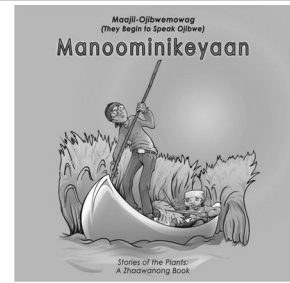


# Manoomin (Wild Rice)

Maajii-Ojibwemowag (They Begin To Speak Ojibwe) - ANA Language Project  
Teacher/Caregiver Supplemental Document



## Manoomin and the Ojibwe

Wild rice, also known as *manoomin* in Ojibwe, is a sacred medicine and important food to the Ojibwe people.

The migration story of how the Ojibwe came to the Midwest features a prophecy which foretells their travel from the east along the various waterways, searching for a place where “food that grows upon the water”. The Ojibwe travelled and settled along the Great Lakes until they came upon wild rice growing in lakes and



Wild rice plant along rivers in the Lake Superior region.

Wild rice is actually an aquatic grass scientifically known as *Zizania palustris*. This plant grows in gently flowing water and mucky areas, which are in

abundance throughout northern Wisconsin and Minnesota.

Wild rice plays a pivotal part in the lives of the Ojibwe people who would travel to wild rice beds in the autumn, creating camps to process the wild rice to store it for the future.

Wild rice season is a celebratory time for the Ojibwe with the rice being one of the prized foods served during holidays and special occasions.



over a fire, being constantly stirred. A young person then “dances” or “jigs” on the rice to release the outer hull from the seed. Finally, the rice is tossed in the air to discard the loose hulls.

Once processed, wild rice has a long shelf life.

## Harvesting Manoomin

Harvesting wild rice is a labor of love for the Ojibwe people.

When hand-harvesting wild rice, two harvesters use a canoe, which is propelled by one person using a forked pole. The other person uses thin cedar sticks to briskly

“knock” or tap the wild rice plant to dislodge the seeds into the canoe.

The collected rice, also known as green rice at this stage, is dried on a tarp in the sun. To further reduce the moisture, the dried rice is parched in a pot

### Zhaawanong set: Manoomin Book Ojibwe Language Word List:

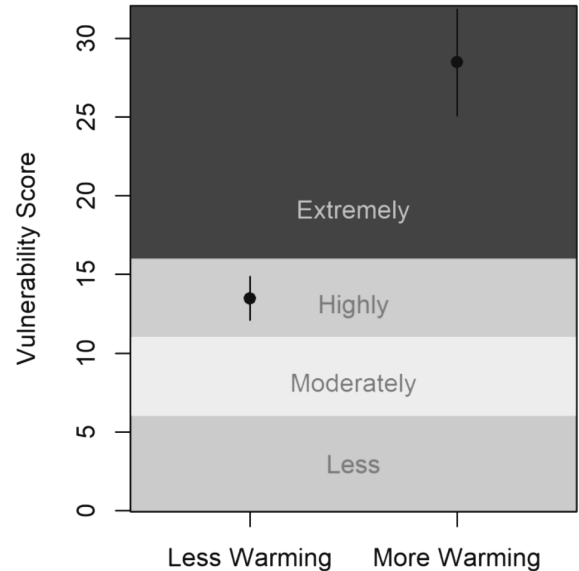
- **Dagwaagin** – Fall
- **Manoomin** – wild rice
- **Awesiinyag** – animals
- **Makiznikewin** – making moccasins
- **Manoominikewin** – harvest wild rice
- **Ningitiziimag** – my parents
- **Gichigami** – Lake Superior
- **Ziibiwan** – rivers
- **Zaaga’iganan** – lakes
- **Bawa’iganaatigoon** – knocking sticks
- **Gaandakii’iganaak** – push pole
- **Jiimaan** – canoe
- **Biindaakoojigewin** – offering tobacco
- **Niwiw** – my wife
- **Nimaamaa** – my mother
- **Bawa’am** – s/he knocks wild rice
- **Nimbaabaa** – my father
- **Chi-noodin** – it is very windy
- **Zaaga’igan** – lake
- **Gii-agadendaagozi** – s/he is embarrassed
- **Akik** – kettle
- **Ishkode** – fire
- **Mimigoshkam** – s/he threshes/jigs rice
- **Nooshkaachigewin** – winnow rice
- **Abinoojiinyag** – children
- **Niigaan** – in the future

## Climate Change and Manoomin

Wild rice is one of the species most affected by climate change. GLIFWC researchers conducted a Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment, which utilized various scientific and traditional knowledge resources to measure the impact climate change is affecting wild rice. As illustrated in the graphic, wild rice vulnerability increases as the climate get warmer (line/dots on graphic).

Unfortunately, climate change affects water levels, disease outbreaks, and pollution, which all contribute to the vulnerability of wild rice. Manoomin needs shallow waters with low sulfide and little-to-no presence of invasive species to flourish. This has lead to once prosperous harvest areas to grow scarce or produce erratic yields of wild rice.

View more information about the Vulnerability Assessment at: [http://www.glifwc.org/ClimateChange/GLIFWC\\_Climat\\_Change\\_Vulnerability\\_Assessment\\_Version1\\_April2018.pdf](http://www.glifwc.org/ClimateChange/GLIFWC_Climat_Change_Vulnerability_Assessment_Version1_April2018.pdf)



## Preparing Manoomin

### Stovetop directions:

1. Place 1 cup of rinsed wild rice in a stockpot with 3 cups of water.
2. Cover the stockpot and place over medium heat.
3. Cook for 30 - 40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Hand-harvested wild rice will be soft, yet chewy when cooked.
4. Drain any remaining water.
5. Serve warm or cold.

**Important:** Always purchase and cook with hand-harvested wild rice. Many supermarkets sell “cultivated” wild rice, which is very different from delicious hand-harvested wild rice. Cultivated rice is darker in color and takes longer to cook than hand harvested wild rice. Can’t find hand-harvested wild rice? Many tribal harvesters sell wild rice in their communities or on-line!

Cultivated  
rice



Hand-  
harvested  
wild rice

## Other Resources:

GLIFWC Publications:

[http://www.glifwc.org/publications/pdf/Wildrice\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.glifwc.org/publications/pdf/Wildrice_Brochure.pdf)

[http://www.glifwc.org/publications/pdf/HarvestWildrice\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.glifwc.org/publications/pdf/HarvestWildrice_Brochure.pdf)

[http://www.glifwc.org/publications/pdf/Goodberry\\_Brochure.pdf](http://www.glifwc.org/publications/pdf/Goodberry_Brochure.pdf)



Questions? Contact:  
GLIFWC ANA Projects Coordinator  
LaTisha Coffin  
lcoffin@glifwc.org  
Grant number: 90NL0645

