

Acorns, Nuts, Seeds, Tubers, Water Chestnut.....Pollens; ...Pollens? Why not!

We, humans, have an intrinsic ability to experiment with the resources around, it appears to be true especially for food plants and animals. In the course of our evolutionary trajectory we have gathered and tasted acorns and nuts, harvested seeds, dug out roots and tubers, collected water chestnuts or fox nuts, fished, hunted and butchered wild animals, and so on. Therefore, it can be imagined that bright yellow or brown superbly attractive pollen-candies of *Typha* aka inflorescence was not unheeded.

Prehistoric investigations have also revealed the use of *Typha* as a prominent food source. In the wetlands of China, especially the Lower Yangtze Region, are famous for early rice cultivation. Alongside rice, wetland abounded with the members of *Typha*, so say the archeologists. The pollens of the plant, a rich source of protein, perhaps made a sumptuous luncheon or supper for the Neolithic people. That charged them with the required calorie to sustain longer in the hostile environment. But, the use of *Typha* as a food source has a rather older tradition buried in prehistory. Before this discovery, the preparation flour employing grindstones from various *Typha* or *Brachipodium* species have been found in Upper Palaeolithic Europe around 25000 years BP.

However, the eating *Typha* as well as using it otherwise continues to this day across the globe. The fleshy and fluffy stems of *Typha* are superb material in matting as seen in many cultures. Above all stands their food value and diverse culinary use. The rhizomes and lower stems, ripe and unripe inflorescence, mature pollens find their place in many local and ethnic cuisines. The young flower stalks can be cut off and removed from their sheaths, boiled or steamed to be eaten just like corn. The bright yellowish pollens, fine substitutes for flours, were yearned for. They can drape pancakes, baked bread, or biscuits in a lovely yellow color quite tempting for kids and adults alike. The usage of pollens as a food source has been observed in broad geographic regions including India, China, Iraq, New Zealand, South Africa, United States, Canada, and many tropical regions around the world, but not in Europe. The reason perhaps rooted in prehistoric adaptation, or may be not. Why bother? The only thing we can now to crave for *Typha* pollen-ed pancakes or cookies and keep hunting for *Typha* pollen-candies.



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