

# DELKI DOZZI FOOD FOREST PLANT GUIDE



## **Apple (*Malus pumila*)**

The varieties planted in the food forest were developed at the University of Saskatchewan and are hardy to -40C. The seven apple trees in the eastern section of the food forest were planted by the Delki Dozzi Community Garden between 2012-14 and have already begun producing fruit. The two planted in the western section in 2017 should begin producing within a few years, but will take several more years after that to become fully mature.



## **Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*)**

Our asparagus, planted in 2017, should not be harvested until the spring of 2020, to ensure it is well-established. Once established, asparagus will produce for decades and can be harvested every second day from early May to early July. Always leave at least one spear, however, which will develop fern-like leaves that will replenish nutrients for the plant later in the season.



## **Baptisia - Blue False Indigo (*Baptisia australis*) and Yellow Wild Indigo (*Baptisia sphaerocarpa*)**

These native wildflower species are NOT edible, but were chosen for the food forest because of their Nitrogen-fixing ability (meaning it is able to take Nitrogen from the air and turn it into a useful form, in other words, a natural fertilizer).

They also attract pollinators and are very drought tolerant.



## **Bee Balm, also known as wild bergamot (*Monarda didyma*)**

A native perennial planted in the food forest mainly for its ability to attract pollinators. A member of the mint family, the flowers and leaves are edible. Related to the bergamot used in Earl Grey Tea (same family but different genus), Bee balm's blooms are strongly flavoured and best used sparingly.



## **Black Chokeberry, not to be confused with Chokecherry. (*Photinia melanocarpa*, also known as *Aronia melanocarpa*)**

A shrub that produces small, dark purple to black berries. They are naturally understory and woodland edge plants, and grow well when planted under trees. Chokeberries are resistant to drought, insects, pollution, and disease. The berries are astringent in flavour, but very high in nutritional value. They are known to be especially high in polyphenols, especially anthocyanins. The astringency is said to come from the skins, so may taste better as a juice than when eaten raw. Make sure they are fully black and ripe for the best flavour.



## **Blue Vervain, also known as Wild Hyssop. (*Verbena hastata*)**

The flowers and leaves of this native wildflower are edible and have been used traditionally for a number of medicinal purposes. Our main reason for planting it in the food forest is to attract bees and other pollinators.



**Buffaloberry, also known as Soapberry, Foamberry, Soppolallie (*Shepherdia canadensis*)**

This small native tree got its name from the traditional use of its berries as an accompaniment to bison meat on the prairies. This species was chosen for the food forest because it is drought tolerant, winter hardy, acts as a good windbreak, and fixes nitrogen, meaning it helps build healthy soils. The berries are very nutritious, being especially high in vitamin C and also lycopene (an anti-oxidant). The berries are very sour and astringent, but after exposure to frost, the taste improves as the sugar content rises. The seed is easily chewed and consumed with the fruit.



**Butterflyweed, also known as Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)**

Butterfly weed is *not* edible and may even be toxic if consumed in large quantities. We chose to plant it in the food forest because it attracts beneficial insects and is the only food for the larval stage of the monarch butterfly.



**Catnip, also known as Catmint (*Nepeta cataria*)**

As the name suggests, this plant is appealing to cats, but young leaves are edible and add a mint-like flavour to salads or can be dried for tea.



**Cherry (Saskatchewon dwarf sour cherry) (*Prunus x kerrasis*)**

The varieties of cherry planted in the Delki food forest are Juliet and Cupid, cold-hardy varieties bred at the University of Saskatchewan. Ours were planted in 2017, so we can expect our first decent crop of fruit by 2021. Both varieties produce fruit that is smaller than what you will find in a grocery store, but are good for fresh eating. Despite the name “sour cherry,” the fruit are actually quite sweet when fully ripe. When the fruit first comes out, it will be a bright red colour and will darken as they ripen, which will take several weeks. They will not be sweet until they have taken on a deep red, nearly black, colour..

**Cherry Plum (*Prunus cerasifera*)**

These are a cross between western sandcherry and Asian plum, bred at the University of Saskatchewan to be cold-hardy. We can expect a good crop of fruit approximately three years after planting (in 2020). The fruit are approximately 3cm in diameter and can be eaten fresh.



**Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*)**

The flowers, leaves and roots of this member of the onion family are all edible.



**Comfrey (*Symphytum species*)**

Considered a weed by some, comfrey is of great benefit in a food forest. While not edible, it is known to have a number of medicinal qualities, but has made even more of a reputation for its positive influence on other plants. Comfrey has deep-tapping roots that pull up trace minerals for other plants to take advantage of. Its nutrient-rich leaves are a great compost activator and mulch. The short-lived flowers are also favoured by pollinators.

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## **Currant, Red, Pink (a variety of red currant) and Black (*Ribes rubrum* ; *Ribes nigrum*)**

The fruit is nutritious, especially high in vitamin C, and ranges from tart to sweet. Can be eaten fresh and makes excellent jelly. Pink currants are pictured here (just because they are so unusual and pretty!), but the more common black and red currants were also planted.



## **Daylilies, orange (*Hemerocallis fulva*)**

Daylilies are not true lilies. The daylily originated in Asia and has been used there for food for at least hundreds, possibly thousands, of years. However, since daylilies were brought to North America, thousands of new cultivars have been developed, many of which are toxic. We would not recommend eating daylilies before doing more research. We requested and received donations of orange daylilies for the food forest because they are attractive, grow very easily here, and people often have extras to give away when dividing them.



## **Echinacea or Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)**

Although Echinacea is known to have medicinal uses, our main reason for planting it in the food forest is to attract beneficial insects.



## **Garlic Chives (*Allium tuberosum*)**

Garlic chives look like regular chives, but have a mild garlic flavour. They can be distinguished not only by their garlic flavour, but also by their flat, broader leaves and fragrant white flowers (which have the added benefit of attracting butterflies). They may be used as you would regular chives, in salad dressings, soups, as a garnish or mixed into butter or soft cheese. When cutting garlic chives, snip close to the ground to allow new growth. They can be dried or frozen and are said to have health benefits common to other plants in the Allium (onion) family.



## **Good King Henry (*Chenopodium bonus-henricus*)**

Good King Henry is in the same family as spinach and all parts of the plant are edible. Its leaves may be used in much the same way as spinach, although raw leaves are bitter and contain oxalic acid, so they should only be eaten in moderation. Raw leaves are best in spring and early summer and used in a mixed green salad to vary the salad's flavour. Cooking destroys the oxalic acid. The shoots can be harvested and prepared just like asparagus (cut when about 12 cm). The flower buds can be prepared and cooked like broccoli, but are much smaller and a little tedious to harvest. The seed may be eaten as a grain source, although it needs to be soaked overnight and rinsed to remove the saponins (soap-like chemicals) much like its relative, quinoa. It may be ground and mixed with other flours.



## **Gooseberry (*Ribes hirtellum*)**

Good King Henry produces well in the shade, making it a good groundcover plant in a food forest.

Wild gooseberry is a shrub native to Northern Ontario that grows to approximately 1 metre tall. The fruit, which matures in summer, may be green to purplish-black. Ranging from tart to sweet, the fruit is high in vitamin C and good for juice and smoothies.



### **Haskap, also known as Honeyberry (*Lonicera caerulea*)**

Haskaps are relatively new as an agricultural crop in North America, although they are native to the boreal forest. In Japan, they have been widely used for hundreds of years. The haskaps planted in the food forest are varieties developed at the University of Saskatchewan. The ripe fruit has a unique flavour, are high in antioxidants and are a great plant for the food forest because they are extremely cold-hardy and resistant to most diseases and pests. The fruit ripens in June, before other berries. They will turn blue on the outside in early June, but are not ripe until a few weeks later, when they are purple (not green) on the inside. We can expect a decent crop by 2021.

### **High bush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*)**

This native shrub is not a true cranberry but produces bright red fruit, about the size of a cranberry, with a similar flavour. The fruit are edible raw but tend to be quite astringent, but this diminishes if they are left on the plant as the freezing and thawing during winter makes them softer and sweeter. They can be mixed with other fruits in jams, preserves or sauces and can also be a useful cooking ingredient. They are extremely healthy, being an excellent source of vitamin C and extremely high levels of antioxidants.



### **Hosta (*Hosta species*)**

A member of the asparagus family, hostas are mostly known in North America as ornamental plants. There are a huge number of species, some better for eating than others. In Japan, the young leaves of *Hosta montana* are popular as a vegetable known as urui. They are prepared in a number of ways including boiling and frying in a tempura batter. The shoots, leaf petiole, whole leaves and flowers are edible raw, but the fresh leaves and stems are best harvested while young and tender. Hostas will readily re-grow their leaves after being chopped down to the base.

### **Lupine, perennial (*Lupinus perennis*)**

Lupines are *not* edible but were chosen for the food forest because of their ability to enhance soil fertility by “fixing” Nitrogen from the atmosphere, providing a natural fertilizer for itself and, as we “chop and drop” them, for other plants in the food forest. Lupines are also attractive to beneficial insects.



### **Oregano (*Origanum species*)**

Oregano has been used as a culinary and medicinal herb for thousands of years, although its medicinal value has been disputed by some since Oil of Oregano became popular in recent decades. There are many species and varieties of oregano. We requested donations of cold-hardy oregano plants for the food forest. Oregano may be harvested when the stems are at least 4 inches tall, by cutting back up to two-thirds of the plant. The flowers are also edible.

### **Pear (*Pyrus species*)**

The two pear trees in the food forest were planted in 2013 by members of the Delki Dozzi community garden. Harvesting pears is tricky because they have to ripen off the tree. If left to ripen on the tree, they will develop a mealy texture. If left longer, they will be rotting from the inside. As a general rule, once the skin starts changing colour (they should still be very hard), harvest them and allow to ripen at room temperature for a few days. To assess that your pear is ripe, apply gentle pressure on the flesh just below the stem. If it is still very hard, it is not ripe yet. If it is a little soft, it is ready!





### **Plum (*Prunus salicina*)**

The two cold-hardy varieties of plum planted in the food forest are Toka and Brookgold. Toka produces crimson round fruit with gold flesh. Brookgold has a golden skin with juicy yellow flesh. Both are sweet and good for fresh eating. Planted in 2017, we can expect a decent crop by 2020.



### **Prairie Coneflower (*Ratibida columnifera*)**

A member of the daisy family (Asteraceae), this native wildflower is NOT edible, but was chosen for the food forest mainly to attract pollinators. First Nations peoples used it for a number of medicinal purposes and an orange-yellow dye was made from boiled flowers.



### **Purple Prairie clover (*Dalea purpurea*)**

This native wildflower is not edible, but is useful in the food forest because of its ability to enrich the soil by “fixing” nitrogen and to attract birds and butterflies. It is not a true clover, but rather a member of the legume family (Fabaceae).



### **Raspberry (*Rubus species*)**

Yellow, red and black raspberries were planted in the food forest in 2018. They take a few years to develop, so we hope to have a decent crop by 2021 or 2022.



### **Rhubarb (*Rheum rhabarbarum*)**

The leaves are poisonous, but the stalks are edible. Rhubarb is easy to grow from divisions of established plants, so we were able to obtain donations from members of the community. Once established, a rhubarb plant can produce well for many years. When picking, leave about one-third of the stalks to allow the plant to regenerate. Once established, this will allow it to be picked from late May throughout the summer.



### **Saskatoon berry, also known as Serviceberry (*Amelanchier alnifolia*)**

About the size of a blueberry, the saskatoon berry is popular as an edible berry, and is a more common shrub in the western provinces than in Ontario. Rich in nutrients, the berries were dried and made into pemmican by Indigenous people and also used for a number of medicinal purposes.



### **Sea Buckthorn, also known as Seaberry (*Hippophae rhamnoides*)**

Sea buckthorn has been used for centuries in both Europe and Asia as food and for its pharmaceutical properties. Juice from sea buckthorn berries is a common drink in many parts of Asia and Europe. The juice is very high in protein, vitamins C and E, and organic acids. The leaves, either fresh or dried, can be steeped to yield a nutritional tea. Another reason it was chosen to be planted in the food forest is its ability to fix atmospheric nitrogen.



### **Silver Sage, also known as Prairie Sage (*Artemisia ludoviciana*)**

Silver Sage is an aromatic plant and is a great drought tolerant ground cover for dry landscapes. Some indigenous people call it "man sage" and use it for ceremonial purposes.



**Strawberry, everbearing/day-neutral (*Fragaria species*)**

The type of strawberries planted in the food forest, have a much longer growing season than the common June-bearing type. Although they produce only a moderate June crop, these will continue to produce from August until hard frost. We should have a good crop for a few years, starting in 2019.



**Sunchoke, also known as Jerusalem Artichoke (*Helianthus tuberosus*)**

A native edible tuber that also provides food for pollinators later in the season than most plants. These were planted in their own separate patch, in the northern part of the food forest, because of their tendency to spread rapidly and so the tubers can be harvested without disturbing other plants. They were an important food source for indigenous people and early settlers, keeping well in the ground throughout the winter. With a slightly sweet flavour and a starchy texture somewhat like potatoes, the tubers can be boiled, made into soups and are delicious when roasted. A number of sources warn to eat them sparingly at first as they are difficult



**Sweet Cicely (*Myrrhis odorata*)**

All parts of this plant are edible – leaves, seeds, roots, and flowers – and have a sweet, licorice flavour. The leaves can be cooked with tart fruits, such as rhubarb, to reduce the amount of sugar needed. Leaves can also be added to soups, omelettes and custards, or used fresh in salads.



**Thyme (*Thymus serpyllum*)**

Mother-of-thyme (also known as Creeping Thyme) was planted as a groundcover that attracts pollinators. The leaves and flowers are edible, but with a different flavour than the thyme that is usually purchased commercially (and sometimes grown as an annual in our climate zone).



**White Clover, also known as Dutch clover (*Trifolium repens*)**

White clover seed was spread between plants throughout the food forest to act as a groundcover that can compete with grass. Because it is able to fix nitrogen, we will be “chopping and dropping” it regularly, to enrich the soil for other plants.



**Wild Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*)**

This native wildflower is NOT edible. It was included in the food forest for its ability to attract beneficial species, because it grows easily in our climate, and because it is drought tolerant.

## **SOURCES:**

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