

Ojibwe Stories

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The Frog, the Snake, and the Cure for Poison Ivy

Many Indigenous peoples around the world, like the Anishinaabe people, are known for being able to use their surroundings as medicine. For the Ojibwe people, many plants are used to help with pain or when someone is sick. How did the Ojibwe and so many other Indigenous peoples learn this knowledge of the plant world's medicines? This story teaches us just one of the many ways the Ojibwe have learned to use the plants around them; by watching the animals!



original Zhaaganaashiimowin	Ojibwemowin anikanootaan
It was a long, long, long time ago now when this story had happened. In one Ojibwe village not too far from a beautiful river, the people were getting ready to start their days.	Shke. Gii-inakamigad mewinzha yo'ow gaa-dibaadonjigaadeg. Mii-sh imaa oodenaansing imaa jiigiziibi, gii-koshkoziwag agiw Anishinaabeg gaa-taajig. wii-ozhiitaabaneg iidog da-maajiitaawaad awegodogwen igo gaa-tazhiikamowaad.
Two women, a grandmother and her granddaughter, were walking toward the river to go and gather plants and any food that might grow there to bring back to their family. The two always liked to travel to the river, because they would see all sorts of creatures there when they visited.	Gii-niizhiwag ikwewag gaa-o-babaamaazhigaamejig; Bezhig mindimooyenh naa oozhisan. Mii imaa ziibiing gii-naazikamowaad babaa-nanda-asiginamowaad anooj ge-aabajichigaadegibanen. Mashkiki, wiisiniwin, awegodogwen igo ge-aabajichigaadegibanen dibishkoo. Gii-wenda-minwendamoog apii endaso-babaamaazhgaamewaad agiw ikwewag onzaam gii-kashitoowaad waabandamowaad niibowa, awensiiyan gaye.
On this day, many small creatures could be seen splishing and splashing and resting by the water. There were all sorts of frogs and toads lazing about, taking in the warm morning sun and eating what insects and other things they could fit into their mouths.	Mii gii-waabanjigaazowaad gii-bagaskaadagaaziwaad niibowa egaashiinyiwijig. Gii-paatayinowag omakakiig naa obiigomakakiig babaa-anwebiwaad imaa gichi-inanjigewaad. gii-shakamowaad awegodogwen igo gaa-kashkitoowaagwenin.
However, these weren't the only creatures that found themselves by the river that	Shke dash gaawiin gii-bezhigosiiwag iwedi jiigiziibiig ani-babaamaazhigaamewaad iw apii. Mii imaa noopiming gaa-pi-

<p>day. In the tall grass and brush, a snake had made its way to the shore of the river, getting ready to find something of its own to eat.</p>	<p>izhi-naazikang imaa jiigiziibiig a'aw bezhig ginebig ani-giiyosed giuwenh.</p>
<p>As the grandmother carried on with gathering plants and berries, the granddaughter had spotted the snake in its hiding place. Not wanting to bother the snake on its journey, the granddaughter only watched as she continued helping her grandmother. Although the snake was smaller than the little girl, she knew this creature did not eat insects like the frogs and toads.</p>	<p>Okomisan ani-asiginaninid anooj gegoo, mii-sh apii gaa-mikawaabamaad iniw ginebigoon aw ikwezens imaa gaazonid. Ani-wiidookaaged aw ikwezens. Gaawiin owii-migoshkaaji'aasiin ani-babaa-ayaanid iniw ginebigoon a'aw ikwezens. Gii-agaashiinyiwiwan iniw ginebigoon nawaj apii-sh a'aw ikwezens, ogikenimaan da-amwaasinig ginebigoon manidoonsini dibishkoo-go enanjigewaad agiw omakakiig naa obiigomakakiig.</p>
<p>This snake was hungry for something a little bigger than a fly or gnat. On the shore, in the middle of all the rest of the frogs and big toads, there was a small treefrog who was enjoying the cool weather and sunshine.</p>	<p>Gii-gichi-bakade a'aw ginebig. Mii gaawiin wii-wiisiniinsiwisiinaaban. Gii-omakakiwibakade geget wa'aw ginebig. Gaa-izhi-mikawaabamaad iniw bezhig mitigo-omakakiwan gaa-anwebinid.</p>
<p>The little girl watched as the snake made its way to the edge of the tall grass, eyeing up all the frogs and toads who sat on the shore of the river.</p>	<p>Gaa-ani-izhi-naazikawaad gii-giimoozaabamaad iniw mitigo-omakakiwan gaa-anwebinijin a'aw ginebig imaa jiigiziibi.</p>
<p>Soon, the snake couldn't wait any longer, and slithered its way out onto the shore, chasing after all the little frogs and toads, trying to get one of them into his belly!</p>	<p>Eshkam igo gii-ani-bakaded, mii gezikaa gaa-izhi-mookiid gii-piminizha'aad iniw omakakiins naa biigomakakiin. Odaano-gii-amwaan!</p>
<p>As the granddaughter kept helping her grandmother, she watched as the snake chased all of the little creatures around the shore.</p>	<p>Ani-wiidookaaged aw ikwezens, ogii-kanawaabamaan iniw ginebigoon ani-babaaminizhikaagenid imaa jiigiziibi.</p>

<p>One little frog, the tree frog, was too busy enjoying the nice day, and didn't see the snake! When the little tree frog finally opened his eyes, the snake was almost on top of him! The little tree frog hopped and jumped and leaped as best he could from the hungry snake as the snake got closer and closer.</p>	<p>Shke, a'aw bezhig mitigo-omakakii gii-ondami-ayekozid, gaawiin ogii-maaminonenimaasiin iniw ginebigoon ani-naazikaagod.</p> <p>Gegaapii gaa-izhi-dooskwaabid a'aw omakakiins, gaa-izhi-maaminonemimaad gii-naazikaagod gegaa a'aw mitigo-omakakiins iniw ginebigoon. Gaa-ani-izhi-gwaashkwanid a'aw mitigo-omakakii gii-ozhimaad iniw gaa-bakadenid ginebigoon. Eshkam igo nawaj besho omakakii.</p>
<p>The snake started to celebrate, knowing he would soon have a nice little tree frog in his belly for breakfast. Just as the hungry snake lifted his head to strike, the little tree frog took one last leap into a patch of plants.</p>	<p>Mii apii gaa-maajii-jiiikaakamizigenid iniw ginebigoon onzaam wayiiba wii-minwanjigenid. Ayaano-gii-tebamigod iniw ginebigoon a'aw mitigo-omakakii, mii gaa-izhi-ikogwaashkwanid imaa aniibiishikaag.</p>
<p>Now the granddaughter couldn't keep her eyes away from the two creatures, and soon grandmother began to watch as well.</p>	<p>Mii zhigwa gii-kanawaabiwaad agiw Anishinaabewikwewag.</p>
<p>They watched as the snake kept away from the little frog in the patch, trying to find some kind of way into... a patch of poison ivy! Why would the little tree frog be so crazy as to jump in these itchy plants?</p>	<p>Ani-aano-gii-tebamigod, gaa-zhi-indendamonid "Aansh danaa naapidekamig ge-izhigwaashkwanid imaa babiikobagokaag?"</p>
<p>The snake slithered around and around the poison ivy, but even he was not hungry enough to jump into the scratchy plants. The two watched as the snake finally gave up, going to find some other meal somewhere else.</p>	<p>Gii-pabaamoodenid aano-gii-nandawaabandamonid ingoji ge-izhi-biidigenipan imaa babiikobagokaag. Mii'sh aangwaamis gii-aanishiitamonid iniw ginebigoon gaa-o-izhi-nandawenjigenid bakaan ingoji.</p>
<p>Soon, the little tree frog leaped back out of the poison ivy, scratching and scratching all over. The little granddaughter laughed a little to herself. Why would the little tree frog do something so careless?</p>	<p>Gaa-izhi-zaagijigwaashkwanid imaa babiikobagokaag gii-papaazagobindizod. Gaa-mikawaabamigod a'aw mitigo-omakakii iniw ikwezansan. "Aanish naa gaa-onji-izhichiged?" gii-inendamoon.</p>

<p>Her grandmother, however, kept watching the little frog as it hopped away. For her, it was always important to watch the animals when they did peculiar things just like her ancestors did, because sometimes they could show the people their wisdom.</p>	<p>Ogii-kanawaabamaan dash a’aw mindimooyenh iniw mitigo-omakakiiwan gii-ni-animigwaashkwaninid. Geget ogii-ishpenimaan awesiinyan ani-babaadoodamowaad anooj. Aanish, giishpin babaamenimangwaa, geget niibowa gigikinoo’amaagonaanig awensiinyag.</p>
<p>As the two watched for a few minutes more, they saw the little tree frog hop and leap to another patch of plants, but it was no poison ivy this time. The little tree frog jumped into a small patch of jewelweed.</p>	<p>Mii dash gaa-izhi-izhigwaashkwanid imaa bakaan ingoji. Gaawiin babiikobag gii-aawanzinon. Ozhaawaskojiibik gosha gii-aawan.</p>
<p>When he did, he began to rub the plant and the dew that had been sitting on it all over his little body. Finally, when he was done rubbing, the little tree frog leaped out of the plants and went on his way, no longer itching!</p>	<p>Gaa-izhi-maajii-zinigonidizod i’iw ayi’ii ozhaawaskojiibik. Gaa-zinigonidizod mii gaa-izhi-ikogwaashkwanid gii-paapaazagobindizod giiwenh.</p>
<p>The tree frog had tricked the snake and cured himself of the poison ivy!</p>	<p>Mii-go geget gii-wayeshimaad iniw ginebigoon apii gaa-biinjigwaashkwanid imaa babiikobagokaag. Wa! Gii-noojimo’idizo a’aw mitigo-omakakii.</p>
<p>The two Ojibwe were amazed, and when they had finished their gathering for the day, the two went back to their family and friends and told them what they had seen.</p>	<p>Gii-maamakaadendamooog dash agiw Anishinaabeg giiwenh. Gaa-asiginamowaad, gaa-izhi-azhegiwewaad imaa oodenaansing gii-tibaadondamowaad iwe gaa-waabandamowaad imaa jiiigiibiig.</p>
<p>For many generations, the story of the snake and frog was passed down and told. Today, many Ojibwe people remember the cure for poison ivy because of this story, taught to us by the little tree frog and his wisdom.</p>	