

Ethnobotany

Find these three plants in Tryon Creek State Park. Mark it on the map provided. Then learn more on the following page. Answer the Questions.



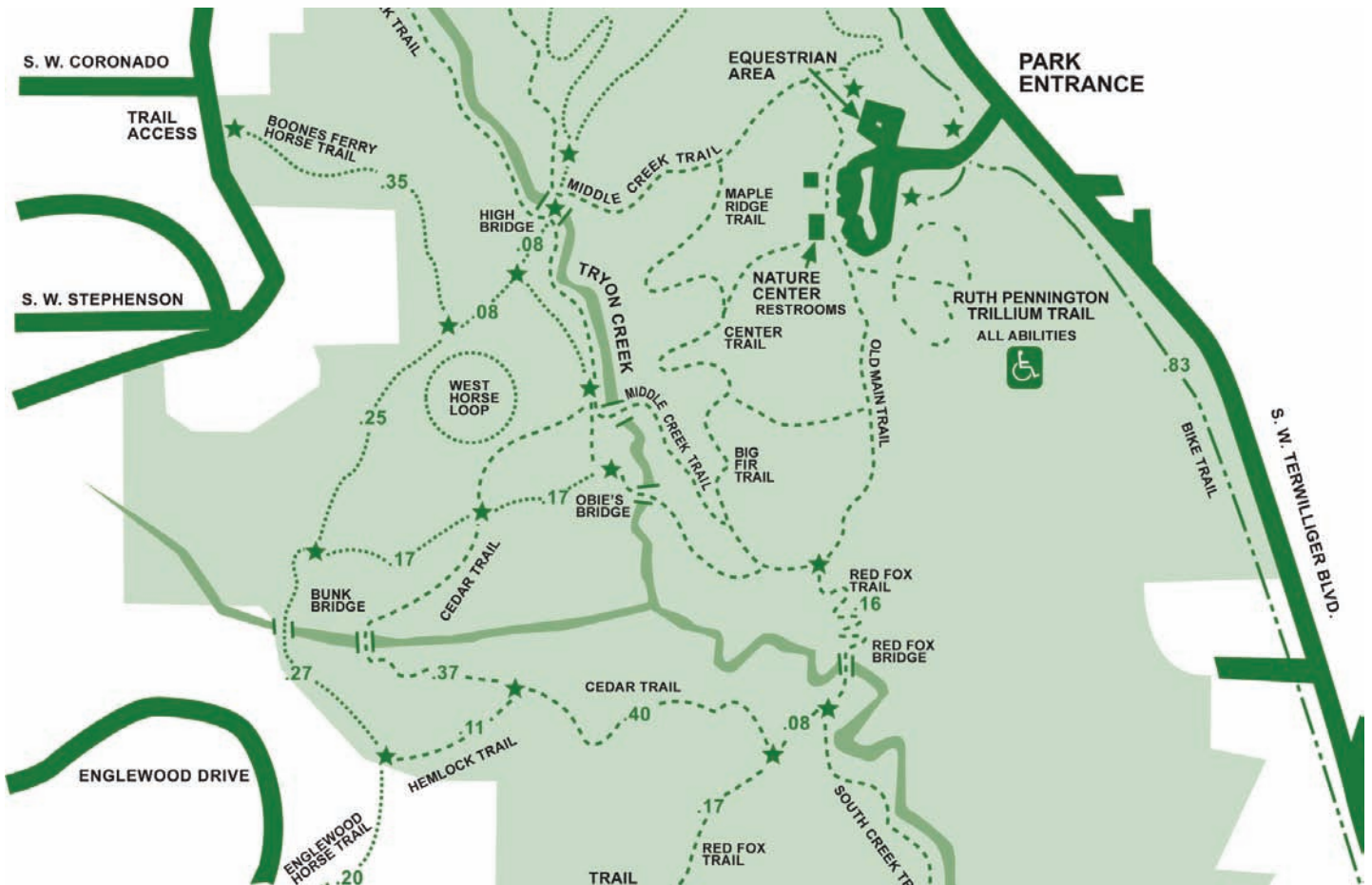
WESTERN RED CEDAR



OREGON GRAPE



SWORD FERN



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WESTERN REDCEDAR

Redcedar is a very easily identifiable tree. It has flat needles that branch and fork from the central stem. The reddish-brown bark looks as if it is made up of many strips peeling up the trunk. Redcedar contains a chemical that makes it especially resistant to both rot and insect infestations. What do you think this tree was used for by the Native Americans who called it the "Tree of Life"? One of the main uses of this tree was to make planks for the traditional long houses

that native people lived in. Because Cedar is a soft wood it is easily split and can be shaped for many uses. Can you think of another use that would allow native peoples to gather food? Remember the dependence that these people had on the river to provide food and transportation. Cedar trees were used for canoes, but how would you make a canoe out of this tree if you wanted to? The trees were usually burned on one side to bring the tree down to ground level where it was then hollowed out by fire and finished by carving. Cedar was used to make many objects, from arrow handles to eating utensils. One of its most amazing qualities of this tree is that it is rot resistant. When Lewis and Clark arrived in the Pacific Northwest they were wearing clothing made from animal hides. As we all know, winter here is wet and those hides rot when exposed to continual rain and never get a chance to dry out. The native people living in this area used the bark to make fibers which could be made into clothing that didn't rot. How would you go about making clothing from bark?

SWORD FERN

One of the most striking plants in the Pacific Northwest forest is the Sword Fern. It is easy to identify by the long fronds with up to 100 alternating leaflets. The leaves stay green and firm all year long.



Feel the fern. How does it feel? What would do you think you could use this plant for? The fronds of the sword fern were used for bedding much like straw was used to fill mattresses. Fronds were used as shelf paper for drying racks for other wild plants like nut and berries. Traditional pit ovens were used in the area of the northwest and were used to slow cook or roast many foods. The fronds of the Sword Fern were used by native people to line the pit ovens and in between layers of food cooking in the pit oven. The fiddle heads, the young spring shoots, of the sword fern were collected and eaten.

OREGON GRAPE



Do you know what the Oregon state flower is? It is a very common ground cover with a distinct texture and leaf shape. Not only does it bear fruit but it also has the name of the state it represents in its name. ..Oregon Grape. Oregon Grape is easy to identify because of the waxy coating on its leaves and because of the teeth or jagged edges on the leaf sides. Since we call it Oregon Grape, we know that it bears grapes, but these grapes do not taste like the grapes we get from the grocery store. The fruit of the Oregon Grape is neither as fleshy nor as sweet as conventional grapes, but it was eaten as a food source by the native people of the Northwest

coast. The berries of the Oregon Grape were not eaten alone in large quantities but were more commonly mixed with sweeter fruits or were sometimes mashed and cooked into cakes or made into a juice. How do you make a piece of cloth a certain color? You dye it, but where does dye come from? Many dyes now are synthetically created in a laboratory, but many of these dyes originated from chemicals that were first derived from plants. The inner bark of Oregon Grape is yellow and when the twigs were boiled in water, the water could then be used as a yellow dye for clothing and baskets.