



Tips for Safely Savoring Wild Edible Plants

- ◆ Do not consume anything you have foraged until you are 100% sure of the species
 - ◆ Take your time and pay attention
 - ◆ Be aware of toxic look-alikes
 - ◆ Start with a mentor or guide to teach you about edible plants
 - ◆ Only eat ripe, in-season plants
- ◆ Take note of subtle differences – whether it is an extra petal on a flower or a strangely toothed leaf, you might not be looking at the plant you thought you were!
 - ◆ Get a thorough and reliable field guide for identification – or two!
 - ◆ Be aware of the common toxic plants in your area
 - ◆ As always, it is unwise to try anything new during pregnancy
- ◆ Do not forage near major roadsides, “perfect” lawns, or railroad tracks – these lands are often sprayed with pesticides and fertilizers or contaminated with gasoline (YUCK!!)
- ◆ Be careful not to trespass – landowners may not want you foraging on their property
- ◆ Beware of animal droppings or urine – if something is visibly contaminated, leave it alone
- ◆ Be aware of where you put your hands – things like thorns and insect bites can harm you!
- ◆ Wild, naturally occurring fungi and bacteria can still harm you. If you see a plant that has spots, foam, or is fuzzy, it could be anything from frog eggs to dangerous fungus. Let it be!
- ◆ Have fun!! Foraging is a great way to enjoy nature and appreciate what it can provide.

Toxicity, Allergens, Look-Alikes, and More

Toxicity: Poison Ivy



This plant causes itching, burning, and painful irritation of the areas of the skin with which it comes into contact. It appears as a trailing or climbing vine or a low shrub and has aerial roots that look like hairs along its stem. It grows almond shaped leaves that contain anywhere from no teeth to multiple teeth on its edges. Leaves turn bright red or orange in the fall.

A Word about Mushrooms

- ◆ Mushrooms are extremely hard to identify.
- ◆ Safe varieties of this fungus often have deadly look-alikes.
- ◆ **Do not forage for these unless you are an experienced mycologist.**
- ◆ Do not eat mushrooms in the field –take them home and be sure of your identification first!



Jack-o-lantern mushrooms –
toxic



Chanterelle mushrooms –
non-toxic



Poison Hemlock - toxic



Queen Anne's Lace –non-toxic

Look-Alikes

- ◆ Many non-toxic plants have extremely toxic look-alikes. Poison Hemlock is deadly to most mammals, including humans, even in small quantities.
- ◆ When identifying a plant, look at many characteristics to ensure you have identified it correctly.

Allergens

- ◆ Common Ragweed, though not edible, provokes serious seasonal allergies in many.
- ◆ Strong allergies to certain plants may extend into allergies to related herbs –allergies to ragweed often extend into allergies to chamomile.
- ◆ Be aware of personal reactions to plants as you forage.

