

## Rose Hip — Qeleepaq

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APRIL-REM QELEMPAQ CAAYUQ PINGAKTAARAA. – APRIL LIKES THE ROSE HIP TEA.

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Photo: Dora Aga and grandchild collecting rose petals.  
Photo by Priscilla Russell, KANA Collection.

The Nootka rose (*Rosa nutkana*) is a spindly shrub that grows in open areas throughout coastal Alaska. It is commonly found along streams and shorelines and in meadows, thickets, and open forests. These prickly bushes flower with pink blossoms each July and then produce hips. This dark red fruit is seedy and dry, but rich in vitamin C. The Alutiiq word for rose hip, *qeleepaq*, is an old word meaning “bag.” This term refers to the shape of the fruit, which looks like a small purse with drawstrings.

Alutiiq people collect both rose petals and rose hips. They flavor tea with aromatic petals and use the nutritious hips for food and medicine. The hips are typically gathered from September to November when they have been sweetened and softened by frost. Alutiiq chefs add the fruit to jellies and syrups and occasionally desserts. They also create medicinal teas by steeping the hips in hot water. This tea is said to cleanse the system and can be used to treat a cold, a cough, or a case of bronchitis. Elders recall that sitting on rose hips soaked in hot water helps a laboring

mother deliver her placenta.