

Beach Lovage — PitRuusqaq

PITRUUSQARSURLITA. – LET’S GET SOME BEACH LOVAGE.



Photo: Margie Inga holding beach lovage, Old Harbor, June 1990. KANA Collection, AM4.

Photo by Priscilla Russell.

Beach lovage (*Ligusticum scoticum*) is a perennial member of the parsley family found widely across the north in Europe, North America, and Asia. Around the Kodiak Archipelago, it thrives along sandy and gravelly shores. This plant features long-stemmed clusters of leaves, each with three shiny, rough-toothed leaflets. Like a number of other common coastal herbs, beach lovage produces an umbrella of small white flowers. However, this plant can be distinguished by the color of its stems. The bottom of its leaf stalk has a purplish tint.

Alutiiq people begin gathering beach loveage in May and harvest the plant throughout the summer until its leaves turn yellow. It is often air-dried by hanging bunches of the plant upside down. Like parsley, people use this herb both fresh and dried, especially to flavor fish soup, fish patties, baked fish, and many other fish dishes. Beach lovage is especially relished with the first red salmon of the season. Some people eat the boiled herb as a vegetable. Others add it raw to salads.