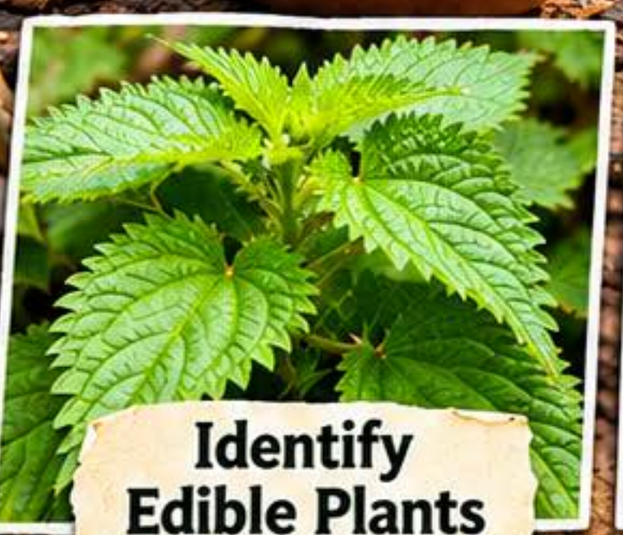
Scouts Bushcraft

Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts









UK Plants & Seasons | Look-alikes & Safety | Foraging Recipes | Sustainable Foraging

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Stinging Nettle


Wild Garlic


Dandelion


Blackberry

Identify Wild Plants | Foraging Recipes | Wild Drinks & Teas | Safe and Sustainable Foraging

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Introduction to Foraging

What is Foraging?

Foraging is the skill of finding, identifying and safely collecting wild plants, leaves, flowers, fruits, nuts and seeds from the natural environment to use as food, flavouring or for other useful purposes.



Why Scouts Learn Foraging

- Builds outdoor skills and confidence in nature.
- Helps us understand and respect the natural environment.
- Provides healthy, natural food and new cooking ideas.
- Encourages a sustainable and low-impact way of living.
- Links to core Scout skills such as bushcraft, survival and campcraft.

Responsible Foraging

- ☑ Only take what you need.
- ☑ Leave plenty for wildlife and others.
- ☑ Choose clean, unpolluted areas (away from roads, farms and dog fouling).
- ☑ Get permission if foraging on private land.
- ☑ Follow the UK foraging laws and the Countryside Code.
- ☑ Forage with adult supervision (especially for young Scouts).



The Natural Environment

Foraging helps us connect with the seasons, woodlands, hedgerows and outdoors. By learning to identify useful plants, we build knowledge, patience and care for the natural world, making sure it stays healthy for future generations.

Find | Identify | Gather | Use | Respect

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Foraging Rules and the Law



Get Permission

- Check with the landowner or site manager before collecting.
- Access rights (e.g. public footpaths or open access) do not automatically mean permission to remove wild foods.
- Check signs and local byelaws for any restrictions.



Protect Wild Plants

- Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 it is an offence to intentionally uproot wild plants without authorisation.
- Plants listed on Schedule 8 of the Act have stronger protection and must not be picked, uprooted or destroyed.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981



Personal Use Only

- Rules differ across the UK.
- Do not assume commercial collection is allowed.
- Never sell gathered material without checking the law and obtaining the necessary permissions.

Special Places

- Do not collect on nature reserves, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) or other protected sites unless the site authority explicitly permits it.
- Follow local rules and any site-specific guidance.

Scout Foraging Code

- **Ask first** – get permission before you collect.
- **Identify first** – be 100% sure of what it is.
- **Take only a small amount** – from abundant populations and where permitted.
- **Never uproot** – pick leaves, flowers or fruits carefully.
- **Leave plenty** – for wildlife and other people to enjoy.
- **Stay on paths** – avoid trampling plants and habitats.
- **Take all litter home** – leave the area as you found it.



This is a learning guide, not legal advice. Rules vary between England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland; check current local guidance before every activity.

Ask | Check | Protect | Respect

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Foraging Safety – Poisonous Plants

Many wild plants are safe and useful, but some are poisonous and can make you seriously ill. It is vital to learn how to identify plants correctly and never take a risk when foraging.

Key Safety Rules

- Never eat a plant unless you are 100% sure of its identification.
- Never taste a plant to identify it.
- Learn the key features of safe (edible) plants and common poisonous lookalikes.
- Forage with a responsible adult.
- Use a reliable field guide or identification app.

Common Poisonous Plants in the UK



Foxglove
Toxic to people and animals.



Deadly Nightshade
Highly poisonous. Do not eat.



Lily of the Valley
Poisonous if eaten (all parts).



Hemlock
Very poisonous. Can be fatal.



Lords-and-Ladies (Cuckoo Pint)
Toxic berries and leaves.

Lookalike – Be Careful!

Some poisonous plants can look similar to edible ones. Always check key features such as leaf shape, flower structure, smell and growth habit.



Wild Garlic (Edible)



Lily of the Valley (Poisonous)



Ramsons (Wild Garlic) (Edible)



Lords-and-Ladies (Poisonous)

If You Feel Unwell

- Stop eating immediately.
- Tell a responsible adult.
- Keep any plant samples (if safe) to help identify the cause.
- Seek medical advice or call NHS 111 (or 999 in an emergency).

NHS 111

Remember: When in doubt – leave it out!

Identify | Be Sure | Get Help | Stay Safe

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Understanding Plant Identification

Why Identify Plants?

Correct identification is essential for safe foraging. By learning the different features of plants, you can recognise edible species, avoid dangerous lookalikes and build confidence in the outdoors.



Use a Range of Clues

Look at several features, not just one. Compare what you see with a reliable field guide or identification app.



Key Features to Look For



Leaves

Shape, size, edge (e.g. smooth, toothed or lobed) and how they grow on the stem (e.g. opposite or alternate).



Stems

Look at colour, texture, hairs and whether the stem is round, square or hollow.



Flowers

Colour, shape, number of petals and when they flower (season).



Fruits & Seeds

The size, colour, shape and how they are arranged (e.g. berries, nuts, seed pods).



Habitat

Where the plant grows – woodland, hedgerow, meadow, riverbank or wet ground.

Plant Identification Tips

- ☑ Use a good field guide for British wild plants.
- ☑ Check several features (leaf, flower, stem and habitat).
- ☑ Learn a few common edible plants well first.
- ☑ Compare with photos or drawings in a reliable guide.
- ☑ Look at the plant through the seasons (leaves, flowers and fruits can change).
- ☑ Take clear photos to check later with an expert.

Common Lookalikes



Some edible plants have poisonous lookalikes. Always be extra careful with:

- **Wild Garlic** vs. **Lily of the Valley**
- **Cow Parsley** (edible) vs. **Hemlock** (poisonous)
- **Water Mint** (edible) vs. other mint family plants
- **Elderflower** (edible) vs. other white-flowered plants

Remember: Use a combination of features, take your time, and never eat a plant unless you are **100%** sure of its identification.

Observe | Compare | Identify | Confirm | Stay Safe

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Common Edible Leaves

Edible Leaves in the Wild

Many wild plants have tasty, nutritious leaves that can be used in simple outdoor cooking. They can be added to soups, stews, teas, salads or cooked like spinach. Always be 100% sure of your identification before collecting.



Key Identification Tips

- ☑ Use more than one feature (leaf shape, smell, stem and habitat).
- ☑ Check a reliable field guide.
- ☑ Pick young, healthy leaves away from roads and pollution.
- ☑ Only take what you need and leave plenty for wildlife.

Stinging Nettle



- ✓ Heart-shaped, serrated leaves.
- ✓ Covered in fine stinging hairs.
- ✓ Rich in vitamins and iron.
- ✓ Cook or dry for tea.

Wild Garlic (Ramsons)



- ✓ Broad, smooth, pointed leaves.
- ✓ Strong garlic smell when crushed.
- ✓ Found in damp woodlands in spring.
- ✓ Use fresh in salads, soups or pesto.

Dandelion



- ✓ Deeply toothed, spear-shaped leaves.
- ✓ Mild, slightly bitter taste.
- ✓ Use young leaves in salads.
- ✓ Flowers can also be used.

Chickweed



- ✓ Small, oval, bright green leaves.
- ✓ Soft, slightly hairy stem (one line of hairs).
- ✓ Common in gardens, woodland edges and open ground.
- ✓ Tasty raw in salads or sandwiches.

Cleavers (Sticky Willy)



- ✓ Narrow leaves in a whorl (usually 6–8).
- ✓ Sticky hooks that cling to clothing.
- ✓ Found in hedgerows and woodland.
- ✓ Young shoots can be added to soups or used in spring greens.

Sorrel



- ✓ Arrow-shaped leaves with a sharp, lemony taste.
- ✓ Smooth edges and a distinct tangy flavour.
- ✓ Found in grassland, paths and clearings.
- ✓ Great in salads or as a wild herb.

Remember:
Never eat a plant unless you are 100% sure of its identification.

Ideas for Use

- ☑ Add young leaves to soups and stews.
- ☑ Use in wild salads and wraps.
- ☑ Make a simple foraged tea (e.g. nettle or cleavers).



Identify | Forage Safely | Cook | Enjoy | Leave No Trace

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Stinging Nettle

A common and useful wild plant, stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is rich in nutrients, easy to identify and ideal for bushcraft cooking and wild teas.



Key Facts

- **Common name:** Stinging Nettle
- **Scientific name:** Urtica dioica
- **Family:** Urticaceae
- **Height:** 30–150 cm
- **Season:** Spring to autumn
- **Habitat:** Woodland, hedgerows, field edges and waste ground

Identification



1. **Leaves:** Opposite pairs, oval with a pointed tip and sharply serrated edges.
2. **Stem:** Square and covered in fine, stinging hairs.
3. **Flowers:** Long, drooping clusters of tiny green flowers (spring to autumn).

Why It Stings

Nettles have tiny hollow hairs on the leaves and stems that inject a mild irritant (formic acid) when touched, which can cause a tingling or stinging sensation.



Safe Harvesting

- Wear gloves or use scissors.
- Pick the young, top leaves (the best flavour and less tough).
- Avoid plants by roads, polluted areas or where dogs may foul.
- Take only what you need and leave plenty for wildlife.

Preparation



1. Rinse leaves in clean water.
2. Wilt or boil for 1–2 minutes.
3. Drain and use in recipes.

Nutritional Benefits

- Rich in vitamins A, C and K.
- Good source of iron, calcium and magnesium.
- A traditional spring tonic.
- Supports a healthy diet and outdoor wellbeing.

Bushcraft Uses



- **Nettle tea** – a nutritious, spring tonic.
- **Nettle soup** – simple, tasty and filling.
- **Nettle greens** – use like spinach in stews, risotto or egg dishes.
- Can also be dried for later use.

Simple Recipe: Nettle Soup

A classic bushcraft foraging recipe.

Ingredients (serves 4)

- A large handful of young nettle leaves
- 1 onion (optional)
- 1 potato (optional, for thickness)
- 1 litre of water or stock
- Salt and pepper to taste

Method

1. Wash the nettle leaves and remove tough stems.
2. Gently cook chopped onion and potato in a pan until soft.
3. Add the nettles and stock, then simmer for 10 minutes.
4. Blend (optional) for a smooth soup and season to taste.

Remember: Always wear gloves when handling fresh nettles, and never collect from polluted areas. Cook or wilt the leaves to remove the sting.

Identify | Forage | Cook | Make Tea | Be Sustainable

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Wild Garlic (Ramsons)

Wild Garlic, also known as Ramsons (*Allium ursinum*), is a common and tasty wild plant with a strong garlic smell. It grows in woodlands each spring and is a popular foraged food.



Key Facts

- **Common name:** Wild Garlic (Ramsons)
- **Scientific name:** Allium ursinum
- **Family:** Amaryllidaceae (Onion family)
- **Height:** 20–40 cm
- **Season:** March to May (flowers April–May)
- **Habitat:** Damp, shady woodlands, hedgerows and stream sides.

Identification







1. **Leaves:** Broad, smooth, pointed leaves (usually 3–6 cm wide) that smell strongly of garlic when crushed.
2. **Flowers:** Star-shaped, white flowers in round clusters (April to May).
3. **Seeds:** Small green seed pods that turn black when ripe (late summer).

Poisonous Lookalikes

Wild Garlic can be confused with Lily of the Valley, which is poisonous. Always check carefully for these key differences:





Wild Garlic (Edible)

- ✓ Strong garlic smell.
- ✓ Broad, smooth leaves.
- ✓ Grows in clumps.
- ✓ White, star-shaped flowers.



Lily of the Valley (Poisonous)

- ✗ No garlic smell.
- ✗ Narrower, oval leaves.
- ✗ Grows in small groups.
- ✗ Hanging, bell-shaped flowers.

Where and When to Find It



- Common in damp, shady woodlands.
- Often grows in large carpets.
- Best foraging time: March to May (before it flowers).

Harvesting and Use



- Pick younger leaves for the best flavour.
- Take only what you need and leave plenty for wildlife.
- Use fresh in salads, soups, pestos and cooked dishes.

Nutritional Benefits

- A good source of vitamins A and C.
- Contains beneficial plant compounds (antioxidants).
- A natural, seasonal alternative to shop-bought garlic.
- Adds a strong, fresh flavour to many outdoor recipes.



Simple Recipe: Wild Garlic Pesto

Ingredients (makes a small jar)

- A large handful of wild garlic leaves
- 50 g nuts (e.g. pine nuts, walnuts or almonds)
- 50 g grated hard cheese (e.g. Parmesan)
- 100 ml olive oil
- A pinch of salt and black pepper

Method

1. Wash and roughly chop the wild garlic leaves.
2. Add leaves, nuts, cheese and a little oil to a blender or crush with a pestle and mortar.
3. Blend or crush to a coarse paste, adding more oil to the texture you like.
4. Season to taste and keep in a clean jar in the fridge (use within a few days).

Remember: Always be 100% sure of your identification. Wild Garlic has poisonous lookalikes, so check the leaf, smell, flowers and growing habitat carefully.

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Dandelion

The Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is a common and highly useful wild plant. Almost every part can be eaten, and it is packed with vitamins and minerals, making it a great bushcraft foraging find.



Key Facts

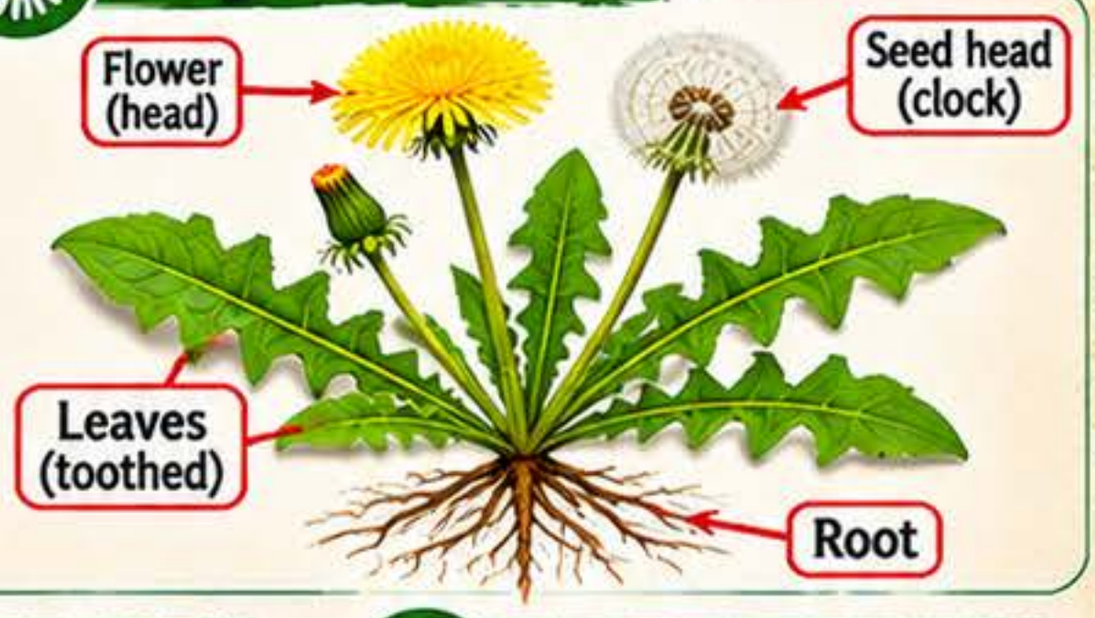
- **Common name:** Dandelion
- **Scientific name:** Taraxacum officinale
- **Family:** Asteraceae (Daisy family)
- **Height:** 5–40 cm
- **Season:** Flowers from March to October
- **Habitat:** Lawns, fields, meadows, roadside verges and open ground

Identification



1. **Leaves:** Deeply toothed (lobed) leaves, growing in a rosette from the base.
2. **Flower:** Bright yellow, many narrow petals (ray florets). Closes at night and in dull weather.
3. **Seeds:** A round, fluffy seed head (clock) with parachute seeds that blow in the wind.

Key Features



When and Where to Find It



- Common throughout the UK.
- Found in grassland, fields, gardens and roadside verges.
- Best for leaves in spring and early summer.
- Flowers from spring to autumn.

Edible Parts and Uses



Leaves – young leaves are best in salads, soups or cooked like spinach.



Flowers – can be used in teas, cordials, jellies or fritters.



Roots – can be washed, chopped, dried and roasted to make a caffeine-free coffee substitute.

Nutritional Benefits

- Rich in vitamins A, C and K.
- A good source of iron, calcium and potassium.
- Contains antioxidants.
- Supports digestion and liver health.
- A natural and free wild food that's easy to find.



Simple Recipe: Dandelion Tea

Ingredients

- A handful of dandelion
- flowers (petals only)
- 500 ml of boiling water

Method

1. Pick fresh, clean dandelion flowers from a safe area.
2. Remove the green bases and use just the yellow petals.
3. Place the petals in a mug or teapot, pour over boiling water and infuse for 5–10 minutes.
4. Strain and enjoy. You can add a little honey if you like.

Remember: Always be 100% sure of your identification.
Only collect from clean, unpolluted areas away from busy roads and dog-walking areas.

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Chickweed

Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) is a common, edible wild plant found across the UK. It has tender, mild-tasting leaves and can be eaten raw or cooked, making it a useful foraging plant for Scouts.



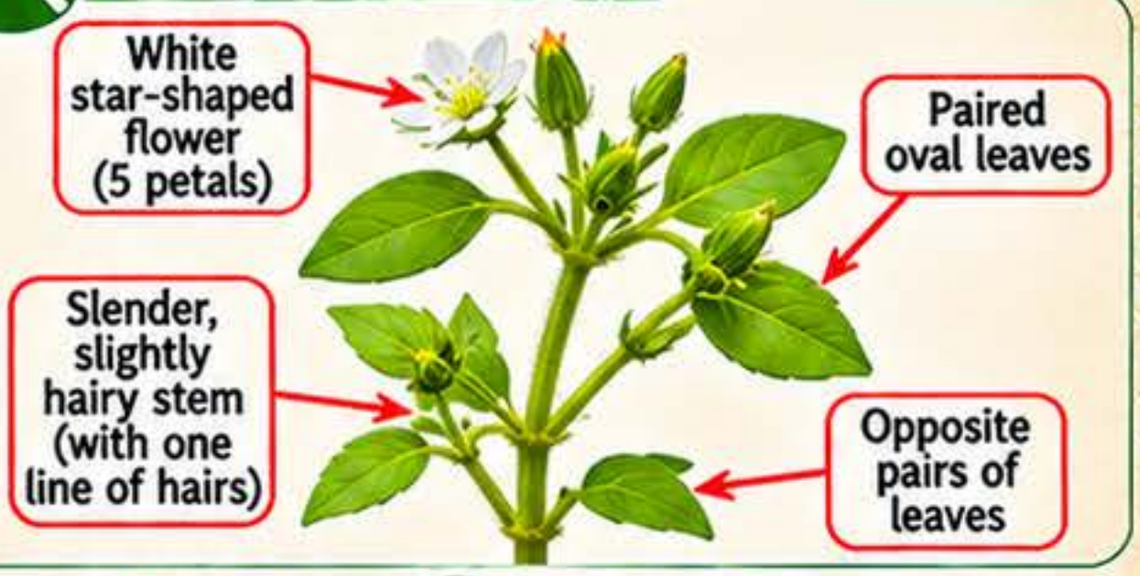
Key Facts

- **Common name:** Chickweed
- **Scientific name:** Stellaria media
- **Family:** Caryophyllaceae (Pink family)
- **Height:** 5–30 cm
- **Season:** All year (best in spring)
- **Habitat:** Gardens, hedgerows, fields, woodland edges and disturbed ground

Identification

1. **Flower:** Small, white, star-shaped flowers with 5 deeply notched petals (looks like 10).
2. **Leaves:** Small, oval and pointed, soft and bright green.
3. **Stem:** Slender, weak and slightly hairy, often with a single line of fine hairs that changes sides along the stem.

Key Features



Where and When to Find It



- Very common across the UK.
- Grows in gardens, allotments, hedgerows, field edges and woodland.
- Can be found all year round, especially in spring and autumn.
- Often grows in moist, disturbed soil.

Edible Parts and Uses



Leaves and stems – tender and mild, great in salads, sandwiches and wraps.



Cooked greens – can be lightly steamed, sauteed or added to soups and stews.



Other uses – can be used in wild pesto, egg dishes or as a fresh garnish.

Nutritional Benefits

- A good source of vitamins A and C.
- Contains iron, calcium and magnesium.
- Mild and easy to digest.
- A nutritious, seasonal green that grows for much of the year.
- A useful addition to a balanced outdoor diet.



Simple Recipe: Wild Chickweed Salad

Ingredients (serves 2)

- A large handful of young chickweed (leaves and soft stems)
- A few salad leaves (optional)
- Cherry tomatoes (optional)
- A drizzle of olive oil or a simple dressing

Method

1. Pick fresh, clean chickweed from a safe area well away from roads.
2. Rinse well in clean water and remove any tough stems.
3. Mix with other salad leaves and chopped tomatoes if you like.
4. Drizzle with olive oil or your favourite dressing and enjoy.

Remember: Always be 100% sure of your identification. Pick from clean, unpolluted areas and leave plenty for wildlife.

Identify | Forage | Cook | Stay Safe | Respect Nature

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Cleavers (Sticky Willy)

Cleavers, also known as Sticky Willy (*Galium aparine*), is a common, edible wild plant. It is easy to identify by its sticky, clinging stems and sprays of small white flowers.



Key Facts

- **Common name:** Cleavers (Sticky Willy)
- **Scientific name:** Galium aparine
- **Family:** Rubiaceae
- **Height:** 30–100 cm (can be longer)
- **Season:** Spring to autumn
- **Habitat:** Hedges, woodland edges, fields, roadsides and gardens

Identification

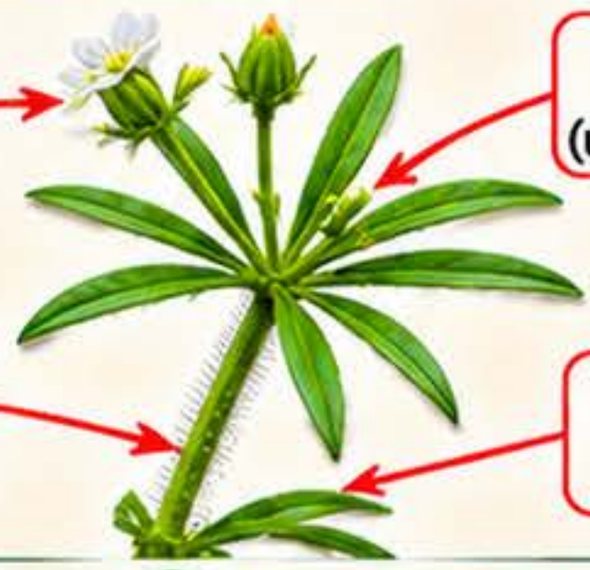






1. **Leaves:** Narrow, pointed leaves (usually 6–8) in a whorl around the stem.
2. **Stem:** Slender, green and covered in tiny, hooked hairs that cling to clothing and hair.
3. **Flowers:** Small, white, four-petalled flowers in loose clusters (May to September).

Key Features



Where and When to Find It



- Common throughout the UK.
- Grows in hedgerows, woodland edges, field margins and gardens.
- Best foraging time: Spring to early autumn (young, tender growth is best).

Edible Parts and Uses





Leaves and young shoots – can be eaten raw in salads or added to soups and stews.

Cleavers tea – a traditional spring detox tea, made from fresh or dried leaves.

Other uses – can also be added to smoothies or used as a mild, foraged vegetable.

Nutritional Benefits

- A good source of vitamin C and beta-carotene (provitamin A).
- Contains minerals including potassium, calcium and iron.
- Traditionally used to support the body's natural detox processes.
- A refreshing, seasonal wild food that is easy to find.



Simple Recipe: Cleavers Tea

Ingredients (1 mug)

- A large handful of fresh cleavers (leaves and shoots)
- 250 ml of boiling water
- Optional: a slice of lemon or honey to taste

Method

1. Rinse the cleavers to remove dirt and insects.
2. Roughly chop the leaves and shoots.
3. Place in a mug and pour over boiling water.
4. Cover and steep for 5–10 minutes, then strain and enjoy.

Remember: Always be 100% sure of your identification. Pick from clean, unpolluted areas, and only take what you need, leaving plenty for wildlife.

Identify | Forage | Cook | Stay Safe | Respect Nature

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Common Edible Flowers

Many wild flowers are edible and can add colour, flavour and nutrition to meals, salads, drinks and desserts. Always be 100% sure of your identification before using any flower.



Key Points

- Only use flowers you can identify with confidence.
- Pick from clean, unpolluted areas.
- Use flowers that are fresh and untreated (no pesticides).
- Take only a small amount and leave plenty for wildlife.

Common Edible Flowers



Elderflower
Sweet, floral flavour. Great for cordial, tea and syrup.



Dandelion
Mild, honey-like taste. Use petals in salads, teas and baking.



Daisy
Mild and slightly nutty. Adds colour and crunch to salads.



Violet
Sweet and fragrant. Good in salads, drinks and desserts.



Red Clover
Mild and sweet. Use fresh in salads or dried for tea.



Primrose
Delicate and slightly sweet. A colourful edible garnish.

Identification Tips







- Look at the flower shape, number of petals and colour.
- Check the leaves, stem and overall plant features.
- Use the plant's habitat (woodland, hedgerow, meadow) to help confirm identification.

Poisonous Lookalikes

Some edible flowers have toxic lookalikes. Always check key identification features.



Foxglove (Poisonous)



Lily of the Valley (Poisonous)



Buttercup (Irritant)

Harvesting and Use



- Pick flowers on a dry day (ideally in the morning).
- Use only the petals or flower heads (as suggested for the plant).
- Rinse gently in clean, cold water.
- Use fresh in salads, or dry for later use in teas and cooking.



Simple Recipe: Elderflower Cordial

Ingredients (makes about 1 litre)

- 10–12 elderflower heads (fully open, clean and fresh)
- 1 litre of water
- 500 g sugar
- 1 lemon (sliced)

Method

1. Gently shake the elderflower heads to remove insects (do not wash).
2. Place in a large bowl with the sliced lemon.
3. Pour over 1 litre of boiling water and cover.
4. Leave to infuse for 24 hours, then strain through a clean cloth.
5. Add the sugar, stir until dissolved, and bottle. Keep in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

Remember: Not all flowers are edible. Always be 100% sure of your identification, check for lookalikes and only take a small amount, leaving plenty for wildlife.

Identify | Forage | Cook | Stay Safe | Respect Nature

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Elderflower (Sambucus nigra)

Elderflower (*Sambucus nigra*) is a common British shrub with fragrant, creamy white flowers. The flowers are edible and can be used to make drinks, cordials, syrups, and desserts.



Key Facts

- **Common name:** Elderflower
- **Scientific name:** Sambucus nigra
- **Family:** Adoxaceae
- **Height:** 2–6 m (a large shrub)
- **Season:** Flowers: May to July
  Berries: August to October (cooked only)
- **Habitat:** Hedges, woodland edges, fields, gardens and along lanes.

Identification







1. **Leaves:** Opposite, compound leaves with 5–7 serrated leaflets.
2. **Flowers:** Creamy white, fragrant clusters (flowerheads) 10–25 cm across.
3. **Berries:** Small, shiny, purple-black berries in drooping clusters (only eat when cooked).

Key Features



Where and When to Find It



- Common across the UK.
- Found in hedgerows, woodland edges, fields, waste ground and gardens.
- Flowers from May to July.
- Berries ripen from August to October (only eat when cooked).

Edible Parts and Uses



Flowers – edible and used to make cordial, tea, syrup, fritters and desserts.



Berries – can be used for jams, jellies and syrups, but must always be cooked.



Other uses – a refreshing tea and a great natural flavouring for drinks and outdoor cooking.

Nutritional Benefits

- A good source of vitamin C.
- Contains antioxidants (plant compounds that support good health).
- Traditionally used to help support the immune system.
- A natural, seasonal ingredient with a fresh, floral flavour.



Simple Recipe: Elderflower Cordial

Ingredients (makes approx. 1.5 litres)

- 10–12 fresh elderflower heads (fully open and clean)
- 1.5 litres of water
- 1 kg of sugar
- 2 lemons (sliced)

Method

1. Gently shake the flower heads to remove insects (do not wash).
2. Add the flowers, sliced lemons and water to a large pan.
3. Bring to the boil, then remove from the heat and cover. Leave to infuse for 24 hours.
4. Strain through a clean cloth or sieve, add the sugar and stir until dissolved.
5. Pour into sterilised bottles and store in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

Remember: Only use flowers you can identify with 100% certainty. Do not eat the berries raw, as they can cause stomach upset. Always pick from clean, unpolluted areas.

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Common Edible Berries

Many wild berries in the UK are edible and packed with flavour, vitamins and antioxidants. They can be eaten fresh, used in cooking, or turned into jams, jellies and syrups.



Key Facts

- Pick only berries you can identify with 100% confidence.
- Choose clean, unpolluted locations (away from roads and dog-walking areas).
- Only take a small amount and leave plenty for wildlife.
- Some berries are poisonous, so always check for lookalikes.

Common Edible Berries



Blackberry
(*Rubus fruticosus*)
Juicy, sweet and very common in hedgerows.



Raspberry
(*Rubus idaeus*)
Soft, sweet berries found in woods, hedges and clearings.



Bilberry
(*Vaccinium myrtillus*)
Small, dark blue berries (blue-staining) found on heathland and in woodland.



Wild Strawberry
(*Fragaria vesca*)
Small, sweet and fragrant berries in woodland and grassland.



Sloe
(*Prunus spinosa*)
Tart, dark berries on blackthorn shrubs (common in hedges).



Hawthorn Berry
(*Crataegus monogyna*)
Bright red berries in autumn, often used to make jelly or syrup.

Identification Tips







- Look at the leaves (shape, edge and arrangement).
- Check the flowers (colour, number of petals and time of year).
- Note the plant's habitat, height and features (e.g. thorns on blackthorn and bramble).

When and Where to Find Them



- Found in hedgerows, woodland, clearings and along field edges.
- Different berries ripen at different times from late summer to autumn.
- Look for healthy plants in clean, natural areas away from roads and pollution.

Edible Uses



Eat fresh – a tasty and nutritious wild snack.



Make jam or jelly – a classic way to preserve your harvest.



Make drinks – use berries in cordials, teas or syrups.

Poisonous Lookalikes

Some berries are poisonous and can be easily confused with edible ones. Always check the whole plant, not just the berry.



Deadly Nightshade
(Poisonous)



Lords and Ladies
(Poisonous)



Yew
(Poisonous)



Simple Recipe: Wild Berry Camp Drink

Ingredients (serves 4)

- A handful of mixed wild berries (e.g. blackberry, raspberry, bilberry)
- 1 litre of water
- 1–2 tbsp sugar or honey (optional)

Method

1. Rinse the berries and place in a pan with the water.
2. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 10 minutes.
3. Strain through a clean cloth or sieve.
4. Sweeten to taste and enjoy hot or cold.

Remember: Only eat berries you can identify with 100% certainty. Never eat unknown berries, and be aware of poisonous lookalikes.

Identify | Forage | Cook | Stay Safe | Respect Nature

Scouts Bushcraft

Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts

Blackberry and Raspberry

Blackberries (*Rubus fruticosus*) and raspberries (*Rubus idaeus*) are common, edible wild berries in the UK. They grow on prickly shrubs (brambles) and are packed with flavour, vitamins and antioxidants.



Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*)



Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*)

Key Facts

Blackberry

- **Family:** Rosaceae
- **Height:** Up to 3 m (scrambling shrub)
- **Fruit:** Black, glossy berries (Aug–Oct)
- **Habitat:** Hedges, woodland edges, clearings and waste ground

Raspberry

- **Family:** Rosaceae
- **Height:** Up to 2.5 m
- **Fruit:** Red, hollow berries (Jul–Sept)
- **Habitat:** Woodland, hedges, clearings and sunny banks

Identification



Blackberry (*Rubus fruticosus*)

- White or pale pink flowers (Jun–Aug).
- Large, glossy black fruit made of many small drupelets.
- Arching, prickly stems (brambles) that can form dense thickets.



Raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*)

- White flowers (May–Jul).
- Red, soft, hollow berries that lift easily from the plant.
- Upright or arching canes with smaller, softer prickles than blackberry.

Key Features

Blackberry



- Larger, darker berries.
- Flowers usually white or pale pink.
- Tough, arching, prickly stems.
- Fruit from August to October.

Raspberry



- Bright red, hollow berries.
- White flowers.
- More upright canes with softer prickles.
- Fruit from July to September.

Lookalikes and Safety



Blackberries and raspberries are usually easy to identify, but always check the whole plant. Avoid eating berries you cannot identify with 100% certainty. Be aware of poisonous plants such as **Deadly Nightshade**, which has smooth, shiny berries (not in blackberry clusters).

Where and When to Find Them



- Common across the UK.
- Found in hedgerows, woodland edges, clearings and along paths.
- **Blackberries:** August to October.
- **Raspberries:** July to September.

Edible Uses



- Eat fresh as a healthy snack.
- Make into jam, jelly or syrup.
- Add to porridge, pancakes or camp baking.
- Use in desserts such as crumbles and cobblers.
- Blend into smoothies or fruit drinks.



Simple Recipe: Campfire Berry Crumble

Ingredients (serves 4)

- 400 g mixed wild berries (blackberry and raspberry)
- 100 g plain flour
- 100 g oats
- 50 g brown sugar
- 50 g butter (or dairy-free alternative)

Method

1. Place the berries in a camp oven or a foil dish.
2. In a bowl, mix the flour, oats and sugar.
3. Rub in the butter until it looks like coarse crumbs.
4. Sprinkle the crumb mixture over the berries.
5. Cook over gentle coals for 15–20 minutes until golden and bubbling.

Remember: Only pick berries from clean, unpolluted areas and away from busy roads and farms. Leave plenty for wildlife and always forage responsibly.

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Scouts Bushcraft

Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts

Hawthorn and Rosehips

Hawthorn and rosehips are common, wildlife-friendly plants in the UK. Both produce edible berries that can be used to make teas, jellies, syrups and fruit leathers.



Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)



Rosehip (*Rosa canina*)

Key Facts

Hawthorn

- **Family:** Rosaceae
- **Height:** Up to 10 m (a shrub or tree)
- **Fruit:** Red berries (haws) Aug–Nov
- **Habitat:** Hedges, woodland edges, fields and along lanes

Rosehip

- **Family:** Rosaceae
- **Height:** 1–3 m (prickly shrub)
- **Fruit:** Orange-red hip fruits Sep–Dec
- **Habitat:** Hedges, scrub, woodland edges and coastal areas

Identification

Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)



- **Flowers:** Small, white, 5-petalled flowers in dense clusters (May–June).
- **Leaves:** Deeply lobed, with 3–7 rounded lobes.
- **Stems:** Thorny branches.
- **Fruit:** Small, round red berries (haws) with a single seed (Aug–Nov).

Rosehip (*Rosa canina*)



- **Flowers:** Pale pink (sometimes white), 5-petalled with a yellow centre (June–July).
- **Leaves:** Compound leaves with 5–7 serrated leaflets.
- **Stems:** Arching, prickly stems.
- **Fruit:** Oval, orange-red 'hips' with a dried flower end (Sep–Dec).

Key Features

Hawthorn

- White flowers in spring.
- Lobed leaves.
- Sharp thorns.
- Red haws in autumn.

Rosehip

- Pink wild rose flowers in summer.
- Serrated leaflets (5–7 per leaf).
- Prickly stems.
- Orange-red hips in autumn.



Lookalikes and Safety



Yew (Poisonous)

- Red berries with a hole at the end. Grows on an evergreen tree.
- All parts (except the red flesh around the seed) are highly poisonous.
- Not a lookalike for hawthorn or rosehip, but often seen in the same areas.

Where and When to Find Them



- Common across the UK.
- Found in hedgerows, woodland edges, fields and scrub.
- **Hawthorn** haws: Aug–Nov.
- **Rosehips:** Sep–Dec.
- Both are valuable for wildlife, especially birds in winter.

Edible Uses



- Make a vitamin-rich tea (especially rosehips).
- Use in jams, jellies and syrups.
- Add to fruit leathers or camp snacks.
- Both are high in vitamin C (rosehips are especially rich).



Simple Recipe: Hawthorn & Rosehip Tea

Ingredients (serves 2)

- 1 handful of hawthorn haws (fresh or dried)
- 1 handful of rosehips (halved)
- 500 ml of water
- Optional: honey to taste

Method

1. Rinse the haws and rosehips.
2. Lightly crush the rosehips to help release the flavour.
3. Add to a pot with the water and bring to the boil.
4. Simmer gently for 10–15 minutes.
5. Strain, sweeten if liked, and enjoy hot or cold.

Remember: Only use plants you can identify with 100% certainty. Always harvest responsibly, take a small amount, and leave plenty for wildlife.

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Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts

Seasonal Foraging Calendar

A simple guide to what you can look for and forage in the UK throughout the year.
Always be 100% sure of your identification and follow the Scout values of safety, respect for nature and responsible foraging.

Spring (Mar – May)

Fresh shoots, young leaves and early flowers.

- ☑ Wild garlic (ramsons)
- ☑ Nettles (young tops)
- ☑ Chickweed
- ☑ Dandelion (leaves & flowers)
- ☑ Primrose (flowers)
- ☑ Violet (flowers & leaves)
- ☑ Cleavers (young shoots)
- ☑ Elderflower (late spring)


Wild Garlic


Nettle (young)

Summer (Jun – Aug)

A time of abundance with flowers, berries and herbs.

- ☑ Elderflower (flowers)
- ☑ Blackberry (early)
- ☑ Raspberry
- ☑ Bilberry
- ☑ Wild strawberry
- ☑ Meadowsweet (flowers)
- ☑ Rose (rose petals)
- Herbs (e.g. mint, thyme)


Elderflower


Raspberry



Autumn (Sep – Nov)

Berries, nuts, seeds and late fruits.

- ☑ Blackberry (main crop)
- ☑ Sloe (for busy/for gin)
- ☑ Hawthorn berry (haws)
- ☑ Rosehip
- ☑ Elderberry (cooked only)
- ☑ Crab apple
- ☑ Hazelnuts
- ☑ Stinging nettle seeds
- ☑ Seed heads (e.g. dandelion)


Sloe


Hawthorn Berry

Winter (Dec – Feb)

Fewer plants, but still useful and nutritious finds.

- ☑ Rosehip (vitamin-rich)
- ☑ Hawthorn (remaining berries)
- ☑ Sloe (after first frost – sweeter)
- ☑ Nuts (e.g. hazelnut, beech)
- ☑ Evergreen herbs (e.g. rosemary, thyme)
- ☑ Lichen (for survival study)
- ☑ Bark (e.g. willow, for tea)


Rosehip


Hazelnut

Key

How to use this calendar:

- ☑ The months are a general guide for the UK (timings can vary by location and weather).
- ☑ Many plants have more than one use (e.g. leaves, flowers and berries).
- ☑ Always check local guidance and follow the Scout's values and POR.



Foraging Tips

- ☑ Learn to identify a few common, local plants first.
- ☑ Use a reliable field guide.
- ☑ Pick from clean, unpolluted areas (away from roads and dog-walking areas).
- ☑ Take only a small amount, leaving plenty for wildlife.
- ☑ Be aware of seasonal lookalikes and poisonous plants.

Responsible Foraging

- ☑ Respect wildlife and habitats.
- ☑ Take only what you need.
- ☑ Avoid rare or protected plants.
- ☑ Leave enough for the plant to regrow.
- ☑ Follow the Countryside Code.
- ☑ Forage safely, sustainably and legally.

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Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts

Sustainable Foraging

Foraging is a great way to connect with nature, learn useful outdoor skills and find wild food. It's important to gather responsibly so plants, wildlife and habitats are protected for the future.



Key Principles

- **Be certain** – only pick what you can identify with 100% confidence.
- **Be selective** – take a small amount and leave plenty for wildlife and regrowth.
- **Be respectful** – follow the Countryside Code and local guidance.
- **Be aware** – check for protected or rare species and avoid them.
- **Be safe** – pick from clean, unpolluted areas away from roads, farms and dog-walking routes.

The Foraging Code

- Take only what you need.
- Leave enough for plants to regrow and for wildlife to feed on.
- Pick from abundant, common species (e.g. nettle, dandelion, blackberry).
- Avoid over-picking from one area.
- Do not damage or pull up whole plants unless needed (e.g. wild garlic bulbs – avoid).
- Follow the Country Code and any local site rules or landowner permissions.

Good Practice in the Field



Pick carefully and gently to avoid damaging the plant.



Take a small amount from each plant, not the whole flower head.



Use scissors or knife for a clean cut, especially with herbs and young shoots.

Avoid



- Do not uproot whole plants.
- Do not strip a plant of all its leaves, flowers or fruit.
- Do not forage in protected sites without permission.

Do



- Take a small amount from several plants.
- Pick young, healthy parts (e.g. leaves, shoots, flowers).
- Leave plenty for wildlife (e.g. berries and seeds).
- Check the law and local guidelines before foraging.

Wildlife and Habitats



- Many wild plants are an important food source for birds, insects and mammals.
- Berries and seeds help wildlife through autumn and winter.
- Flowers provide nectar for bees and other pollinators.

Replant and Regrow



- Pick from established, healthy areas.
- Allow time for plants to recover.
- Leave some flowers and berries to set seed.
- Help nature by avoiding damage to roots and young growth.

Useful Tips

- Learn to identify a few common, abundant plants first.
- Forage with a buddy or Scout leader, especially when learning.
- Carry a small pouch, basket or container (not a plastic bag).
- Wash and prepare your finds carefully before eating.

Remember: Forage responsibly, be certain of your identification, and always leave the environment in a good condition for others to enjoy.

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Scouts Bushcraft

Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts

Preparing and Cleaning Wild Foods

Once you have foraged your wild plants, berries or flowers, it's important to clean, prepare and store them properly. This removes dirt and insects, keeps food safe, and helps you get the best flavour and nutrition.



Key Steps at a Glance

- **Sort** – remove any damaged or unsuitable parts.
- **Clean** – wash gently in clean, cold water.
- **Prepare** – trim, chop or remove tough parts.
- **Store** – keep cool and use within a few days (or preserve for longer).
- **Cook or Eat** – enjoy safely in your camp meals and recipes.

Step-by-Step Preparation

1 Sort



Check your harvest and remove any damaged, mouldy or unripe parts. Only keep clean, healthy material.

2 Clean



Rinse in clean, cold water to remove dirt, grit and insects. Use a bowl or colander.

3 Prepare



Trim off tough stems, thorns or spoiled parts. Chop leaves, herbs or soft shoots into smaller pieces if needed.

4 Check



Look for any insects and remove them. **Double-check** your identification before using the plant.

5 Use or Store



Use fresh, cook, or preserve (e.g. dry, freeze, make jam, jelly or cordial) depending on the plant and season.

Preparation by Food Type



Leaves and Shoots

- Wash well to remove dirt and insects.
- Use young, tender leaves where possible.
- Blanch tougher leaves (e.g. nettle) in hot water for 1–2 minutes.



Berries and Fruits

- Gently rinse and pick over for debris.
- Remove stalks, leaves and any unripe fruit.
- Use fresh, or make into jam, jelly, syrup or a camp dessert.



Flowers

- Pick on a dry day when fully open.
- Shake gently to remove insects (don't soak).
- Use fresh in drinks and salads, or dry for later use (e.g. elderflower tea).

Storing Your Foraged Food



Short term: Keep in a cool, shaded place and use within 1–3 days.



Preserve: Make jam, jelly, cordial, chutney or dry herbs and flowers.



Freeze: Berries can be frozen in a sealed container for later use.

Food Safety

- Be 100% sure of your identification before eating.
- Only use clean, healthy plants from unpolluted areas.
- Avoid plants near roads, farms, or where chemicals may have been used.
- If you are unsure, don't eat it.
- Some wild foods (e.g. nettles) need to be cooked first.

Camp Cooking Tip



Many wild plants, such as nettles and wild garlic, are great in simple camp dishes like soups, stews and omelettes.

Key Tips for Success

- Use clean equipment and containers.
- Keep plants cool and shaded in the field.
- Prepare food soon after foraging.
- Learn a few simple preservation methods.
- Share what you find and enjoy it as part of your camp cooking.

Remember: Only eat wild plants you can identify with 100% certainty. If in doubt, leave it out!

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Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts

Simple Bushcraft Foraging Recipes

Turn your foraging finds into tasty, simple and traditional outdoor recipes. These ideas use common edible wild plants found in the UK and can be cooked over a campfire or on a stove.



Before You Cook

- [x] Only use plants you can identify with 100% certainty.
- [x] Pick from clean, unpolluted areas.
- [x] Wash and prepare your ingredients well.
- [x] Use simple, fresh ingredients.
- [x] Check for allergies and dietary needs.
- [x] Cook food thoroughly and eat it while fresh.

Wild Garlic Pesto



Ingredients

- 2 large handfuls wild garlic leaves
- 50 g nuts (e.g. pine nuts or sunflower seeds)
- 50 g hard cheese (optional)
- 100 ml olive oil
- Pinch of salt

Method

1. Wash and roughly chop the wild garlic leaves.
2. Blend or crush with nuts, cheese, oil and salt.
3. Use as a spread, with pasta or on camp bread.

Elderflower Cordial



Ingredients

- 10–12 elderflower heads (fresh and clean)
- 1 litre water
- 1 kg sugar
- 2 lemons (juice and zest)

Method

1. Shake the flowers to remove insects (don't wash).
2. Add flowers, lemon and water to a large pan, bring to the boil.
3. Remove from heat, cover and leave for 24 hours.
4. Strain, add sugar, stir until dissolved and bottle.

Campfire Berry Crumble



Ingredients

- 2–3 handfuls wild berries (e.g. blackberry, raspberry)
- 100 g plain flour
- 50 g oats
- 50 g brown sugar
- 50 g butter (or dairy-free)

Method

1. Place the berries in a fireproof dish or pan.
2. Rub flour, oats, sugar and butter together until crumbly.
3. Sprinkle over the berries and cook on the campfire (15–20 minutes) until golden and bubbling.

Nettle and Wild Herb Soup



Ingredients

- A large handful of young nettles (top leaves only)
- A handful of wild greens (e.g. chickweed or cleavers)
- 1 onion (optional)
- 1 potato (optional)
- 500 ml stock or water
- Salt and pepper

Method

1. Wash the nettles and wild greens and chop roughly.
2. Gently cook chopped onion and potato (if using) in a pan.
3. Add greens and stock, simmer for 10–15 minutes.
4. Blend (if you can) or leave chunky, then season to taste.

Dandelion Fritters



Ingredients

- A handful of dandelion flowers (petals only)
- 100 g plain flour
- 1 egg
- 100 ml milk (or water)
- Pinch of salt
- Oil for cooking

Method

1. Remove the green bases and keep the yellow petals.
2. Make a simple batter with flour, egg, milk and salt.
3. Stir in the petals, then fry small spoonfuls in a pan until golden on both sides.

Rosehip Tea



Ingredients

- A handful of ripe rosehips (soft, red and firm)
- 500 ml water
- Honey (optional)

Method

1. Rinse the rosehips and remove the dried ends.
2. Lightly crush them to help release the flavour.
3. Simmer in water for 10–15 minutes, then strain.
4. Sweeten with honey if you like and enjoy warm.

Remember: Only use plants you can identify with 100% certainty, forage responsibly and always follow food safety good practice.

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A Practical Guide for Scouts

Making Wild Drinks and Teas

Wild plants can be used to make tasty, healthy and refreshing drinks. Many leaves, flowers and berries make great teas, cordials and simple camp drinks.



Key Points

- Only use plants you can identify with 100% certainty.
- Pick from clean, unpolluted areas.
- Wash and prepare your ingredients.
- Use fresh or dried plant parts.
- Follow simple, safe methods.
- Sweeten with honey if needed.
- Enjoy hot or cold, and share with your group.

Common Wild Drinks



Elderflower Cordial



Nettle Tea



Rosehip Tea



Wild Berry Drink

Other Great Ingredients

- Wild garlic leaves (mild, savoury tea)
- Dandelion flowers (light, honey-like tea)
- Meadowsweet flowers (sweet, relaxing tea)
- Mint (wild or garden) (fresh, cooling tea)
- Thyme (wild) (herbal, warming tea)
- Lemon balm (citrus, calming tea)

Elderflower Cordial



Ingredients

- 10–12 elderflower heads (fresh and clean)
- 1 litre water
- 1 kg sugar
- 2 lemons (juice and zest)

Method

1. Shake the flowers gently to remove insects.
2. Add flowers, lemon and water to a pan and bring to the boil.
3. Remove from the heat, cover and leave for 24 hours.
4. Strain, add sugar, stir until dissolved and bottle.

Nettle Tea



Ingredients

- A handful of young nettle tops (fresh)
- 500 ml water
- Honey (optional)

Method

1. Wash the nettle tops and chop roughly.
2. Add to a pan with water and bring to a gentle boil.
3. Simmer for 5–10 minutes, then strain.
4. Sweeten with honey if you like and enjoy warm.

Wild Berry Drink



Ingredients

- A handful of mixed wild berries (e.g. blackberry, raspberry, bilberry)
- 500 ml water
- Honey or sugar (optional)

Method

1. Rinse the berries and remove any bad ones.
2. Add to a pan with water and gently simmer for 10–15 minutes.
3. Mash the berries slightly to release the flavour.
4. Strain, sweeten to taste and serve hot or cold.

Rosehip Tea



Ingredients

- A handful of ripe rosehips (soft, red and firm)
- 500 ml water
- Honey (optional)

Method

1. Rinse the rosehips and remove the dried ends.
2. Lightly crush them to help release the flavour.
3. Simmer in water for 10–15 minutes, then strain.
4. Sweeten with honey if you like and enjoy warm.

Top Tips for Great Teas

- Use young, fresh growth where possible.
- Try different combinations (e.g. nettle and mint).
- Make small batches to test the flavour.
- Let drinks cool and store in clean bottles or flasks.
- Label and date any cordials or infusions.

Remember: Only use plants you can identify with 100% certainty, and always follow good food hygiene and safety practices.

Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts

Foraging Identification Challenge

Put your foraging skills to the test! Use your knowledge from this book to identify common wild plants, leaves, flowers and fruits. Work on your own or in a small team and see how many you can get right.



The Challenge

- ☑ Identify the plants, leaves and berries shown below.
- ☑ Use a real plant (where safe and legal) or a field guide to help.
- ☑ Tick the box when you are confident with your answer.
- ☑ Try the extra challenge to test your foraging and bushcraft knowledge.

Plant Identification Quiz

✓ Name each plant and tick the box when correct.

1 

2 

3 

4 

5 

6 

7 

8 

9 

10 

Quick Knowledge Challenge

1. Which plant has stinging hairs? ☐
2. Which flower can be used to make cordial? ☐
3. Which berry is high in vitamin C? ☐
4. Which plant can be used for a simple tea? ☐
5. Which tree has winged seeds (helicopters)? ☐
6. What should you always do before eating any wild plant? ☐

Observation Tasks

- ☑ Find and sketch the leaf of one edible plant.
- ☑ Look closely at a flower and note its key features (e.g. number of petals, colour, shape).
- ☑ Find a berry or fruit (in season) and describe where it is growing (e.g. hedge, woodland, open area).
- ☑ Can you spot any signs of wildlife that use these plants (e.g. insects, birds, droppings)?



Extra Challenge

- ☑ Identify three edible plants from your local area.
- ☑ Find one plant that is not safe to eat and explain why.
- ☑ Describe how you would harvest responsibly.

Self Assessment

How did you do?

- ☐ 8–10 correct: Foraging Expert!
- ☐ 5–7 correct: Good Knowledge!
- ☐ 1–4 correct: Keep Learning!

Remember: Only forage plants you can identify with 100% certainty, follow the Countryside Code and always leave enough for wildlife.

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Foraging and Edible Plants

A Practical Guide for Scouts

Practical Activities and Worksheets

Put your knowledge into practice with these hands-on activities and printable worksheets. They help build identification skills, observation, teamwork and outdoor learning.



Activity Overview

- Practical, fun and safe outdoor learning.
- Build plant identification and observation skills.
- Work as a team and share knowledge.
- Use the worksheets on the following pages.
- Adapt activities to suit your group and location.

Practical Activity Ideas



Plant Treasure Hunt

Find and identify a set number of wild plants (e.g. nettle, dandelion, wild garlic).



Seasonal Forage Walk

Go on a guided walk to spot edible plants, berries and flowers in season.



Campfire Foraging Cook

Use a safe, identified ingredient (e.g. nettles or wild garlic) to make a simple camp snack or tea.



Leaf and Flower Sketch

Choose a plant, sketch its leaf and flower, and add key notes (e.g. shape, edge, colour, smell).

Printable Worksheets



- **Plant Identification Sheet** – record key features (leaf, flower, stem, habitat).
- **Foraging Field Notes** – space for finds, location, date and use.
- **Seasonal Calendar** – tick plants you spot through the year.
- **Quiz Sheet** – test your knowledge of edible and non-edible plants.
- **Observation Log** – record wildlife, habitat and foraging activity.

Group Activities



- **Plant ID Relay** – in teams, identify plants from samples or photos.
- **Foraging Compare** – look at similar plants (e.g. raspberry and blackberry) and note the differences.
- **Habitat Survey** – record where edible plants grow (e.g. woodland, hedgerow, meadow).
- **Wild Food Tasting (Optional)** – try a simple, safe recipe such as wild garlic pesto or elderflower cordial.

Skills and Learning Outcomes

- Recognise and correctly identify common wild plants.
- Understand seasonal availability and habitat.
- Learn safe and sustainable foraging practices.
- Develop teamwork and outdoor observation skills.
- Build confidence in using wild ingredients for simple recipes.

Tips for Leaders



- Print the worksheets before your activity.
- Choose a safe, local site with a variety of plants.
- Check identification with a reliable guide.
- Keep activities flexible to suit your group's age and ability.

Remember: Only use plants you can identify with 100% certainty, follow the Countryside Code and always leave enough for wildlife.

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Foraging Knowledge Test

Test Your Knowledge – Be Bushcraft Ready!

Plant Identification • Safety • UK Foraging Rules

A. Plant Identification (1 mark each)

1. Name this plant?



A. Nettle
B. Dock
C. Plantain

2. Name this plant?



A. Dandelion
B. Buttercup
C. Daisy

3. Name this berry?



A. Blackberry
B. Raspberry
C. Strawberry

4. Name this flower?



A. Elderflower
B. Hawthorn
C. Rose

B. Safety and Rules (1 mark each)

5. What is the minimum distance for tomahawk throwing?

A. 2m B. 3m C. 4m

6. What should you do if you are unsure about a plant?

A. Eat it anyway
B. Ask an expert
C. Try a small bite

7. Why should you leave some berries for wildlife?

A. It helps nature
B. They taste better
C. It is a rule

8. Which plants are poisonous lookalikes?

A. Hogweed
B. Yew
C. Both A & B

C. UK Foraging Knowledge (1 mark each)

9. When can you find wild garlic?



A. Spring
B. Summer
C. Winter

10. Which month is best for elderberries?



A. June
B. August
C. October

11. What is a good foraging tip?

A. Take as much as you like
B. Take only what you need
C. Pull up the whole plant

12. Name one edible wild herb.

.....

D. Short Answer (2 marks each)

13. Name two signs that a plant is safe to eat.

1. .....
2. .....

14. Why is it important to wash wild foods?

.....

.....

15. Give one rule for sustainable foraging.

.....

E. Practical Skills (2 marks each)

16. Describe the correct way to prepare and cook wild berries.

.....

.....

17. Name one method to preserve wild fruits and berries.

.....



F. Multiple Choice (1 mark each)

18. Which tree has acorns?

A. Oak B. Beech C. Birch

19. Rosehips are from which plant?

A. Hawthorn B. Oak C. Elder

20. What is the main aim of foraging?

A. To harm nature
B. To enjoy and learn
C. To take everything

Your Score

Total: ____ / 20

Score Guide

16–20 Excellent! You are a Foraging Expert!
11–15 Good! Keep learning!
6–10 Keep practising!
0–5 Review the information.

Key Takeaways

- Know your plants.
- Take only what you need.
- Respect wildlife.
- Follow the rules.
- Enjoy the outdoors safely.

Remember: Always be safe, leave no trace, and enjoy the natural world!

Scouts Bushcraft

Bushcraft Skills, Resources and Practical Guides for Scouts

The **Scouts Bushcraft** book series provides practical, easy-to-follow guides to help Scouts, Explorer Scouts, Scout Leaders and other youth groups learn outdoor skills, develop confidence, work as a team and build a greater understanding and respect for the natural world.

In This Series

- Expert, practical guidance
- Step-by-step activities
- Useful tips and techniques
- Printable worksheets and resources
- Ideas for meetings, activity days and camps
- Supports safe, responsible and sustainable use of the outdoors



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Plant Identification Sheet

Use your eyes, a reliable field guide and several identifying features. Record observations only—do not taste or collect unknown plants.

Scout / group: _____	**Date:** _____	**Site / area:** _____

1. Plant observations

Feature	What can you observe?	Notes / sketch reference

2. Draw the plant

3. Identification check

Check	Yes / No / Unsure

Check: leaf shape and arrangement • stem • flower or fruit • habitat • season • possible poisonous lookalikes.

Safety: A worksheet entry is not proof that a plant is edible. Never taste a plant to identify it. Only a suitably competent person can confirm an identification for any later food use.

Foraging Field Notes

A record of what you noticed on your walk. Leave plants where they grow unless your leader has specifically authorised an activity.

Scout: _____	**Date / time:** _____	**Weather:** _____

Find no.	Plant / tentative name	Location / habitat	Season / date	Observations

Field reflection

What features did you notice?	
What might help confirm the identification?	
Did you see any wildlife using this plant?	
How did you avoid damaging the habitat?	

Remember: record uncertainty honestly. Write “unknown” if you cannot identify a plant confidently.

Seasonal Foraging Calendar

Use this page to record when plants are seen locally. Seasons vary with weather, location and habitat.

Season	Plants to look for (examples only)	My local observations / dates
Spring	Nettle shoots, chickweed, dandelion leaves and flowers; wild garlic where correctly identified.	
Summer	Elderflower, blackberries as they ripen, raspberries and wild strawberries.	
Autumn	Blackberries, rosehips, sloes, hazelnuts and properly identified elderberries.	
Winter	Observe evergreen plants, seed heads and remaining fruits; many plants are dormant.	

My seasonal sightings

Date	Plant observed	Habitat	What was happening? (flowering / fruiting / dormant)

Date	Plant observed	Habitat	What was happening? (flowering / fruiting / dormant)

Seasonal reminder

A plant appearing in a seasonal calendar is not automatically safe to eat. Confirm the exact species and edible part, check current local guidance, and leave protected or uncertain plants untouched.

Foraging Knowledge Quiz

Answer the questions. Use your book and field notes to help you revise.

Name: _____	Group: _____	Date: _____

1. What should you do if you cannot identify a plant with certainty?

A. Taste a tiny piece

B. Leave it alone

C. Ask a friend to taste it

2. Name two features that help identify a plant.

1. _____

2. _____

3. Why should you avoid gathering plants beside busy roads or sprayed fields?

_____

4. Which plant is well known for stinging hairs?

A. Nettle

B. Dandelion

C. Blackberry

5. Give one reason to leave plenty of berries on a bush.

_____

6. What should you check before gathering anything?

A. Permission and local rules

B. The plant's colour only

C. Whether it smells nice

7. Why is smell alone not enough to identify wild garlic?

_____

8. Name one way to record observations without picking a plant.

_____

9. What should you do if someone may have swallowed an unknown plant?

_____

10. Give two ways to forage responsibly.

1. _____

2. _____

Score: _____ / 10 One thing I learned:

_____

Safety rule: never taste an unknown plant. If ingestion is suspected, seek urgent medical advice; call 999 for severe symptoms.

Nature and Habitat Observation Log

Foraging is also about noticing how plants support wildlife and fit into their habitat.

Scout: _____	**Date:** _____	**Location:** _____

Observation	What did you see?	Evidence / notes

Habitat sketch

Reflection

How do plants provide food or shelter for wildlife?	
What signs showed that wildlife had used this area?	
What could people do to protect this habitat?	

Leave no trace: do not uproot plants, damage habitats, disturb nests or take more than is permitted.