

How You Can Help

Do's and don'ts to harvest and help preserve a tradition and sacred food of the Yakama Tribe.

DO

- Clean up after yourself when you leave.
- Respect the Handshake Agreement Area.
- Respect the Treaty of 1855.
- Leave unripe fruit on the plant.

Don't!



- Use mechanical devices that scars the bush & kills the berry.
- No illegal drugs of any kind.



Preserving the natural resources for future generations. It's remembering the future.

Taking Care of the Resources

Please report violations and infractions to:

Yakama Nation Fish/Wildlife Enforcement

P.O. Box 151
Tappanish, WA, 98948
(509) 865-5121

Mt. Adams Ranger District

2455 Hwy 141
Trout Lake, WA 98650
(509) 395-3400
TTY: (360) 891-5003

Gifford Pinchot National Forest

Forest Headquarters
10600 N.E. 51st Circle
Vancouver, WA 98682
(360) 891-5000
TTY: (360) 891-5003

Cowlitz Valley Ranger District

10024 US Hwy 12
PO Box 670
Randle, WA 98377
(360) 497-1100
TTY: (360) 497-1101

Monument Headquarters

42218 N.E. Yale Bridge Rd.
Amboy, WA 98601
(360) 449-7800
TTY: (360) 891-5003



Pacific Northwest huckleberries are from the *Vaccinium* species.

Protecting the Huckleberry Fields Forever



W'wnu is sacred among Yakama traditions

Tribal Significance of the Huckleberry

Huckleberries grew abundantly in the alpine meadows surrounding Pátho (Mt. Adams) and is one of the "first foods" that tribal people honor and thank the Creator for bringing the food resource back for them.

The "chief" of all the berries, huckleberry has great power. "They are the same as good words from the other world," says Yakama oral tradition. "They know everything; they do nothing wrong. They do right all of the time, night and day"

The huckleberries and chokecherries are sisters. Chokecherry is the oldest and holds great power in the lower country while the younger sister has power in the mountains. These sisters keep track of each day and each night. They keep track of all that is done, even to the sun.

As long as the tribal people showed respect for w'wnu, taking only what they needed and giving thanks for the sacred food, the berries would return each summer to help them prepare the winter storage.

A Handshake Preserves the Tribal Huckleberry Grounds



The Great Depression had taken its toll on everyone, driving 7,000 non-tribal men, women and children into the Twin Buttes area located on the Mount Adams Ranger District. Back then it was known as the Columbia National Forest.

They came to survive off the natural resources including the huckleberries that were picked and sold to canneries while others went house-to-house peddling the berries.

Tribal people complained that all of the newcomers were crowding them out of their own hunting and berrying grounds.

At the request of Yakama Nation Chief William Yallup, Forest Supervisor J.R. Bruckart met with the Tribal Council at Surprise Lake just below Pahlo (Mt. Adams) on Sept. 2, 1932.

Through an interpreter Chief Yallup said, "This is my land. I own it. It has always been so...Whites gave us a treaty that it should be so...Now, in the last two years, Whites, thick as the needles on the firs, have driven our tribal women from the berry fields...Yet our treaty signed in 1855, recognizes our right to hunt, fish and gather berries for all time in our usual and accustomed places."

In mid-August the Yakama people reached the Cascade crest in time of the ripening of the huckleberries. They knew exactly when to come and what sort of crop to expect on their arrival because some were sent in advance to gather fruit for the annual huckleberry feast.

Supervisor Bruckart Sets Aside Area

After listening to the tribe's concerns Bruckart said he could not exclude the whites but he

could set aside an area around Surprise Lake for the exclusive use of the tribal people. Signs were quickly posted reserving the area for tribal members. That oral treaty was confirmed by a handshake.

In 1991 a monument was unveiled on site at Surprise Lake where the handshake agreement took place. The huge cedar monument depicts that historical occasion.

Under the treaty and handshake agreement tribal people still gather, fish and hunt for subsistence and religious purposes in that location.



The carved monument reads: "May the Creator honor the memory and spirit of Chief William Yallup and the Columbia National Forest Rangers and all the other people that took part who had the wisdom and foresight to make the 1932 Handshake Treaty for the future generations."

The Creator made the Mother Earth, the mountains, streams, trees, animals, roots and berries and made it sacred. May the future generations honor and respect the work of the past leaders in working in harmony to create the Treaty. It is signed: Chief Frederick Ike, Sr.

Yakama people harvest plant and animal resources as they become available then thank the Creator for bringing that resource back to them in a "First Foods" ceremony.

In early spring they gather celebrities in the nearby hills before heading down to the rivers for the first salmon run in late April. When spring runoff made the rivers too high and muddy for fishing, they cached their catch and moved to root-digging grounds on the eastern slopes of the Cascades.

Following the receding snow and ripening of plants at higher elevations, women gathered more than 20 varieties of roots. In late June or early July falling river levels brought the tribal people back to the fishing stations temporarily.

You Can Help Preserve The Natural Resources

The different purple hues on huckleberries are found all along the route usually from early August to late September depending on abundance at various places, and can change from season to season.

In the fall of 1993, Yakama Council Chair, William Yallup, Sr., grandson of Chief Yallup urged the Forest Service to clear the undergrowth to restore huckleberry habitat fields in the Gifford Pinchot National Forest.

The problem is the encroachment by trees and years of fire suppression. But through cooperative agreements, the tribe

and Forest Service are working to help the huckleberry rebound.

Twin Buttes huckleberries grow on land considered of poor quality for timber. Huckleberry fields occupy sites that are marginal at best for timber production with the most productive berry fields occupying the poorest timber areas according to studies.

Permit System Allows No Use of Rakes

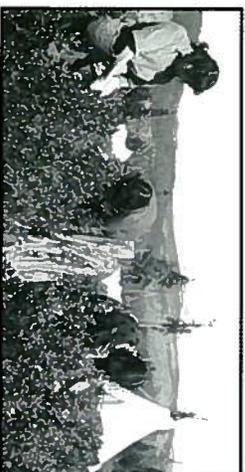
In 1993 the Gifford Pinchot National Forest was the first and only, national forest in Washington and Oregon to implement a berry picking permit system. These free permits were available from ranger stations and roadside stores near the forest boundaries. The system was an attempt to record the number of pickers and quantity of harvest of berries.

With the permit, pickers were allowed to gather up to three gallons per person, per season for personal use. Commercial pickers are also required to obtain a permit.

Commercial pickers harvest the berries quickly by raking the bushes instead of picking. Raking strips the bushes of berries and leaves, afterwards the berries are cleaned using a chute system to separate the leaves from the berries.

This method strips ripe and unripe berries often destroying the huckleberry and the bush as well. Although it seems to be a faster method of filling a bucket, it is detrimental to the plant's overall health. The permit makes it illegal to use rakes.

Please respect the "Handshake Agreement," as well as foregoing the rakes to harvest the precious berry and continue caring of the resources.



A 50's era photo of Yakama women picking huckleberries on Potato Hill on the closed area of the Yakama Reservation. Left-to-right, Saly Dick, Roseline Dick and Louise Weaseltail. Photo courtesy Yakama Nation Museum.