



# Speckled alder

*Alnus rugosa*/Speckled alder

Speckled alder, also called grey alder, is one of the first trees to bloom in spring, as soon as the snow melts. L'Isle-aux-Coudres abounds with alders, which grow on the riverbanks and on the edges of the island's marshes and peat bogs. They enrich the soil and bees harvest the pollen to feed their brood. Alder thickets protect common snipe chicks from their enemies. American porcupines eat alder catkins, while redpolls, finches and woodcocks feast on the fruit and beavers eat the bark and leaves.

## Uses and benefits:

Because the salicin it contains acts like aspirin, Indigenous people would make an alder bark decoction to treat rheumatism. The Iroquois used a similar decoction to stain spoons and other wooden items red.

The catkins are picked from the tree in autumn after the leaves have fallen, and throughout the winter. In winter, the boiled buds can be used as food in an emergency. Gargling a cooled tea made with the bark or leaves helps soothe a sore throat and bring down fever. Fun fact: alder wood does not rot in water. It is for this reason that Venice was built on alder pillars.

## BODY CARE PRODUCTS – LE 1603

**EXFOLIATING SOAP:** The ground alder catkins help scrub and cleanse the hands and feet after doing manual labour, working in the garden or in the kitchen. For a nice overall cleanse.



# Spruce and fir

Precious spruce and fir oils were used to counter bad smells, and as an antiseptic and disinfectant.