

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

Common name	Information
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

Common name	Information
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