

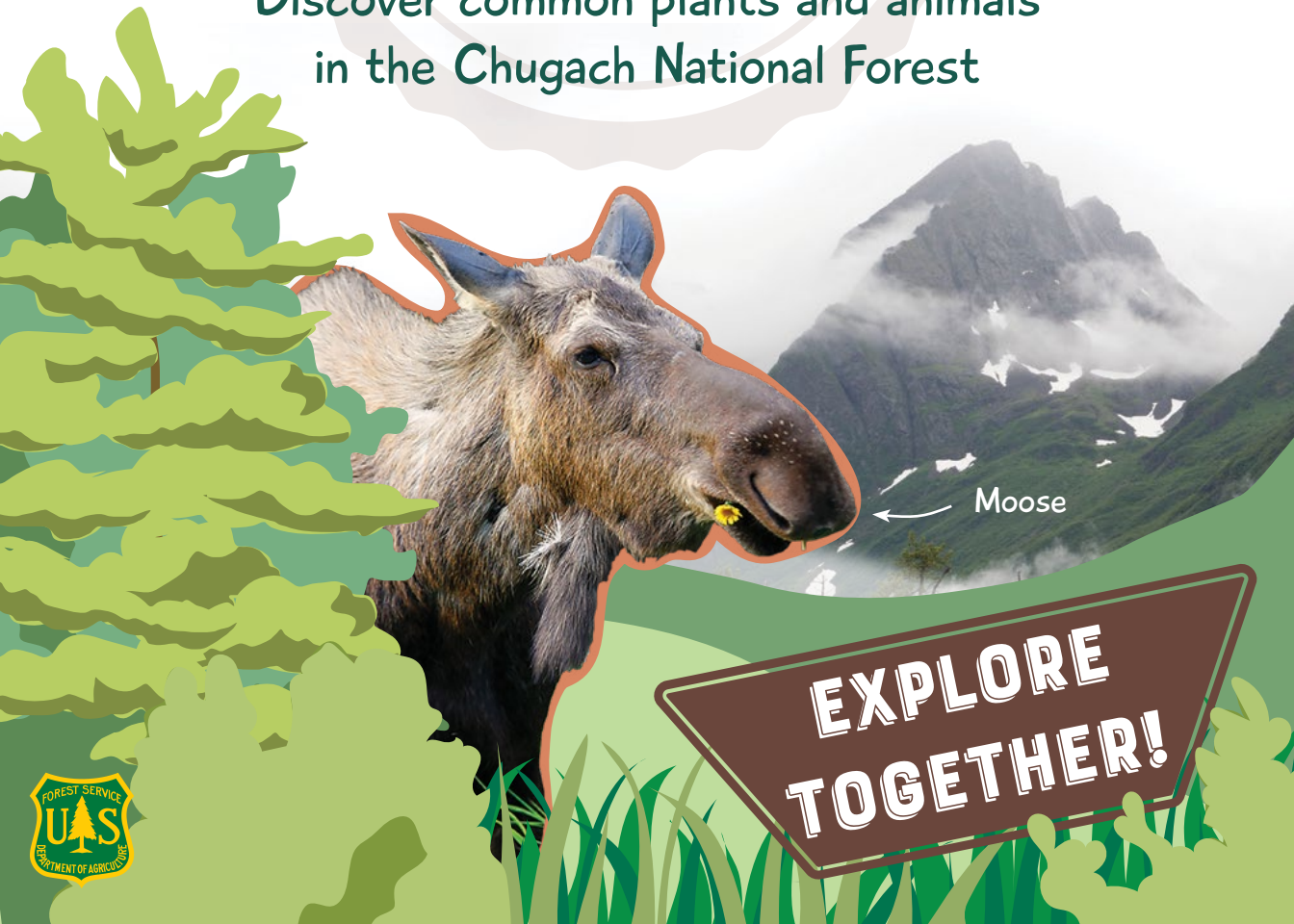


United States Department of Agriculture

# CHUGACH

## *Family Field Guide*

Discover common plants and animals  
in the Chugach National Forest



Moose

**EXPLORE  
TOGETHER!**



# Are you ready to explore the Chugach National Forest?

Dall Sheep



Milo Burcham

Using this guide, see how many plants and animals you can find. You can discover many different plants and animals across the Chugach National Forest. This booklet only includes a sample of each.

As you explore the Chugach National Forest, try to figure out how different plants and animals might be connected. Plants and animals depend on each other and the places they live. It's all connected!

Find a plant or animal not included in the book? Check out the back page to add your own notes and drawings.

Arctic Tern



Brian Logan

## FUN FACTS

- 30% of The Chugach National Forest is covered in ice.
- Copper River Delta is the largest contiguous wetland in North America.
- The Chugach National Forest provides habitat for 67 million salmon a year.



### map key

 Chugach National Forest  
(in the United States of America)

 Town or City

## Safety First

- Be prepared for changing weather conditions.
- Help may be far away so plan ahead before you go.
- Always be aware of your surroundings and give wildlife plenty of space.

# LARGE MAMMALS

## BEAR SAFETY

### 1. BE A NOISY HIKER

Sing or talk while hiking so you don't surprise a bear. Make up a fun song!

### 2. GIVE BEARS SPACE

Don't approach a bear - watch from a distance.

## Brown Bear

Their strong shoulders allow them to dig for bugs, plant roots and other food.



## Black Bear

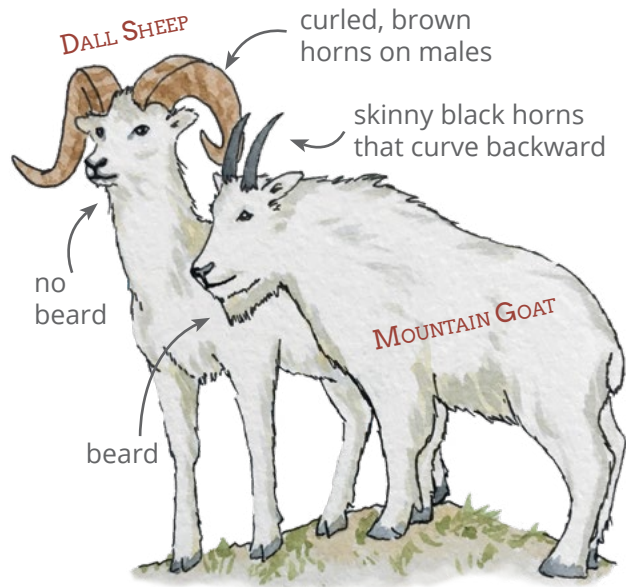
Black bears use their short, sharp claws to climb trees. Sows also send their cubs up trees as a babysitting strategy.



Both black bears and brown bears vary in color from blonde to brown to black.

## Dall Sheep

Dall sheep don't have beards and their horns are brown. Females, called "ewes" have short horns, but males, called "rams" have massive curled horns that they use to head-butt other rams.



## Mountain Goat

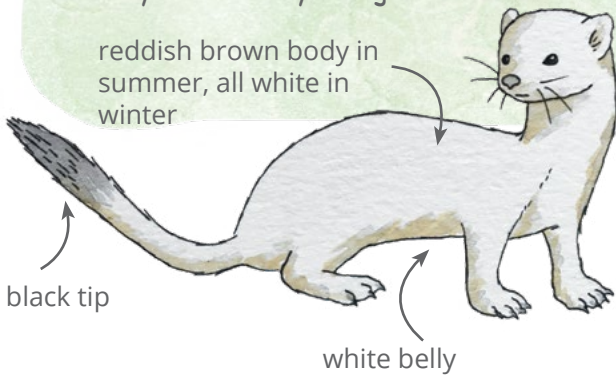
Mountain goats have skinny black horns that curve backward. They have shaggy white fur, which they shed in the summer. Look for a beard under their chins (females and kids too).

# SMALL MAMMALS

## Ermine

An ermine's fur coat changes color throughout the year: brown in the summer, white in the winter. Why do you think they change color?

reddish brown body in summer, all white in winter



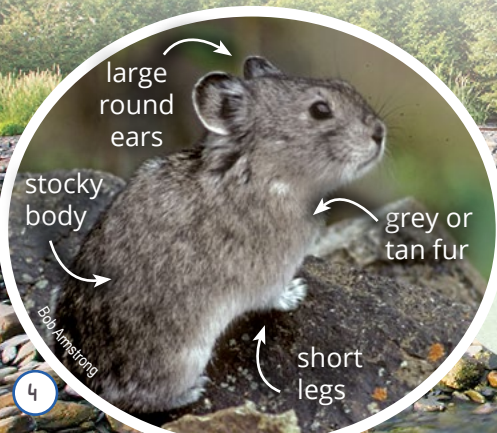
## Hoary Marmot

Hoary marmots love rocks! They burrow under rocks. They sit on top of rocks, watching for predators. Fur is even the color of rocks to help them blend in.



## Arctic Ground Squirrel

Arctic ground squirrels are super-hibernators! Scientists have discovered that a hibernating squirrel's body temperature can drop below the freezing point of water.



## Collared Pika

Pikas are related to rabbits and do not hibernate, so they are often busy gathering and storing food for the winter. Listen for their high-pitched "enk" call.

# BIRDS

thick beak

black body



## Bald Eagle

Immature (young) eagles are dark brown. A bald eagle doesn't have bright white head feathers until it is about five years old. There are more bald eagles in Alaska than in anywhere else in the U.S.



Ravens are larger than crows

## Raven

Ravens are scavengers, and will eat just about anything. They love elderberries in late summer! Ravens are playful and very smart, able to solve complex problems.



wing span up to 7.5 feet

dark brown body

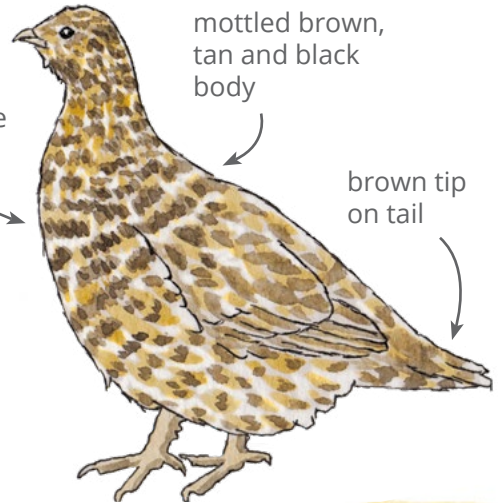
white tail

white head

chicken-like bird

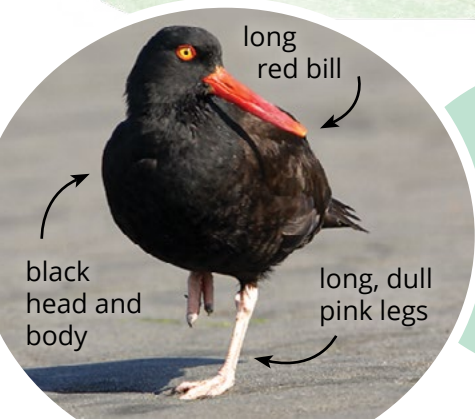
mottled brown, tan and black body

brown tip on tail



## Black Oystercatcher

Look for black oystercatchers hopping up and down rocks along the coast, searching for their favorite food - mussels.



long red bill

black head and body

long, dull pink legs

Because they depend on rocky coastlines, black oystercatchers are sensitive to disturbance. Please watch them from a distance.

## Spruce Grouse

During breeding season, male spruce grouse work hard to impress females. They fluff their feathers, stick their tail high in the air, and beat their wings so fast that it makes a low drumming sound. Can you flap your arms so fast that it makes a sound?

# SALMON

Salmon are born in fresh water, live in salt water, and then return to freshwater to spawn. This is called anadromous.

© mcbalme99



## Coho

Spawning coho salmon adults develop greenish-black heads and dark brown to maroon bodies.



## Chinook

Spawning salmon adults lose their silvery color and turn maroon to olive.

USDA Forest Service



© kathawk



## Chum

Spawning adults develop olive green back, maroon sides covered with irregular reddish purple bars. Males have canine-like teeth.



## Pink

Pinks are also known as "humpies" for the humped back that the males grow when they return to the river.

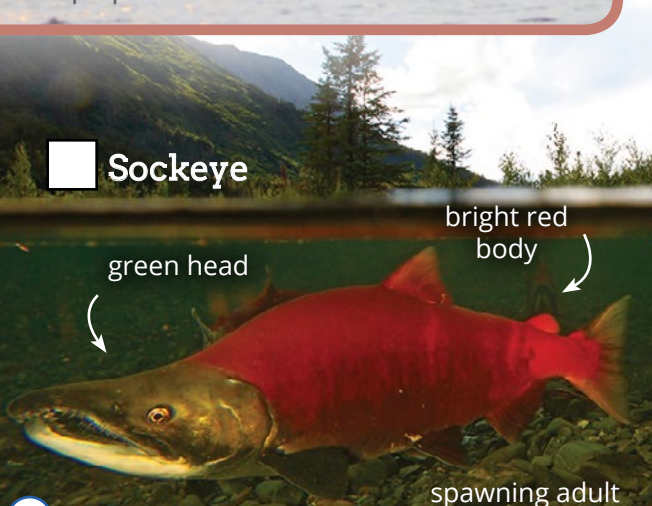
© Donna Pomeroy



## Sockeye

green head

bright red body



spawning adult

tallest finger,  
**king**

pointer finger,  
poke in the eye,  
**sockeye**

ring finger,  
**silver**  
ring

pinky,  
**pink**

thumb  
rhymes with  
**chum**

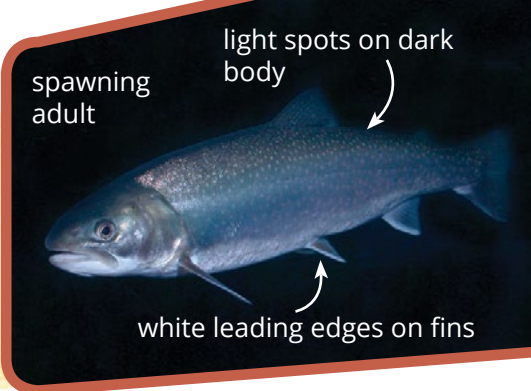


Remember salmon species using your hand!

# FISH

## Dolly Varden

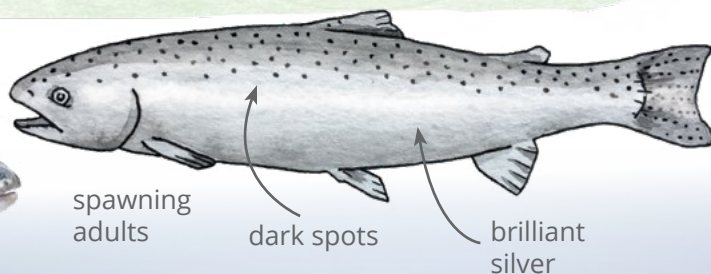
Though similar to trout, Dolly Varden are actually a char. To tell a char from a trout, look at their spots—char have light spots (white, yellow to red) on a dark body, while trout have dark spots (brown to black) on a light body.



## Rainbow Trout and Steelhead

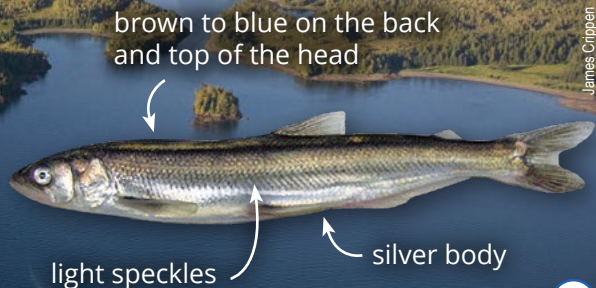
Rainbow trout and Steelhead start out as basically the same kind of fish, but as they grow up rainbow trout stay in freshwater streams and steelhead migrate to the ocean.

blue-green to olive



## Eulachon

Eulachon are also called "hooligan" and people dipnet for these popular subsistence fish. They are also called "candlefish" because when dried, the oil content is so high the fish can burn like a candle.



# WILDFLOWERS

## Nootka Lupine

Lupines take nutrients from the air and put them in the soil, which helps other plants grow.

pod-shaped flowers are blue with pink or white accents

long clusters of flowers



clusters of 5-8 narrow oval leaves



dark pink to purple flowers

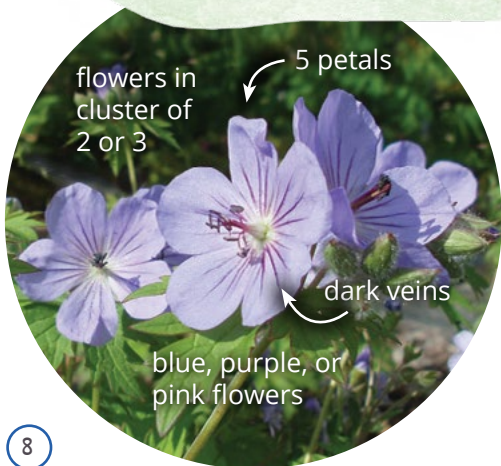
flowers grow in clusters up the red stem

## Fireweed

Flowers bloom at different times on the stem, starting at the bottom and ending at the top. Locals know the end of summer is coming when the fireweed finishes blooming.

## Wild Geranium

Wild geranium is also known as "wooly geranium" or "cranesbill," because sometimes the stalks in the middle of the flower are stuck together and look like the beak of a crane.



flowers in cluster of 2 or 3

5 petals

dark veins

blue, purple, or pink flowers

long narrow leaves



large blue or purple flower

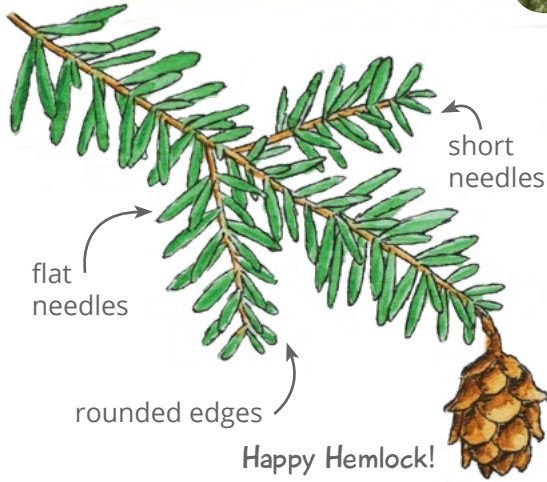
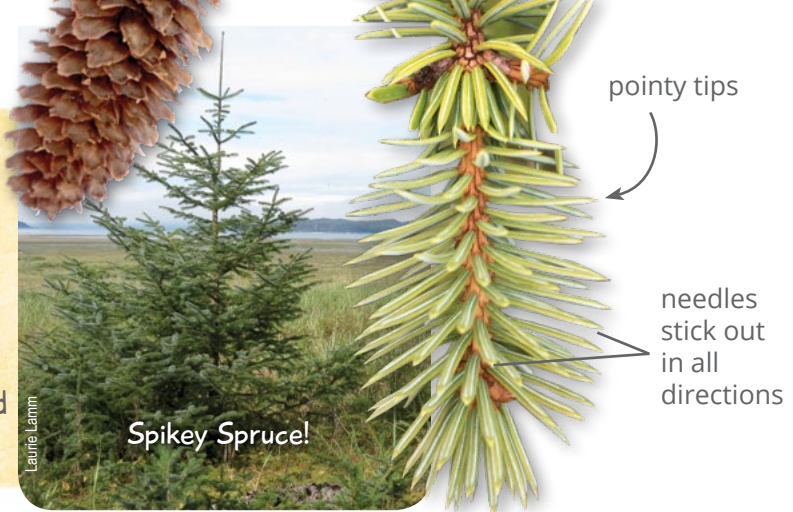
## Wild Iris

Wild iris can be found growing in wet areas all across northern parts of the world, from Alaska and Canada to Russia and China. It is sometimes called "beachhead iris," because it will grow in salty air on the beach.

# TREES

## Sitka Spruce

If you shake hands with a spruce, beware of its spiky needles! Despite its prickly reputation, spruce is a good food source for many animals, especially red squirrels who eat the seeds found between the scales of the cones.



## Hemlock (western and mountain)

If you shake hands with a hemlock, you'll be happy to find its flat needles have rounded ends. Many animals hide in the shady branches of a hemlock, which makes a good place for birds like chickadees to build a nest.

## Cedar (Alaska Yellow-cedar)

Cedar needles look and feel more like scales. These scaly cedar branches are an important winter food source for Sitka black-tailed deer.



## Black Cottonwood

Cottonwoods have thick catkins with seeds covered in white, fluffy hairs. Black bears climb cottonwood trees in the early summer to eat the catkins, or seed pods, which are like an energy-rich nut.

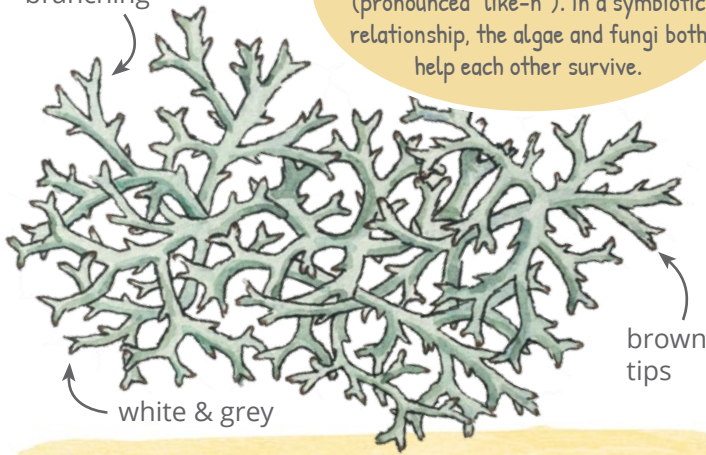


# LICHENS

## What's lichen?

Together, some fungi and algae create an organism called lichen (pronounced "like-n"). In a symbiotic relationship, the algae and fungi both help each other survive.

complex branching

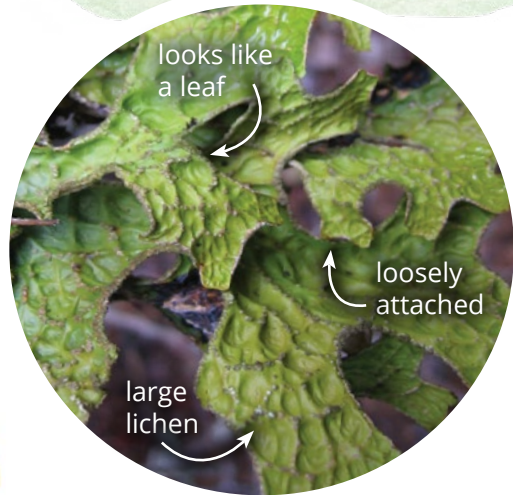


## Reindeer Lichen

Reindeer lichen grow close to the ground in open, wet habitats. Guess who likes to eat it? Caribou!

## Lung Lichen

Lung lichen grows on trees in really wet forests. Gently touch the lichen - does it feel like stiff leather?



# FUNGI

WARNING: Do NOT touch or eat anything without an expert's permission. Some mushrooms in the forest are poisonous.



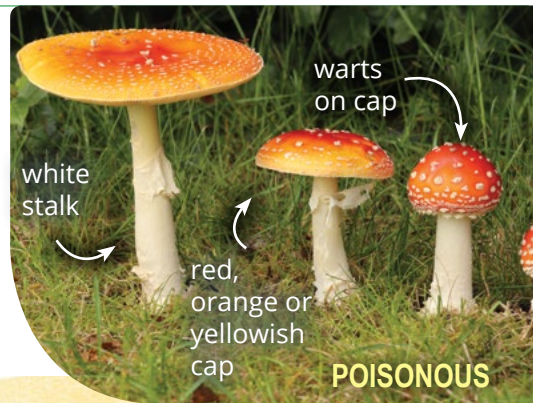
## King Bolete

Boletes feel kind of like a sponge underneath their caps. Besides being edible, you can use this mushroom to dye clothing a mustard yellow color.

color ranges from white, brown to reddish brown



Steve Trudell



**POISONOUS**

## Amanita Muscaria

This colorful mushroom is also called the "fly agaric" because it used to be used to control house flies. This iconic mushroom looks playful, but BEWARE. Amanitas are POISONOUS.

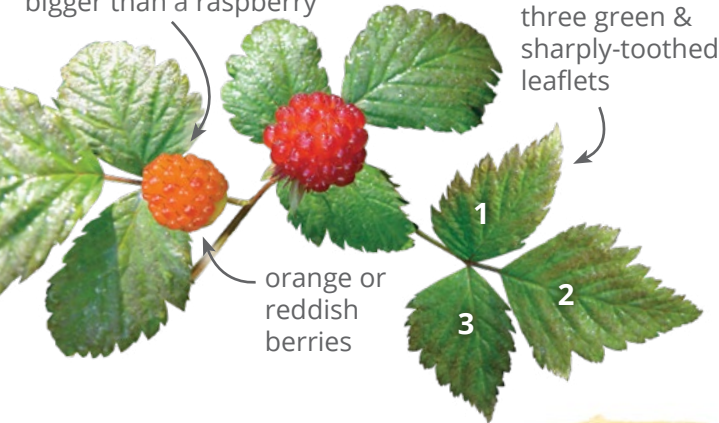
# BERRIES

**WARNING:** Do NOT pick or eat anything without an expert's permission. Some berries in the forest are poisonous.

## Salmonberry

Look familiar? These popular berries are related to raspberries, only juicier.

bigger than a raspberry



three green & sharply-toothed leaflets

orange or reddish berries

## Nagoonberry

Nagoonberries are hard when ripe and are best when cooked, including in jams and baked goods. Nagoonberry flowers can be used in salads.



red berry that looks like a raspberry

leaf has three leaflets with sharp-toothed edges.

grows close to the ground

small, light green leaves that turn reddish in fall



blue berries

## Blueberry

Berries from different bushes can taste differently, so sample a few bushes before you choose your picking area. Watch for bears, who love blueberries, too!



red berries

leaf looks like dinosaur footprint

messy-looking shrub

Bob Armstrong

## High Bush Cranberry

The fruits of high bush cranberry are enjoyed by both people and wildlife. Deer, beavers and moose eat the leaves while butterflies visit the flowers.

# NATURE NOTES

Find a plant or animal not included in the book? Add it on this page.  
This is your field guide so add notes, thoughts, and sketches.



*Interested in discovering  
even more plants and  
animals in the Chugach  
National Forest?  
Forest Service rangers are  
happy to suggest more  
in-depth field guides for  
the area.*



Produced by the Chugach National Forest and designed by Elise Wahl, Timberdoodle Studio.

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