

Last session we looked at Fire Safety & Teepee Fires. This week we're going to utilise those skills and find out more about:

## Foraging, Water Collection & Open Fire Cooking

Young people can often be risk takers for a variety of reasons. Their age and stage of development means that they can be easily distracted, do not recognise danger, and may be more likely to take risks. It is important to have a responsible adult supervising during the fire lighting and cooking time in this session.

**Location:** See Foraging & Water Collection for locations & as before fires should be in Your Garden, or a Beach (below the tide line!)



### What you need:

- Adult Supervision – ask them to join in too!
- Print the booklet OR use some scrap paper to draw and copy things.
- Depending on what you are foraging and what you would like to cook, please see recipes to find out what you will need.
- A clean container to collect water in.

### Aim:

- Be able to risk assess the activity
- Be able to go foraging
- Know about good & bad water collection
- Be able to cook what you forage
- Be able to light a fire

### Activity

- Go and find things you can eat
- Water collection
- Cook one of these:
  - Nettle soup
  - Dandelion or Gorse Flower Tea



## Foraging

Foraging is about more than just trying to find a bit of free food. It's about making a connection to the wild world, reminding us that all foods begin with growing things, nurtured by soil, sunlight and water.

There is a no more direct connection between our plates and the natural world. Collecting wild plants for food is a very rewarding activity.

**Location** – it is amazing what you can find in your local area, at the side of roads, in the woods or parks and not to forget your own back garden!

### **Forage Responsibly:**

Know what you are picking – use a foraging app like ... or get a handy pocket size book to take on walks.

Only collect from a plentiful supply and leave plenty behind for regeneration and wildlife. Never harm or remove whole plants, this is against the law! (Wildlife Act 1990)

Where possible, avoid collecting plants, berries and nuts from the edges of paths at dog-pee height, and always make sure you wash or freeze what you find to kill-off any bacteria.

If you are foraging on private land always seek permission from the landowner, and forage for personal use only. Find out if the land you are on is a nature reserve or has any protected species.

**Can you think of three types of food you could forage for?**



## Here are 3 common plants you will be able to find right now!

### Dandelions

Dandelion are a family of flowering plants that grow in many parts of the world.

Identifying Dandelion: For such a common weed, dandelion is easy to misidentify. Many look-a-like plants have similar leaves, but dandelion leaves are hairless. They generally have toothed edges that gave the plant its French name, "dent de lion."



Where you can find them?

- Gardens
- Grass verges
- Fields
- Woods



Dandelion greens can be eaten cooked or raw and serve as an excellent source of vitamins A, C and K. They also contain vitamin E, Folate and small amounts of other B vitamins. Cut the leaves and flower heads. Why not try them in a salad or put handful in a curry in the last few minutes of cooking to add flavour, texture and colour?

### Gorse Flowers

You may want to wear some gloves collecting this one, as gorse brush can be prickly.





Gorse is a large, evergreen shrub covered in needle-like leaves and distinctive, yellow flowers during the spring and summer.

The buds can be pickled in vinegar and eaten like capers. Gorse has never played a big part in herbal medicine. Its flowers have been known to be used in the treatment of jaundice, scarlet fever, diarrhoea and kidney stones, but documented

success is limited.

**How do you pick a gorse flower?** You are looking to pick the flowering buds, pinching them out from their base, taking care not to crush them too much if possible. When you bruise the petals, they have a light scent of 'black coconut'.



## Nettles

You will need a pair of gloves for this one, Nettles can sting so get an adult to help and take care.

Stinging nettle has been used for hundreds of years to treat painful muscles and joints, eczema, arthritis, gout, and anaemia.



A very common plant, the stinging nettle can be found growing in gardens, hedgerows, fields, woodlands and many other habitats. It has a preference for damp, fertile and disturbed ground.



Nettles are best when very tender, so pick in the spring when the nettles are just coming up, or, if collecting them later in the season then be sure to only pick the young leaves from the tips. Use gloves or pinch the leaves hard, so you don't get stung.

It might seem a bit scary, but fresh nettles can be eaten raw. But be cautious and be sure to neutralize the formic acid that can sting you. Use a blender, mortar and pestle, or juicer to crush nettle leaves and eliminate their sting.



Try them in a nettle and dandelion leaf smoothie - just blend the leaves with some banana, apple, avocado and a squeeze of lemon or lime juice, and enjoy!

## What, Where and When

Foraging can happen all year around, with lots of different tasty things being available at different times. A great resource to find out more is <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/visiting-woods/things-to-do/foraging/>

Just going out of season is wild garlic. This is best collected when the leaves are young, as early as February! You can use the leaves or the flowers. This plant is just starting to die off now, but keep it in mind for next year as this is great for cooking with, chop up the leaves and add to pasta, or into flat bread which you can cook over your fire.

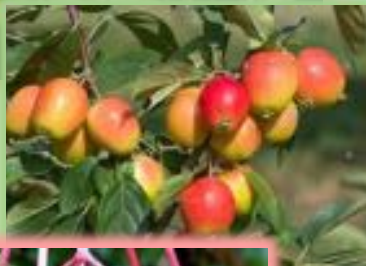


In the coming months you may be able to find:

July - Bilberry (aka Blueberry or Whinberry) & Wild Strawberry

August - Blackberry or Bramble Berry, Crab Apple & Elderberry

September - Rosehips or Sloes



## Water Collection

Every living organism needs water for survival. This tasteless and odourless compound may be simple, but without it, life would not exist. The human body, for example, is made of as much as 60% water. Take this away and many of our bodily functions would go haywire. But we need to be careful about the water that we drink. Water can contain harmful bacteria, chemicals or algae that could make us sick.

### Where to find water

**Location - river, stream, lake, waterfall**

Always make sure to check upstream of your water collection point for any dead animals, rubbish or other pollutants that may be there. Try to collect water well away from human habitation and livestock.



An average person can only last 3 days without water, at the very maximum. You'd be very lucky if severe dehydration doesn't catch up with you at that point. Once it does, your body can suffer from organ failure and eventually, shock. Whether you're in a survival situation or simply enjoying the outdoors, it is always important to have an adequate supply of water.

#### GOOD WATER SOURCES

- Water falls
- Clean Snow or Ice  
(never the yellow stuff!)
- White water
- Morning dew
- Moving water
- Water from tree
- Middle of a clear lake





### BAD WATER SOURCES

Still water

Brown water

Sea water

Anywhere near the edge  
(lake or stream)

In very remote locations, it is possible to drink water straight from a good water source BUT if you have the means to purify the water you should always do so, just to be on the safe side. There are several methods of purifying water. The four basic ways are boiling, filtering, chemical treatment and ultra violet treatment.

Which you choose will depend on a number of factors, including portability, time and cost. We are going use our fire lighting skills from last week and look at boiling today. This is a simple and reliable method of killing off bacteria but does not clean sediment or chemical pollution from the water, so it is really important to get your collection site right! The water should be boiled for at least five minutes for effective sterilisation. The fire will need to be nice and hot to boil the water (see instructions for cooking on a fire).



Make sure you don't put your sterilised water back into the same container you collected it in, unless it has been thoroughly cleaned in between. We like to have one container for collecting and another for the sterile water to go into after.





## Cooking on a fire



Remember your fire safety from last week.

Fire has a potential to cause injury and property damage. Before you choose a location and light a fire, you should think about the risks and what you can do to reduce them. Ours is in a metal fire pit to keep it contained, or you could use a BBQ. Please be aware that the risks relating to fires increase during periods of warm dry weather.

Open fire cooking can be misinterpreted in numerous ways. Some think only of s'mores - delicious but the bare basics of campfire cooking, or others of burnt corn on the cob. Is it only for wild adventurers, or BBQs? We feel that open fire cooking is actually a delightful method of preparing your meals, one which takes you out of the kitchen, is far more interactive and social.

### Here are some handy hints to get you going

#### Don't be impatient

Seeing flames does not mean that your fire is ready for cooking.

#### Don't cook directly over the flame

Many of us are raised with the image of roasting a hotdog or marshmallow directly over an open fire, and think all meals can be done in that method.

But in reality, placing food directly over the open flame is a guaranteed way to get a burnt meal.



Too many flames = not ready to cook



Plenty of hot embers and ash = ready to cook



### Get the right gear

Make sure you use metal utensils. Avoid pots and pans with rubber-coated or wood-effect handles, instead get an aluminum pot lifter. The best option is to go for utensils that are specifically designed for the outdoors, to avoid any mix ups or mishaps.

It is also worth noting that cooking on a fire can damage or discolour even metal pans, don't use your shiny new pans!

Always use heatproof gloves when handling pots and pans that have been on the fire.



## Recipes

### Gorse Flower or Dandelion Tea

- Pan to go on the fire
- Sieve
- A Mug
- Wooden spoon

#### Ingredients for one cup of tea

- A handful of gorse flowers or 4-6 Dandelion heads, washed
- 500ml clean water

#### How to cook

1. Place the pan over the fire when it is ready to cook on
2. Pour in the water (if you are using water you have collected from a stream then boil it for 5 minutes before adding any other ingredients)



3. When the water starts to boil add the flowers

4. Let it cook/boil for 5mins

5. Use a sieve to strain the flowers and enjoy

If you would like a stronger tea leave the flowers in for longer



## Nettle Soup

What Does Nettle Taste Like? Nettle tastes like spinach, but a bit punchier. "It's a distinctive taste, characteristic of edible wild plants in general: a bright green note that makes you sit up and pay attention, with a peppery zing.



### What you will need

- Pot to go on the fire
- Wooden spoon
- Peeler
- Chopping board
- Knife
- Blender



### Ingredients

- 40 ish leaves
- 3-4 potatoes
- 1 stock pot
- 1500ml clean water (if you are using water you have collected from a stream then boil it for 5 minutes before adding any other ingredients)
- \*optional\* you could add any other veg you have- onion, carrot, broccoli, spinach



### How to cook

1. Bring 500ml of water to the boil
2. Add the nettle, potatoes and any other veg
3. Add stock pot and 1tr of water
4. Stir and leave to cook until the veg is soft, normally 10-15 min, but this dose depend on your fire so keep an eye on it and stir every 5mins
5. Blend your soup up and add salt and pepper to tasted.



Next week we'll be learning more about:

## Navigation