

# ČHANŠÁŠA REVITALIZATION PROJECT



Mni Wichoni Health Circle  
University of North Dakota  
Wend Collective

## BACKGROUND →

Mni Wichoni Health Circle

Dedication

Project Scope

Land Stewards

The Čhanšáša Story

History of Cannonball and Little Eagle

## PLANTING GUIDE →

Ordering Čhanšáša Seedlings

Creating an A-frame & Marking the Area

Tools

Environment

Seasons

## ART SCIENCE AND MORE →

Art Projects

Science Experiments

Coloring Pages

How to Pronounce Čhanšáša

Land Back

## PREPARING THE ČHANŠÁŠA →

Harvesting Protocols

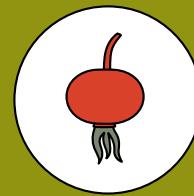
Tȟáŋkake činj Wóiyaksape - The Elders Teachings

Our Connection to the Wičháhpi Oyáte (Star Nation)

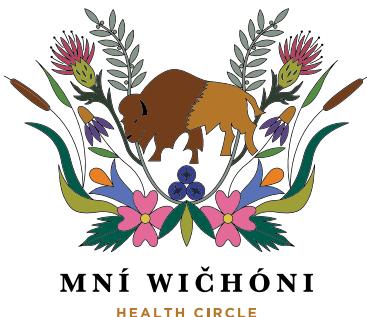
## ČHANŠÁŠA AS MEDICINE →

Plant Profile

Medicine Making and Uses



# BACKGROUND



The Mni Wichoni Health Circle (formerly known as the Mni Wichoni Clinic and Farm) is an envisioned model of health and wellness for the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ Nations and beyond, which was born out of the #WaterisLife Movement at the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ Camp that began in 2016 when the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe and accomplices worldwide stood in opposition of Energy Transfer Partners Dakota Access Pipeline, also known as DAPL. It was originally called the Medic Healer Council within the NoDAPL resistance camp. In order to support families within the camp and warriors at the front lines, there were donations of feminine hygiene products, medical and first-aid supplies, herbs and seeds, human resources, and other types of medical and healing aids gathered and coordinated efforts were made to make sure that everyone was healthy: mind, body, and spirit, while they were standing for the land and the water. There was a power in the many medical experiences that were available to the camp such as herbalists, Indigenous birth practitioners, acupuncturists, and body workers, as well as a community of holistic healers who wanted to share their services with the folk at the front lines and those needing support within the camps.



We knew we couldn't let that dream die out after the camps were closed. Just like the movement was shared through the sacred fire metaphorically and physically, those coals sparked fires in countless other communities around the world. A fire was also sparked in each of us who were able to witness what this healing space within camp did for all those who were able to bear witness and for all who were involved. Our collective vision for the health circle is intentionally Ochethi Sakowin and Indigenous centered, but also coalitional and intersectional. We continue to interrogate our traumas, anti-darkness, anti-blackness and internalized racism. We are continuously finding ways to grieve and remember together so we can find our collective and individual power again and move forward in necessary ways.

[MniWichoniHealthCircle.org](http://MniWichoniHealthCircle.org)

[Medic Healer Council Facebook Page](#)



Photo: Mni Wichoni Health Circle



Photo: Mni Wichoni Health Circle

## DEDICATION

As a collective we'd like to offer our condolences and prayers for health and healing to those who are grieving the loss of their loved ones and/or those who are healing due to the devastating and ongoing impacts of COVID-19. Indigenous communities have been fighting against colonial diseases since the first settler invasions, and even so, we continue to maintain many of our original teachings such as: gardening practices, Indigenous medicine harvesting protocols, food preservation practices, ceremonial life ways, and reciprocal storytelling about how to be in a good relationship with the lands and with each other.

We'd like to first thank our elders, youth, and those community members for all the ways that you've held steadfast in carrying, and passing on, the knowledge and life ways of our people through insurmountable circumstances. We see you and we're thankful for your bravery and radical love for the people. We also want to acknowledge the many Indigenous led organizations, tribal institutions, as well as family and community-led projects that

organized mobilizing action that was needed during this great time of collective grief. The commitment to each other by sharing resources and offering multiple forms of support has been monumental, including the support offered by the University of North Dakota Public Health Department in funding this beautiful project and the WEND Collective for funding our efforts to develop this beautiful resource to share the teachings during this project.

We especially give thanks to the amazing community land stewards and elder land stewards who made this beautiful project possible. The main goal for this project was to create a reciprocal relationship to each other, to our sacred medicine čhanšáša, or red willow (in turn all entities including More-Than-Human relatives) along with the land; which supports the participants in learning about our responsibility to the larger movement of caring for and uplifting the spirit Uŋčí Makȟá (Mother Earth).

### Mitákuye Owás'inj

(WE'RE ALL RELATED)



## PROJECT SCOPE

The Mni Wichoni Health Circle, in collaboration with the University of North Dakota (UND) Public Health Program, developed a project to give six (6) community land stewards (Apprentices) and three (3) Elder land stewards (Masters) the opportunity to work together through a paid Master-Apprentice model to reclaim the teachings around čhanšáša (red willow-also referred to as traditional tobacco). The Master-Apprentice model is a model widely used in language revitalization efforts that are within language immersion settings and require a fluent speaker and/or advanced speaker and a learner. This incorporates the framing that Hermes, et. al.<sup>1</sup> generously shares requiring a project within a community implies reciprocity within relationships that embodies practices of inclusion rather than hierarchy and exclusion. In our case, we had both fluent speakers and knowledge carriers paired with community members who were eager to learn and enact the original teachings and protocols of the Očhéthi Šakówin people.

---

<sup>1</sup> Hermes, M., Bang, M., & Marin, A. (2012). Designing Indigenous Language Revitalization. Harvard Educational Review, 32(3), 381-402.





Using the Master-Apprentice model, where the knowledgeable Elder land stewards shared stories, language, and their decades of experience with the community land stewards in a transmission of knowledge for the sake of passing on the important teachings around čhanšáša. The objectives discovered through this project were:

- 1 Map out two natural creeks on Standing Rock. (Locations chosen were in Little Eagle, SD and Cannonball, ND).
- 2 Create natural walking trails for future propagation. (The old train track in Cannonball, ND was used and wild game trails in Little Eagle, SD were cleared and lined with fallen logs and branches to create the natural walking trails).
- 3 Plant čhanšáša seedlings along walking trails in Little Eagle, SD and Cannonball, ND.
- 4 Develop a protocol for harvesting čhanšáša in a traditional and sustainable way using our original teachings and protocols.

## LAND STEWARDS

We centered the work within the Wóopȟe Šakówinj (seven values/virtues) of the Očhéthi Šakówinj people: **Wówahwala** (humility), **Wówayuonihaj** (respect), **Wówačhiŋthar̍ka** (patience), **Wówaunjšila** (compassion), **Wóksape** (wisdom), **Wówačhanjtognake** (generosity), and **Wóohitike** (bravery). The Wóopȟe Šakówinj centers self-determination and sovereignty with a goal of social justice that transforms, decolonizes, heals, and mobilizes folx<sup>1</sup>. This essential centering of the Wóopȟe Šakówinj created space to see each other as relatives<sup>2</sup> and created a collaborative storytelling environment rooted in Indigenous lifeways and knowledge transmission<sup>3</sup> that centers the story, storytelling, and listener<sup>4</sup>. From this lens, everyone, whether the elder land stewards or community land stewards, was able to share their knowledge about čhaŋšáša and began imagining what a co-created

1 Smith, L. T. (2012). Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. New York, NY: Zed Books.

2 Eagle Shield, A., Paris, D., Paris, R., & San Pedro, T. (2020). Education in Movement Spaces (Indigenous and Decolonizing Studies in Education). Milton: Taylor and Francis.

3 San Pedro, T., & Bang, Megan. (2021). Protecting the promise : Indigenous education between mothers and their children (Culturally sustaining pedagogies series). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

4 Archibald, J. (2008). Indigenous storywork : Educating the heart, mind, body, and spirit. Vancouver: UBC Press.



project could look like and where it could take place. The members of the čhanšáša revitalization project (i.e., masters and apprentices or Elder land stewards and community land stewards) metaphorically walked away from a typical boss/employee and job/duties model and walked towards a co-constructive model that required agreement, consent, and dialogic participation<sup>5</sup> from everyone involved with the čhanšáša revitalization project.

<sup>5</sup> San Pedro, T., & Bang, Megan. (2021). Protecting the promise : Indigenous education between mothers and their children (Culturally sustaining pedagogies series). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.



We want to acknowledge these amazing elder, youth, and community land stewards who've stepped in and showed up on the land to participate, lead, teach, and learn together. Their beauty and power as individuals added to the collective power and prayer on the land.

## Elder Land Stewards (Masters)



**John Eagleshield**



**Cedric Goodhouse, Sr.**



**Clayton Ayutapi**

## Community Land stewards (Apprentices)

**Baylee LaCompte**  
**Monique Runnels**  
**Breanne Luger**

**Cotton Ducheneaux**  
**Dustin Thompson**  
**Sonya Smith**

## Special Acknowledgments

**Evelyn (Sissy) Good House, SRST Elder**  
**Virgil Taken Alive, SRST Elder**  
**Lyle Uses Arrow Sr., SRST Elder**  
**Sunshine Claymore, MWHC current board member**  
**Chris Peltier, Turtle Mountain Citizen**  
**Red Rock Perkins, MHA Citizen**  
**Steve Sitting Bear, SRST Citizen**  
**Melanie Thompson, MWHC past board member**

**Tasha Peltier, MWHC Co-Executive Director**  
**Alayna Eagle Shield, Co-Executive Director**  
**McLaughlin Local District**  
**Little Eagle Local District**  
**Cannonball Local District**  
**Missouri Breaks Industries Research, Inc**  
**Canli Coalition**  
**KIPI Radio Station**  
**Wozu, Mni Wicomi Nakicizin Wounspe**

## Youth Land Stewards

**Chasen Sitting Bear**  
**Chael Sitting Bear**  
**Aelita Claymore**  
**Tatiye Ducheneaux**  
**Wachiyea Ducheneaux**  
**Kyyalyn Eagle Shield**

**Teyanna Luger**  
**Jade Luger**  
**Joe Peltier**  
**Waaruxti Perkins**  
**Handsome Flying Horse**  
**River Grey Bull Jr.**



# THE ČHANJŠÁŠA STORY

# A Hokšíla's Love for his People

Long ago, a young hokšila (boy) who was always doing good for the people went hunting to get meat and food for oyáte kiŋ (people). He was gone longer than usual, and his thiwáhe kiŋ (family) began to worry about him. His thiwáhe kiŋ searched for him but they couldn't find him.

The thiwáhe asked a waphíya (healer) to support their efforts. Because our waphíya have spiritual gifts and can communicate with our wičháhunkake kiŋ (ancestors) on the other side, they're consulted for various reasons. The waphíya went into iníkaġapi (sweat lodge) and asked the wičháhunkake kiŋ for guidance on where to find the hokšila. The wičháhunkake kiŋ told the family to go over the hill from where they were and the hokšila will be there waiting for them along the wakpála (creek). The thiwáhe was relieved and could barely wait to go find the hokšila.

The next day, the thiwáhe, along with warriors from the oyáte went to search for the hokšila again. They went to the spot the waphíya said to look. And again, they did not find him. They returned to the oyáte with the sad news. The waphíya had wówičala (faith, belief) and said he will lead the search the next day.

The next day the waphíya led the search for the hokšila. They walked over the hill, and along the wakpála, there was a bright red bush that none of the oyáte had seen before. The waphíya pointed at the bush and said he's right there, the hokšila is there, and pointed at the bright red bush. The waphíya explained that because of his love for the oyáte, the hokšila gave his life so the oyáte could use this medicine, which he shared was čhanšáša (red willow).

The waphíya shared with the oyáte to always remember this young hokšila who gave his life so the oyáte could pray and use this medicine in a healing and reciprocal way. So, to this day, the young man communicates with the waphíya and the oyáte uses čhanjšáša in many ceremonies.

## Synopsis of the origin story of čhaŋšáš from the Elder land stewards involved in the project and elders from surrounding Lakhóta/Dakhóta reservations



Art: Brendan "Pnut" Young, SRST Citizen

# HISTORY OF CANNONBALL AND LITTLE EAGLE AREAS

The Standing Rock Sioux Tribe (SRST) was established in 1873 and is situated in southwest North Dakota on the North and South Dakota border. It is over 2.3 million acres, roughly the size of Connecticut. There are two dialects spoken on the SRST, Lakota and Dakota and comprise four bands.

The Dakota people of the SRST include the Upper Yanktonai (Iháŋkthuŋwaŋna- Little End Village) and Lower Yanktonai (Húŋkpapȟa- Campers at the Horn) and today the Yanktonai people of the SRST live primarily in communities on the North Dakota portion of the reservation. Cannonball is primarily a Yanktonai Dakota dialect speaking community with rich history and beauty of trading routes and defining rock formations. Descendants of Chief Swift Horse, Chief Two Bears, Chief Red Tomahawk, Chief Two Shields, and many more still live in the Cannonball community today.

The Lakota speaking people of the SRST include two subdivisions of the Thíthuŋwaŋ (Seven bands of the Lakota) Húŋkpapȟa- Campers at the Horn and Sihásapa- Blackfeet. The Little Eagle community is primarily a Lakota dialect speaking community with rich history and beauty of sacred sites and ceremonial rebirth. Descendants of Chief Sitting Bull, Chief One Bull, Chief Running Antelope, Chief Crawler, and many more still live in the Little Eagle community today.

[Standing Rock Sioux Tribe](#)

[Lakota Language Bowl Vocabulary](#)



## Cannonball, ND



## Little Eagle, SD



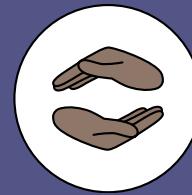
## REFLECTIONS

How have you handled grief and forgiveness in your life? What type of support did you need?

When and where did storytelling happen for you? Did your family share stories of your people's history or your family's history?

What are sacred plants and medicines in your community? How can you make changes in your life to protect them?

What are things you've observed in your community that define your community? (i.e., a store, a sacred site, etc.)



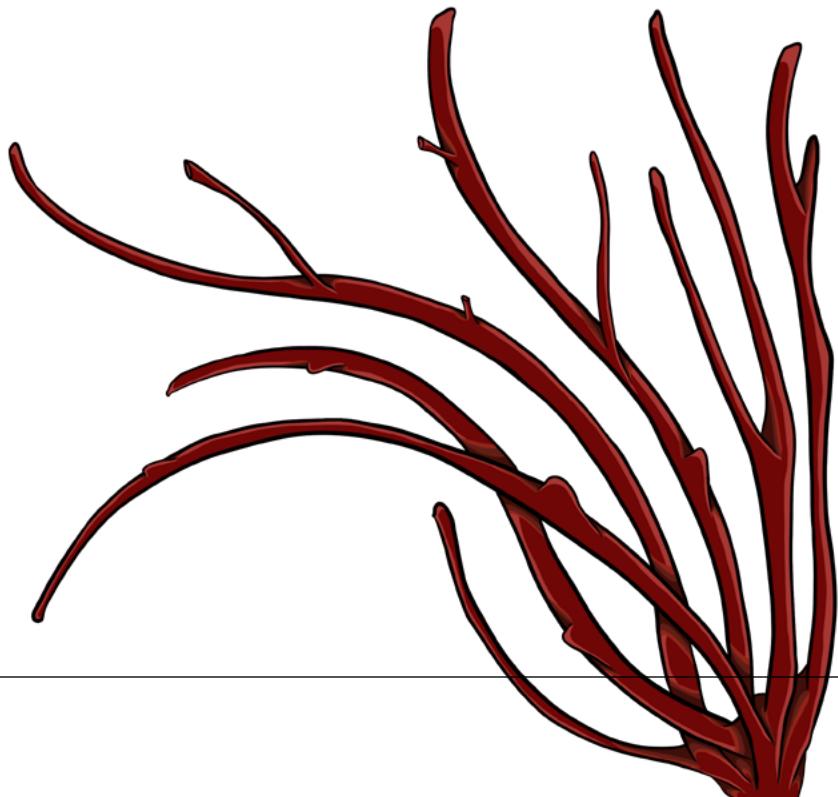
# PREPARING THE ČHANŠÁŠA



## HARVESTING PROTOCOLS

At the start of 2020, a global pandemic stopped the world in its tracks, and Indigenous communities were among the most devastatingly impacted. Indigenous families started networking and using social media to reconnect with relatives near and far to begin gardening, harvesting medicines, and creating teas and elixirs to cope with this unknown illness that was spreading across the globe. Many of the original teachings were foreign to individuals, families and communities due to ethnocide (deliberate destruction of original teachings) and attempted genocide (deliberate killing of people from a particular nation or ethnic group) by the United States government. In the process of relearning, reclaiming, and reconnecting with the land in this collective moment of crisis, many of the natural resources begin to be depleted. Along with climate change impacts, this was also partially due to the fact that many individuals, families and communities were harvesting foods and medicines not according to our original teachings and protocols, which require a reciprocal relationship that is rooted in Indigenous values and life-ways that doesn't deplete the medicine source and leaves it to grow and flourish for generations to come.

Čhanjšáša is harvested between the thunders (usually between December and March; however, due to ongoing climate change, it can be harvested earlier or later depending on when seasons are experienced in real time), this is when the čhanjšáša is dormant. When čhanjšáša goes dormant, all the sap goes into the roots and the leaves shed to conserve moisture and ensure its survival. It's when the inner bark of čhanjšáša is smooth when you smoke it. If it's bitter, it's not dormant yet, but there may be other reasons for being bitter (explanations on the following pages).



## Steps for Harvesting Čhaŋšáša in a Sustainable Way:

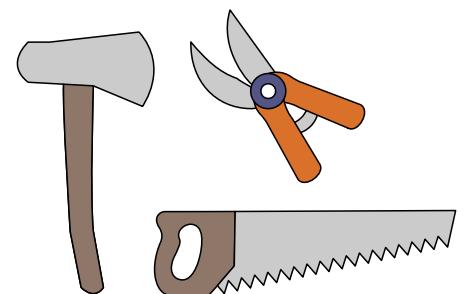
### 1 Harvesting

Our first protocol when an individual is asking for something from another individual, when praying, when harvesting animals and plants, when at a powwow, etc. Is to opági, make an offering, or offer a gift, in exchange for something. You can opági by presenting (i.e., gifting, sprinkling, smoking in a pipe, eating together, etc.) food, čhaŋšáša\*, or any other items of significance in exchange for something. Čhaŋšáša is usually offered when seeking knowledge or asking for something and is either sprinkled directly on the land or item and/or smoked in a čhaŋnúŋpa (sacred pipe) with the individual that knowledge will be obtained from or the being/item that will be prayed over. Čhaŋšáša is also usually held in the left hand, because of our connection to all that is sacred. We understand the connection to Pté Sáŋ Wiŋ (White Buffalo Calf Woman), a sacred being important to the Očhéthi Šakówinj people who brought many ceremonies, came in from the left and our blood flows to our heart on the left side.

When harvesting čhaŋšáša specifically, you must check your intentions, say a prayer, opági the plant with food or čhaŋšáša (sprinkle around the plant), and only take what you need. A rule of thumb is to get a fairly big branch about the size of your thumb, leaving the smaller branches so they can grow and mature for later harvesting. Make sure you harvest for yourself and not for others, unless it's for an elder or someone who is unable to do it themselves. It's important for each person to put that prayer and intentions into harvesting it themselves. Never cut the roots or too many branches from a single čhaŋšáša bush. Make sure that you cut each branch in a way that won't harm the whole tree. Talk with Creator about why you need the čhaŋšáša and make sure you set time aside to process the čhaŋšáša, or help an elder process it.

#### SUPPLIES NEEDED

- Small ax
- Pruning shears
- A saw, or anything you have available



\*Due to settler colonialism commercial tobacco has been used in this exchange as well, but not recommended because it isn't sacred.



## Steps for Harvesting Čhańšáša in a Sustainable Way:

### 2 Processing:

**STEP 1:** Use the peeler or knife to gently scrape the top red bark layer off the čhańšáša. Do this to the whole plant.



**Čhańhášá**  
outer red bark

**USES:**

čhańlí pħaħtá (prayer ties),  
teas, ceremonies, etc.

**STEP 2:** Use your knife (either the front or back of the knife) and scrape the inner green layer off the čhańšáša.



**Čhańlí**  
inner green layer; the layer  
that is smoked and used  
for prayer

**USES:**

smoked and to  
make offerings.

**STEP 3:** Keep the center stick of čhańšáša.

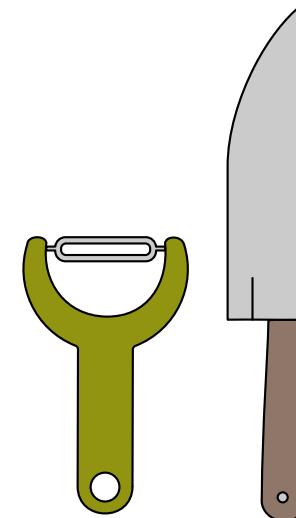
**Čhoġíj**  
center stick

**USES:**

make drumsticks, rattles, use as a tamper for your pipe,  
use to build an inípi (sweat lodge), use the sticks for  
around an alter or Wiwáñyañg Wačhípi circle, etc.

### SUPPLIES NEEDED

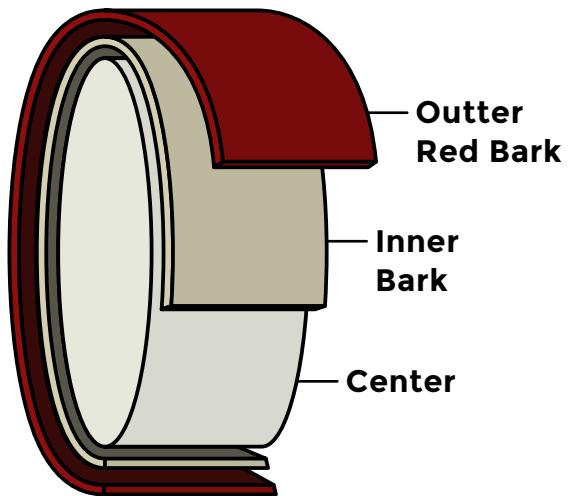
- Vegetable/potato peeler
- Knife, or any metal object  
with a flat and sharp edge  
to scrape the layers off.





## Steps for Harvesting Chanšáša in a Sustainable Way:

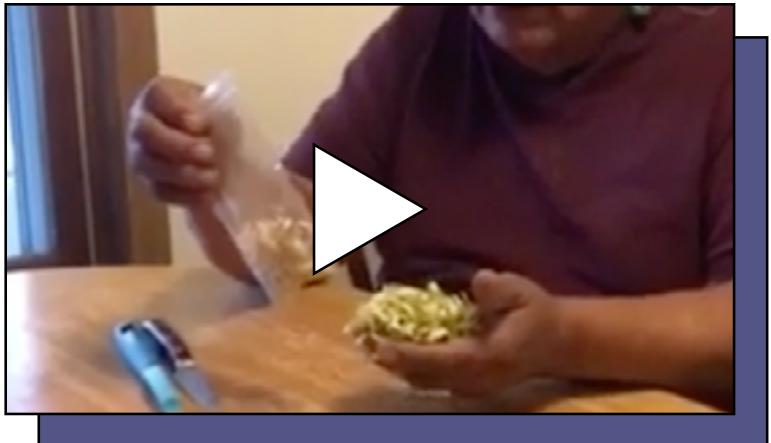
### The Layers





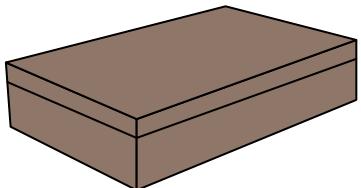
## Steps for Harvesting Čhanšáša in a Sustainable Way:

- ③ Drying and storing: Place the čhanšáša into separate, unsealed containers, red bark in one container and green inner layer in another container, and allow to air dry for a few days or longer. Once they are dry, you may place them in a sealed container such as a plastic baggy.



### SUPPLIES NEEDED:

- parfleche container, wooden box, shoe box, plastic baggy, or any container you have available.





# TĚĀNKAKE ČIN WÓIYAKSAPE

## The Elders Teachings

Our elders have endless amounts of knowledge and lived experiences to share with those who are willing to listen and learn. Asking for knowledge from our elders is a simple one but must be led by our protocols. When we meet with an elder in any community and ask for knowledge, even a simple, but deep story or teaching of our Indigenous lifeways, we must give the elder the opportunity to extend or refuse consent<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, using our medicines and foods to opági (make an offering, or offer a gift, in exchange for something) is a crucial part in requesting knowledge. An elder has the right to either accept or refuse the offer, but it is all handled within the protocol of opági.

Humor and teasing/joking is how our communities deal with grief and other struggles. Our elders are strong and resilient and have endured infinite amounts of grief and trauma throughout their lives, yet they still rise to the occasion and step in

<sup>1</sup> Simpson, L. B. (2014). Land as Pedagogy: Nishnaabeg Intelligence and Rebellious Transformation. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society*, 3(3), 1-25.





where needed within the family and community structure and ecosystems. Elders are not necessarily defined by age, but they are usually the closest generations to our ancestors and our original teachings and represent the many lives and experiences they carry.<sup>2</sup> We advise others to not take for granted the beautiful ways our elders give generously of their knowledge and time, humbly accept and appreciate company, and embody teachings that are meant to be carried onto the next generations.

In the Očhéthi Šakówin phrase *Mitákuye Owás'inj* (we're all related) is central to how we believe the world works. When we honor the multitude of beings and spirits in the world, we're honoring our relationship to ourselves as well. When we treat all things as a relative then we take care of them as relatives. Nothing is greater or less valuable in this sense. Taking it further, this world is a mirror of the cosmological world. When our world is not in balance, we see the normal seasons being shown to us through the cosmos and yet due to climate change and other reasons, the seasons haven't been aligning and our relationships suffer. This throws many things out of alignment. We need to remember that all things are connected: our health, the natural world, the cosmos, elements, everything, and we learn these things through our original teachings that have been passed down by our elders and knowledge keepers.

2 Holmes, A. & Gonzalez, N. (2017). *Finding Sustenance: An Indigenous Relational Pedagogy*. Paris, D. & Alim, S.H. *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World*. Pg:207-224. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.



“

*When you look at everything we've lost, we've lost the resources and the connections to these things. Everything can be revitalized... It starts with the environment.*

**LEKSI CEDRIC GOOD HOUSE SR.**

“

*We're not losing our language, we're regaining our language.*

**LEKSI JOHN EAGLE SHIELD, SR.**

“

*In the process of regaining our language, we're also regaining all of the things we have learned through all of our experiences up to this point.*

**LEKSI VIRGIL TAKEN ALIVE**



# OUR CONNECTION TO THE WIČHÁHPÍ OYÁTE (STAR NATION)

## Our Creation Story and Re-emergence Story

In the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ life-ways, an entity called ínyan (Rock), who was a massive power that existed on its own, created the world we know today. Ínyan used pieces of itself and created makhá (Earth), hanjhépi wí (moon), aŋpé wí (sun), and the wičháhpí oyáte (star nation), galaxies and universe to be in correlation with each other. The two-legged nation (humans) were arrogant and destructive and ínyan began to cleanse itself. There were many natural disasters, over eons of time: hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tornadoes, etc. and the Earth was split into different continents of people. The two-legged destruction continued and ínyan then created the ice age and instructed all the people who were living according to the original teachings to go into the Earth and they would be protected. The new world was beautiful and there were many bodies of water and an abundance of foods and medicines. Iktómi (spider- trickster spirit) heard the breathing of the people down in a deep hole in the Earth, what we know as Wind Cave. Iktómi tricked the two-legged nation to come to the surface of the Earth.

Thus began our re-emergence story, the two-legged nation

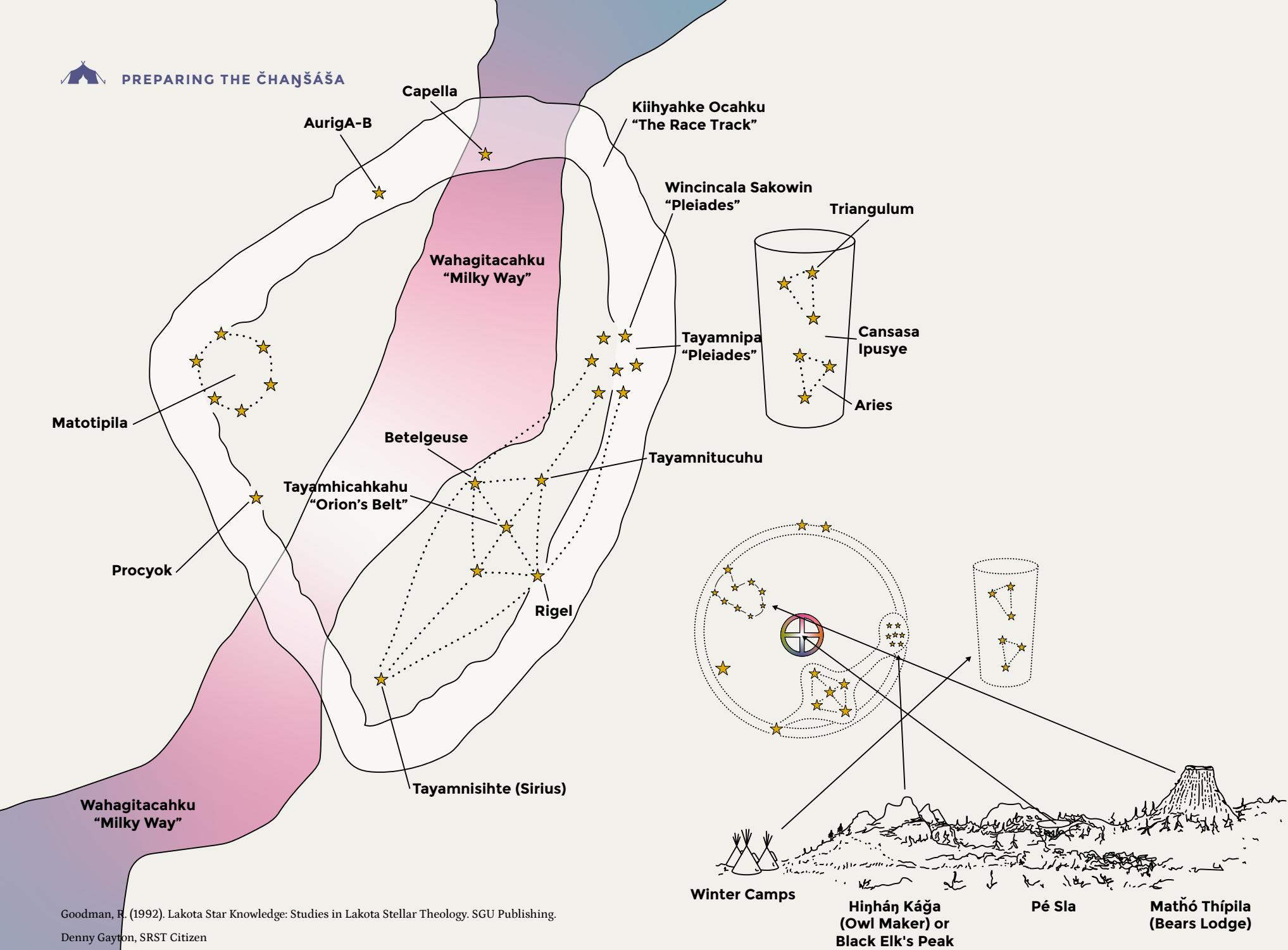
(humans), came to the surface of the Earth and began a complicated journey of acknowledging and reckoning with our own arrogance and learning to live in relationship with the four-legged (animals), winged animals, plants, and elements. The buffalo nation stepped forward and took responsibility for the two-legged and gave of themselves to the two-legged. They became everything the two-legged would ever need: food, shelter, medicine, and tools. The buffalo nation also sent Pté Sáŋ Wiŋ (White Buffalo Calf woman) to teach and share the lessons and original teachings that the two-leggeds needed to live in harmony with the other elements in this world.

The connections the Očhéthi Šakówiŋ people have with the wičháhpí oyáte (star nation) are teachings that came from the buffalo nation. The buffalo nation knew the paths to the sacred sites and already had a connection to the stars. The star constellations are considered to be guides and serve as a calendar that offers a time-frame of when to make offerings and hold ceremonies. Our connection to the stars is critical in maintaining balance as individuals and as a people.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> WoLakota. (2016, April 5). Origin Story with Duane Hollow Horn Bull [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CnTkk4iyy5w>  
[https://prezi.com/sajf1qyxrcgg/our-relatives-the-stars/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](https://prezi.com/sajf1qyxrcgg/our-relatives-the-stars/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)



## PREPARING THE ČHANŠAŠA

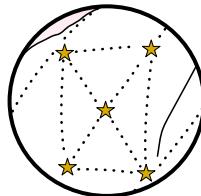


Goodman, R. (1992). Lakota Star Knowledge: Studies in Lakota Stellar Theology. SGU Publishing.  
Denny Gayton, SRST Citizen



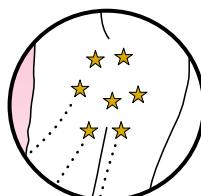
## Waní-wí-iphá (Winter Solstice)

Waníčokanyan (midwinter), this was the time that the sun was farthest south and also the time when stories were shared. Thayámni Čhanjkáhu (Orions Belt) was straight above in the sky during this time. The people were in our winter camps and harvested and prepared čhanšáša for the upcoming spring and summer ceremonies. Čhanšáša Ipúseye (consists of stars in Triangulum and Aries and resembles a branch with the bark stripped off) is a constellation of stars that marks the end of winter and beginning of spring.



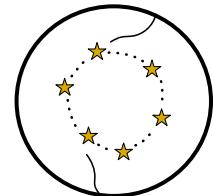
## Wétu Ákhianjpetu (Spring Equinox)

This was the time when Wičhínčala Šakówinj (Seven Girls, also referred to as Thayámni-phá or the Pleiades of Taurus) was visible and it marked the time of offerings to the Wakínyan (thunder beings) to welcome them back. This would take place at Hinjhán Kága Pahá (English names are Black Elk's Peak, but formerly known as Harney Peak) in the Black Hills. After the Wakínyan were welcomed back, the people would travel to Phešlá (Center of the Black Hills) and would hold a ceremony to welcome back all other life by feeding the plants and animals with water and tongue and scattering seeds.



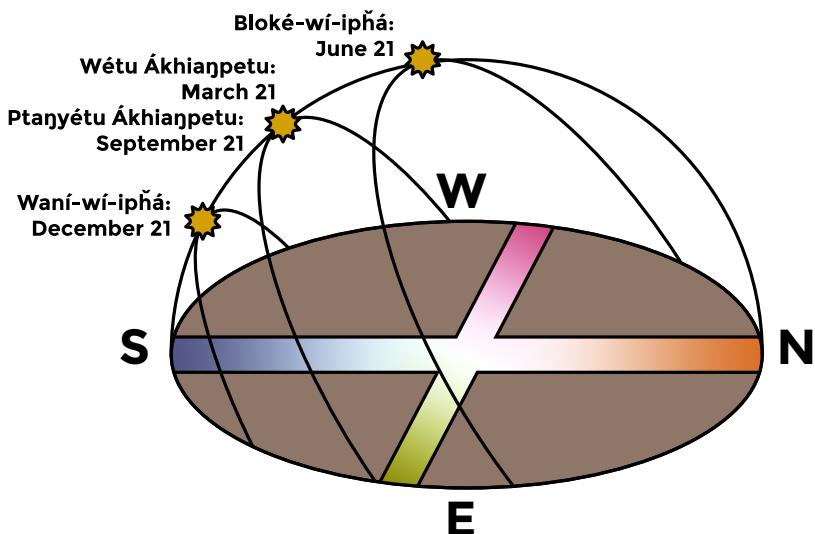
## Bloké-wí-iphá (Summer Solstice)

This marked the time when the sun was the highest in the sky and the farthest north. Mathó Thípila (Bear's Lodge) was visible. The people would travel to Mathó Thípila (Bear's Lodge, formerly known as Devil's Tower) to begin preparations for the Sundance.



## Ptanyétu Ákhianjpetu (Fall Equinox)

This marked the time when our people would gather at Mathó Pahá (Bear Butte) began preparing for the winter again and begin traveling to their winter camps and preparing for the winter months.



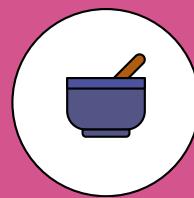
## REFLECTIONS

What did you learn about harvesting chansasa (red willow) that you can teach those around you?

How do you interact with elders in your own community? Do you feel like there are elders you can turn to for stories, history, and advice?

What are some creation stories you've heard growing up? Do you know someone you can ask to share a creation story with you? How would you approach them?

How can understanding star knowledge help us to restore our relationships to the land?



# ČHANŠÁŠA AS MEDICINE

## PLANT PROFILE

**LAKHÓTA NAME:** Čhanšáša or Can sasa, “chahn SHAH SHAH,”  
(Wood Red/Red Willow)

**COMMON NAME:** Red osier dogwood

**SCIENTIFIC NAME:** *Cornus sericea*

**FAMILY:** Cornaceae

**DESCRIPTION:** Shrub with simple opposite leaves exhibiting entire margins and a ‘latex’ that connects leaf pieces that are pulled apart; fleshy white fruits are inedible.

**HABITAT, DISTRIBUTION:** Native, common throughout Black Hills, Bear Lodge Mountains, and Northern Plains regions. Low to mid-elevations forests. Found in wet areas along rivers and creeks.

**COMMENTS:** Čhanšáša or Can sasa is also known as Red Willow and Red osier dogwood. The inner bark is utilized for ceremonial pipe smoking, smudging, and offering. Branches used to build a Inípi (Sweat Lodge) frame.

**TEACHINGS:** The story of the young man sacrificing his life, offering before harvesting, prayer, Pick before first thunder, women do not handle on cycle, different parts of the medicine is utilized for various things; camp fire,

Female: scrap away from you; Male: scrap towards you

**HARVEST:** Start December 21st until first Thunderstorm

**MEDICINAL PROPERTIES:** Boil the inner bark and drink to treat UTI. Analgesic, Astringent and Stimulating compounds.



Larson, G.E., & J.R. Johnson (2007). Plants of the Black Hills and Bear Lodge Mountains, 2nd ed. South Dakota State University

Two Dogs, R (2021). Čhanšáša Wičoyake na Woonspe Teachings. [Zoom recording]. Thunder Valley CDC

Linda Black Elk (medicinal properties)

# MEDICINE MAKING AND USES

TIME	TYPES	DEFINITIONS	PARTS	RECIPES	AILMENTS TREATED
	Infusion	Tea made by pouring boiling water over plant material. This is best for plants with softer tissues (most leaves and flowers). 10 minutes. Infusions can be done for longer periods of time, however, the difference is that it is not simmering for long periods, or it would be considered a decoction.	Twigs and peeled bark	Cover twigs and peeled bark in cold sterile water (may use hot or warm water). Let infusion steep for 12-24 hours at room temperature and then filter twigs and bark. (note: shelf life is between 24-48 hours).	Can be used as an antiseptic analgesic wash for aching muscles, washing wounds, foot soak, or sore areas of skin.
	Decoction	Tea made by simmering plants/mushrooms in water for at least 20 minutes. This is best for plants with harder tissues (roots, bark, tough leaves, and woody mushrooms).	Twigs and peeled bark	Cover twigs and peeled bark in cold sterile water (may use hot or warm water). Let infusion steep for 12-24 hours at room temperature and then filter twigs and bark.	Analgesic, Astringent and Stimulating compounds.
	Poultice	A soft, moist mass of material, typically of plant material or flour, applied to the body to relieve soreness and inflammation and kept in place with a cloth.	Twigs and peeled bark	Allow the inner bark to soak for up to 30 minutes then add to cheesecloth or other thin washcloth. Apply to area needing relief.	Applied topically can relieve skin ailments from rashes, infections, wounds and sores.
	Tincture	Plant medicine that has been extracted (usually into alcohol, glycerin, or vinegar) over weeks or months. This usually comes in a bottle.	Twigs and peeled bark	In a jar add inner bark about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the jar filled. Add either alcohol, glycerin or vinegar as the medium for extraction. Cover with lid then shake well. Allow to sit for a couple of weeks to a full lunar cycle.	May bring relief to coughs, colds, headaches and fevers.
	Smoking Blend	Smoking mix can be single plants along with mixtures of various plants as herbal smoke applications (use other Indigenous plants that call to you or that were shown to you by knowledge keepers.)	Inner bark	Measure herbs with removed stems by weight or eye. You can mix in a large ziplock bag. Additional herbs that can be used include: Mullein, Raspberry leaf, mugwort, yarrow, mint, lemon balm, chamomile, skullcap, hops, willowbark. Add mixture to blender and pulse to blend and not powder the herbs. Store completely dried in an airtight jar.	Smoking is not generally good for health but can relieve acute symptoms such as headache, stress, cramping, addiction sedation, allergies, asthma, or anxiety.

<https://mniwiconicclinicandfarm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/HerbalResilienceGuide.pdf>

<https://thelostherbs.com/red-osier-dogwood/#:~:text=Internally%2C%20red%20osier%20dogwood%20tea%20or%20tincture%20may,helps%20to%20relieve%20sore%2C%20tight%2C%20and%20overworked%20muscles>

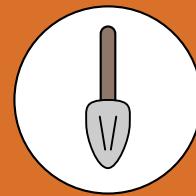
## REFLECTIONS

Does your family have a practice of using or harvesting natural medicine?

Can you describe the local areas that you feel comfortable gathering from?

How are you interested in using more plants that your ancestors may have used?

Have you identified čhańśáša (red willow) in its native habitat?



# PLANTING GUIDE

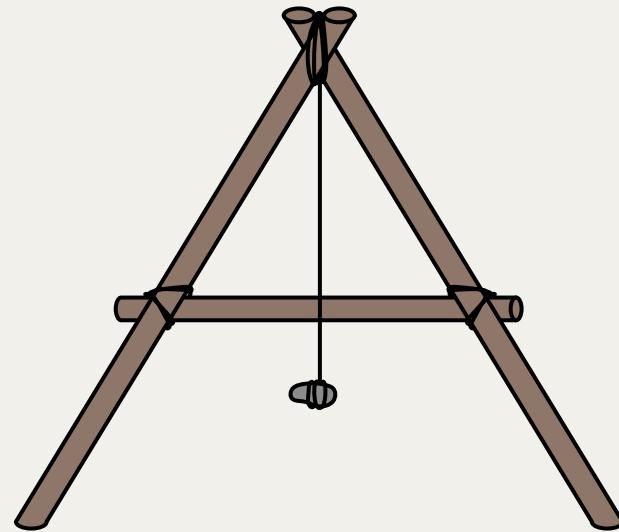
# ORDERING ČHANŠÁŠA SEEDLINGS

- 1 Google trees for sale in your area. Many locations will pop-up. We chose to buy from a soil conservation called Cedar Soil Conservation District.
- 2 Choose an amount you are able to plant. We chose to order 2000 čhanšáša seedlings. Each seedling cost \$1.50 each X 2000 = \$3000. Depending on when you purchase the trees, many places will have final tree sales (i.e., \$10/bag or \$1/tree) with what they have available.
- 3 The land stewards planted roughly 700-800 at each location (Little Eagle, SD and Cannonball, ND).
- 4 We gifted the remaining seedlings to each of the land stewards and also to local community members.
- 5 Be mindful of what you're able to plant and share if you can. Please don't waste trees.



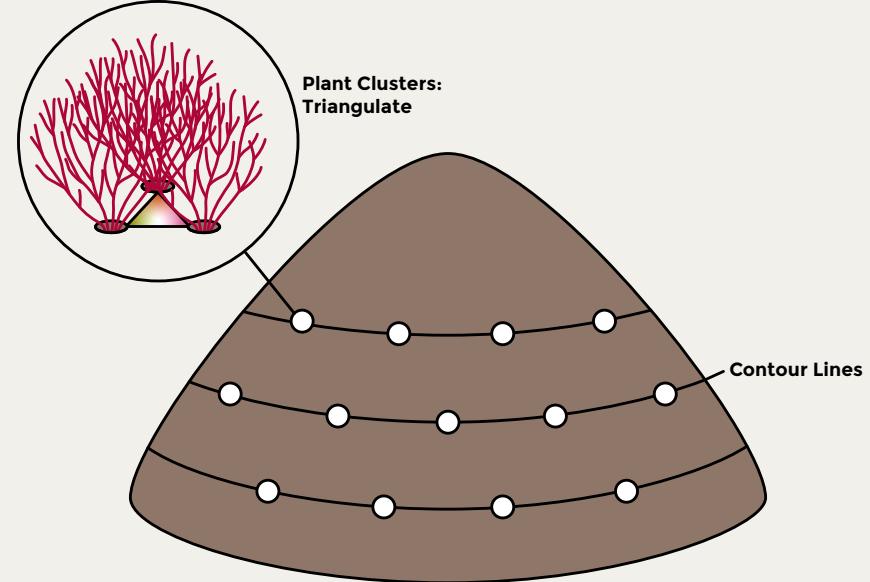
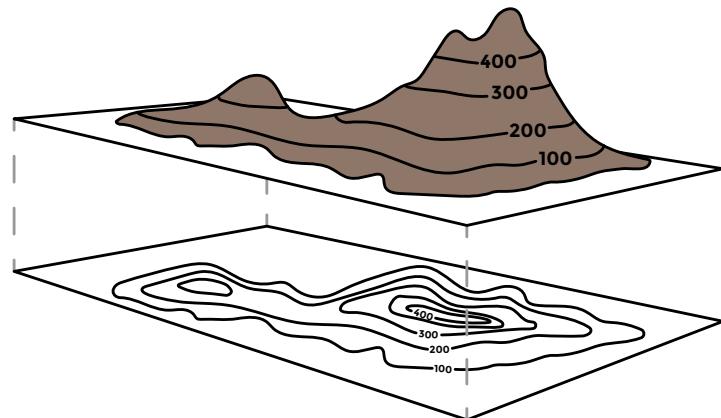
## A-FRAME

An a-frame is a simple, indigenous tool that has been used to mark contour lines for digging ditches or swales along a plane. People can use this contour line while planting trees or building terraces which can help harvest water while reducing soil erosion.



## MARKING THE AREA

Marking any area is not always necessary but it helps with organizing the planting process. Our example is how it may look on a sloped plane but you can use a similar strategy if you are in a more flat area.



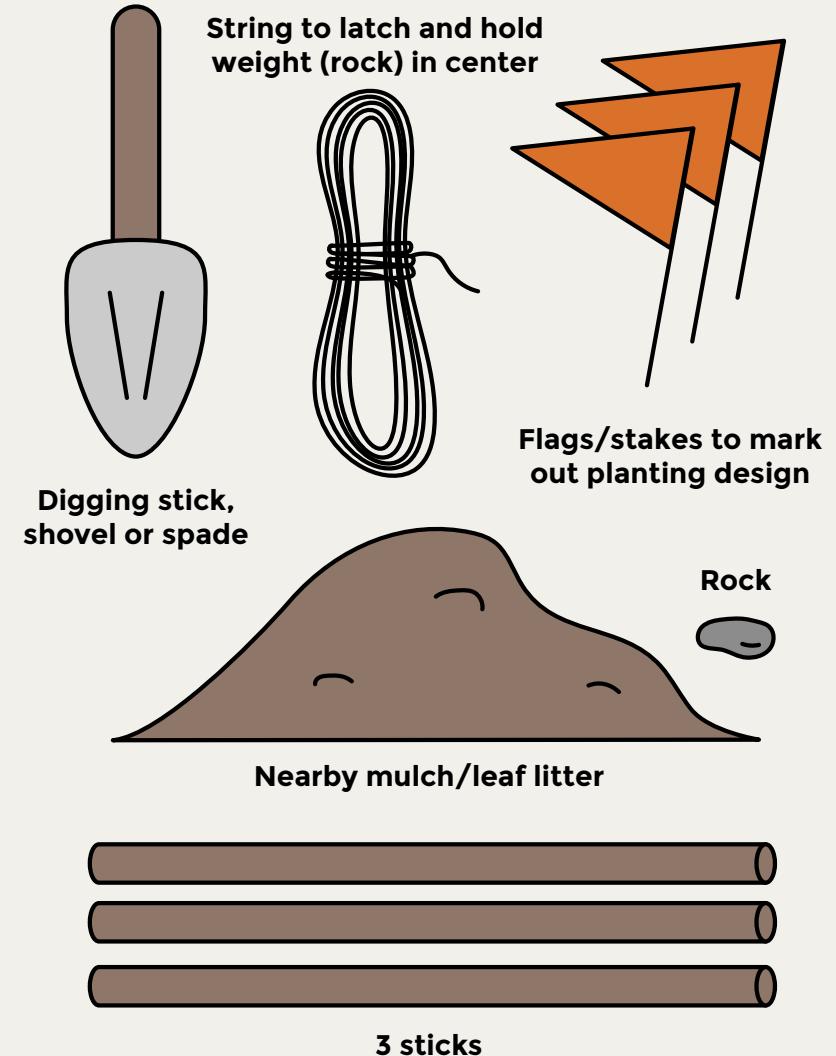
Example image demonstrated as a hillside.

# TOOLS

The tools needed to plant chansasa are:

- Digging stick
- Shovel or spade
- Nearby mulch/ leaf litter
- Flags/ stakes to mark out planting design
- Tools to make a-frame:
  - 3 sticks
  - String to latch and hold weight rock in center
  - Rock

These are suggested tools, based on accessibility to resources, however, these can be modified and adapted for each planting site.



## ENVIRONMENT

“Red osier-dogwood is an excellent plant for restoration purposes. It is easy to propagate, grows quickly, and has wildlife value. It does well in areas that are seasonally inundated with water. Places along stream banks and shorelines are ideal. It has a fibrous root system which is great for soil stabilization. This dogwood is an excellent shrub to plant along sunny edges and in deciduous canopy shade because it is sun-loving and shade tolerant. It provides ample shade on the ground below and nearby, which is serves well to shade out weedy species like reed canary grass and Himalayan blackberry. The flowers in spring provide nectar for insects and hummingbirds. Birds eat the berries that develop in summer and early fall, as well as nest in the protective shrub cover.”

[University of Washington Bothell, Red-osier dogwood](#)



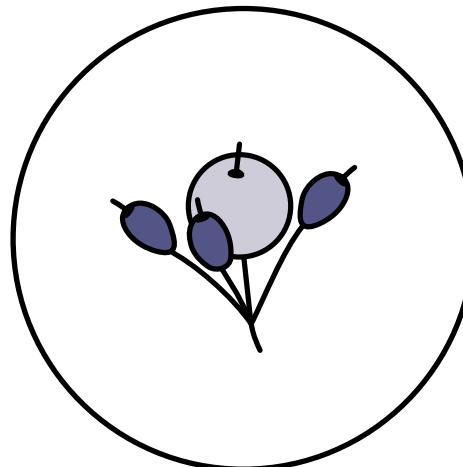
# SEASONS

**Wétu (Spring):** The leaves on the čhanšáša are lance-shaped (narrow end is sharp and pointed) or oval (narrow end is sharp and pointed but wider middle area) with smooth edges that are darker green on top of the leaf and lighter green underneath the leaf. White flowers bloom in late spring and are characterized by five (5) petals in a star shape with showy stamens (the pollen producing part of the flower).

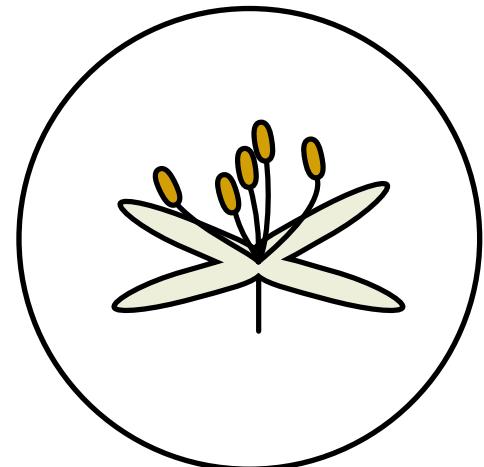
**Blokétu (Summer):** Small, pea-sized white berries with bluish-tinge appear in clusters in midsummer after flowering. They are not advised to be eaten; however, they may not be poisonous. (Please do your research and use your discretion).

**Ptanyétu (Fall):** In the fall, the čhanšáša leaves change from green and become beautiful yellows, oranges, coral reds, deep reds, and pinkish-reds and fall off. They might still have white berries from the summer that fall off with the leaves.

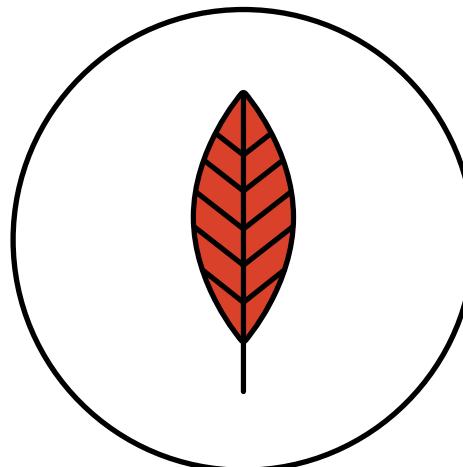
**Waníyetu (Winter):** In the winter the čhanšáša is leafless, flowerless, and berryless and is a vibrant red color that are clearly visible.



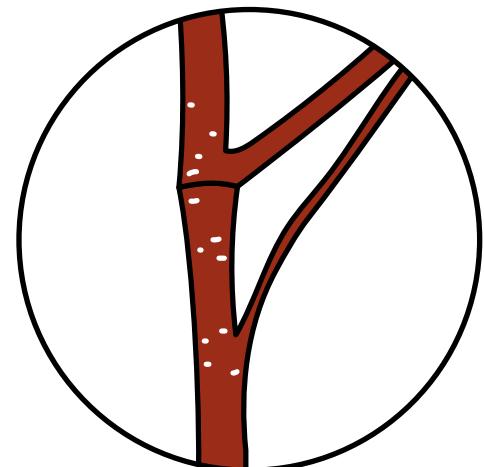
**Wétu  
(Spring)**



**Blokétu  
(Summer)**



**Ptanyétu  
(Fall)**



**Waníyetu  
(Winter)**

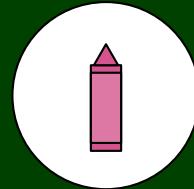
## REFLECTIONS

Are there any planting practices that you have used to give back to the land or any lost habitat?

Have you ever made or used primitive tools? If so, what was it like?

Do you know how to identify any poisonous plants in your area?

How have you collected personal data, even simply noticing when birds return in the spring, or when certain flowers bloom?



# COLORING PAGES & MORE

# ART PROJECT

## Create Art from Natural Objects

Items needed: any natural materials available to you (i.e., rocks, sticks, leaves, bark, pine cones, etc., however, avoid using live plants)

- 1 Gather natural materials around you that are NOT connected to a live plant.
- 2 Arrange natural materials into an arrangement or pattern or something that speaks to you. Use your beautiful imagination.
- 3 Take a picture with your brain or with a camera.
- 4 Walk away and let the weather blow and wash your art away.

You can get creative and create mini walking trails for the čhanjúnt'ila (little people) or create a small house for the insects and small animals. Or you can spell out your name or make a beautiful pattern. You and your family can use your creativity to create beautiful art installation in your community.



# ART PROJECT

## Painting with Soil

Items needed: paper cups, paint brush, paper, sticks, water and different types of soil.

- 1 Gather as many colors of soil that you can find.
- 2 Place each different color of soil into a separate cup and use a stick to mix up the soil into a fine powder. Try to empty out the larger pieces of soil and rocks. (May also use a mortar and pestle to grind up soil)
- 3 Add water to the different cups of soil and mix.
- 4 Use a paint brush and begin painting on a piece of paper. (You may also draw a design before you start painting on the paper). Get creative!



# SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

## Soil Texture Analysis

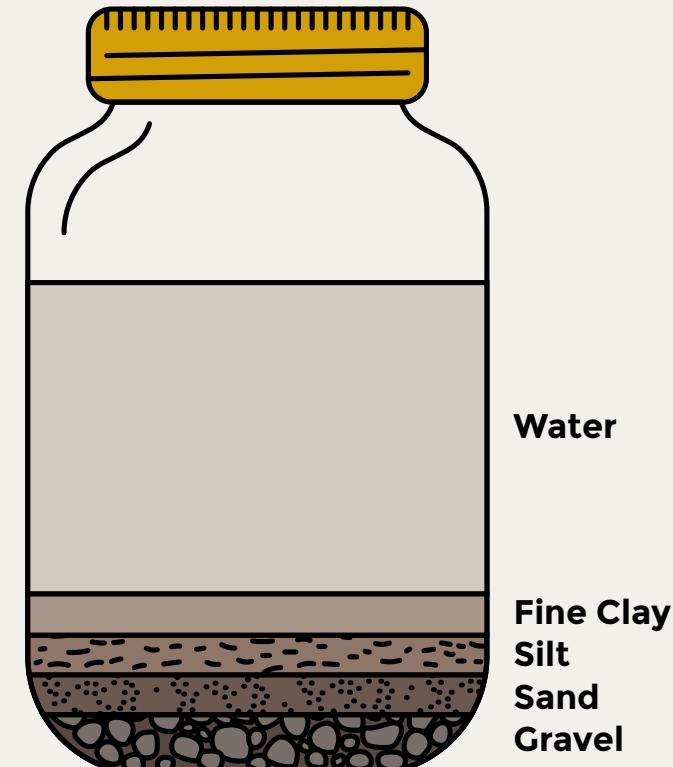
Items needed: mason jar, water, and soil.

- 1 Filling a mason jar  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the way full of soil.  
Remove as much plant matter, such as leaf litter, from the collection
- 2 Add water to almost the top of the jar
- 3 Add some dish soap
- 4 Shake the mixture
- 5 As the soil/water mixture settles over 48-72 hours, you'll notice the sand, silt, and clay will separate forming horizons. Most of the organic matter will float to the top of your sample
- 6 Once its settled, their proportions can then be determined

Soil Texture is any combination of sand silt and clay. Čhanšáša is adaptable to a variety of soil texture types.

A suggested experiment is to collect soil from three places: a nearby native čhanšáša, an area you wish to plant more, and the soil nearby your house.

Soil Classification	Clay Soil	Loam Soil	Sandy Soil
Percent Clay	40-100%	7-27%	1-10%
Percent Silt	0-40%	28-50%	1-15%
Percent Sand	0-45%	23-52%	85-100%



# SCIENCE EXPERIMENT

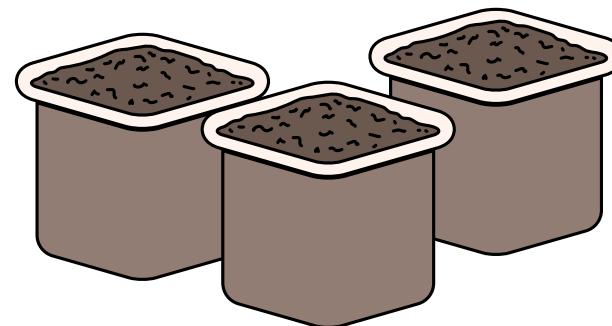
## Making Soil Cakes

Items needed: bucket, kitchen bowl, small plastic containers, a nail, tack, or something sharp to poke holes in small containers, gardening compost, water and soil.

- 1 Collect soil into a container (i.e., bowl, bucket, etc.) and pay attention to the different soils
- 2 Grab four small plastic containers (i.e., yogurt cups, plastic cups, etc.) and poke holes in the bottom.
- 3 Mix dirt with water and place into two of the small plastic containers, making sure to pack it down.
- 4 Mix dirt and water, this time adding gardening compost, and place into the other two of the small plastic containers, making sure to pack down.
- 5 Leave the soil mixtures in the sun to dry for several days until completely dry (protect from rain).
- 6 Test to see which soil cakes can suck up and retain more water.

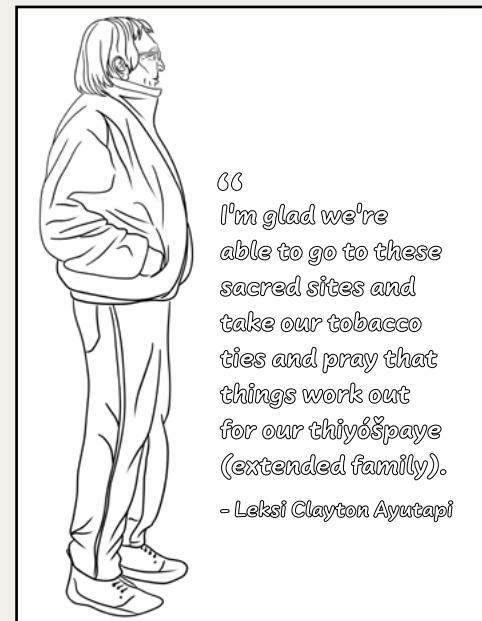
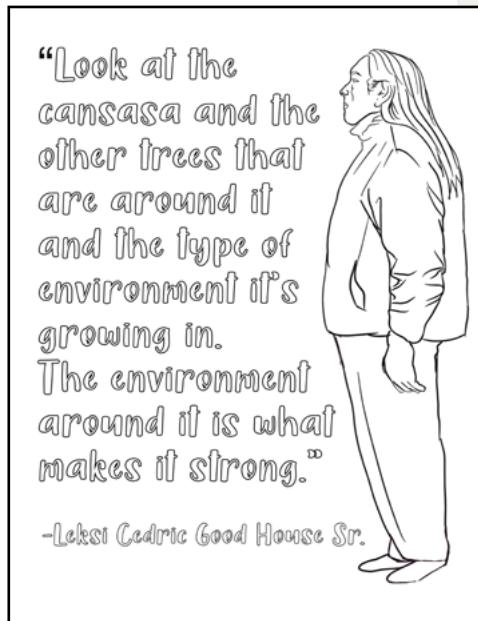
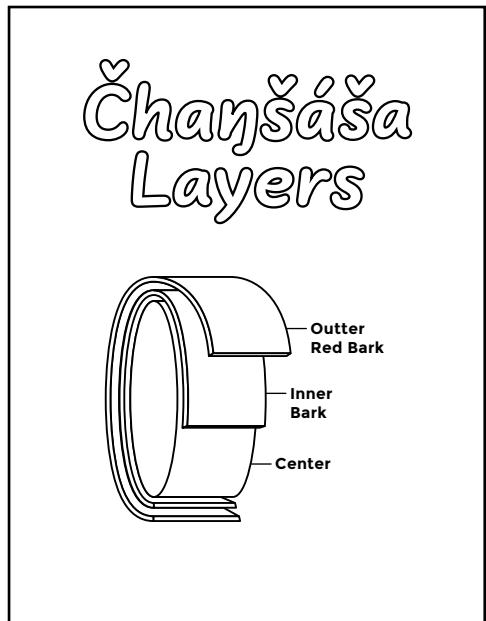
- 7 Using two bigger cups or bowls, pour about a cup of water into the bottom and place the soil cakes (still in the small plastic containers) inside the bigger cups or bowls to determine which soil cakes suck up and retain more water. Leave them in the water for 10 minutes and check.
- 8 Next, take the soil cakes and dump them out of the small plastic containers, and see if you can break them up with your hands.

What do you notice? How does the soil feel? Adding compost is important for soil, especially during dry summers. It's also important for rainy seasons. The soil with compost is also easier to break up. Plants need soil that their roots can easily break through and grow in.



# COLORING PAGES

Click the images below for links  
to printable coloring pages!



# HOW TO PRONOUNCE ČHANŠÁŠA



## LAND BACK

We end our resource with a call to action towards LANDBACK and moving beyond simply acknowledging the land that you are on and may also call “home”.

LANDBACK is a movement that has been ongoing for generations that calls for a physical return of the land and all that is sacred to Indigenous peoples, to steward it according to their original teachings while enacting their sovereignty unapologetically.

To be clear, Indigenous people never intended to “own” the land, but because of our complicated relationship with the federal government and the treaties we’ve been forced to sign, we must now fight for the land and resources that we can protect and manage for our future generations.

## APPS AND RESOURCES

For finding whose land you’re currently on and learning about the peoples of that land.

[Native-Land.ca](http://Native-Land.ca)

[Whose.land](http://Whose.land)

[Native Governance Center](http://Native Governance Center)

Text city and state for info on land acknowledgment  
(ex. Seattle, WA) to (907)312-5085

## A PROTOCOL ON TAKING STEPS TOWARDS LANDBACK

- ① Using the resources to the left (and others) to determine which land you are currently visiting and/or residing on.
- ② Research current actions towards LANDBACK those particular Indigenous Nation(s) have in place.
- ③ Do some self-reflection and check your intentions. Do not take up space or center yourself. Uplift the efforts of those who are from those Nations who are doing the work on the ground. (Find out where your particular skills can be of service.)
- ④ Use your privilege to speak up at your local city council and other public meetings to share your learnings and resources with others of privilege. If you’re able to, have resources available to pass out and share.
- ⑤ Return your property to your local Indigenous/Tribal Nation. (Reach out to the local Tribal Council/Nation for specific steps.)
- ⑥ Create awareness within your circles.

“

*Be prepared. Someday somebody is going to ask you to do something, to say something. To pray. To share these teachings and what you've learned here. Be prepared.*

LEKSI JOHN EAGLE SHIELD SR.

“

*Oyáte kiŋ blihéč’iya po! My people take courage! Lakhól wičhóh’ay kiŋ othéhike lo. The Lakota way is a blessed way of life.*

LEKSI VIRGIL TAKEN ALIVE

This document created by  
the Mni Wichoni Health Circle



with funding from the University  
of North Dakota and the Wend Collective



and designed by Verelle Tomford Graphic Design,  
with cover illustration by Deanna Bear Uphold