

While the cousins were at school, Rana set up brewing a fragrant starry stew for them to celebrate the end of winter and usher in the coming of spring.

Rana began by setting up her brew pot. In the kitchen, she lit the cooking fire, feeding it wood to grow. The pot hovered about the young flames as they grew to touch and warm the underbelly of the pot. She poured in several cups of water till it was as full as she needed it. Rana let the water sit and boil as she went into the garden.

The garden was Rana's pride and joy. She grew a variety of flowers, fruits, vegetables, and fungi- all edible, safe, and good for the environment. It was very sustainable, and she loved providing for herself. From the garden, Rana gathered Pitchulum flowers, Agababra leaves, some Mama berries, a heap of Gagabee root, and some other, small edible flowers for garnish on the dish. With her haul, Rana returned to the kitchen.

Rana spread all her ingredients out on the countertop, organizing them by order of which they'll be added to the stew.

Firstly, Rana took her vegetable shredder and shred all of her Gagabee root into a bowl. In groups, she transferred mounds of shreds into a mortar and Using a pestle, she mushed the shreds into a paste. As each batch was done, she scooped the paste into the now boiling pot of water. The paste would add enough starch to keep the stew together, but not turn it into pudding. It also gave the stew that signature stark-white color.

Second, she plucked the petals of the Pitchulum flowers and stirred them in. These would add some of the fragranciness the stew is known for, as well as a subtle flora flavor. She kept a few to the side to add as decoration for each bowl to be served.

Third, Rana separated the Agababra leaves from the stems and stirred them in too. These leaves secreted an aloe-like substance when separated from the plant. This would bring the stew together and give it a thick enough consistency to cling to the back of a spoon just perfectly!

Lastly, Rana washed the Mama berries and tossed them in. She mixed the whole brew well, stirring and stirring for a few minutes before letting the stew rest and cook for the next few hours. As it cooked, the whole house began to smell like the sweet and flora fragrance of the stew. It would be immediately obvious when the cousins walked in what had been cooking. But that just made Rana smile more, thinking of the realization spreading across their faces in eager smiles.

Five hours later, the cousins came running up to the cottage. Bursting through the door, the cousins, Ducky & Rusty, shouted a greeting to their distant aunt Rana. Then, they paused. Ducky was still, but Rusty energetically sniffed at the air. The pair exclaimed, "Starry Stew!?!?" Rana laughed and nodded, confirming.

The family had to wait another two hours before the stew would be done. As they waited, they sat together at the family table playing card games and chatting about the cousin's day at school.

When the stew was finally ready, Rana grabbed two spoons and let Ducky & Rusty taste from the pot. Ducky closed her eyes and smiled while Rusty dramatically threw his head back and howled. Rana laughed watching their unique reactions. The cousins rushed to the table and sat patiently waiting while Rana prepared their bowls. They all said grace, then together the family enjoyed this meal from the land, made of the last plants of winter and the earliest blooms of spring.