How to Make Salve from Traditional Unangâx Plants

Overview

Chikayaasiâ (A) (fireweed), chuhnusîx (A) (wild geranium), and saahmikaadaâ (A) (yarrow) are three plants that can be harvested in the Aleutian and Pribilof region. These plants have many different uses and medicinal benefits. This film takes place in Atka at the Tanasxangin, the Atka and Akutan combined Culture Camp. Dr. Gary Ferguson, of Sand Point, teaches campers how to create a medicinal salve from these traditional Unangâx plants.

Harvesting Tips

- Always identify the plant properly before picking it for medicine.
- Never pick more than ¼ of the plants in one area. Leave some for other people, for the animals and for the plant to propagate, or reproduce, itself.
- Cut or pick the plant at the base.
- Be respectful and give thanks to the plants for giving you their medicine.
- Wash your hands before harvesting.

Unangâx Plant Medicinal Benefits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unangâx Plant</th>
<th>Medicinal Benefits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fireweed</td>
<td>• The whole plant is edible, including the flowers&lt;br&gt;• Helps heal skin&lt;br&gt;• A tea, using the leaves, can soothe the stomach</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chikayaasiâ (A)</td>
<td>By: Shara Kay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wild Geranium</td>
<td>• The whole plant is edible, including the flowers&lt;br&gt;• Helps heal skin&lt;br&gt;• Dries out wound so it can heal faster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chuhnusîx (A)</td>
<td>By: Shara Kay</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yarrow</td>
<td>• Leaves can be crushed up and placed on a wound to stop bleeding, or placed inside the nose to stop a nosebleed&lt;br&gt;• Reduces itching when placed on bug bites</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saahmikaadaâ (A)</td>
<td>By: Shara Kay</td>
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Unangâx Tunuu:

Chikayaasiâ (A) – Fireweed<br>Chuhnusîx (A) – Wild Geranium<br>Saahmikaadaâ (A) – Yarrow

E = Qawalangin, or Eastern dialect<br>A = Niîgûx, or Western or Atkan dialect
**MEDICINAL SALVE RECIPE**

**WHAT IS SALVE?**
A medicine used to protect or promote healing of the skin.

**INGREDIENTS NEEDED:**
- Eight quarts (32 cups) olive oil
- Two pounds (32 ounces) beeswax
- 10 large handfuls of each plant: Fireweed (Chikayaasi), Wild Geranium (Chuhnusi) and Yarrow (Saahmikaada)
- For storing: Using the funnel, strain the medicinal mixture into sterilized jars
- Yields approximately 64, four ounce jars
- Optional: Add two drops of tea tree and lavender essential oil to each prepared jar.

**Directions:**
The day before you prepare the salve, harvest the fireweed, wild geranium and yarrow. Store overnight and allow plants to wilt a little so they release some moisture. The next day, carefully remove all the leaves and flowers from the stalk of the plants.

On a stovetop over medium-low heat, warm the olive oil in a double boiler. Place the leaves and flowers of the plant into the oil and continue to gently warm. Heat until the mixture is boiling. Reduce the heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, for approximately one hour or until the plants change to a slightly brown color. The oil will now be infused with the plants' medicine. Strain the mixture to remove the leaves and set aside.

On a stovetop over medium low heat, warm the beeswax in a different double boiler. Once the beeswax is melted (approximately one hour), slowly add the beeswax to the plant-infused oil and stir. The mixture will start to thicken. Once combined, use a funnel and strain the mixture into the jars, filling to just below the top of the jar. If desired, you can add two drops of essential oil to each jar to provide aromatic benefits and help preserve the salve. The salve is good for up to two years.

**CAUTION**
Some people may have an allergic reaction to some of the plants. Before using, test a little bit of the salve on your inner arm.

**UNANGA WAY:**
Take Care of Our Land
Tana agliisada (A)
Tuman tana agliisaa atan (E)

**Tip from Atka salve makers:** To make any amount of this medicinal salve, combine one ounce of beeswax for every one cup of oil used.