

May 2, 2013

Interpretive walk focuses on native plants

Campbell River residents will get a chance to look more closely at edible native plants in local ecosystems during an interpretive walk on Saturday, May 11.

“Through North Island College’s Lettuce Grow program, Luisa Richardson, environmental educator and local naturalist will lead an engaging and delicious, interpretive walk through the city’s wild spaces,” says Kira DeSorcy, lead instructor for the *Lettuce Grow* program.

People interested in joining the May 11 walk can register for “Anticipating Wild Edibles Year-Round” through North Island College’s Continuing Education department. Visit your local campus or register online at www.nic.bc.ca - search for course code GENI 7910. The tuition is only \$26!

“Campbell River is blessed with so much natural habitat, so many native plants. Wherever native trees, shrubs and understory plants grow, they’re competing with each other – and you can tell a lot about the underlying land by the plants and plant associations that you see,” shares Richardson.

The two-hour walk will explore locally-available, edible native plants and provide tips on sustainable harvesting. The walk will also include cultural highlights and history around edible native plants.

“Cultural knowledge and use of edible native plants provides all kinds of fascinating information,” Richardson said.

Wandering in the wild and wondering what might be in season to eat now? Try a salad of miner’s lettuce, salmon berry petals, wild violets, cleaver tips, chickweed, and purslane. The greens are full of vitamins A, K, D and E, which are all fat soluble. The natural fat content of chickweed and purslane help absorb these essential nutrients. Try mixing this with balsamic vinegar, or, if you’re feeling ambitious, try some local spruce tip vinegar.

“Remember to harvest respectfully to ensure the vitality of nature’s abundance. This will ensure that the patch will be available to you and others next year and for years to come,” says DeSorcy. *“Harvesting no more than 10 per cent of any given patch is a good rule of thumb.”*

Questions or comments on growing local food? Please send them to growlocal@campbellriver.ca to have them addressed in a future article.

The *Lettuce Grow* courses and article series support the implementation of the City’s Agriculture Plan and the community sustainability goal of local food self-sufficiency and resiliency.

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