

EXCERPT FROM RECORDED INTERVIEW OF KAREN BROOKS, PART 2

TALKING ABOUT SUNDEW

CONDUCTED BY JENNIFER ANDRULLI

IN SOLDOTNA, ALASKA

DECEMBER 30, 2021

ORAL HISTORY 2021-02-31 PT.2

JENNIFER ANDRULLI: There's another plant that you work with, called sundew.

KAREN BROOKS: Oh, sundew is a nice, wonderful little creature. You know, you get to know each plant's personality by when you harvest them, where they grow, what they look like, how hard it is to harvest. You know, sundew is one of those little tiny plants that is a pain in the butt (laughing) to pick, 'cause they're only like a -- what, an inch and a half tall. And they are -- it's not like you can get on your hands and knees because you're in a bog picking. So you have to bend over, and to pick a quart jar takes a long time. So, you have to really be in that zen place of patience. You can't be in a big hurry. You can't be like -- you have to be really in a meditative sundew place. (laughing)

JENNIFER ANDRULLI: Sundew is a carnivorous plant that grows in the bogs throughout Alaska. It's a beautiful red color and it puts out a little sprig that's about three inches of a flower and seed.

KAREN BROOKS: Right. It's a very cool plant. Um, very little, and when you -- and -- and you learn how to pick it 'cause you gotta nip it -- you -- with your fingers, you know, with -- Or after it flowers, you take that stem and you can pull it right up. That's when you -- it's effortless. I've learned that after, you know, picking -- that's really easy 'cause then you don't have to bend over quite so far.

JENNIFER ANDRULLI: You'll notice that certain types of moss and certain types of bogs release the sundew easier than gravel or harder more compact tundra?

KAREN BROOKS: Uh, yeah, they do because they're so -- it's so -- I think of moss as being loose, whereas gravel is a little bit more compacted, so it's a little harder, 'cause it's -- it won't pull right out like in the gravel as it does in the moss. But, you still have to hold it really secure with your fingers. And what happens is you get this -- the, the Sundew -- it's the dew from the -- the plant that attracts the bugs. Of course, they would be in a bog. There's all kinds of bugs in a bog, and they get little bugs. And, of course, they would be right next to the blueberries, because blueberries grow in bogs, you know. So, everything is related to everything. So, I think about that -- those things when I'm picking plants -- is what is the relationship to, you know, what else do I look for if I'm -- I mean, sundew is little, uh, blueberries patches are big. So, if I see blueberries, I'm gonna look for sundew because they are together, or moss, or alder, or -- you know, I mean, there's things that I pay attention to in my head, that I didn't know I was paying attention to. And I'll go, "Stop, let's go see if there's --" 'cause I noticed a big patch that looked like a bog. And there's sundew.

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