



# To share and compare the ethnobotanical similarities between the indigenous Apsaalooke Nation and Mongolian people using traditional ecological knowledge systems

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### Introduction

As a result of colonization and loss of culture in indigenous tribes across the world, there is a dire need to document and share the Traditional Ecological Knowledge that Native tribes have practiced for thousands of years. The philosophy and principals that make up the majority of Indigenous spirituality is an interconnectedness with the land, plants and animals (Barnhart 2005). This deep understanding of relationship and reciprocity can teach all of us a lesson about living with the natural world. Using Native Science and Traditional Ecological Knowledge to document traditional medicinal plants, the information will help decolonize indigenous peoples across the world by rejecting colonial frameworks, revitalizing language and traditional knowledge, and reclaiming our right to be who we are (Ten Fingers 2005).



### Objectives

The objectives of this research are to

- Share and record knowledge about Mongolian Ethnobotany and Apsaalooke Ethnobotany
- Explore Traditional Ecological knowledge and Indigenous science in comparable systems
- Use Indigenous Research Methodologies to conduct fair and appropriate interviews with research partners
- Use Holistic Management Methodologies to ensure the support of the whole to be managed
- To build strong and meaningful relationships with Indigenous Mongolian people and the Apsaalooke Nation through knowledge exchange

### Methods

Over many decades, non-native researchers have gone into indigenous communities to record information about cultural practices and ways of life. Unfortunately, some of these researchers took this information and used it for the betterment of themselves, rather than the betterment of the people and peoples they studied (Bohensky 1999). Indigenous Research Methodologies ensure that the knowledge holder and community are treated with respect and reciprocity of knowledge.



Likewise, the Holistic Management methodology focuses on:

- What do people want?
- What are the tools?
- Testing Questions
- Plans and Actions
- Feedback Loops

Using these two methodologies, we sought to conduct fair and respectful interactions with Mongolian and Native (Crow) people, and to record ethnobotanical knowledge.

### Results

After recording and documenting traditional knowledge about medicinal plants in both Montana and Northern Mongolia, I have separated the information into two tables, the first is Apsaalooke plants, and the second is Mongolian plants. Both tables have five most useful plants (according to research partners), with their healing specialty, harvesting requirements, name in language, and the preparation of the plant.

Plant	Healing	Harvest	Apsaalooke name	Usage
Bear Root Lomatium disticum	Labor Restrict womb Menstrual flow	Hard to come by Shamans Fall harvest	Esa  (Hibernating bear story)	Roasted root Eat bark meat
Plantain Plantago virginicum	Cuts Open sores	Easily found Wild anyone can pick	Begeelish aubalay	Mash leaves Create poultice
Nettles Urtica dioica	Sweat ceremonies Arthritis	Easily found Wild Anyone can pick	Babaliatocha	Switch Acupuncture Boil water 2x for tea
Echinacea Echinacea angustifolia	Earaches Toothaches Mouth ulcers lesions	Easily found Wild Anyone can pick	Egigeshishbita  (Black root)	Burn root Steep tea Chew root
Yarrow Achillea millefolium	Stings Bites Burns Sore throat	Easily found Wild Fuzzy & puffy	Chibaapooshchishgota  (Chipmunk Tail)	Mash up leaves, create poultice Steep tea

Plant	Healing	Harvest	Mongolian name	Usage
Vansembuu Saussurea involucrata	Lungs Cough Colds	Hard to find Medicine man Prohibited to harvest	Vansembuu	Boiled Tea Fermented
Plantain Plantago virginicum	Stomach Cuts Blisters Swelling	Easily found Wild Anyone can pick	Plantain	Mash up as poultice
Nettles Urtica dioica	Pain Energy Dumplings	Easily found Wild Anyone can pick	Nettles	Acupuncture Boil x2 tea Leaves in food
White Mushroom Agaricus species	Childbirth aftercare Fever	Hard to find On mountain Grows in a circle	White Mushroom	Boiled in soup Drunk after birth
Rhubarb Rheum rhabarbarum	Stomach Gallbladder Cough Burns	Easily found Looks like wolf tongue	Choning hill  (Tongue of Wolf)	Boil root Tea Poultice

### Conclusion

After spending a summer month in the Darhad Valley in northern Mongolia, I am able to say there are strong similarities between the cultural practices of the Apsaalooke Nation in Montana, and the Mongolian people in the Darhad Valley. Both of these indigenous nations use stories to name and teach about plants, they leave offerings when digging certain plants, and both only take what is needed. The ethnobotanical knowledge of both nations is threatened, making learning and documenting traditional medicinal information more imperative than ever.



### References

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