

Ashi-nisiwag giizisoog

Thirteen Moons

Thirteen Moons is produced monthly by the Fond du Lac Resource Management Division and University of Minnesota Extension. Content is based on the appropriate moon, and addresses culture, ecology, and the management of natural resources. Comments and contributions should be directed to the FDL Resource Management @ 218.878.8001

Peeling Birch Bark

Dave Wilsey

UMN Extension

Charlie Nahgahnub offered some sound advice for anyone interested in peeling birch bark. Bark has to be removed when the time is right, a period typically occurring between the end of May and early July.

Look for a tree with a good crown: if there are no fine branches at the top, a sign of blight, the bark won't peel well.

Make a test cut: a small 1 inch "T" cut at the base will help you to determine if the bark is ready to peel, and will give you a sense of the thickness and quality of the bark. Basket and canoe bark have different characteristics. Canoe bark is 1/4 inch thick and of grandfather trees more than 50 years old.

If you find a tree, *make an offering:* Lay down some tobacco and offer an explanation to the tree of why you are taking its bark. Remove bark by connecting circular cuts – at the top and bottom – with a single vertical cut. Then roll the piece with the outside bark to the inside, packing with ferns or leaves to retain moisture.

The world was created when muskrat brought mud from the bottom of the flood to be placed on turtle's back. The turtle's shell has thirteen central plates, called scutes. The traditional Ojibwe calendar year follows a 13 moon lunar cycle. The names of each moon are influenced by natural phenomena, animal activity, and cultural practices and beliefs. Because the area in which Ojibwe is spoken is so vast, not all Ojibwe people use the same names for the moons.



Charlie Nahgahnub releases a sheet of canoe bark as (left to right) Andy Anderson, Andy Anderson, and AndyAnderson aide the process

Ode'imín Giizis (Strawberry Moon)

Wayne Dupuis

FDL Resource Management, Environmental

Ode'imín (strawberry) is known to the Anishinabug as the "heart berry." According to Edward Benton-Benai in Mishomis, "It was said the ode'imín resembled the heart in shape, structure and color. Just as the ode'imín was connected to the plant by a vast system of leaves, runners, and roots, so was the heart connected to the organs and other parts of the human body." Also, according to Mishomis, the roots of the ode'imín could be taken just before the berry ripened to purify a person's blood. It is also good medicine for the heart and the teeth. The health of the teeth has recently been recognized, through medical research, as an indicator of and contributor to a healthy heart. The Gete Anishinabe (old time Anishinabe) recognized the importance of the ode'imín long ago and this recognition was most likely the reason for this important plant's name in Anishinabemowin (Ojibwe language).

Sonny Greensky shared that during his childhood his parents brought him and his brothers and sisters out during the late ziiigwan (spring) to pick ode'imín, which was the first berry to ripen. His father, Jacob Greensky, Sr., would tell him in Anishinabemowin that ode'imín stems were like the indiskweyab (veins) in our bodies. Sonny added: when using the language, the "glottal stop" (the apostrophe in ode'imín) usually indicates something powerful about the subject. His recollection was that Kitchi Manitou (the kind great spirit) was upon and about them like the sun when his family picked and ate this good food.

Match the Ojibwe to English

Miskwaadesi	Strawberry
Mikinaak	Garden
Ode'imín	Spring
Gitigaan	Birch
Wiigwaasi-mitig	Tick
Ziiigwaan	Painted turtle
Ezigaa	Snapping turtle

Summer Solstice

Shannon Judd,

FDL Resource Management

June 21 is the summer solstice - our longest day. Solstice comes from the Latin *sol* (sun) and *sistere* (still), as the sun appears to stop overhead. For many cultures, summer solstice is a celebration of the new season and hope for successful hunting, gathering, and planting.

Events:

8-29 June: Language Immersion Birch Canoe Workshop, FDL Cultural Museum, Info - 218.878.7582

7 June - 17 July: Journey Garden summer program (2 sessions), Ojibwe School, Info - 218.726.7235