

Upcoming Events

March 8 - International Women's Day

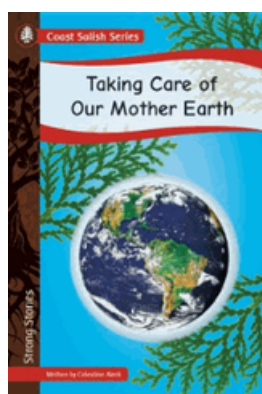
March 19 - Spring Equinox

March 31 - Indigenous Languages Day

April 22 - Earth Day

International Women's Day

There are many ways to celebrate Indigenous women. Here is a [timeline](#) that highlights influential Indigenous women across Canada.



Earth Day

In 2009, the United Nations designated April 22 as a day to honour Mother Earth. To Indigenous people, every day is a day to celebrate our relationship with the land, water, air, plants and animals. Honouring Mother Earth requires us to experience a connection with her and understand that everything we have is a gift from her.

Earth Day is an opportunity to revisit Indigenous connections to land that is present in many of the resources that you may already be using. This year, the [Earth Day website](#) is underlining the need to lean on and learn from Indigenous perspectives.

[Pulling Together: Indigenous Peoples Offer International Leadership in Caring for Land and Sea](#)



Spring Equinox

While this day is marked by equal daylight and darkness, falling this year on March 19, the Spring Equinox is also a time of year recognized and celebrated by many Indigenous communities ceremoniously as new beginnings and rebirth. It is a time of awakening, renewal, and the arrival of new life that appears after the long winter of hibernation.

Not only is this true in nature, but it's also true for the cycle of our lives. Spring is a time to clear away, refresh, renew and rejoice in new beginnings.

"For all our Peoples, the celebration of the spring equinox brings with it earlier sunrises and later sunsets. The sun's rays cascade across Turtle Island for a longer duration, warming the earth and waterways. The last signs of winter slowly give way to healthy, lush green grasslands, flower blossoms, and tree buds. Rivers and streams swell with melting snow and ice travelling down from distant rugged mountains." (National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health)

Pacific Northwest Plant Knowledge Cards



Indigenous Languages Day

The Assembly of First Nations website reports that, "UNESCO considers all Indigenous languages in Canada at risk due to assimilationist government policies and actions," and that "there are over 60 unique Indigenous language dialects spoken in Canada, and all are considered to be critically endangered, except Inuktitut." It is important to learn **about** the history of Indigenous languages, but we must be respectful and careful in doing so. While our local nations reclaim their language, we must wait for them to lead this work in education.

[The First Voices website](#) has an interactive map and language information. Learning about language families and language group is a great way to teach about cultural diversity, especially in BC.

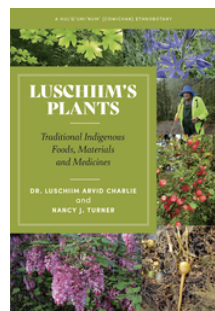
[First Peoples Map of BC](#)

Use these resources to teach *about* Lekwungen, but aside from the words and phrases that are publicly available, we will respectfully leave the teaching of Lekwungen to our local Nations.

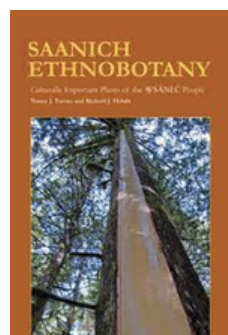
Recommended Resources



Leigh Joseph provides Squamish stories and connections to land, info on growing, harvesting and using our plant relatives.



This resource has extensive information on west coast plants, including Hul'q'umi'num' names and Coast Salish cultural knowledge.



WSÁNEĆ Nation expertise is at the heart of this excellent guide to local plants, their importance and uses, including names in SENĆOŦEN.



A story book with traditional teachings about caring for, harvesting and eating camas.



A written record of traditional knowledge featuring 36 plants that can be used to make medicines.



Environmental Stewardship and Activism

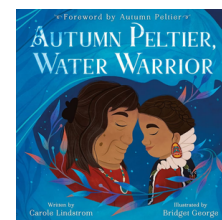
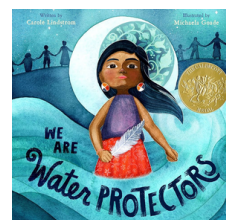
The Songhees and Esquimalt Nations have stewarded the lands in this community since time immemorial. The Songhees website has information on the [Signs of Lekwungen](#) and the video [Place to Smoke Herring: The Esquimalt Nation](#) website has information on their Sacred Trust and history of their lands. These are excellent local resources to explore and revisit.

"Land" is a broad and complex topic that lies at the heart of Indigenous ways of knowing, being, and education. Almost all subjects and discussions can ultimately be brought back to the land and water. Indigenous people manage some of the most biodiverse lands and waters in present day British Columbia.

Water is Sacred

Indigenous people have relied on water for their livelihood, spiritual practices, and traditional knowledge for generations. They have a deep understanding of their interconnectedness between water, land, and living things.

Water is more than just a resource. Water sustains all life and runs through many Indigenous communities across Canada. Many Indigenous people have been fighting for their rights to clean water for decades and their struggles still continue today.



Water is seen as a living entity with its own spirit, and it is believed that humans are responsible to protect and care for it. Grand Chief Steward Phillip of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs states, "Water is the lifeblood of Mother Earth, and it's everything to us. Water is sacred and it's a symbol of our sovereignty."

Indigenous people have been advocating for the protection and conservation of water sources for future generations. Water is a basic human right that everyone should have access to.

It is important to recognize Indigenous traditional ecological knowledge to better understand how to protect and conserve water. The protection of water is not just about environmental sustainability, it's about human rights and cultural preservation.

Efforts to address water issues require a holistic approach that recognizes the interconnectedness of water, land, and all living things.