

Cherokee Ethnobiology

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HUCKLEBERRY

Cherokee Usage

Huckleberries, when not eaten raw, are used in baking and are put in such food as pancakes and breads, and jellies and jams are also made from the sweet fruit. A tea from the leaves is used for dysentery, and a tea from the bark is used to check bowels.

Description

A short, perennial shrub, 1-2 feet in height. Small oval-shaped leaves and many white flowers emerge in April. The dark purple or almost black fruit ripens in June and is picked and eaten by many Cherokees. The sweet fruit is used in baking and is eaten raw. The Huckleberry Festival is held in Jay every year around Independence Day in honor of this prized, tasty little fruit. This species is shade tolerant and prefers to grow in acidic soils. It will produce more fruit if the plant is burned or mowed every three to five years.

Where found:	The huckleberry plant grows in dense thickets in the understory of upland hardwood forests in the Ozark Plateau.
Other names:	Blue Berry
Taxonomy:	Kingdom - Plantae Phylum - Magnoliophyta Class - Magnoliopsida Order - Ericales Family - Ericaceae Genus - <i>Vaccinium</i> Species - <i>pallidum</i>

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