

Renewing America's  
Food Traditions



Place-Based  
**Foods**  
*at* **RISK**  
in New England  
and the Maritime Provinces

Renewing America's Food Traditions (RAFT) is an alliance of food, farming, conservation and culinary advocates who have joined together to identify, restore and celebrate America's biologically and culturally diverse food traditions. Our collective work involves conservation, restoration, education, sustainable promotion and regional networking.

During workshops held in Vermont and Massachusetts, we asked:

- 1.** What place-based foods have unique traditions in Greater New England landscapes, seascapes and cultures?
- 2.** Which of them offer flavors, textures and pleasures cherished in the "Maple and Clambake foodsheds", that can't be found anywhere else on the continent?"
- 3.** How many of these foods—traditionally foraged, fished, hunted or grown—might now be at risk in their home place?
- 4.** What can we do to collectively ensure their survival, and to support their original stewards in their struggles toward food sovereignty?

We now invite you and your friends—rural or urban—to help us answer these questions, and work to recover the rarest foods in your own community. We encourage you to add, amend or adopt foods on this list, to become allies to those individuals, communities or cultures who remain their stewards, and to celebrate their *taste of place* every autumn at American Traditions Picnics in great New England places.



Men in Fishing Dory—1890, Photograph by Henry L. Rand—Number 5335—The Southwest Harbor, Public Library Collection of Photographs

# Now and Then – Then and Now

by Dale Carson

Just as the changes in our lives are mostly subtle, so are the changes in the foodways we become accustomed to in our lifetime. As a child growing up in coastal New England, clams, mussels and codfish were as common and plentiful as sand. Corn and other fine vegetables were either from our garden or left on the doorstep from someone else's. Herbs, blueberries, sun chokes, sumac, nut and fruit trees were all pretty much everywhere, if you knew where to look.

Sadly, we took it for granted that these treasures and others like them would always be available. I would often balk about having mussels *again* for dinner, and am still not fond of them. However, cod has always been a favorite and I'm startled that it is getting scarcer by the day. Lobster has always been a tad elite for my tastes, but I'm aware that some shellfish are getting just as expensive and as endangered as Maine lobster.

One of the subtle changes I resent the most is how seasonality has been obscured. When blueberries were "in", my mother, a wonderful Native American woman, would plan a day of "berrying". I was allowed to accompany Mom and her two friends to their secret place. We took a picnic and made a day of it. I really looked forward to this time of year. Each food had its time, harvested at its peak.

Now, you can go to the supermarket and find just about anything "in" or "out" of season, brought to you from south of the Equator, thanks to modern shipping on a global scale.

Ignoring seasonality not only makes food more expensive but it is not as much fun. There is nothing so satisfying as a good hunt for an elusive ingredient. Clambakes were one such seasonal event that we all anticipated for days in advance. My uncle, who lived with us, was the firekeeper and great storyteller. The clambake was a joyful time. Some years, it lasted just a day, but other years, it stretched on, depending on many a circumstance.

Of course traditional foods have always been local or regional, as certain native foods still are in some areas. Today, we may be fortunate enough to travel so that we can sample the local specialties of a cultural area (or foodshed) beyond our home. The growing appreciation of place-based food can be good in many ways, as long as the food traditions are respected, and their producers or stewards are honored. It is my hope that we all, as a human species, relearn the values of the past, respect the earth and realize her fragility, all the while knowing when we have taken enough so that the rest is left to share with others. Aho.

*Raised in Rhode Island near the water, Dale Carson now lives with her family near the water in Connecticut. She and her husband have two daughters, twin sons and two grandsons, who all enjoy each other's company as close family. In addition to cooking, writing and Native American crafts, Dale Carson enjoys "two thousand other things." Her books, New Native American Cooking and Native New England Cooking, are classics.*

# Rare Place-Based Foods of New England

T = Threatened E = Endangered X = Functionally extinct

\* = On the Slow Food USA Ark of Taste + = see below

Foraging, hunting, fishing, farming and gardening have been and continue to be part of Native American communities' traditional management of their places. Among those marked "+", there are certain varieties or particular populations in New England that Native Americans have long used, managed or conserved. Individuals or organizations outside indigenous communities can become allies toward restoring or affirming the Native American farmers' rights to stewardship of certain cultivated seedstocks or their traditional resource management rights for "wild" foods, thereby acknowledging and supporting these communities' food sovereignty.

| Category       | Variety Name   | Rarity                     | Category           | Variety Name   | Rarity           |
|----------------|--|----------------------------|--------------------|--|------------------|
| <b>Berries</b> |  |                            | Smelt              | + Rainbow, St. Lawrence River  | T                |
| Blackberry     | Snyder   | E                          | Sturgeon           | + Atlantic<br>+ Lake<br>+ Shortnose                                    | T<br>T<br>E      |
| Blueberry      | Brunswick Lowbush<br>Upright Maine   | E<br>E                     | Wolffish           | Atlantic   | T                |
| Cranberries    | + Berry Berry  | E                          | <b>Fruit Trees</b> |  |                  |
| Currant        | Prince Albert<br>Red<br>Red Dutch  | X<br>E<br>E                | Apples             | * American Beauty  | T                |
| Dewberry       | Lucretia   | E                          |                    | * American Golden Russett/<br>Bullock                                  | T                |
| Gooseberry     | Houghton   | E                          |                    | * American Pippin  | T                |
| Raspberry      | Cuthbert,<br>Queen of the Market<br>Golden Queen<br>Gregg<br>Marlboro<br>Shaffer<br>Souhegan   | X<br>E<br>X<br>X<br>X<br>X |                    | Bailey Sweet<br>Baker Sweet<br>Banks Gravenstein<br>* Bethel           | E<br>E<br>E<br>E |
| Serviceberry   | Nantucket  | E                          |                    | Bevan's Favorite<br>* Black Oxford                                     | E<br>T           |
| Strawberry     | Marshall<br>Premier  | X<br>E                     |                    | Bottle Greening<br>* Campfield   | E<br>E           |
| <b>Fish</b>    |  |                            |                    | Champlain<br>Chandler<br>Charette/The Donut<br>Chimney                 | E<br>E<br>E<br>E |
| Cod            | Atlantic Cod, Maritime<br>Atlantic Cod, Newf Et Labrador<br>+ Cusk, Torsk<br>+ American Tomcod   | T<br>T<br>T<br>T           |                    | * Coles Quince<br>* Davey<br>Deacon Jones<br>Doctor                    | E<br>E<br>E<br>E |
| Eel            | + American, St. Lawrence River   | T                          |                    | Dudley<br>* Fall Harvey  | T<br>E           |
| Eel-like       | Ocean Pout   | T                          |                    | * Fall Wine<br>* Garden Royal  | E<br>E           |
| Flounder       | Yellowtail, Cape,<br>Gulf of Maine Yellowtail<br>Southern NE<br>Summer, Fluke<br>Winter, Blackback<br>Gulf of ME Winter,<br>Georges Bank | T<br>T<br>T<br>T<br>E<br>T |                    | * Gloria Mundi/ox<br>Golden Sweet<br>* Granite Beauty<br>* Graniwinkle | T<br>T<br>T<br>T |
| Haddock        | Winter, Southern NE<br>Witch   | T<br>T                     |                    | * Harrison<br>Hawley   | T<br>T           |
| Hake           | Gulf of Maine Haddock  | T                          |                    | * Hightop Sweet<br>* Hunt Russett                                      | T<br>T           |
| Halibut        | Northern Red Hake<br>Southern Silver Hake,<br>Whiting<br>White Hake  | T<br>T<br>T<br>T           |                    | * Hyslop (Hyssop) Crab<br>Jewett's Fine Red                            | T<br>T           |
| Monkfish       | Atlantic   | T                          |                    | * Late Strawberry<br>Lyscom  | E<br>E           |
| Rockfish       | Monkfish, Goosefish  | T                          |                    | * McLellan   | E                |
| Salmon         | Acadian Redfish  | E                          |                    | * Melon<br>Milden  | E<br>T           |
| Shad           | + Atlantic, Gulf of Maine  | T                          |                    | Moses Wood   | T                |
|                | + American<br>+ Hickory  | T<br>T                     |                    | * Newtown Spitzenburg  | E                |
|                |  |                            |                    | * Northern Sweet<br>* Northfield Beauty                                | E<br>E           |
|                |  |                            |                    | Nova Scotia Gravenstein<br>Nutting Bumps                               | E<br>T           |
|                |  |                            |                    | * Ortley/Greasy Pippin   | T                |
|                |  |                            |                    | * Pearmain, Summer<br>Peck's Pleasant                                  | E<br>T           |
|                |  |                            |                    | * Porter/Yellow Summer<br>Pearmain                                     | T<br>T           |
|                |  |                            |                    | * Primate<br>Pumpkin Russett T<br>(three stains)                       | T<br>T<br>T      |
|                |  |                            |                    | Pumpkin Sweet  | T                |
|                |  |                            |                    | * Rambo (winter)   | E                |
|                |  |                            |                    | * Ramsdell Sweet   | T                |
|                |  |                            |                    | Rolfe  | T                |
|                |  |                            |                    | Sheepnose  | T                |

| Category        | Variety Name              | Rarity | Category         | Variety Name                   | Rarity |
|-----------------|---------------------------|--------|------------------|--------------------------------|--------|
|                 | * Smith's Cider           | T      | Quince           | * Meech's Prolific             | E      |
|                 | * Somerset of Maine       | E      |                  |                                |        |
|                 | * Starkey                 | E      | <b>Grains</b>    |                                |        |
|                 | Starr                     | E      | Corn             | + Bearpaw Pop                  | E      |
|                 | St. Johnsbury             | E      |                  | Black Mennonite Pop            | E      |
|                 | St. Lawrence              | E      |                  | Crosby's Early                 | X      |
|                 | * Stone                   | E      |                  | + Fort Kent Gold Flint         | E      |
|                 | Summer Sweet/Sidney       | E      |                  | First of All                   | E      |
|                 | * Suttan Beauty           | T      |                  | + Gaspé Flint                  | E      |
|                 | * Sweet Winesap           | E      |                  | + Ha-Go-Wa (Seneca Flint)      | E      |
|                 | Washington Royal          | E      |                  | + Iroquois Calico Flour        | E      |
|                 | Washington Strawberry     | T      |                  | + Iroquois White Giant Flour   | E      |
|                 | * Western Beauty          | E      |                  | King Phillip Improved Flint    | E      |
|                 | * Williams                | E      |                  | Lancaster Surecrop             | E      |
|                 | * Winter Sweet Paradise   | T      |                  | + Longfellow Flint             | E      |
|                 | * Winthrop Greening       | E      |                  | + Narragansett White Cap Flint | E      |
|                 | Wright                    | E      |                  | Pennsylvania Dutch Butter      | E      |
| Cherries, sweet | Black Heart               | E      |                  | * + Roy's Calais Flint         | T      |
|                 | Governor Wood             | T      |                  | + Sehsapsing (Delaware Blue)   | E      |
|                 | Windsor Yellow            | T      |                  | + Seneca Blue Bear Dance       | E      |
|                 | Spanish/Bigarreau/Grafton | E      |                  | + Six Nations                  | E      |
| Fig             | Long Island               | E      |                  | Tom Thumb Yellow Pop           | E      |
|                 | New York City             | E      |                  | + Tonawanda Calico Flint       | E      |
| Grape           | Agawam                    | E      |                  | * + Tuscarora White Hominy     | E      |
|                 | Barry                     | E      |                  | Vermont Yellow Flint           | E      |
|                 | * Bronx Seedless          | E      | Sorghum          | John Coffey/Dale Strain        | E      |
|                 | Canandaigua               | E      |                  |                                |        |
|                 | Delaware                  | T      | Wheat            | Red Lammas                     | E      |
|                 | Dutchess                  | E      |                  | Banner                         | E      |
|                 | Goff                      | E      |                  | Siberian                       | E      |
|                 | Green Mountain            | E      |                  | Black Sea                      | E      |
|                 | Hartford                  | X      |                  | Defiance                       | E      |
|                 | Iona                      | E      |                  | Champlain                      | E      |
|                 | Isabella                  | E      |                  |                                |        |
|                 | Moore's Early             | E      | <b>Livestock</b> |                                |        |
|                 | Wilder                    | E      | Cattle           | Canadienne                     | E      |
| Hawthorn        | Succulent                 | E      |                  | * Milking Devon                | E      |
| Pawpaw          | Zimmerman                 | E      |                  | Randall Lineback               | E      |
| Peach           | Crawford, Early           | E      | Sheep            | Newfoundland Local             | T      |
|                 | Crawford, Late            | E      |                  |                                |        |
|                 | George IV                 | E      | <b>Nuts</b>      |                                |        |
|                 | Iron Mountain             | E      | Butternut        | * + American Butternut         | E      |
|                 | Rochester                 | E      |                  |                                |        |
|                 | Slappy                    | E      | Chestnut         | * American                     | T      |
|                 | Slaybaugh Special         | E      |                  |                                |        |
|                 | Stump-the-world           | E      | Hickory          | + Fayette Shellbark            | E      |
|                 |                           |        |                  | * Fox Shagbark                 | X      |
| Pear            | * Bloodgood               | E      | <b>Poultry</b>   |                                |        |
|                 | * Buffum                  | E      | Chickens         | Chantecler                     | E      |
|                 | Clairgeau                 | E      |                  | * Delaware                     | E      |
|                 | * Clapp's Favorite Red    | T      |                  | * Dominique/Dominicker         | E      |
|                 | * Columbia                | E      |                  | Holland                        | E      |
|                 | * Dana Hovey              | E      |                  | * Java                         | E      |
|                 | * Dearborn                | E      |                  | * Jersey Giant                 | T      |
|                 | * Dorset                  | E      |                  | * New Hampshire                | T      |
|                 | Duchess d'Angoulenne      | T      |                  | * Plymouth Rock,               | T      |
|                 | * Frederick Clapp         | E      |                  | Non-industrial                 |        |
|                 | * Lawrence                | E      |                  | * Rhode Island Red             | E      |
|                 | * Lawson                  | E      |                  | (Original Strain)              |        |
|                 | Louise Bonne d'Avranche   | E      |                  | Rhode Island White             | T      |
|                 | * Sheldon                 | E      |                  | * Wyandotte                    | T      |
|                 | Superfin                  | T      | Ducks            | Cayuga                         | E      |
|                 | * Tyson                   | T      |                  |                                |        |
|                 | * Vermont Beauty          | E      | Geese            | * American Buff                | E      |
|                 | * Wilder Early            | E      |                  |                                |        |
|                 | * Worden Seckel           | E      | Turkeys          | * Standard Bronze              | T      |
| Persimmon       | Evelyn                    | E      |                  | * Jersey Buff                  | E      |
|                 | Killen                    | E      |                  | * Narragansett                 | T      |
| Plum            | Abundance                 | T      | <b>Shellfish</b> |                                |        |
|                 | Coe Golden Drop           | T      | Lobster          | American, Penobscot Bay        | T      |
|                 | Jefferson                 | E      |                  | American,                      | T      |
|                 | Purple Gage               | E      |                  | Massachusetts Bay              | T      |
|                 | + Wild Goose              | E      |                  | American,                      | T      |
|                 |                           |        |                  | Rhode Island Bay               |        |
|                 |                           |        |                  | American,                      | T      |
|                 |                           |        |                  | Long Island Sound              |        |

## Reclaiming Wild Collecting Traditions and Tribal Memories

by Nova M. Kim

"Renewing America's Food Traditions" can mean many things. For some people, it means making an effort to bring back plants that were traditionally used on the farms and ranches scattered throughout America. For my partner Les and me, it is more about reclaiming the wild traditions that were known and practiced not only by our ancestors, but by native peoples the world around.

Les came from a hilltop farm in Vermont where his father taught him how to collect wild foods and medicines. His father died when he was eight and, coming from a family of nine, if he hadn't remembered those early lessons, his family probably would not have had much to eat. Most Vermont farmers—particularly those from hill-top farms like the one Les roamed—relied upon wild plant collecting as much as farming to feed themselves. Many of them also foraged for a certain amount of wild foods to sell in order to help get through the winters.

As for my own skills, I *could* tell you that I learned them from my family, since both of my parents were "half Osage." But if the truth be told, I am primarily self-taught. Why does that make a difference? There are a number of reasons I could not learn all my skills directly from my family. First, over several generations, many native families gradually lost their collecting traditions. For many of the natives, it was because of their fear of government agents. If you were a native plant collector, you did not want to be "found out" because if the government didn't get you, then the locals would.

Ironically, when I was growing up, everyone was promised that the science, the store, and the magic pill could bring you just about everything. They were told that instead of going to the woods—where the food and medicine were free—that penicillin could cure just about anything and the grocery stores would provide everything else. Collecting one's own food and medicine from the wild was looked down on and frowned upon, something only the very poor did.

Today, my work is about teaching people the value of these wild plants. My hope is that you become inspired enough to realize that you too can reclaim your own plant collecting traditions. Such traditions include not only learning the proper identification and harvesting techniques, but the old preservation methods as well. We have all become use to the "easiest and quickest" methods of getting our food while totally ignoring the cost that it places on our Mother, the Earth.

And, if there is no one around to teach you, then the only other way to learn these skills is by working, studying, reading and believing in your own abilities! Of course, you may have had hands-on training with an expert. However, the expertise of others relieves you of the responsibility of having to know all the details yourself and be sure that you did it right. Remember that you too can regain and reclaim your collecting traditions on your own.

Tribal memory is in all of us no matter who we are. Whether we want to remember it or not, we are all native of some place. Local knowledge remains alive in every area on earth.

*Nova Kim, of Osage heritage, and Les Hook, a true Vermont native raised in the vanishing mountain tradition, have more than eighty years of combined experience hunting the woods and fields for wild foods and medicines. They promote the use of wild edibles while conducting and collecting research on the various plant forms (native and immigrant) in the wild, all the while educating the public on the benefits derived from their usage. They also help to preserve the plants' natural habitat, thus ensuring a continuing supply for generations to come. Nova and Les recently joined Executive Chef Tom Bivins of the New England Culinary Institute to found the Wild Food Gatherers Guild & Cooperative.*

| Category          | Variety Name                 | Rarity | Category            | Variety Name            | Rarity | Category           | Variety Name              | Rarity |
|-------------------|------------------------------|--------|---------------------|-------------------------|--------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| Limpet            | + Slippershell               | T      | Carrot              | Early Chantenay         | E      |                    | Canada Crookneck          | T      |
| Mussel            | + Ribbed                     | T      |                     | Early Scarlet Horn      | T      |                    | Connecticut Sweet Pie     | E      |
| Oyster            | New Haven                    | E      |                     | Long Orange             | E      |                    | Essex Turban Long Pie     | E      |
|                   | Perth Amboy                  | E      | Cucumbers           | Boothby Blonde          | T      |                    | Landreth Cheese           | E      |
|                   | Raritan Bay                  | E      |                     | Early cluster Pickling, | T      |                    | Long Island Milk Cheese   | E      |
|                   | Rockaway                     | E      |                     | Russian                 |        |                    | + Nanicoke Indian Turban  | E      |
|                   | Shrewsbury                   | E      | Eggplant            | Old White Egg           | T      | Sunflower          | + Seneca                  | E      |
| Scallops          | Cape Cod Bay                 | E      | Jerusalem           | Clearwater              | E      | Tomato             | Acme                      | E      |
|                   | Peconic Bay                  | T      | Artichoke           | Stampede                | E      |                    | Beaut                     | E      |
| <b>Vegetables</b> |                              |        | Lettuce             | Spotted Aleppo          | E      |                    | Berkshire Polish          | E      |
| Bean              | Bumblebee                    | E      | Melon               | Montreal Nutmeg         | E      |                    | Cheerio                   | E      |
|                   | Champion of England Pea      | E      |                     | Sungold Casaba          | E      |                    | Hog Heart Paste           | T      |
|                   | Charles Murphey's Shell      | E      | Onions              | Yellow Globe Danvers    | E      |                    | Large Red                 | T      |
|                   | + Duane Baptiste's Potato    | E      | Parsnip             | Guernsey                | T      |                    | Mankin Plum               | T      |
|                   | Fisher                       | E      | Pea                 | Caribou                 | E      |                    | * Orange Oxheart          | T      |
|                   | Flagg                        | E      |                     | * Marrowfat             | E      |                    | Red Peach                 | E      |
|                   | Golden Heirloom              | E      |                     | Risser Sickle           | E      |                    | Trophy                    | E      |
|                   | Ice                          | E      |                     | Tall Arrow              | E      | Watermelon         | Mountain Sweet Yellow     | T      |
|                   | + Iroquois Cranberry         | E      | Potato              | Beauty of Hebron        | E      | <b>Wild Fowl</b>   |                           |        |
|                   | + Kahnawake Mohawk Pole      | E      |                     | Cow Horn (Purple)       | E      | Herons             | + Quawk, Boauc,           | T      |
|                   | King of Early                | T      |                     | Early Ohio              | E      |                    | Black-crowned Night       |        |
|                   | Lazy Housewife               | T      |                     | Early Rose              | E      | <b>Wild Plants</b> |                           |        |
|                   | Leather Britches             | E      |                     | * Green Mountain        | T      | Wild Fruit         | + Alleghany Plum          | T      |
|                   | Maine Yellow Eye             | T      |                     | Kalahdin                | T      |                    | + Alpine Blueberry        | T      |
|                   | * Mayflower                  | E      |                     | Seneca Horn             | E      |                    | + Graves Beach Plum       | T      |
|                   | Marfax                       | T      |                     | White Rose              | T      |                    | Fernald's Serviceberry    |        |
|                   | Mostellers Wild Goose        | E      | Radish              | Black Spanish Winter    | T      |                    | Nantucket Juneberry       | T      |
|                   | + Northeaster Pole (Kwintus) | T      | Rutabaga/<br>Turnip | Canadian Gem            | E      | Wild Herbs         | + Lady's Thumb            | T      |
|                   | Scott's Choice Dry Bush      | T      |                     | * Gilfeather            | T      | Wild Nuts          | + Northern Bitternut      | E      |
|                   | Seneca Pinto                 | E      |                     | Old Jake's              | E      | <b>Wild Game</b>   |                           |        |
|                   | + Six Nations                | T      |                     | Orange Jelly            | E      | Mammals            | Sperm Whale               | T      |
|                   | Steuben Yellow Eye           | E      |                     | Waldoboro Greenneck     | E      | Reptiles           | + Northern Diamondback,   | T      |
|                   | Sulfur                       | T      | Squash/<br>Pumpkin  | * Amish Pie             | E      |                    | Terrapin                  |        |
|                   | Thousand-to-One              | T      |                     | Bakery's                | E      |                    | Atlantic Green Sea Turtle | T      |
|                   | + Tonawanda Seneca Dry Bush  | E      |                     | * Boston Marrow         | T      |                    | Hawksbill Sea Turtle      | E      |
|                   | * True Red Cranberry Pole    | E      |                     |                         |        |                    | Kemp's Ridley Sea Turtle  | E      |
|                   | Vermont Cranberry Bush       | T      |                     |                         |        |                    | Leatherback Sea Turtle    | E      |
|                   | White Kidney                 | T      |                     |                         |        |                    | Loggerhead Sea Turtle     | T      |
| Beets             | * Early Blood Turnip-rooted  | T      |                     |                         |        |                    | + Wood Turtle             | T      |
|                   | Flat Egyptian                | E      |                     |                         |        |                    |                           |        |
| Cabbage           | Danish Ballhead Shortstem    | T      |                     |                         |        |                    |                           |        |
|                   | Jersey Wakefield Pewa        | E      |                     |                         |        |                    |                           |        |
|                   | Winningstadt                 | T      |                     |                         |        |                    |                           |        |

This provisional list was compiled by DeJa Walker, Jennifer Trotter, Makalé Faber Cullen and Gary Nabhan, with assistance from more than 50 participants in two multi-cultural workshops in 2007-2008. This list is for discussion purposes and is subject to change. Send your list edits and additions to Jenny Trotter at [jenny@slowfoodusa.org](mailto:jenny@slowfoodusa.org). Special thanks to Ginger Nickerson, Don Bixby, Ben Watson, Nova Kim and Les Hook, Dale Carson, Joan Carstensen, Amy Trubeck and John Elder.

