

## QUALITY CONTROL:

### Handling:

- Wash hands before harvesting or handling Sweet Flag.

### Harvesting and processing:

- Harvesting Sweet Flag root can be done as soon as the frost leaves the ground and the plant is recognizable

### Drying process:

- Producer must have a drying shed or a place that can be inspected
- Spread Sweet Flag root on screens in layers
- Room must have heat source
- Use a fan to move air around Sweet Flag root
- Drying process takes 3-6 days in a well ventilated dryer

### Storage Technique:

- Product should be stored in a clean poly woven rice bag, paper bag, paper box, or clean container.
- Dirty containers will not be accepted and the product in it maybe rejected
- Do not store in a shed that has been used for storing gas and oil.
- Dried Sweet Flag root should be stored in a dry room away from moisture until it is ready to be transported to buying depot

**BUYING REQUIREMENTS** (THIS IS INTENDED TO PROVIDE GENERAL STANDARDS. REQUIREMENTS MAY VARY FROM BUYER TO BUYER. PLEASE CONFIRM WITH YOUR BUYER BEFORE HARVESTING):

- Producers must have a wild harvesters association Membership Card.
- General harvest area.
- No foreign smell (ex: gas, oil)
- No foreign material (ex: Different kinds of bark, dirt, rocks)
- No mould.

**All bags, boxes and containers may be inspected to determine if product meets a buyers specifications.**

### **PRICING:**

- Call NFDC prior to shipping or traveling to buying depot.



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## NON-TIMBER FOREST PRODUCTS INFORMATION BROCHURE



(FROM HARVESTING PRACTICES)

## SWEET FLAG



## HARVESTING SWEET FLAG

### SCIENTIFIC NAME:

- *Acorus americanus*

### CREE NAME:

- **Wèkà'sk** ("sweet tasting herb")

### COMMON NAMES:

- Rat Root
- American Sweet Flag
- Belle-angélique
- Wikis

### PLANT SPECIES IDENTIFICATION:

#### Flowers

- 2—4" dense, thick, cylindrical spadix (a thickened, fleshy axis)
- Yellow to brown

#### Fruit

- Brown, hard, dry, with 2—3 seeds
- Yellow to brown

#### Leaves

- Sweetly aromatic
- Bright green blade shaped, sheathed into each other at base
- Blades have 2—6 raised veins, and a swollen center when viewed in cross section.

#### Plant Reproduction:

- Blooms June—July
- By seed or Under ground network of rhizome

#### Habitat:

- Shallows
- Ponds
- Marshes
- Water less than 20" in depth
- Wet, silty soil

#### What is harvested:

- Root

### PRODUCT USES:

- Colds and coughs
- Sore throats
- Lower back pain
- Upset stomachs and cramps

### Aboriginal Uses:

- The Cree drank as a tea to treat sore throats and colds
- Northern Cree chewed the root for tooth-aches and teething pains
- Cree also used it as a bartering tool with other nations.

### SPECIES SUSTAINABILITY:

Practice sustainable harvesting, by not over harvesting in one area.

### HARVESTER CERTIFICATION:

- **NFDC** is working on providing organic certification on selective NTFP'S in each community harvest area.
- **Buyers may not purchase** Sweet Flag from producers who does not follow the **HARVESTERS CODE OF ETHICS (Copy available at the NFDC Centre).**