

Ashi-Nisiwi giizisoog (Thirteen Moons)

Waatebagaa Giizis

Waatebagaa Giizis is the leaves changing color moon. Waatebagaa acutally means brightly colored leaves...perhaps the association with the color change came later? This moon is also known as Mandaamini (corn) Giizis and Moozo (moose) Giizis. Waatebagaa Giizis begins its cycle as a new moon on September 8.

Don't Knock It, Once You've Tied It

By Dave Wilsey,
UMN Extension

The Anishinabe Nation fulfilled its seventh fire, or teaching, when the people arrived at Lake Superior and found *manoomin*: the food growing on the water. Historically, *manoomin* was the primary grain consumed by Ojibwe people. For many, this remains true today. How did the means to harvest and prepare “the good berry” come to the people and how is what we think of today as “ricing” similar or different from the process over time?

I was introduced to ricing, *manoomin ikayng*, two years ago in the Moose Horn River. I stood in the back and pushed with a balsam pole, *gahndakeeigunahk*, while my partner knocked rice into the canoe with cedar knockers. We didn't fall in; we were lucky. I've since learned of two important and much

discussed variations to the rice harvesting process.

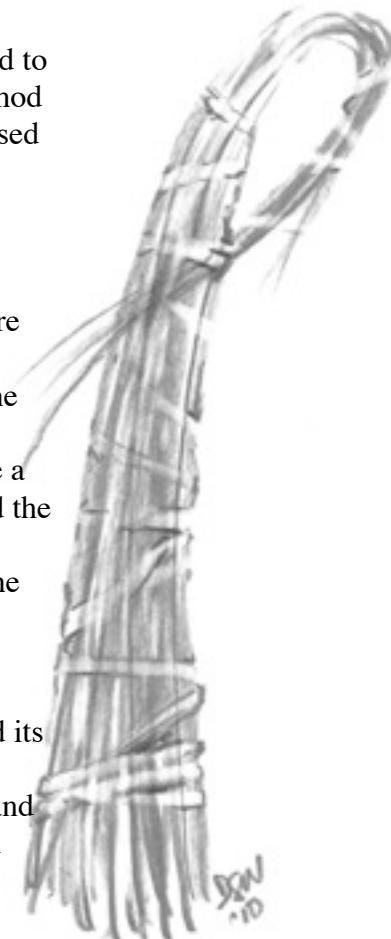
progress we are able to see

Ethnographer Francis Densmore observed Ojibwe rice camps in the 1920s and wrote that families once made claim to portions of rice fields just as they claimed a sugarbush. Women arrived at the lake and literally “staked out” the bed for their family. Women tied rice plants into small sheaves, or bundles, using the inner bark of basswood, *wiigob*. The sheaves resembled sage smudges tied with cotton string, tapering at the end. Sheaves were left standing until the rice ripened. Rice was harvested by untying the sheaves, allowing the ripe rice to fall into the canoe. The tying process had an additional benefit of creating a passage through the rice bed. Tied rice was noted to have a different flavor and size than the rest of the

crop. Rice left untied was referred to as “free rice.” The knocking method we are familiar with today was used in transit to gather *free rice*.

According to Densmore, “It was considered a test of a good rice gatherer to free the ripe kernels without dislodging those that were unripe.”

Densmore also observed that one person, usually a man, pulled the canoe from the bow (front) while a passenger, often a woman, untied the rice sheaves in the stern (back). I learned to push the canoe from the stern and have only seen this practice, but have heard much discussion around Fond du Lac about the old ways of pulling and its survival as a preferred method among certain harvester groups and Ojibwe Bands. I tried it once and nearly fell in the river!



Food preservation

By Shannon Judd

Dagwaagin (Fall) is a time for harvesting **miijiman** (food) and preparing for the long northern **biboon** (winter). Before electricity and grocery stores, food preservation methods were essential to winter survival.

Canning and freezing often come to mind when thinking of

food preservation, but other techniques commonly used include: drying, **gaaskizan** (smoking), salting, and cold storage.

Drying is an ancient method of preservation and a good technique to use for **wiiaas** (meat), **giigoonhyag** (fish), fruits, herbs and **wazh-ashkwedoonsag** (mushrooms).

Vegetables tend to lose their flavor and nutrition content if dried. Traditionally, food would be laid out in the sun or over a fire to dry. Another method, salting, provides protection from many bacteria, which cannot survive the high salt environment. Though typically used for **wiiaas**, salt can be used on herbs and

vegetables. One disadvantage is most of the salt should be removed before eating to avoid consuming excessive sodium. Finally, **cold storage** is time-honored, even without a refrigerator. Some foods can be stored in the ground, provided there is some insulation, such as straw or mulch, to protect against severe cold and frost.

Upcoming Events:

Thirteen Moons Workshop: Food Preservation, Date & Time TBD
Gitigaan Harvest Fest, Date and Time TBD

Thirteen Moons is a monthly production of FDL Resource Management Division and University of Minnesota Extension. Content addresses culture, ecology, and natural resource management. Comments and contributions are welcome and should be directed to FDL RMD at 218-878-8001 or giizis13@gmail.com