

Pineapple Weed, Wild Chamomile — ARam'aas'kaa

UNA ARAM'AAS'KAAQ CAAYUQ PITURNIRTUQ. – THIS CHAMOMILE TEA TASTES GOOD.



Photo: Pineapple weed growing in disturbed soil.
AM628.

Pineapple weed (*Matricaria matricarioides*) is a widespread, low-growing herb with pale green, berrylike flowers and a fruity scent. It thrives in open fields and disturbed areas, and grows particularly well around human settlements. European settlers introduced Pineapple weed to North America and it is now found across the continent. Also known as wild chamomile, the Alutiiq word for pineapple weed—*aRam'aas'kaa*—comes from the Russian word for chamomile —*romashka*.

Alutiiq people use the leaves, stems, and flowers of the pineapple weed. Islanders add the edible flowers to salads or pick them for a snack. Others steep the leaves and stems in boiling water to make a medicinal tea. The plant is potent fresh or dried and may be steeped for up to an hour, depending on the desired strength of the tea. Alutiiq people use pineapple weed tea for relaxation. It is said to soothe nerves, prevent nightmares and promote sleep. It is also a remedy for nausea and a mild laxative. A few drops will help a newborn baby move its bowels.

And if smelly hands are a problem, rub the plant's fresh leaves on your skin. Pineapple weed has a deodorizing effect.