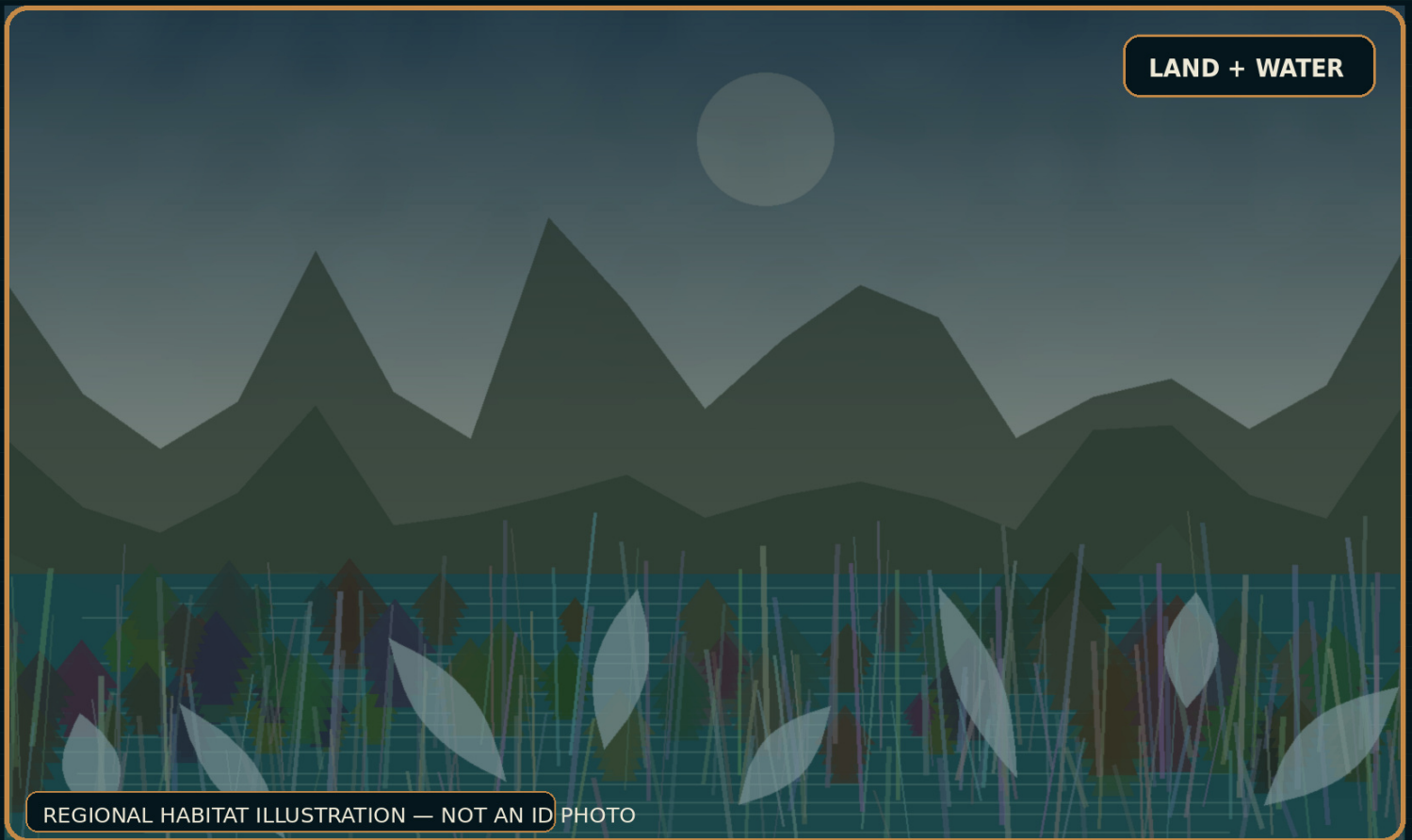


MAGHREB MEDITERRANEAN & ATLAS MOUNTAINS PLANT SURVIVAL GUIDE

Africa • USDA-EQUIVALENT ZONES 8-11 • KÖPPEN Csa / BSk



USEFUL

EDIBLE

MEDICINAL

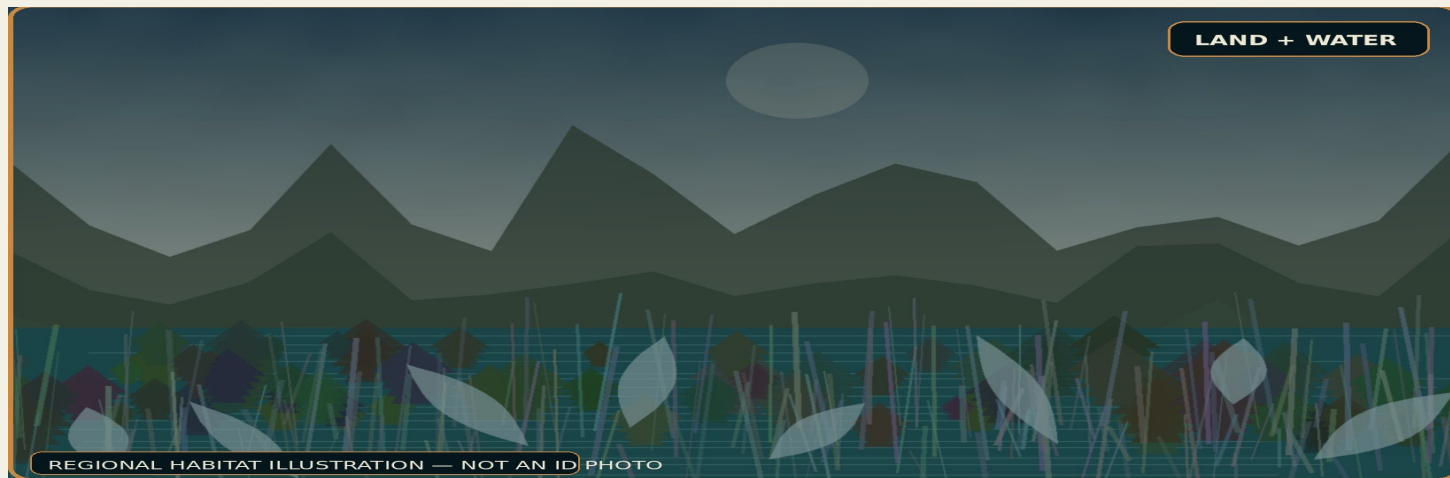
POISONOUS

IDENTIFY • EAT • BUILD • HEAL • AVOID

Illustrations show habitat and form; verify every plant with current regional photographs and expert sources.

REGION AT A GLANCE

A continental bioclimatic region, not a destination or a promise that every listed plant occurs at every site.



Continent: Africa USDA-equivalent hardiness: 8-11 Köppen: Csa / BSk

Regional habitat: Mediterranean scrub, cedar-oak mountain, wadi and coast

Zone warning: hardiness describes winter minimum temperature only; rainfall, heat, soils, fire, elevation and seasonality still control the flora.

FIELD PRIORITIES

- Use the continent, climate band and habitat as filters — never as proof of identity.
- Match at least three independent traits and rule out every dangerous look-alike before harvest.
- Treat water plants as both botanical and water-quality decisions; parasites, sewage and algal toxins can defeat correct identification.
- Take material from deadfall or abundant growth first. Roots, bark and whole plants are the most destructive harvests.
- Medicinal notes document traditional use only; the guide gives no dosing and does not replace medical care.

SURVIVAL STANDARD

A correct plant name is only the beginning. Also verify plant part, maturity, preparation, dose, contamination, legal access and local cultural protocol. When any one of those is uncertain, do not consume or medicate.

POSITIVE IDENTIFICATION AND PRACTICAL USE

The illustrations are form diagrams. The linked POWO and iNaturalist pages provide current photographs and taxonomic context.

1

1. PLACE

Confirm continent, elevation, water regime, soil and disturbance.

2

2. FORM

Tree, shrub, vine, herb, grass, sedge, palm, fern, succulent or aquatic.

3

3. LEAF

Arrangement, veins, edge, hairs, glands, sap, odor and underside.

4

4. STEM / BARK

Thorns, pith, nodes, buds, lenticels, fibers, latex and branching.

5

5. FLOWER / FRUIT

Petal count, inflorescence, fruit attachment, seed and maturity.

6

6. EXCLUDE

Name every dangerous look-alike and explain why it is different.

7

7. VERIFY

Use current regional flora, qualified local knowledge and several photos.

AUTOMATIC STOP LIST

No tasting to identify.
No unknown roots, bulbs or white umbels.
No unknown milky sap.
No raw wetland foods.
No medicinal dose experiments.
No smoke from unknown toxic wood.

USEFUL-PLANT HIERARCHY

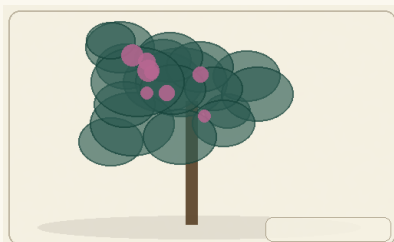
1. Deadfall and shed bark.
2. Abundant annual greens and fruit.
3. Pruned shoots and leaves.
4. Small stems from common thickets.
5. Roots, bark and whole plants only with permission and no safer substitute.

USEFUL PLANTS FOR TOOLS, FIRE AND SHELTER

Wood, fiber, tinder, bow-and-arrow components, friction fire, containers and construction.

HOLM OAK

USEFUL MATERIAL



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Quercus ilex

IDENTIFY: Evergreen leathery leaves, often pale beneath and variably toothed; acorns in cups.

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean woodland and rocky hills. Season: Acorns autumn; wood year-round.

SURVIVAL USE: Dense bow and handle wood, durable coals and acorns after repeated leaching.

CAUTION: Raw acorns are high in tannins; mold and species variation matter.

LOOK-ALIKES: Kermes oak is shrubbier and usually more spiny-leaved.

TASKS: bow wood, handles, fuel, food nut

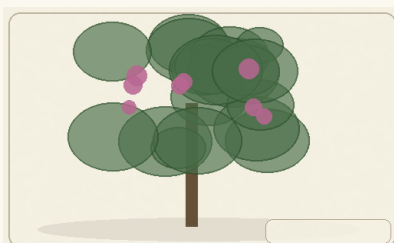
Verified images: POWO

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1

CORK OAK

USEFUL MATERIAL



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Quercus suber

IDENTIFY: Thick deeply fissured corky bark; leathery evergreen leaves; acorns.

HABITAT / SEASON: Western Mediterranean acidic soils and open woodland. Season: Acorns autumn; wood year-round.

SURVIVAL USE: Fallen cork insulates containers and floats; wood and acorns serve the same uses as other oaks after processing.

CAUTION: Commercial bark harvest is skilled and regulated; do not cut living cork.

LOOK-ALIKES: Holm oak lacks the massively corky bark.

TASKS: insulation, float, fuel, food nut

Verified images: POWO

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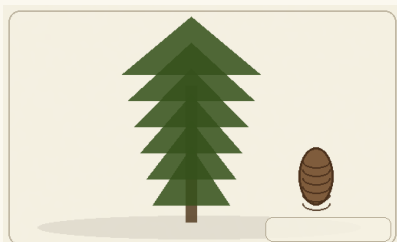
2

USEFUL PLANTS FOR TOOLS, FIRE AND SHELTER

Wood, fiber, tinder, bow-and-arrow components, friction fire, containers and construction.

ALEPPO PINE

USEFUL MATERIAL



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Pinus halepensis

IDENTIFY: Two slender needles per bundle; open irregular crown; cones often persist for years.

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean dry slopes, coast and fire-prone scrub. Season: Year-round.

SURVIVAL USE: Resinous kindling, poles, fuel and pitch-rich shavings; inner cone seeds are edible but small.

CAUTION: High fire risk and resinous smoke; do not damage living trees for pitch.

LOOK-ALIKES: Stone pine has larger umbrella crown and much larger edible seeds.

TASKS: poles, fuel, tinder, food seed

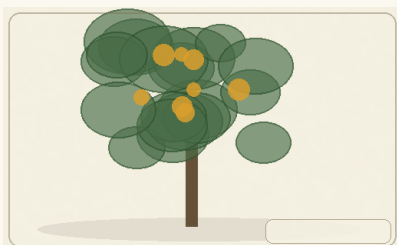
Verified images: POWO

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3

WILD OLIVE

USEFUL MATERIAL



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Olea europaea subsp. europaea var. sylvestris

IDENTIFY: Opposite narrow leathery leaves, silvery beneath; small white flowers; purple-black drupes.

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean scrub, rocky slopes and dry woodland. Season: Fruit autumn; wood year-round.

SURVIVAL USE: Dense hard wood for pegs, handles and friction-fire spindles; fruit becomes food only after controlled curing.

CAUTION: Raw fruit is intensely bitter; curing requires salt/water and hygiene. Do not improvise medicinal leaf extracts.

LOOK-ALIKES: Privet has broader leaves and clustered black berries.

TASKS: handles, bow drill spindle, food fruit

Verified images: POWO

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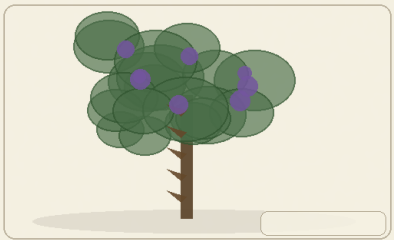
4

USEFUL PLANTS FOR TOOLS, FIRE AND SHELTER

Wood, fiber, tinder, bow-and-arrow components, friction fire, containers and construction.

ARID ACACIAS

USEFUL MATERIAL



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Vachellia / Senegalia spp.

IDENTIFY: Feathery compound leaves; paired or hooked thorns; yellow or white puffball flowers; pods.

HABITAT / SEASON: African, Arabian and Australian savannas, dry rivers and deserts. Season: Wood year-round; gum and pods seasonal.

SURVIVAL USE: Dense wood for bows, handles, stakes and hot coals; gums of selected species have documented food or adhesive use.
CAUTION: Species vary in cyanogenic chemistry and pod edibility. Thorns cause deep punctures.
LOOK-ALIKES: Prosopis/mesquite and other mimosoid legumes require pod and thorn comparison.
TASKS: bow wood, handles, fuel, adhesive

Verified images: POWO

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5

MATERIAL SELECTION SCREEN

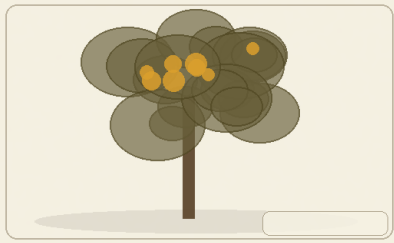
Before cutting, test straightness, grain, dryness, hidden rot, sap or smoke toxicity, and whether the species is protected. Match the material to the load: springy bow wood, straight shaft wood, soft dry hearth board, harder spindle, fibrous cordage, or resin-free cooking fuel.

LAND-BASED EDIBLE PLANTS

Documented foods on dry or seasonally dry ground. Preparation and contamination still matter.

CAROB

LAND FOOD



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Ceratonia siliqua

IDENTIFY: Leathery paired leaflets; thick dark brown flattened pods with hard seeds.

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean woodland, rocky slopes and dry farms. Season: Pods late summer-fall; wood year-round.

SURVIVAL USE: Mature pods are documented sweet food after removing hard seeds; dense wood makes handles and fuel.

CAUTION: Moldy pods are unsafe; seeds are hard enough to damage teeth.

LOOK-ALIKES: Honey locust pods are longer and the tree has large branched thorns.

TASKS: food pod, handles, fuel

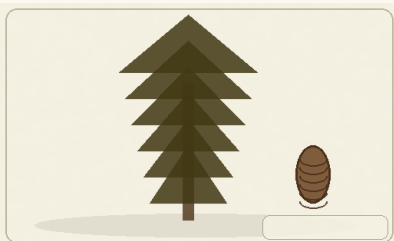
Verified images: POWO

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6

STONE PINE

LAND FOOD



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Pinus pinea

IDENTIFY: Umbrella-shaped mature crown; two long needles per bundle; large rounded cones with large seeds.

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean sandy soils and open woodland. Season: Pine nuts autumn-winter; wood year-round.

SURVIVAL USE: Pine nuts are high-energy food; wood and resin serve fuel and repair uses.

CAUTION: Cones are heavy and may fall; collection can be regulated.

LOOK-ALIKES: Aleppo pine has smaller cones and a less regular crown.

TASKS: food seed, fuel, resin

Verified images: POWO

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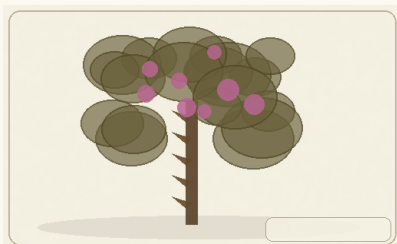
7

LAND-BASED EDIBLE PLANTS

Documented foods on dry or seasonally dry ground. Preparation and contamination still matter.

JUJUBES

LAND FOOD



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Ziziphus spp.

IDENTIFY: Zigzag twigs with paired straight and hooked thorns; three-veined leaves; small drupes.

HABITAT / SEASON: Dry Africa, Asia and Mediterranean-type scrub. Season: Fruit summer-fall; wood year-round.

SURVIVAL USE: Ripe fruits of confirmed species are documented food; hard wood makes tool handles, pegs and small bows.

CAUTION: Unripe fruit can be astringent; thorn injuries are common. Species vary.

LOOK-ALIKES: Christ's-thorn and buffalo-thorn relatives require local confirmation.

TASKS: food fruit, bow wood, handles, pegs

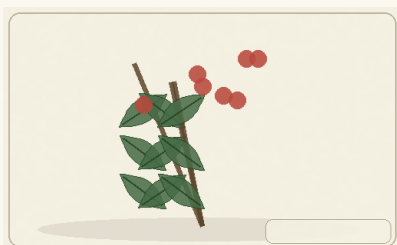
Verified images: POWO

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8

COMMON MALLOWES

LAND FOOD



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Malva spp.

IDENTIFY: Round palmately veined leaves; five-petaled pink to lavender flowers; wheel-shaped segmented fruits.

HABITAT / SEASON: Disturbed ground, field edges and Mediterranean-type regions. Season: Cool to warm growing season.

SURVIVAL USE: Young leaves and immature fruits are documented cooked foods; mucilage thickens soups.

CAUTION: Avoid roadside contamination and rust-infected leaves.

LOOK-ALIKES: Hollyhock and hibiscus relatives share similar flowers; some are not equally palatable.

TASKS: food green, thickener

Verified images: POWO

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LAND-BASED EDIBLE PLANTS

Documented foods on dry or seasonally dry ground. Preparation and contamination still matter.

WILD FENNEL
LAND FOOD



Foeniculum vulgare

IDENTIFY: Tall aromatic hollow stems; threadlike leaves; yellow umbrella flower clusters; anise odor.

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean scrub, roadsides and disturbed warm regions. Season: Leaves spring; seeds summer-fall.

SURVIVAL USE: Leaves and seeds are documented seasoning and food.
 CAUTION: Do not use smell alone: poisonous Apiaceae may grow nearby. Concentrated fennel oil is not field medicine.
 LOOK-ALIKES: Poison hemlock has broader divided leaves and often purple-spotted stems.
 TASKS: food green, seasoning

Verified images: POWO

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10

FOOD HARVEST SCREEN

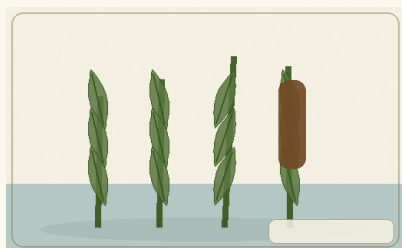
Confirm species, plant part and maturity. Check whether cooking, leaching, peeling, fermenting or repeated water changes are required. Reject mold, animal contamination, roadside plants, chemically treated ground and any food whose safe preparation cannot be completed with current water and fuel.

WATER AND WETLAND EDIBLE PLANTS

Freshwater, marsh, tidal and marine foods. Correct ID does not make dirty water safe.

CATTAILS

AQUATIC FOOD



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Typha spp.

IDENTIFY: Tall flat strap leaves; dense brown cylindrical female flower spike below a narrower male section.

HABITAT / SEASON: Marshes, pond edges, slow channels and wet ditches. Season: Shoots spring; pollen early summer; rhizomes year-round where lawful.

SURVIVAL USE: Documented food parts include young inner shoots, pollen and processed rhizome starch. Leaves make mats, baskets and thatch; seed down can bulk tinder.

CAUTION: Water can concentrate sewage, metals and parasites. Raw rhizome requires correct processing; avoid contaminated marshes.

LOOK-ALIKES: Yellow flag iris has sword leaves and showy flowers but no brown cattail head.

TASKS: food shoot, food starch, basketry, thatch, tinder

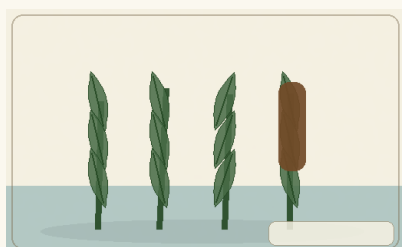
Verified images: POWO

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11

COMMON REED

AQUATIC FOOD



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Phragmites australis

IDENTIFY: Tall jointed canes; broad leaves with rough margins; large feathery purple-tan panicles.

HABITAT / SEASON: Marshes, riverbanks, lake edges and brackish wetlands worldwide. Season: Canes year-round; young shoots spring.

SURVIVAL USE: Dry canes make arrow shafts, fish spears, mats, thatch, containers and friction-fire spindles; young shoots have limited documented food use.

CAUTION: Invasive populations may be chemically treated. Cut cane edges are sharp; food use is excluded where water quality is uncertain.

LOOK-ALIKES: Giant reed is stouter; reed canary grass has a smaller seed head.

TASKS: arrow shaft, bow drill spindle, thatch, basketry, container

Verified images: POWO

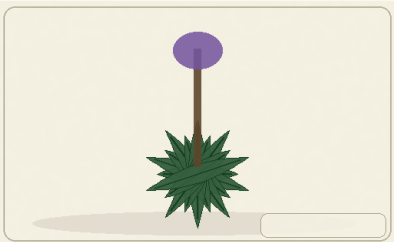
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WATER AND WETLAND EDIBLE PLANTS

Freshwater, marsh, tidal and marine foods. Correct ID does not make dirty water safe.

GLASSWORDS
AQUATIC FOOD



Salicornia spp.

IDENTIFY: Leafless-looking jointed succulent stems; green turning red; tiny flowers embedded in segments.

HABITAT / SEASON: Salt marshes, saline lake margins and tidal flats worldwide. Season: Young shoots spring-summer.

SURVIVAL USE: Tender tips are documented cooked greens and salt seasoning.
 CAUTION: Very salty; use small portions and avoid sewage-contaminated marshes.
 LOOK-ALIKES: Other succulent chenopods differ in branching and fruit; none should be eaten from polluted sites.
 TASKS: food green

Verified images: POWO
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AQUATIC HARVEST SCREEN

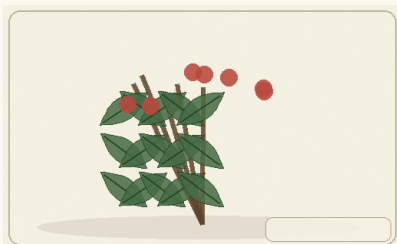
Check five separate questions: Is the species correct? Is the plant part edible? Is the water free of sewage, mining or farm runoff? Are parasites or harmful algal blooms plausible? Is entry and exit from the water safe? A “yes” to the plant and a “no” to the water still means do not eat.

MEDICINAL AND TRADITIONAL-USE PLANTS

Traditional and historical uses only — no dosing, diagnosis or treatment claims.

ROSEMARY

TRADITIONAL-USE



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Salvia rosmarinus

IDENTIFY: Narrow aromatic opposite leaves rolled under, pale beneath; blue two-lipped flowers.

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean scrub, rocky slopes and cultivated escapes. Season: Year-round leaves; flowers winter-spring.

SURVIVAL USE: Documented seasoning and traditional aromatic use; dry stems make fragrant kindling.

CAUTION: Essential oil is concentrated and unsafe to ingest in survival dosing; avoid confusion with toxic ornamental shrubs.

LOOK-ALIKES: Lavenders have softer gray leaves and flower spikes.

TASKS: seasoning, medicine, kindling

Verified images: POWO

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THYMES

TRADITIONAL-USE



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Thymus spp.

IDENTIFY: Low aromatic opposite-leaved shrub; tiny leaves; pink-purple two-lipped flower clusters.

HABITAT / SEASON: Dry Mediterranean, steppe and mountain grassland. Season: Leaves and flowers growing season.

SURVIVAL USE: Documented seasoning and traditional aromatic use; dry stems aid tinder bundles.

CAUTION: Species vary and essential oils can irritate. Use modest food amounts only.

LOOK-ALIKES: Savory and other mint relatives have similar small leaves.

TASKS: seasoning, medicine, tinder

Verified images: POWO

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MEDICINAL AND TRADITIONAL-USE PLANTS

Traditional and historical uses only — no dosing, diagnosis or treatment claims.

YARROW

TRADITIONAL-USE



Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

Achillea millefolium

IDENTIFY: Aromatic finely divided leaves; flat clusters of small white to pink flower heads.

HABITAT / SEASON: Dry openings, trails, grassland, shore gravel and disturbed soil. Season: Summer through fall.

SURVIVAL USE: Documented traditional external uses include washes and aromatic preparations; dry flower heads make light tinder.

CAUTION: Possible allergy, pregnancy and anticoagulant concerns. Not a substitute for wound cleaning or medical care.

LOOK-ALIKES: Poison hemlock is much taller with hollow purple-spotted stems and true umbels.

TASKS: medicine, tinder

Verified images: POWO

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MEDICINAL RESTRAINT

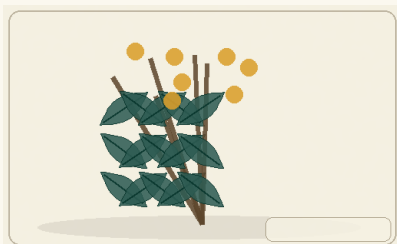
A plant can be culturally important and pharmacologically active yet still be the wrong survival choice. Unknown concentration, dehydration, pregnancy, allergies, chronic illness and medicine interactions can turn a traditional remedy into a second emergency.

POISONOUS PLANTS AND DANGEROUS LOOK-ALIKES

High-consequence species to learn before gathering starts.

OLEANDER

POISON — AVOID



Nerium oleander

IDENTIFY: Evergreen shrub with narrow leathery leaves in pairs or whorls and pink, white or red five-petaled flowers.

Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean and arid-region waterways, wadis and planted settlements. Season: Year-round foliage.

SURVIVAL USE: No use.

CAUTION: All parts contain potent cardiac glycosides; smoke, skewers and contaminated water can be dangerous.

LOOK-ALIKES: Yellow oleander has different fruit but similar cardiac toxicity.

TASKS: poison

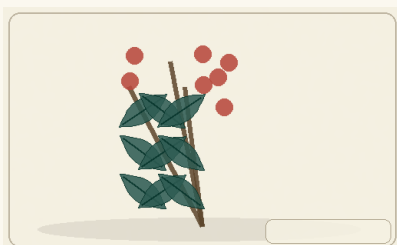
Verified images: POWO

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MANDRAKE

POISON — AVOID



Mandragora officinarum

IDENTIFY: Low rosette of broad wrinkled leaves; violet flowers; yellow-orange berry; thick forked root.

Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean rocky ground and old fields. Season: Cool season to spring.

SURVIVAL USE: No field medicinal or food use.

CAUTION: Contains tropane alkaloids; root and fruit can cause severe anticholinergic poisoning.

LOOK-ALIKES: Edible nightshades have different flowers and cultivated forms.

TASKS: poison

Verified images: POWO

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POISONOUS PLANTS AND DANGEROUS LOOK-ALIKES

High-consequence species to learn before gathering starts.

SEA SQUILL

POISON — AVOID



Drimia maritima

IDENTIFY: Huge above-ground bulb; broad leaves in winter-spring; tall flower spike after leaves die back.

Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

HABITAT / SEASON: Mediterranean rocky coast and dry slopes. Season: Leaves cool season; flowers late summer.

SURVIVAL USE: No food use.

CAUTION: Bulb contains cardiac glycosides and remains toxic after drying.

LOOK-ALIKES: Edible onions have onion odor and smaller bulbs.

TASKS: poison

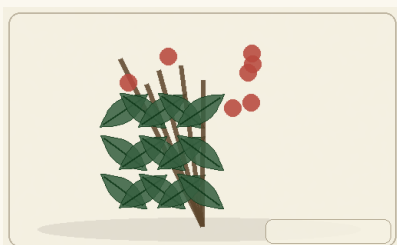
Verified images: POWO

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CASTOR BEAN

POISON — AVOID



Ricinus communis

IDENTIFY: Large star-shaped palmately lobed leaves; spiny capsules; glossy mottled seeds.

Stylized form diagram — not an identification photograph

HABITAT / SEASON: Warm disturbed ground, riverbanks and tropical/subtropical waste areas. Season: Growing season; seeds seasonal.

SURVIVAL USE: No survival food or medicine use. Oil extraction is industrial, not a field process.

CAUTION: Chewed seeds can release ricin and cause severe or fatal poisoning.

LOOK-ALIKES: Jatropha has similar lobed leaves but different fruit; it is also toxic.

TASKS: poison

Verified images: POWO

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SURVIVAL TASK MATRIX

Choose the least destructive plant that meets the job. A material that works poorly but is abundant may beat the perfect rare species.

TASK	BEST REGIONAL CANDIDATES IN THIS GUIDE	FIELD DECISION
Bow / spring wood	Holm oak, Arid acacias, Jujubes	Use dead, shed or pruned material first.
Arrow or dart shaft	Common reed	Use dead, shed or pruned material first.
Bow-drill hearth	No reliable candidate among the priority profiles.	Use a different technology or carried tool; do not force unsuitable plant material.
Bow-drill spindle	Wild olive, Common reed	Use dead, shed or pruned material first.
Tinder	Aleppo pine, Cattails, Thymes, Yarrow	Use dead, shed or pruned material first.
Fuel / coals	Holm oak, Cork oak, Aleppo pine, Arid acacias	Use dead, shed or pruned material first.
Cordage / fiber	No reliable candidate among the priority profiles.	Use a different technology or carried tool; do not force unsuitable plant material.
Basket / mat	Cattails, Common reed	Use dead, shed or pruned material first.
Container / wrap	Common reed	Use dead, shed or pruned material first.
Fruit food	Wild olive, Jujubes	Verify part, maturity and preparation.
Green food	Common mallows, Wild fennel, Glassworts	Verify part, maturity and preparation.
Seed / nut	Aleppo pine, Stone pine	Verify part, maturity and preparation.
Root / starch	Cattails	Verify part, maturity and preparation.
Traditional-use	Rosemary, Thymes, Yarrow	Documented use only; no field dosing.

SEASONAL OPERATING RHYTHM

PHASE	PRIMARY OPPORTUNITY	PRIMARY RISK
Early growth	Shoots, greens, flowers, sap and easy bark identification.	Toxic shoots and bulbs are hardest to separate before flowering.
Peak growth	Maximum leaf and flower information; fiber plants mature.	Heat, insects, sap and water contamination.
Fruit / seed	Highest food density; nuts, berries, pods, grains and tubers.	Mold, wildlife encounters and unripe or toxic fruit.
Dormant / dry	Wood, bark, evergreen leaves, persistent fruit and roots.	Fewer diagnostic traits; overharvest of stored underground parts.

SOURCES, IMAGE VERIFICATION AND EMERGENCY

Every profile links to current taxonomic and photograph searches. Treat community photographs as evidence to compare, not as a final authority.

1. 2023 USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map

USDA Agricultural Research Service — hardiness-zone reference

<https://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/>

2. Plants of the World Online

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew — taxonomy, distribution and images

<https://powo.science.kew.org/>

3. World Flora Online

World Flora Online Consortium — global plant taxonomy

<https://www.worldfloraonline.org/>

4. Global Biodiversity Information Facility

GBIF Secretariat — occurrence records and licensed media

<https://www.gbif.org/>

5. World Checklist of Useful Plant Species

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew — documented plant uses

<https://kew.iro.bl.uk/concern/datasets/7243d727-e28d-419d-a8f7-9ebef5b9e03e>

6. Poison Control

National Capital Poison Center — poisoning first-response guidance

<https://www.poison.org/>

7. WHO Monographs on Selected Medicinal Plants

World Health Organization — medicinal-plant safety and monographs

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9241545178>

8. African Plant Database

Conservatoire et Jardin botaniques de Geneve and SANBI — African taxonomy and distribution

<https://africanplantdatabase.ch/>

9. PlantZAfrica

South African National Biodiversity Institute — African species profiles and uses

<https://pza.sanbi.org/>

SUSPECTED POISONING

Stop exposure. Remove material from the mouth and rinse. Do not induce vomiting unless directed. Save a sample or clear photographs. Contact local emergency services or a poison center. Monitor airway, breathing and consciousness.

PUBLICATION LIMITS

Regional lists are representative, not exhaustive. Species ranges, names, laws and preparation practices change. Local floras, land managers, Indigenous knowledge holders, poison centers and clinicians take precedence.