should be a minimum of 3 intact fiddleheads on each cut piece, which now becomes an individual ‘bare root’ plant. If the buyer does not want split plants, simply harvest smaller ferns (the frond size is an indication of the rhizome size). If potting up to sell, you can leave the fronds on the plant to keep it attractive, though these fronds will often die back after transplanting.

How do I store and transport this product?
The plants can be stored in burlap bags, in sawdust or potted. It is very important that they do not dry out or freeze. If selling bare root (see above), the plants can be stored for a month or so in the winter before selling to the buyer. You must protect the roots from drying out or freezing and this can be done best with bark mulch. In a pile of bark mulch (an outdoor location works well), dig long shallow trenches. Place the roots of the ferns into the trench, and fill in with more bark mulch. To transport, pull ferns out of the bark mulch and place in burlap bags. If storing for a short time, put the root balls in burlap bags and place the filled bags on pallets in an area protected from freezing. Do not let the roots dry out completely.

If selling in pots, the pots can be left outside; there is no need for a shed. Ensure that the pots do not dry out (water when needed) or freeze (place pots in bark mulch if it is very cold). To transport, simply load pots into a van or truck in a single layer.

How much will I be paid?
For selling bare-root plants in bulk, the price is usually about $0.65–$0.85 per fern. Potted ferns generally sell to wholesalers or retailers for around $3.50 for a one gallon pot to $7.50 for a two gallon pot.
Wild Rose (*Rosa spp.*)

**How do I identify this species?**
Wild rose can be up to 10 feet (3m) tall with arching branches. Most of the stems have prickles that vary in size and number, depending on the species. The leaves are alternate, and are divided into an odd number of leaflets (eg 5–7). The leaflets are egg-shaped to elliptical, and are toothed (jagged or sharply pointed edges). The flowers are slightly different on each species and up to 3 inches (8cm) across, pale pinkish to pink or white. The fruits – rosehips – are orange to bright or purplish red, and are round to pear shaped with several hairy seeds inside.

**Where do I find this species?**
**Distribution** All along coastal BC, including on Vancouver Island. Wild rose is generally found at low to middle elevations.

**Habitat** Wild rose is found in a variety of habitats, from within the forests to clearings such as clearcuts and meadows. It is found along stream banks, roads, and lakes, and grows best in open habitats.

**How is the species used?**
Wild rose is used in the landscape and horticulture industry. It is a beautiful and hardy plant. The rose hips produced by wild roses in the summer are high in vitamin C.

**Caution** Eat only the flesh, avoiding the inner seeds.

**When should I harvest?**
Roses should be dug up when dormant, from November to March.

**How should I harvest?**
Rosa species send out stolons (stems which grow horizontally like roots), which can be cut through when digging around the plant. Shake soil off of the roots. Separate the stems and trim down the tops. Trimming not only helps the survival rate, but it greatly increases the attractiveness of the plant. Leave about one foot total of roots (whether one or a few roots) and one foot high stems. If selling a number of plants at one time, ensure that all plants are cut to a uniform height. Store in a cool moist place for bare root plants, or pot up into one or two gallon pots.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
As with the ferns, if selling bare root, the plants can be stored for a month or so in the winter before selling to the buyer. You must protect the roots from drying out or freezing and this can be done best with bark mulch. In a pile of bark mulch (an outside location works well), dig long shallow trenches. Place the roots of the roses into the trench, and fill in with more bark mulch. To transport, pull plants out of the bark mulch and place in burlap bags.

If selling in pots (see above), the pots can be left outside; there is no need for a shed. Ensure that the pots do not dry out (water when needed) or freeze (place pots in bark mulch if it is very cold). To transport, simply load pots into a van or truck in a single layer.

**How much will I be paid?**
A wholesaler will pay about $2.50 to $4 for a one gallon potted shrub. A retailer may pay as much as $5 to $15. Quality will be very important.
Salmonberry  (*Rubus spectabilis*)

**How do I identify this species?**
Salmonberry grows in thickets, with erect branches up to 4m tall, though the average is about 5 feet (1.5m). Older branches have shredding, light-coloured bark and the occasional prickle. The leaves, like other Rubus, are compound, made up of three sharply-toothed leaflets; if the top (middle) leaflet is folded back, the bottom two leaflets create a butterfly shape. The flowers are very bright pink to reddish-purple. The fruits look similar in shape to a raspberry, and range in colour when ripe from golden yellow to very dark red.

**Where do I find this species?**
**Distribution** Salmonberry are very common all along coastal BC, from low up to sub-alpine elevations.

**Habitat** Salmonberry thrive in wet areas – streamsides, lake edges, depressed areas within forests, and also on disturbed sites.

**How is the species used?**
Salmonberry plants can be used in the horticulture and landscape industry. As with all transplants, have a buyer lined up before digging the plants. Salmonberry also produces sweet berries in the summer (see Summer Berries section).

**When should I harvest?**
The salmonberry plant should be dug when it is dormant, from November to March.

**How should I harvest?**
Salmonberry, like the rose, also sends out stolons, which can be cut through when digging around the plant. Shake soil off of the roots. Separate the stems and trim down the tops as with wild rose. Leave about one foot total of roots (whether one or a few roots) and one foot high stems. If selling a number of plants at one time, ensure that all plants are cut to a uniform height. Store in cool moist place for bare root plants, or pot up into one or two gallon pots.

**How do I store and transport this product?**
If selling bare root (see above), the plants can be stored for a month or so in the winter before selling to the buyer. You must protect the roots from drying out or freezing and this can be done best with bark mulch. In a pile of bark mulch (an outside location works well), dig long shallow trenches. Place the roots of the salmonberry into the trench, and fill in with more bark mulch. To transport, pull plants out of the bark mulch and place in burlap bags.

If selling in pots (see above), the pots can be left outside; there is no need for a shed. Ensure that the pots do not dry out (water when needed) or freeze (place pots in bark mulch if it is very cold). To transport, simply load pots into a van or truck in a single layer.

**How much will I be paid?**
A wholesaler will pay about $2.50 to $4 for a one gallon potted shrub. A retailer may pay as much as $5 to $15. Quality will be very important.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### APPENDIX 1

**Overview of Species and Harvesting Times**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Species</th>
<th>Common Names</th>
<th>Spring</th>
<th>Summer</th>
<th>Fall</th>
<th>Winter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abies amabilis</td>
<td>Amabilis fir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abies lasiocarpa</td>
<td>Subalpine fir</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adiantum</td>
<td>Maidenhair fern</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fronds</td>
<td>Fronds</td>
<td>Whole plant</td>
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<tr>
<td>aleuticum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Whole plant late fall</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Blechnum spicant</td>
<td>Deer fern</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fronds</td>
<td>Fronds</td>
<td>Whole plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Whole plant* late fall</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boletus spp</td>
<td>Boletes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mushroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantharellus spp</td>
<td>Chanterelle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mushroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornus canadensis</td>
<td>Bunchberry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cornus stolonifera</td>
<td>Red-osier dogwood</td>
<td>Branches except growing season</td>
<td>Branches</td>
<td>Branches</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaultheria shallon</td>
<td>Salal</td>
<td></td>
<td>Branches except growing season</td>
<td>Branches</td>
<td>Branches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahonia nervosa</td>
<td>Dull Oregon grape</td>
<td></td>
<td>Branches except growing season</td>
<td>Branches</td>
<td>Branches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Morchella spp</td>
<td>Morel</td>
<td>Morel</td>
<td>Mushroom</td>
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<td>Pinus monticola</td>
<td>Western white pine</td>
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<tr>
<td>Polystichum munitum</td>
<td>Sword fern</td>
<td>Fronds</td>
<td>Fronds</td>
<td>Whole plant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Whole plant late fall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa spp</td>
<td>Wild rose</td>
<td>Hips</td>
<td>late summer</td>
<td>Whole plant</td>
<td>Whole plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rubus leucodermis</td>
<td>Blackcap raspberry</td>
<td>Berries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubus ursinus</td>
<td>Blackberry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rubus discolor</td>
<td>Himalayan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Salix spp</td>
<td>Pussy willow</td>
<td>Branches</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Thuja plicata</td>
<td>Western redcedar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tricholoma magnivelare</td>
<td>Pine mushroom</td>
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<td>Mushroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vaccinium spp</td>
<td>Huckleberry</td>
<td>Berries</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wild Blueberry</td>
<td></td>
<td>Berries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various species</td>
<td>Mosses</td>
<td></td>
<td>Wet, for hanging baskets</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Dry, for crafts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2

References


Isaac, Leo A. 1945. Sustained Yield of Swordfern. Forest Research Notes No. 33. USDA PNW Forest Station. USA.


Internet Resources

Centre for Non-Timber Resources http://www.royalroadsa/cntr
A source of information, searchable databases and downloadable documents for all aspects of NTFPs, including harvesting, selling, stewardship, law & policy, upcoming workshops and events, and much more.

Institute for Culture and Ecology http://www.ifcae.org/
Includes links, downloadable reports and updates on projects such as community-based inventory.

National Aboriginal Forestry Association (NAFA) http://www.nafaforestry.org/
A source of information on Aboriginal issues in forestry, including tools for stewardship, business development, forest management, policy and advocacy, education and employment. Full reports available include “Value-added Forestry and Aboriginal communities: The Perfect Fit”, which includes a section on NTFPs.

Mushrooms; NTFPs of British Columbia
http://bcmushrooms.forrex.org/ntfp/
This site brings together the scientific and technical information on the provinces NTFP mushrooms. It describes in detail the characteristics of each mushroom including its morphology, synonyms, common names, ecology, habitats, and look-alikes. It also provides distribution maps and interesting facts about each mushroom.

National Herb & Spice Coalition
Provides extensive directories, links, definitions and news items relating to both farmed and wild-crafted herb, spice, and natural health products.

Native Plant Society of British Columbia.
http://www.npsbc.org/
Provides information on native plants, particularly for landscape and restoration. The society emphasises awareness and protection of the plants and their habitats.

Small Woodlands Program of BC
A Guide to Agroforestry in BC which provides information on incorporating NTFPs into forest management and development.

United Plant Savers
www.plantsavers.org
A non-profit organisation which works to protect native medicinal plants. Includes a newsletter and a list of species at risk.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Special Forest Products
http://www.sfp.forprod.vt.edu/special_fp.htm
This site is produced by the Virginia Tech Department of Wood Science and Forest Products, the USDA Forest Service Southern Research Station and the Top of the Ozarks RC&D in Missouri. The purpose is to disseminate information on NTFPs and markets, and is designed for harvesters, growers, marketers, processors, and end-users. There is also information provided on relevant workshops and publications. This has the potential to be an excellent site but it is based in the US, and the information is limited thus far.

Washington State University Special Forest Products.
http://thurston.wsu.edu/Forest%20Products/forest_products.htm
A very good site with specific information regarding what special forest products are, and how they are best harvested and marketed.