

Foraging – The etiquette!

The New Zealand wilderness is a very special place and we are very lucky to be able to get out amongst it and forage its bounty! NZChefs wants you to care for the environment and be safe out there.



Following are some best practice tips on foraging responsibly, sustainably and safely

- Rule number one! If in doubt, even a slight doubt, **do not** eat it.
- If you have never been foraging before, it is best to go with someone who has experience in foraging. This gives you safety in numbers and more eyes to identify something edible (or not).
- Always get permission from landowners and or a land manager before foraging. (Including doc and local Iwi and Hapu)
- Do not forage from anywhere smelly or toxic, e.g. busy roadsides where there may have been spraying, or contamination from vehicles.
- Only take what you need! Do not take too much or you wipe out the population – if you do not need it, leave it so it can repopulate for next year.

Try the “rule of thirds.”

Take a third. Leave a third for the next time. Leave a third to allow the species to repopulate or reproduce.

- Abide by national regulations and licensing, e.g. national shellfish or finfish recreational quota limits and New Zealand Game & Bird licenses. If you need a license, get one!
- Take the time, and learn how to accurately identify plants.

Do your research and learn about one species at a time. Know what wild edibles look like at all stages of their growing life – some plants can look the same until they flower, but once they do, it gives you their identity for next year so you can pick it when the plant is at its edible stage (eg, young, leafy, before flowering).

Do not go just by sight – understand the smell and texture of an edible plant so you have multiple points of identification for it.

Know what kind of places plants grow – if you find something similar-looking but growing in the wrong habitat, it can be a warning sign.

Never taste a plant unless you are 100% certain of its identification.

- If foraging in our forests, be mindful of the spread of diseases such as Kauri dieback. We suggest you stay on the beaten tracks.
- Be very careful foraging water plants, liver fluke, even in remote places, can affect especially watercress.
- Do not forage for mushrooms unless you are with someone who is an expert on mushrooms – it is very, very easy to confuse edible with poisonous and identifying fungi is a specialist topic.

