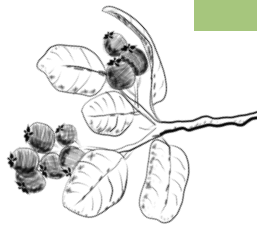


SASKATOON



SCIENTIFIC NAME: AMELANCHIER ALNIFOLIA

SPECIES OVERVIEW

Saskatoons are a tall, fast-growing shrub within the same family as roses, Rosaceae. This species can often be found in open thickets and forests with well-drained soils across Alberta. Saskatoons have white clusters of flowers blooming in spring, that are an excellent source of pollen and nectar, which greatly appeals to Alberta's native pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Saskatoon shrubs are primarily known for their fruit which consists of edible dark purple berry-like pomes, which are also commonly known as Saskatoons.

Ungulate species often munch on the tips of branches and leaves during the harsh winter months, and many species of birds have been observed regularly picking off the berries to supplement their diet.

CULTURAL VALUE

The English word 'Saskatoon' is a modification of the Cree word 'misâskwatômin' (ᓄᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴᓴ). Since time immemorial, Saskatoons have played an important role in the struggle of human survival. Indigenous peoples incorporated this fruit into their societal meals in a multitude of manners; from soups to pemmican, this berry has had the privilege of being platformed as the star of many traditional Indigenous dishes.

Saskatoons have operated at both ends of the palette continuum, providing a sweet and savory nature to a mix of different dishes.



There is a history of Saskatoon berries being added to stews and dried cakes, as well as traditional recipes involving meats of the fresh and dried persuasion. The versatility of Saskatoon berries is a trait that has kept them at the center of Albertan appetites for hundreds of years.

Traditionally, Saskatoon berry was a staple in the diet of First Nations people and since the berries are high in antioxidants, they directly enhanced the Nations health and wellness.

Beyond food, there is a medicinal component to the utilization of this shrub species as well. Indigenous peoples discovered that while sweet and delicious, Saskatoon berries simultaneously can perform as a mild laxative that operates to alleviate stomach pains stemming from various ailments. Furthermore, extracted drops can be developed and used for treatment in efforts to remedy ear and eye infections.

In addition to the berries, the stems of these plants have been showcased in Indigenous communities for the creation and subsequent use of pipes and arrows. Whether it be sustenance, medicinal properties or its use to produce secondary goods, Saskatoons significantly contribute to the cultural, physical, and spiritual welfare of Alberta's First Nations, and Métis communities.



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