

RESPONSIBLE FORAGING GUIDE

Before you pick and eat any wild foods for first time, it's important you familiarise with some basic foraging rules, so you can gather safely, responsibly and within the law.

Make sure you comply with the following foraging code:

Know what you're picking

Never eat anything you cannot positively identify and deem completely safe.

Familiarise yourself with edible species and lookalikes, because there are a handful of poisonous plants that can make you sick, or worse. Use field guides to identify them and make sure to cross-reference. If in doubt, leave it out.

Only take what you need

Always pick in moderation from plentiful populations.

Take no more than you plan to consume and try to spread your foraging over a wide area, rather than pick all plants of any species in the same patch. Make sure there is enough for wildlife to survive and to ensure plants can regenerate and reproduce.

Leave rare species alone

Familiarise yourself with the endangered species to avoid them.

Many species of plants and fungi are endangered and rare. Do not collect any that you cannot positively identify and avoid any plants that look unusual or scarce in the area. Some species are protected by law and it's illegal to pick them.

Seek permission to enter the land

Consent is required to go onto private land that you do not own.

Authorisation must be obtained before picking plants from land situated away from public rights of way; otherwise you are likely trespassing on somebody else's land. Do not touch anything that has clearly been planted.

Leave no trace of your visit

Minimise damage and do not disturb the habitat.

Take care not to trample down or damage surrounding vegetation when foraging. Do not disturb the habitat and the local wildlife and bring any rubbish home with you.

Do not pick the roots

The roots are a vital part of the plant.

Never pull up a plant by its roots unless you intend to consume them on the premise that the plant is growing in plentiful populations. It might be illegal to dig up any plant unless you have the landowner's permission.

Only pick from clean areas

Consider the contamination risk and impact of surrounding land use.

Avoid those places subject to pollution such as roadsides, agricultural land, industrial estates, dog-walking paths and certain water sources. Wash all of your food before you eat it.

Pick gently and sustainably

Avoid excess damage to the plant or inadvertent rooting.

Harvest plants using techniques and tools that allow the species to keep growing healthy. Never strip plants of all their leaves, fruits or seeds, as they depend on them to survive.

Test new wild foods

Only eat a small quantity of any new ingredient.

There might be a chance that your body may not tolerate a plant. If you are susceptible to food allergies, have a sensitive digestive system or have a kidney or heart condition, you may have a reaction to some wild food.

Share your knowledge

Create awareness and encourage others to care for the landscape.

Modern society is increasingly disconnected to the places where our local food comes from. The best way to recover ancestral knowledge is teaching future generations how to use local plants.