Hello again and welcome back to our herb walk. Today, Yarrow comes across one of his favorite wild foods: salmonberry (*Rubus spectabilis*).

Salmonberry marks the true return of spring, as it is one of the first berries to ripen in the woods.

A staple of west coast First Nations for thousands of years, the delectable and juicy salmonberry ranges in color from yellow, orange, pink, and red.

Salmonberry naturally thrives in coastal environments from Alaska to California, and all along the BC coast (where today’s specimen was found).

According to ethnobotanist Leigh Joseph (Styawat), Yetwánaý is the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish language) name for the salmonberry bush, the berry itself known as yetwán.
FAMILY: Rosaceae

PART(S) USED: Berries used as a food, leaves used medicinally

WHERE DO YOU FIND SALMONBERRY?
Salmonberry is found growing in moist to wet forests, along streams and in shady areas.

HOW DO YOU IDENTIFY SALMONBERRY?
Salmonberry is a shrub growing 1 to 4 meters tall with golden brown, peely and perennial - not biennial - woody stems covered with fine prickles varying from unarmed to very bristly.

Trifoliate leaves have 3 sharply toothed leaflets.

Flowers have five petals and are pink to reddish-purple. They are among the first wild flowers to appear in the spring.

The fruits resemble raspberry, with a hollow core and a color ranging from yellow to pink and orange. The tasty berry is actually a fleshy aggregated drupelet, ripening from early May to late July.

THERAPEUTIC BENEFITS OF SALMONBERRY
We enjoy salmonberry as a palatable edible wild food to munch on, like Yarrow does in today’s video. Like its cousins raspberry and blackberry, salmonberry has some therapeutic benefits as well, mostly found in the leaves of the plant.

BENEFITS: Leaves are astringent, fruits are rich in antioxidants and vitamin C

MAIN PROPERTIES: Tannins in the leaves have an astringent effect, toning the tissues of the digestive system and assisting with conditions of inflammation or diarrhea. The fruit provides essential vitamins and minerals.

HOW DO YOU USE SALMONBERRY?
Harvest the ripe berries to snack on or turn into jams, jellies, and fruit wines.

You can also choose to leave the berries for the bears and birds that feast on them in the wild, foraging for the leaves of salmonberry instead, which can be dried and made into herbal tea later in the year.

This year, head out and meet salmonberry for yourself. If it doesn’t grow in your area, substitute it for another member of the genus, such as the common wild red raspberry bush, another mid-size shrub with astringent leaves and palatable berries, a favorite of herbalists and hikers alike.