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Indigenous People's Day **Manoomin is the name of Wild Rice**

Ypsilanti, Michigan, 2020 October 12— Anishinaabek Caucus member, Barb Barton, wrote a seminal work on Manoomin, a grain native to the Great Lakes Basin that many know as wild rice of the genus *Zizania*. "Manoomin: The Story of Wild Rice in Michigan" is the first book of its kind to bring forward the rich tradition of wild rice in Michigan and its importance to the Anishinaabek people who live here. "Barton brings us the untold story of one of Michigan's iconic natural resources--its cultural and historical importance, its mistreatment and demise, and the seeds of hope for its future recovery. She writes with deep reverence and careful scholarship, in a warm style that makes me want to paddle the backwaters of Michigan's rivers and lakes, searching for lost stands of this amazing grass." --SAMUEL THAYER, author of *The Forager's Harvest*, *Nature's Garden*, and *Incredible Wild Edibles*. This is a book for every Michigander.

When harvested, the grains range in color from tan to ebony. After sun drying, a slow roast over the fire dries the grains and encourages the release of their still clinging hulls. After winnowing to remove the chaff, the delicious grain is ready to eat.

Manoomin guided the migration of the Anishinaabe to the place where food grows on water.

It is fitting that the second Monday in October is Indigenous People's Day, as Autumn is the season of manoomin harvest. Governor Whitmer declared in 2019, "Michigan recognizes the presence of...the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Bodewadmik who have lived upon this land since time immemorial...we should honor the historic, cultural, and contemporary significance of Indigenous peoples on this land and to celebrate the thriving culture and values...."





Manoomin also is a healthy part of Michigan's inland lake and river ecology, providing a shallow water habitat for many aquatic and waterfowl species. It once was abundant along the marshes of the Great Lakes.

Anishinaabek Caucus of MDP is a political caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party advocating for the issues and concerns of the 12 Tribes in Michigan.



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photographs by Barb Barton: polling, manoomin over water, long awns