

Alaska Plant Identification

Poisonous Berries



Baneberry / Snake Berry / Doll's Eyes | *Actaea rubra* (Interior) *Actaea arguta* (coastal)

Habitat: Woods and dry hillsides.

Leaves: Leaves are large three to five parted, finely toothed, and narrow-pointed on a single stock. Leaves change with the season from narrow and crinkled in the spring, to broad in the summer.

Flowers: From May to June, small white clusters appear above the leaves.

Fruit: From July to August, a red, opaque, shiny berry develops with a black dot at the end. The berry turns completely white later in the season. Each berry also has its own elongated stem.



Black Twinberry / Bearberry Honeysuckle | *Lonicera involucrata*

Habitat: Moist woods in Southeast Alaska.

Leaves: A shrub that stands up to 6 feet tall, lance-shaped, and has leaves up to 5 inches long.

Flowers: In June the leaves are yellow, tubular, and grow in pairs.

Fruit: In August, black, soft, round berries form.



Devil's Club | *Oplopanax horridus*

Habitat: Moist forest habitats.

Leaves: Leaves are spirally arranged on the stems and are 8- to 16-inches across and the plant grows up to almost 5 feet tall. Spines are found covering the stems as well as along the upper and lower surfaces of veins of its leaves.

Flowers: Produced in dense clusters or umbels 4- to 8-inches in diameter, each flower is small, with five greenish-white petals.

Fruit: Small red berries with pits about 1/4 inches in diameter that grow in clusters.



Queen's Cup / Blue Bead | *Clintonia uniflora*

Habitat: Moist forests at lower elevations.

Leaves: Each plant has three fleshy leaves three to six inches long with hairy edges.

Flowers: In June, white flowers about 1 inch in diameter with six tepals.

Fruit: In August, the plant develops a blue berry.



Red-Twig Dogwood / Red-Osier Dogwood | *Cornus stolonifera*

Habitat: Moist land or lakes at low elevations.

Leaves: Grows 5 to 15 feet tall. Leaves are dark green on top, somewhat hairy below, and elliptical or oval shaped.

Flowers: In June, the shrub produces flowers that are white, with four small green sepals.

Fruit: In August, the shrub produces a small white berry that is soft and has a small spot at the end.



Snowberry / Waxberry | *Symphoricarpos albus*

Habitat: Woodlands at lower elevations.

Leaves: Grows to 4 feet in height. Oval shaped leaves grow on opposite sides of a stem, are dark green above, white beneath, and grow up to 3-inches in length.

Flowers: In June, the flowers are pink and white, small, and bell-shaped.

Fruit: In August, the plant develops berries that are white, round, soft, and opaque.

Resources:

Alaska's Wild Berries and Berry-like Fruit by Verna E. Pratt
Edible and Medicinal Plants of the West by Gregory L. Tilford
USDA Plants Database



Alaska Plant Identification

Poisonous Flowers



Arrowgrass | *Triglochin maritima*

Habitat: Moist soil; can grow in water such as salt marshes and grassy areas near the ocean.

Leaves: Grow 6- to 18-inches tall, but the slender flower stalks may reach 5 feet.

Flowers: Small, green flowers appear close together along the upper part of the stalk early in the season. Later the flowers develop into a golden-brown color.

Fruit: None



Cow Parsnip | *Heracleum maximum*

Habitat: Moist, shaded habitats adaptable to various types of soil.

Leaves: Tall herb growing up to about 6 feet. Leaves are very large, up to 18-inches across, and divided into lobes.

Flowers: White flower umbels spanning about 8-inches across; these may be flat-topped or rounded.

Fruit: None



Death Camas | *Anticlea elegans*

Habitat: Streams, forest clearings, and meadows from about 6,000 to 12,000 feet in the mountains.

Leaves: Leaves are linear, smooth, and have parallel veins.

Flowers: Saucer-like flowers grow spiraling around the stalk, with six white petals and six stamen.

Fruit: None



Skunk Cabbage | *Lysichiton americanum*

Habitat: Wet woodlands and meadows.

Leaves: Leaves are large, thick, and can grow up to 40-inches in length. Plants are often associated with a strong odor like a skunk.

Flowers: From April to June, plants are small and yellow on a thick spike surrounded by a large yellow spathe.

Fruit: In August, these plants are green, soft, and sparse.



Wild Calla | *Calla palustris*

Habitat: Shallow water along the edges of lakes and slow-moving streams.

Leaves: Thick, shiny leaves are heart-shaped on a thick stem that grow from creeping rootstocks.

Flowers: In June and July, very small green flowers develop on a dense spike atop a large, white, heart-shaped spathe.

Fruit: In August, this plant forms a soft red berry.

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