

Brenda Commander - Tribal Chief
Susan Young - Editor

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HBMI Natural Resources Department



Gathering the Muskrat Root

Sweet Flag, *Acorus Calamus*, Calamus or Muskrat root, are all names for the wetland plant that has been used as medicine by the Maliseets for generations for the treatment and prevention of colds. The underground stems or *rhizomes* were also once used to make a popular gingery candy and the leaves have been used since ancient times as a sweet smelling floor covering.



On Monday, October 16, 2001 David Lombard, Susan Young, Christina Desiderio and Ryan Greenlaw of the Natural Resources Department were fortunate to accompany Elder Charles (Wimpy) Solomon of Kingsclear First Nation, Imelda Perley, HBMI Language Coordinator, and Barb Flewelling of Kings-

clear to the place in Mars Hill where Elder Solomon has been gathering the muskrat root for many years.

The Natural Resources Department donated the muskrat root that they gathered to Imelda and the Language program so that it would be shared with the elders.

Hopefully the gathering of the muskrat root will become an annual event and more tribal members will take the opportunity to go out and gather the medicine.

Our special thanks go out to Elder Solomon and Imelda for teaching us about the muskrat root.

See related story on page 4

Who am I?

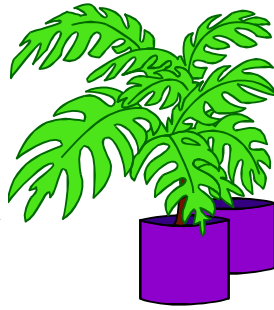
While out and about this fall our department members have had a couple of unusual bird sightings. Can you identify them? (see page 2 for answers)



- a. woodcock
- b. snipe
- c. timberdoodle
- d. lunch

Plant Safety

Now that winter is here and we're spending more time indoors, it's a good time to take a look at the plants in your home. While plants improve air quality and the overall look and feel of your home, some plants can harm children and pets.



Here are some helpful hints to make your home a safer one:

- ☞ Remember children often go after brightly colored plants and berries frequently putting them in their mouths.
- ☞ Teach your children not to touch plants or put them in their mouths.
- ☞ Keep all plants out of the reach of children. They can choke on any part of a plant.

- ☞ Find out what types of plants you have in your home. The local greenhouse, garden center or agricultural extension office can help with this.

If a child puts a piece of plant in their mouth:

- Stay Calm
- Carefully remove all pieces
- Find out the name of the plant
- Call the Maine Poison Center at 1-800-442-6405

This information gathered from the Maine Medical Center and the Maine Poison Center, Portland, Maine

Harmful Plants **

INDOORS

Amaryllis	Ficus
Caladium	Hyacinth
Calla lily	Larkspur
Chrysanthemum	Mistletoe
Cyclamen	Oleander
Dieffenbachia	Philodendron
Elephant's Ear	Poinsettia
English Ivy	Pothos

Safe Plants **

INDOORS

African violet	Creeping Jenny	Pepperomia
Aluminum plant	Easter Lily	Piggyback Plant
Baby's tears	Gardenia	Prayer Plant
Begonia	Grape Ivy	Rubber Plant
Boston Fern	Hens & Chicks	Snake Plant
Bridal Veil	Jade Plant	Spider Plant
Christmas Cactus	Lipstick Plant	String of Hearts
Coleus	Mother-in-law Tongue	Swedish Ivy
Corn Plant	Nasturtium	Umbrella Plant
Creeping Charlie	Parlor Palm	Wandering Jew

**** This is just a partial list of the most common plants found in the home.**

For more information contact your local poison control center, or agricultural extension office.

Next issue we'll concentrate on the plants commonly found outside the home

Who Am I? answers

Bird # 1 - This one is a little tricky. No it's not a dove, it's an albino Robin. The robin we're most used to seeing looks like this.



Bird # 2 a.) Snipe. Yes these birds really do exist. They are more than just the hoax of the "snipe hunt". They are often seen performing their aerial displays at dusk.



MERCURY Reduction, Recycling & Safety

We' ve talked to you a lot about mercury in our newsletters this year (See Dec. 2000, June 2001, and Sept 2001 issues). The enclosed Medux-
nekeag River profile also talks about mercury on page 6; *Is it safe to eat the fish?* So you probably know that mercury contaminates our environment, and can affect our health through the fish we eat. Here are some of the ways **you can help reduce mercury in the environment.**

Reduction When you purchase household products, read the label. Try to avoid buying products with mercury when substitutes are available. Fluorescent light bulbs are a good example of how protecting the environment is never simple. Fluorescent bulbs conserve energy. But they also contain mercury! They reduce air pollution and lowers your electric bill. (Unfortunately, there are currently no substitute energy-saving light bulbs available.)

Recycling Many household products contain mercury (thermometers, fluorescent lights, button

cell batteries, clothes irons with automatic or tilt shutoff *and many others*). Thankfully, mercury recycling is coming to Maine and soon many areas will be accepting mercury containing products for recycling. Some of these products you may want to recycle at the end of their useful life span. Others, such as thermometers, should be replaced as soon as possible to avoid the risk of being exposed to mercury if these thermometers break.

Safety Mercury is toxic in very small quantities and volatilizes at room temperature. Even a small spill (1/2 teaspoon) indoors from a broken thermometer or fluorescent light bulb can raise mercury levels in the air to unhealthy levels.

If you break an item containing liquid mercury

- ✓ Open windows and doors to air out the room
- ✓ Use 2 pieces of stiff paper to scoop up the beads of mercury or an eyedropper or sticky tape **DO NOT USE YOUR BARE HANDS** and Never use a vacuum to clean up the spill!
- ✓ Place all clean up materials and contaminated carpet etc. in a sealable plastic container
- ✓ Take all materials to a household hazardous waste collection center or call Maine DEP 1-800-452-1942

Word Search

C Q R T O I Y T H A W S
 C H H I S D U L W A L L
 F O R C S O L S T I C E
 R L O I P E E F U C S E
 E L X C S P R U C E L T
 E Y R L K T J R M S E O
 Z B B E A R M S I K D U
 E W R T I O P A A A D F
 S N O W B A L L S T I U
 C V B N M L K F W I N D
 H I B E R N A T I N G M
 I A F G J R N L N G Q T

BEAR	ICE SKATING	SPRUCE
CHRISTMAS	ICICLE	THAW
FREEZE	SLEDDING	WIND
FURS	SLEET	WALL
HIBERNATING	SNOWBALLS	YULE
HOLLY	SOLSTICE	

For larger spills call the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) at 1-800-452-4664 immediately!

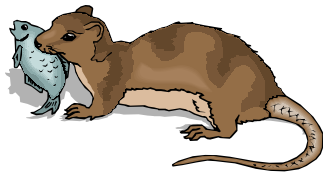
For more information on how to properly clean up mercury spills and help reduce mercury in the environment, contact Sharri Venno at ext. 215, and ask for DEP flyer "***Let' s Get Mercury Out Of Maine' s Environment.***"



Kilhus

Pihce Pihce, Wolastoqewiyik
ksinuhkhotuponik.

Iyuhpon Nutsipiluwet,
Pilickew. Itomuwiw ali
Kilhus pechihptuwat 'pisun.



Long ago, the People of the River were very sick. There was a healer from Kingsclear. It is said that the Muskrat brought Medicine.

Little Girl: Oooooo Mother, help me.

Little Woman: My poor daughter

Pilsqehsis: Oooooo Nikuwoss, wicuhkemin

Ehpitsis: Liqew ntus, liqew

Naskatahasu Nutsipiluwet, opocil ma 'tihilwon
pisun. Tokkiw neket peciyamat Kilhus.

Nutsipiluwet: (Dreaming) hears Kilhus calling to
her

Kilhus: Ckuwi, wicewin 'pisunihkuk.

Kwolankeyutomon Pisun: 'ciw weckuwapasihitit.

Nutsipiluwet: Woliwon Kilhus 'ciw Pisun,
kilhusuwask

Aki, Kilhus pechiptun kolusuwakon.

Ehpitsis: Na ntus, wiqeht yut pisun, kilhusuask

Pilsqehsis: Eci Mocipuhkok!

Aki, mec ote tokec Wolasto-
qewiyik woleyutomu-
niya Kilhusuwask, Ktihin?

Nitte Psiw.



The Healer was discouraged because she had
no Medicine, until Muskrat came to her.

Healer: (Dreaming) hears Muskrat calling to
her

Muskrat: Come with me to the Medicine Place.
Take care of this Medicine for the ones who are
not born yet.

Healer: Thank you Muskrat for the Medicine,
Muskrat Root.

You see, Muskrat brought good teachings.

Woman: Here my daughter take this medicine,
muskrat root

Little girl: Yech, it tastes bad!

You see, even today the People of the River
take care of the Medicine, Muskrat Root. Do
you have any?

Woliwon Imelda Perley for sharing this story.

Storm Drain Stenciling

Have you noticed the storm drains in Houlton?

Have you read the messages painted on them?

This summer, members of the Meduxnekeag Watershed
Coalition painted area storm drains with the message
“Don't Dump - Protect Your Water”. The idea behind
this project is to help educate and remind residents that
anything that goes down the storm drain goes directly
into the Meduxnekeag River.



*HBMI employee Sharri Venno and River Network's
Angie Reed stenciling a storm drain in Houlton*



Importance of Wetlands (part II)

Wetlands, where our quality of life begins. Think about it, wetlands contribute to our health, wealth and wildlife populations.

Wetlands help protect health and safety by

- ✎ Making clean drinking water.
- ✎ Preventing erosion from storms, especially along shorelines.
- ✎ Absorbing large quantities of water, reducing run off into streams and rivers, thereby providing flood control.
- ✎ Providing plants and soils that absorb carbon and in turn reduce the effects of global warming.
- ✎ Retaining large amounts of water that keep the ground moist and thereby reducing the risk and spread of fire.

Wetlands are key to a strong area economy

- ✎ As home to many plant, animal and bird species, they provide ample recreation activities including hunting, hiking, photography,

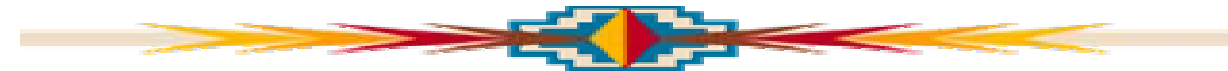
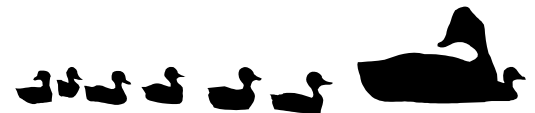
drawing, painting and bird watching.

- ✎ Fish spawn and thrive in wetlands providing great fishing opportunities.

Wetlands cater to the wild populations by

- ✎ Providing breeding, feeding and sheltered areas for many species of amphibians, reptiles, mammals, fish and birds.
- ✎ Wetlands also come in all shapes and sizes and go by many names. Wetlands are found in every state, from the coasts to the mountains and prairies. They are known as bogs and marshes, swamps, pocosins and playa lakes, riparian wetlands, prairie potholes and vernal pools. So next time you see a wetland, take a closer look, you might be surprised at what you'll find.

Source: National Wildlife Federation



Battery Handling Tips

The Christmas holidays are a time when lots of electronic gadgets are purchased. Since using rechargeable batteries helps reduce the amount of toxic chemicals in the environment, we felt this was a good time to share some handling tips for rechargeable batteries.

DO

- ✓ Read and follow charging instructions for your product. Instructions and charging times vary.
- ✓ Charge your new battery overnight (14-16 hrs) before using it. This will enable the battery to obtain its maximum charging capacity.
- ✓ Let a discharged battery cool to room temperature before charging. A warm battery will activate the cut off switch and your battery will not fully charge.

- ✓ Recharge batteries only when they are near to fully discharged. A discharged battery can be detected by a sharp drop in speed or power or a reduction in the number of power indicators.
- ✓ Refer to your product manual for instructions on how to recycle your used batteries.



DON'T

- ✓ Return a fully charged battery to the charger for an "extra boost". This will overcharge the cells and significantly shorten their lifespan.
- ✓ Leave your cellular phone, radio etc. in the charger when not charging (don't use the charger as a stand). Continuous charging will shorten the battery life.

For more information contact the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation at www.rbrc.org

A Fond Farewell



The end of October meant that it was time to say goodbye to summer technicians Christina Desiderio and Ryan Greenlaw.

During their time here, Christina and Ryan worked alongside David Lombard on many projects. They planted trees, caught fish for the mercury study, harvested the traditional muskrat root, and participated in the fish habitat assessment along with the team from Water Resources. All in all they helped the forestry / environmental department complete many projects this summer.

Ryan and Christina will be greatly missed and we wish them all the best.

Tribal Members Wanted

Beginning in January 2002, the Maine Forest Service will be offering Forest Fire Training for individuals 18 and older. If you'd like more information or would like to sign up for training - please contact David Lombard ext. 220 by Friday December 21, 2001 for the January 2002 sessions.



T	O	G	N	L	N	R	G	V	I	A	F	J	R	N	L	G	T
M	H	B	E	R	N	A	T	I	N	G	M						
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C	H	H	I	S	D	U	L	W	A	L	L						
C	O	R	T	O	I	Y	T	H	A	W	S						

Word Search Answers

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