

Foraging Guidelines (adapted from wildedible.org)

PROPER IDENTIFICATION

1. **Make sure that you are able to positively identify everything that you choose to forage.** Bring a guidebook with you if you are unsure of the plants that you are harvesting. **Always consult a qualified professional** before consuming a new plant.
2. **Don't rely on common names.** Common names can be shared among several plants, some of which may be safe and some of which may be poisonous. A plant's scientific name is less likely to change in a hundred years.
3. **Use all of your senses.** Lots of wild edible plants have look-alikes. Learn how to distinguish plants by smell, feel, texture, etc.
4. **Learn habitat.** Purslane prefers sandy soils. Hackberry won't grow in a swamp. A knowledge of habitat will help make informed decisions regarding the sourcing and identification of plants.
5. **Learn companion plants.** Many plants are commonly found growing near other plants. If you identify one plant, another you seek may be close by.
6. **Learn to follow wild edibles through all seasons.** This is essential both for making positive identifications and to locate perennial plants you intend to harvest later.

SAFETY

1. **Be wary of foraging near roadways, railroads, private residences,** where pesticide and herbicides are likely to be applied. Use your best judgement to determine the health of the surrounding ecosystem.
2. **Learn which parts of a wild edible are safe to consume.** Just because a wild plant is considered edible does not mean all parts of the plant are edible. It is also important to note that certain wild plants are only edible at specific times of year.
3. **Only harvest plants that appear healthy.** Harvesting healthy plants minimizes the risk of illness and also usually means you're eating more nutritious food.

CONSERVATION

7. **Never harvest endangered species.** Be aware of endangered species in the ecosystem in which you are harvesting. If you notice an endangered species in the wild, let it be.
8. **If you are foraging on privately-owned land (a neighbor, school, house, etc.), be sure to ask permission.** Emphasize how you are cleaning their land of weeds, and suggest that you are willing to share your bounty.
9. **Be sure to not overharvest.** This will disrupt local ecosystems and won't leave any plants left for other foragers. Encourage growth of native plantings and desirable foragable plants.
10. **Only harvest the part of the plant you intend to use.** Take what you need and, if you can, leave enough to ensure the plant can continue to thrive.
11. **Be a good steward:** care for the land, do not leave trash behind and clean up after yourself.