Qaqamiiguq — A Traditional Foods Film Series
From The Aleutian and Pribilof Islands

ALUGAX / SARANAAX (CHOCOLATE LILY)
HOW TO HARVEST, PREPARE AND PRESERVE

OVERVIEW

The alugax (A) / saranaax (E), or chocolate lily, is a plant that grows naturally in the Aleutian Islands. The alugax not only boasts a beautiful bloom, but the bulbs are harvested and eaten as part of the traditional Unangaax diet. In this film, Sally Swetzof shows how to harvest, prepare and preserve this traditional food.

Harvest Tips:

• Alugas are usually harvested in mid-June and early July in Atka. In warmer places, such as Anchorage, the alugas may be ready earlier.

• You can tell the bulb is ready to harvest when the flowers are blooming. A thicker stem and bigger flower will indicate a larger bulb. The alugax bulb will be white or purple.

• After harvesting, you can place the alugas in a pan and let them dry under the sun. This is said to help make the alugas taste less bitter.

UNANGAM TUNUU:

Alugax (A) – Chocolate Lily
Alugas (A) – Chocolate Lilies
Saranaax (E) – Chocolate Lily
Saranan (E) – Chocolate Lilies

E = Qawalangin, or Eastern dialect
A = Nii'gu, or Western or Atkan dialect

UNANGAAX WAY:

Qalgadam Kaanguu (A) – Healthy Food
Qaam Kaanguu (E) – Healthy Food

By: Chrissy Roes
By: Sharon Kay

The Qaqamiiguq Film Series can be viewed at www.apiai.org or
How to Harvest, Prepare and Preserve Alugax

**STEP 1: DIG UP THE BULB**
By hand, push aside foliage or soil around the alugax so you can get to the bulb. If the bulb is deep, you can use other tools to help move the soil and break the other roots around the bulb.

**STEP 2: HARVEST THE BULB**
Gently remove the bulb out of the ground so that you don’t lose too many of the grains from the bulb. Twist the bulb off at the base of the stem.

**STEP 3: SOAK AND CLEAN THE ALUGAS**
Soak the alugas in water overnight. After soaking, use the tip of a knife to clean any remaining soil. Cut off any remaining part of the root.

**STEP 4: STRAIN THE ALUGAS**
Rinse the alugas a few more times, then strain. Place the alugas in a pot of water for cooking.

**STEP 5: BOIL THE ALUGAS**
Boil the alugas until they become translucent.

*Preparation Tip:* Once the alugas come to a boil, you can drain them, add fresh water and then bring them to a boil for a second time. Some people say this helps reduce the bitterness.

**STEP 6: DRAIN AND COOL ALUGAS**

**STEP 7: PRESERVE THE ALUGAS**
Option 1: Freeze uncooked alugas for later
Option 2: Freeze cooked alugas for later
Option 3: Preserve the alugas in seal oil
Option 4: Dry alugas and store in cool place