

PLANTS FOUND AT STAR CARR

All these plants were found at Star Carr during the excavations by the archaeologist Sir Grahame Clark in 1949-1951. We know that many of them were used in later times by people: as food or medicine or for making objects. We also know that some are poisonous and will either make people feel ill, or they will die if they eat them.

We do not know whether Mesolithic people actually ate or used each of these plants. what we can say is they could have done.

Some plants would have grown in the water of the lake, some in swampy ground at the edge of the lake. Other plants would have grown in the open ground in the settlement, while others would have grown in the woodland behind the settlement.

Water plants

| <i>Common name</i> | <i>Information</i> |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Mare's tail | can heal wounds and upset stomachs |
| Pondweed | good food for water birds but not for people |
| Stonewort | smell of rotten eggs, not useful to people |
| Water lily (white) | seeds, flower buds and roots can be eaten |
| Water lily (yellow) | seeds can be made into 'cake' and eaten |

Swamp plants

| <i>Common name</i> | <i>Information</i> |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bittersweet | poisonous |
| Bog bean | roots can be eaten |
| Club rush | roots can be eaten, stems used to make baskets |
| Cowbane | poisonous |
| Deergrass | no known uses |
| Gipsywort | can help cure coughs, is relaxing and helps people sleep |
| Grey willow | bark and leaves can be used like aspirin to reduce fever, small stems can be woven into baskets and fences |
| Horsetail | poisonous |
| Marsh willowherb | leaves can be eaten |
| Meadow rue | boiled roots help cure constipation |
| Meadowsweet | leaves used as flavouring in other foods |
| Reed | sugary sap, roots and stems can be eaten |
| Sedge | can be used to line shoes for warmth, seeds of some sedges can also be eaten |
| Spearwort | bitter, unpleasant and poisonous |
| Spike rush | could be woven into mats or baskets |
| Water dock | powdered root can be used as toothpaste |

Open plants

| <i>Common name</i> | <i>Information</i> |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bistort | leaves can be eaten |
| Black nightshade | poisonous |
| Chickweed | leaves, stems can be eaten |
| Crowberry | berries can be eaten |
| Goosefoot | leaves can be eaten |
| Hemp nettle | can help with coughs |
| Knotgrass | seeds can be eaten |
| Nettle | leaves can be eaten |
| Ragwort | distasteful and poisonous |
| Redshank | leaves can be eaten |
| Sorrel | leaves can be eaten |
| St John's wort | helps lift moodiness and depression but can cause anxiety and over activity |

Woodland plants

| <i>Common name</i> | <i>Information</i> |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aspen | wood is good for making paddles |
| Birch | a tough, heavy wood good for furniture and handles, bark used for tanning leather and making boxes, shoes, roof covering, quivers, torches and many other things, bark can be heated to make tar used for waterproofing and as glue |
| Hawthorn | wood burns well with much heat, leaves can be eaten, berries irritate the stomach |
| Hedge woundwort | used for healing wounds |
| Moss | absorbent, can be used as a wound dressing |
| Pine | pollen can be eaten, leaves can make a tea, strong wood, resin can be used as a glue and to stop bleeding wounds, to waterproof things and to burn for light |
| Red campion | roots can be used as a soap for washing |
| Rowan | berries can be eaten |
| Tinder fungus | can be used to help light fires |