

TRUE TRACKS



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Working in Earthtime Creates Its Own Rhythm

In many lectures it is implied that there are rhythms of the Earth associated with different activities (stalking and concentric ring studies being the most apparent).

It appears to me that any skill has associated with it a particular rhythm, or pace. For me, my biggest failures occur when I try to operate at my pace rather than surrendering to the rhythm of the particular skill I am trying to learn. How many times have we heard Tom say something to the effect of selecting the proper materials should take twice as long as the actual time to complete (insert the skill of your choice here).

Yet, when challenged to collect raw materials (such as trap parts) we rush out and grab the first thing that just might be adequate, only to find what we collected to be lacking in some capacity. This could have disastrous implications in full survival.

The time we spend actually LEARNING the skill, as opposed to learning ABOUT the skill, is what I like to think of as working in Earthtime. Each entity has its own rhythm for you to discover. For example, how does yucca like to be used for a hand drill as opposed to mullien, as opposed to blueberry? How does obsidian respond as opposed to chert as opposed to opal? The same techniques are applied; it is just they are in a different balance specific to that entity. This also goes



By **Eddie Starnater**
Instructor

hand in hand with the repetitious asking of the Sacred Question as you go. What does this flake tell me about how the stone felt about my strike? How is this bow limb telling me where I need to take off wood? What have I missed (or could have done differently) in fashioning this pot? How can I improve the efficiency of this trap?

Tom recently told a story of how Grandfather would sometimes study a stone for days, repeatedly changing his angle of view, tapping it in various places, or just touching it, before he ever took a spall for a tool. That is working in the Earthtime of the stone to me. Think about it this way, that rock has been here since the dawn of Creation waiting to teach me this one particular lesson. How patient and thorough can I be in my attempt to learn it? How old is the piece of wood you are burning in for a bowl? How much time are you willing to spend to learn how that piece of wood can be transformed without splitting or checking? You get the idea.

I feel the time spent in the quest for perfection of skills under ideal conditions pays dividends in full survival because you know how things will respond, as well as what shortcuts you can and cannot take. Working in Earthtime helps you learn the most the entity has to teach you at that time, thus honoring the Teacher, the Teaching, and the Earth.

Finally, as the new (instructor) kid on the block, thanks to Tom, Deb, and the Tracker family for allowing me to do what I so love. I hope to see you all soon at future classes.

NEW CLASS!!!

Spiritual Scout Protection Workshop

For many years now students have wondered how to combine the Scout Philosophy mindset application with that of the Scout Protector Class. The answer is the SPIRITUAL SCOUT PROTECTION WORKSHOP!!!

This class will be taught by Tom and in conjunction with Paul Bonner and George and Vanessa Larson. This course will include physical skills, lectures and spiritual lessons and applications. The class is open to graduates of either the Scout Protector or the Scout Class only.

This is the first time this course has ever been offered and one that you do not want to miss!!! The cost of the course is \$850 and the date is October 26 - November 1, 2003 in the Pine Barrens.

For further details, please call the Tracker School office at 908-479-4681.

Hunter-Gatherers or Wal-Mart Shoppers: Who gets the Nutrition?

Given our brain capacity, a lot of evolutionary years and our superior attitude, it is a fascinating question to ask: Just who has better nutrition, us or our ancestors?

The availability and palatability of plants, and thus their nutritional value, is now greater than our ancestors could have ever imagined, however, studies show that we eat far fewer than they did. If a plant was available, palatable and not poisonous, hunter-gatherers ate it, thereby enriching their diet with a vast quantity and diversity of nutrients. Despite our science and technologies, modern humans fall far short of obtaining the nutrition available to us, simply by not making the choice.

Studies have shown that hunter-gatherers ate, on average, more than 100 different species of vegetables (not including fruits, seeds, nuts and grains) in a year's time. The Paiute, a tribe living at the desert's edge, ate at least 50 different plant species; tribes in Zimbabwe ate 83 plants including 40 leaves as greens; and tribes in other parts of South Africa ate more than 120 plants as vegetables. Imagine the nutritive value in such a wide array of species. These plants were barely processed, providing full quality, unlike, for example, the flours we buy that lose 50% of their nutritional value in five days once reduced from seed to flour. In addition to minerals and nutrients, these folk ingested 100g of fiber per day compared to our 20g p/day USDA recommended amount.

I invite you to create your own list of plants eaten in a year, including: fruits, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds. You'll probably note yourself falling far below the hundred mark of most natives' veggie options. I think of myself as a relatively healthy eater and my list of domesticated veggies came to a whopping 30. Add fruits, grains, nuts and seeds and I hit an impressive 75. Yet, with seemingly all food at our fingertips, why do I still fall so far short? Partially,



**By Ruth Ann Colby
Martin**
Head Instructor

because like most modern folk, I have foods I like to eat and with them readily available year round for the low, low price at Wal-Mart, why would I go out of my way to eat another score or more varying species? Carrots alone provide 30% of Vitamin A in the USA diet. Are we in a rut?

Vegetables are partially responsible for our feelings of daily well-being as well as

our long-term protection from degenerative disease. Each individual species has its own unique chemical, mineral, and nutritional make up, not to mention its personality and spiritual components. They just can't put all that into a supplement. Evolution has designed for us to be happy and healthy by consuming vegetables of all kinds, not simply selecting the ones we find most palatable or taking a multi-vitamin to make up for our lacking. We donate to disease research instead of picking up a new vegetable to eat.

It's time to step outside the store. Just like our ancestors, we have available to us a huge range of plants in the form of leaves, leaf buds, flower buds, flowers, pollens, seeds, nuts, shoots, shoot buds, stems, roots, tubers and gums. I made a second list of wild foods that I easily eat in a year (easy to find, fix and tastes good, too) and I listed 59 total, including 51 vegetables and seven fruits. Suddenly, I've added almost double my current vegetable intake, and nearly doubled my overall species intake.

Taking a closer look at the integral nutritional value of the plants you are eating may help you to vary your diet. When you know that rosehips provide 60 times the Vitamin C as a lemon, and a cup of pine needle tea provides five times the Vitamin C as a cup of fresh squeezed orange juice, you may realize you'd rather consume rosehips and pine needles than the extra amount of lemons and o.j. that you must to get what your body needs.

Salad is good, but compare consuming one half cup of spinach at 26 mg calcium & .85mg iron to one half cup of amaranth (448mg calcium & 13mg iron), lamb's quarters (324mg calcium) and dandelion (187mg calcium). Spinach contains 4,460 International Units (IU) of Vit A, which sounds like a lot until you compare it to our common violet which has 15,000 IU of Vit A and 130 mg Vit C when mature, 20,000 Vit A and 260 mg Vit C in young leaves. Or compared to plantain's 10,000 IU Vit A and 19 gms Vit C or garlic mustard's 12,000 IU Vit A and 190 gms Vit C. Compare these wild foods' Vit C content to broccoli (58 mg), brussel sprouts (48mg), spinach (8mg) and lettuce (5mg).

It is as simple as eating a few leaves on the way to your mailbox. A few leaves a day go a long way in beefing up your nutritional intake. Another way I've easily and painlessly incorporated wild plants into my diet year-round is a tip suggested by Linda Runyon, author and wild food extraordinaire. In season, gather power-packed plants such as dandelions, plantains, lamb's quarters, and amaranth and then dry them and store in jars right with your spices. When cooking add a pinch of one or many for your health. Most of the vitamins in these dried plants stay intact for years.

Remember that a little each day adds up to a lot over the year. If we use our smarts and technologies to continue to build on what our hunter-gatherer ancestors already knew, we will become much healthier, happier people. Watch out Wal-Mart Supercenter, we're headed Outside!!

Resources: Adams, Catherine for USDA. Handbook of the Nutritional Value of Foods in Common Units. Dover Publications, NY. 1986; Runyon, Linda. From Crabgrass Muffins to Pine Needle Tea, Health Research, Pomeroy, WA. 2002; Runyon, Linda. Survival Acre. Health Research, Pomeroy, WA. 1985; "Natural Food - Vegetables", The Natural Food Hub. www.naturalhub.com. 2001; Sherwood, Karen. Earthwalk Northwest School. Herbalist & Botanist.

The Best Nettle Recipe Ever!

Have you ever met someone so vibrant and alive that even if you only spoke with them briefly you will remember them forever? That is how I feel about my first introduction to stinging nettles. Once you feel the tenacity, life, and power of this plant you just can't forget it.



By Kristy McConnell
Instructor

I know we talk about nettles in the standard class, maybe even point it out on the plant walk, but if you have never had a "hands on experience" with this warrior of the plant world I strongly encourage you to do so. I will never forget my first run-in with nettles. I was probably 12 years old and my friends and I were lost in the Elk Horns Mountains in Montana. Being slow learners we blundered smack into the middle of the lushest patch of nettles you have ever seen before we actually realized it was the plants that were stinging us. I can clearly remember looking at the countless painful welts rising on my arms and legs and then looking at the plant with amazement and fear, almost expecting it to grow arms and reach out and bite me.

It was such a memorable event from then on whenever I saw nettles I remembered to give it plenty of respect. Now nettles are one of my favorite plants and in my top 10 list of wild edibles. Besides having a dynamic personality, nettles are amazing for a number of different reasons.

Of course the first step to eating any wild edible is making sure you have properly identified the plant. Stinging nettle is a great plant to start with particularly if you are overwhelmed by the identification process. Basically, if you discover a plant with leaves that are opposite, slightly heart-shaped base, toothed leaf margin, and when you touch it you feel the sting, you can be assured that you have found a nettle. It is wonderful to have the sting to help know without a doubt that you have the right plant.

Nutritionally, nettles are packed full of vitamins and minerals including: calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, manganese, phosphorus, sulfur, Vitamin C, complex B vitamins, and contains an astounding ten percent protein. Remember, when you pick nettles to always harvest leaves before the plant flowers. After they flower

the leaves contain such a high concentration of minerals it can be hard on your kidneys to process. Most nettle patches will have new growth late in the season so you can collect leaves in the spring and in the fall.

One could write a book on all the various medicinal uses of nettles. Dried leaves make a wonderful tea that is a rich nourishing drink to help strengthen your whole being and is used specifically for the chronically ill. Nettle tea is a wonderful drink in the winter to help fight off all the colds and flus of the season.

Although I have to admit I have not used it for many of the medicinal properties it is also known to be recommended for treating allergies, eczema, hemorrhages, asthma, nose bleeds, gout, and the list goes on. There are many more medicinal uses but one of my favorite more unconventional uses is to use sting (same principle as using bee stings) to help people who have arthritis.

Nettles are also of course an important source used to make cordage for weaving, nets, bowstrings, or whatever survival need arises. A yellow dye can be extracted from the roots and some natives in the northwest even used the sting to keep themselves awake on long whaling excursions.

I have to admit my favorite use of nettles is to make a wonderful vitamin rich meal. Betzy Bancroft, the herbalist that many of you know from the plant walk at your Standard, recently shared with me the best nettle recipe in the whole world. I love it so much I feel it imperative to share with everyone. I

first experienced this delightful dish at Betzy's home and in the next month I was so psyched I made it three times (and this is coming from someone who never cooks). I love it because it looks and tastes gourmet but is easy to prepare, and would be great for a first time experience with eating wild edibles. So here it is, Betzy's Nettle Kopita:

Ingredients: Goat cheese, Filo dough (usually found in the freezer section), Butter, Nettles.

First you will want to harvest a good amount of nettle leaves, for a 9x11 glass pan half a plastic grocery sack should be plenty. Rinse off the leaves and then steam like you would spinach. Remember the formic acid which produces the sting is destroyed by either cooking or drying the leaves so make sure they are steamed until soft, but not over done. Then melt about 1/2 a stick of butter (you can use olive oil) and grease the pan. Then lay down two or three sheets of the filo dough into the pan and brush on a thin coat of butter. Using two sheets at a time, brushing butter on top, lay down 3-4 layers. If you have never used filo dough before, it is important to keep it covered when you aren't using it so it doesn't dry out. Once you put down 3 or 4 layers then take your steamed nettles and place them in the pan. Next slice your goat cheese and cover the nettles with a layer of cheese. Then continue with 3-4 layers of the filo dough and butter. If you have enough nettles and cheese you can add another layer of dough then more nettles and cheese. Make sure your final layer of dough has a thin coat of butter and then place in the oven for about 40 min at 375°F. When it is done the top should be brown and flaky and the cheese should be melted. I like to add tomatoes and bacon to mine, and I am sure if you like onions that would be tasty too. Betzy claims she has done many experiments with different types of cheese and nettles and found that goat cheese is the best.

I wish all of you happy harvesting and I hope you enjoy this as much as I do. Thanks Betzy!



Why I Track



By Kevin Reeve, Director

The late March day dawned warm and clear. A full agenda awaited me. I planned to build a planter box and get the vegetable garden ready. I was not particularly motivated to get out and get started, catching up on the latest war news instead. Joe called from the office and gave me a number to call. A 13-year-old boy was missing, and the local police wanted our help. I called and spoke to an officer, who was in a helicopter at the time, and got the basic facts. I called Tom, and caught him in the shower. I told Deb to have him call me on my cell, as I was leaving for the scene. As I got to the highway, Tom called back and told me to go to the Primitive Camp and get whoever was there and have them meet us at Wells Mills. By an amazing stroke of luck, I got one of the caretakers on the phone. They would rally the troops and join us. More good luck. There were about 20 people there attending the Scout Protector class.

He had been discovered missing shortly after six that morning. His parents had last seen him at around 11:30 the night before. So he disappeared sometime in that 6-hour window. Since six, police and sheriff department has been using bloodhounds and helicopter looking for him. Nothing so far. We were on the scene by noon. So he has up to a 12-hour lead on us. We will have to track fast to catch up. We start with an interview of the parents. The usual profiling questions. Right or left handed? Can we see a pair of his shoes? Anything unusual in his walk? Was he angry? Does he have friends in the area? How comfortable is he in the woods? Is anything missing from his room?

First things first: To the back yard to find a reference track and establish the time of departure. Tom finds a track or two, and ages them to 1:30 am. Then he finds a good track in front of the house headed down the street. It matches. Deb walks ahead to check the track traps on the road (sand on the road from the winter snowstorms that hold tracks). She finds a track and I confirm. It looks like

he is turning the corner. Now it time to landscape track. We skip track to the location where he most likely would have left the road and begin cutting for sign here. We find a couple of more tracks. We now have a vector and can eliminate a large search area.

The reinforcements arrive. 20 or so students show up to help with the search. We form them into teams and send them to cut for sign. We are eliminating possibilities, shutting down potential trails, and homing in on the likely direction. While we know his general direction, tracking in the suburbs is more difficult because of stretches of asphalt, fenced yards, dogs, etc. So eliminating trails and cutting for sign is essential. The addition of five more tracking teams makes this possible. I was relieved to see some very experienced trackers among the group.

We finally get to the highway, and pick up his trail on the far side. He is walking along the sandy shoulder of the road, and the tracks for a while are easy to follow. He comes to the entrance of the park, and it is trail elimination time again. Several teams are dispatched to essentially eliminate trails. I ride with one of the officers over to the other side of the park to cut for sign. Nothing. At the same time, one of the team picks up the trail again on the side of the road, and follows it. I arrive back at the scene, and call Tom to tell him that we are back on the trail. He has one or two more trails to eliminate and is on his way back. The team on the trail points to the last found track. The trail seems to disappear, so while the team starts to cut ahead for sign, I gather with several of the other teams to get some water and catch up with what everyone has found. We are gathered along the shoulder of a busy road (Rte 532) with forests on both sides. I have looked at the last know track, and have scanned the area trying to imagine where I would go from here if I were him. His school is across the street, and that seems like a logical place to look.

Two of the teams cross the street and begin cutting for sign on the side

of the road. So far we have eliminated all trails behind us, to the left of us, and ahead of us (Tom and I had scanned the roadside further ahead earlier). Now all that is left is the area to the right, the forest of oak and maple. As we are standing there discussing the situation, a couple of the trackers are looking off into the woods, looking for a trail. What they see instead is something out of context. They call my attention to what looks like a pile of trash back in the woods thirty or forty feet. I see something that is strangely out of context, and immediately set off to investigate. As I get closer, I can see a blanket covered with leaves. Protruding from the blanket is a head of brown hair.

Immediately, my heart stops. The motionless body appears lifeless. I think to myself, "we are too late. Some freak found and killed him in the night." As I get closer, I turn and whistle at the cops to get their attention. I am certain we have a dead body on our hands. I am sickened. I stop a few feet away so as to not disturb the crime scene. By now the officer is looking over my shoulder. Suddenly, the little brown head pops up awakened by my shrill whistle, and a little boy rubs his eyes. I start to breathe again. We found him and he is alive. The police officer brings him out and he is hustled into a waiting police car and driven home.

I get to make the call to everyone else that we found him. Tom shows up, beaming with pride that his teams have made the find, and that this time, we beat the clock. We don't always have such happy endings.

As we regroup over at the boy's house, his parents rush out, and with tear filled eyes, thank us for our efforts. They offer a donation, but we decline. Their thanks is enough. There are no TV crews, no video cameras, no flashes firing. There are just a few Trackers and police standing around with big smiles being thanked by grateful parents. That is the payment. That is why I track.



Working On The Hunted—A Priceless Experience

By Billy McConnell, *Instructor*

The osage shavings stained the white tile and grout of the pristine bathroom floor. Their trail, bright yellow, went across the blue shag carpet to the window leading out onto the small roof where we lit hand drill coals. The nests of ribbon-like shavings clumped in mass at the foot of the toilet to catch the dacite and Fort Hood chert flakes. A knock at the door, ignoring the “DO NOT DISTURB” sign, that hung for days on end, delivering more fresh coffee.

Amazing how quickly one’s life can change. One moment living in a primitive shelter, honing aboriginal skills in the New Jersey Pine Barrens, working as an instructor for Tom Brown, Jr.’s Tracking, Nature, and Wilderness Survival School. The next, living in an expensive hotel room in Portland, Oregon, working as Tom’s assistant, technical advisor on a movie from Paramount Pictures starring Tommy Lee Jones and Benicio Del Toro entitled “The Hunted.” The plot of the movie is based loosely on events from Brown’s own life, at a time when he was training elite military operators in indigenous tracking skills, ancient camouflage and evasion techniques, and high-speed and invisible survival, where all necessities are provided for, compliments of Mother Earth herself.

I sat, hands beneath the table on the patio of the five-star hotel restaurant, chipping flakes off of the stone blade that Jones’s character would carry on screen. Del Toro, meanwhile, would be armed with “The Tracker,” a knife that took Brown seven years to design, and perfect. Flint and steel pitted against each other in the final showdown, no-holds barred, coup de grace. The keep-you-on-the-edge-of-your-seat, this town isn’t big enough for the both of us, fight to the finish. The classic struggle, of the ancient and timeless, the unseen and the eternal, versus microchip technology mindset, rush and din modern society.

The chert blade, dull and muted earth tones, cut still air crisply, with fluidity, and grace of motion. The dance of the Apache wolverine fighting style, stark in contrast to the hand-forged surgical precision of “The Tracker” knife, and its systematic extraction capabilities.

Acclaimed director William Friedkin, known for his intensity, and attention paid to minute detail, weaves a tale dark with the collision of a polarized world. Leading us on a journey through the gloomy underbelly of the cement juggernaut, inner-city sprawl of northwest metropolis, and its opposition the moistened rainforest, shrouded thick and green, veiled in shimmering fog. Fresh cougar tracks, still glistening white light in the coastal range sphagnum moss. Anarchist antagonist. Pugilist protagonist. Alive and breathing, choking back the coughs born of industrial cancers, humanity feeding upon itself. Del Toro, living in root system hide-out beneath giant Doug firs, eviscerating what we are led to believe are high-tech, postmodern rifle hunters on a dark side expedition. Imagery that will make Hemmingway types blush, and Roosevelt Rough Rider aficionados wet their bed.

Majesty of majesties, the wisdom and beauty of the natural world, the forest whispering secrets of the infinite and the finite, of life everlasting. Nothing moving in the garden without creating a disturbance, no matter how slight or seemingly insignificant, a ripple thrown on a quiet pond. The hairs on the small of your neck standing on end, you are not alone.

Gift given to child, with love from father. Eyes wide with wonder and possibility, son he never had. Lost, gone astray. Anger acted out on innocence. Something must be done.

Jones is responsible for creating Frankenstein. Now he must exile himself from his betrothed, the silence and asceticism of the pathless woods, to face skeletons long assumed dead.

Asked by a world he’s trying to escape to cage an animal he has set adrift. Connie Nielson, Jones’s F.B.I. liaison, keeping an eye on his every move, while he tracks Del Toro through the contrast of extremes, purity and desecration. The hunter is also “The Hunted,” trust nothing but the tracks, and inner vision, for they alone lead to the oneness. Six months spent away from home and family, working on a multi-million dollar Hollywood movie containing hard-core primitive skills. Adapting to a catered lifestyle far outside the context of my day-to-day existence.

Ticket: \$8.00

Popcorn and soda: \$7.50

Tracking with my mentor Tom Brown, Jr., teaching Tommy Lee Jones to flintknap, and Benicio Del Toro the hand drill: PRICELESS. *(Billy McConnell assisted Tom Brown, Jr. as a consultant during the filming of The Hunted, which was recently released in DVD and VHS Video.)*

My Soul Prayer

By Kate Ridge, Caretaker

Watching the birds dart around,
watching the shadows move
on the ground;
feeling the heat of the sun
penetrate my skin;
knowing that the lizard is
one of my kin.

No time to hold me,
no schedule to keep my heart
to lead me;
my fears here to leap the pines,
have grabbed hold,
and are searching.

My soul prayer is my answer,
the promise of my soul.

2003 Tracker School Schedule

NEW JERSEY

Advanced Standard

October 5-11

Philosophy 2

December 7-13

Advanced Tracking

October 12-18

Search & Rescue

November 9- 15

Expert Tracking

November 2-8

Philosophy 1

September 21-27

November 30-

December 6



Look for the 2004 Schedule on our website!

www.TrackerSchool.com

Caretakers, Interns Sought

Ruth Ann Colby Martin, coordinator of the Caretaker and Intern programs at Tracker School, has announced that applications are now being accepted for both.

"Folks should contact me for a program handbook and application," said Colby Martin.

Tracker School hires two males and two females for each program.

Caretaker is a year-long commitment. Requirements include the completion of five Tracker classes, volunteered at two more, and must have own health insurance and a passion for what Tracker teaches as well as a strong work ethic and strong social skills.

Next Caretaker term: May '04 - May '05; hiring Feb 14, application deadline is Feb 1.

Internship is a 6-month commitment. Requirements are the completion of four Tracker classes, volunteered at two more, and must have own health insurance and a passion for what is taught by Tracker School. A strong work ethic and social skills are essential, as well.

Intern Terms: Jan 3 - June 27, 2004. Apps. due Nov. 1. Hiring Nov. 8; Intern term: Feb 28 - July 25, 2004. Apps. due Jan. 3. Hiring Jan 10; Intern term: March 27 - Oct. 3, 2004. Apps. due Jan. 3, Hiring Jan 7; Intern terms: May 8 - Oct. 31, 2004. Apps. due Feb 28, Hiring March 6.

Ruth Ann Colby Martin, Head Instructor, can be contacted at The Tracker School, PO Box 173 Asbury, NJ 08802.

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