



Fact Sheet: Gifts of Reciprocity - The National Inquiry Seeds Project

*Glenda Abbott kindly donated her time and expertise on the seed project.
She is a traditional medicine bundle keeper and nehiyaw from Pelican Lake First Nation.
She chose seeds that are able to grow naturally in families' and survivors' home communities.*

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls acknowledges the spirit of gift-giving. In most Indigenous cultures, gift-giving and reciprocity are customary. It is an important element that is used to build and maintain interpersonal relationships.

Gift-giving continues to be honoured in Sacred Ceremonies as a means to recognize important events, redistribute food and to show material wealth. Gift-giving also builds social, economic and political relationships. In traditional customs, it is an honour to share what one has, just as it is an honour to receive. By practicing this Indigenous law of reciprocity, the National Inquiry is hoping to decolonize its approach—through respecting of cultural protocols and practice.

The National Inquiry began gifting seeds to participants of the Truth Gathering Process. The seeds are a way of acknowledging each individual's time, experience and healing. Gift-giving demonstrates respect for the stories shared and encourages the telling of the same in a truthful, empowering and healthy manner. In the same way that we want the National Inquiry to be the beginning of an ongoing relationship, we hope these seeds will take root and grow.

The National Inquiry hopes that family members and survivors who receive these seeds, will plant them in honour of their loved ones. By taking the time to plant the seeds, it will allow participants to also connect back with the earth and their territories. The growing seeds will represent the stories that have been shared with the National Inquiry and to offer remembrance of the loved ones that are now gone. As the National Inquiry gives life to the truth, these seeds will also give life to the memories of those we have lost.

There are seven types of seeds including: Strawberry (Wild and Alpine), White Sage, Forget-Me-Nots, White Yarrow, Blue Aster and Fireweed.

- **Strawberries** are interconnected to Indigenous women as they were the original ones who harvested them. Strawberries are a blood strengthening medicine. It is the leader of the berries, because it is the first fruit to ripen. It is also known as "the big medicine" because it is shaped like a heart and people are revitalized whenever they drink its juice or eat it.
- **White Sage** was chosen because it is one of the four sacred Indigenous medicines.
- **Forget-Me-Nots** are chosen for their beauty and their name.
- **White Yarrow** is used because it is also known as a good women's medicine.
- **Blue Aster** seeds are shared because they're known as a talisman of love and a symbol of patience.
- **Fireweed** is chosen for the fact that it is a brilliant flower that is the first to grow in a burned area—a powerful symbol of healing and rebirth.