

# EDIBLE WILD PLANTS FOR BEGINNERS



PHOTO: SV DOLVEN



NORGES SOPP- OG  
NYTTEVEKSTFORBUND

## The joy of foraging

This brochure highlights ten edible wild plants that you can find throughout Norway. We hope it will inspire you to start visiting the tasty, free food store right outside your door.

The Public Right of Access gives everyone the right to roam and camp freely in the countryside – irrespective of who owns the land. The right to forage is part of the public right of access.

### OUTDOOR RECREATION ACT § 5

Under travel in uncultivated land, the public may harvest wild nuts to be eaten on the spot and pick and take with them wildflowers, plants, berries, and wild mushrooms, as well as roots of wild herbs, when done considerately and with due caution.

### NATURE DIVERSITY ACT § 15

Harvesting and other removal of naturally occurring wild plants and fungi are permitted as long as it does not threaten the survival of the respective population or is restricted by law or decisions made under the authority of law.

## Best practice of foraging

1

### Knowledge

Always be certain of what you're picking—never taste anything unless you're completely sure it's safe.

2

### Forage sustainably

Learn the best ways to forage different plants. You can freely pick invasive species and common plants like fireweed (p. 7) or dandelion (p. 11) as much as you like. However, for other plants, be mindful to ensure they continue growing in the same spot next year. Also, consider other foragers who may come after you. Rare, red-listed species or plants with very small populations should be left untouched. Before harvesting, check which category a plant belongs to in your area.

3

### Forage with care

Take only what you need and leave enough for the species to live on.

To keep your foraged plants fresh until you get home, store them in airtight plastic bags, such as knotted freezer bags or zip-lock bags. This will help maintain their freshness and crispness for up to a week in the refrigerator. Many plants can be blanched and frozen for later use, while others are best dried and used as spices or tea.



PHOTO: SV DOLMEN

## Do you want to learn more about the world of edible wild plants?

The Norwegian Association for Mycology and Foraging offers a variety of opportunities for those interested in learning how to forage and utilize wild edible plants. Our activities are conducted through member societies spread across the country. We offer courses where you can learn to prepare dishes and identify plants, as well as excursions to discover where to harvest them. Each year, we also host national events in various locations throughout Norway.



FOTO: SV DOLMEN

## Consider becoming a member!

As a member, you'll receive reduced participation fees for courses and books. Additionally, you'll get the quarterly magazine «Sopp og nyttevekster», filled with tips and knowledge about useful plants from both sea and land. There are many excellent resources available to enhance your knowledge of useful plants. A good starting point could be acquiring a flora—a book that provides keys to identifying plant characteristics. These come in various sizes, suitable for home use or to bring along on excursions. Searching online bookstores with terms like «edible plants» or «food from nature» will show the current selection, which varies from year to year.

## NSNF in English

Our web page [Soppognyttevekster.no](http://Soppognyttevekster.no) is in Norwegian, but you can find a summary of our activities in English at [soppognyttevekster.no/EN](http://soppognyttevekster.no/EN)

You can download our free booklet Edible mushrooms and poisonous mushrooms in Norway from the webpage, use the search field.

### Skvallerkål *Aegopodium podagraria*

Skvallerkål can often be found in gardens or growing wild in parks or beside roads. The young, light-green leaves taste best. Note that the leaves become bitterer with age and as their colour begins to dull. Remember that there are a number of poisonous species in the umbellifer family so it is important to learn to tell them apart.



**Edible parts:** Flowers, young leaves and roots.

**Culinary tips:** Pesto, salads, soups, omelets and pie filling. The leaves can also be dried into 'crisps' in the oven.

### Engkarse *Cardamine pratensis*

Engkarse thrives in damp habitats. The pale pink to lilac flowers are easy to recognize when blooming across meadows and lawns. Although engkarse looks fragile or delicate, it has a strong flavour. Lots of very tasty Brassica family members grow in Norway. The related skogkarse (*Cardamine flexuosa*) with white flowers is also edible.



**Edible parts:** Leaves and flowers.

**Culinary tips:** Instead of wasabi with sushi, pesto, herb butter, or sprinkled over tomato salad or oven-baked vegetables.



## Stornesle *Urtica dioica*

Stornesle – or brennesle which is a more common name – is very rich in nutrients. They often grow in ditches or beside roads and we recommend the use of gloves when picking. If you leave two pairs of leaves on the stem, you will be able to harvest new shoots throughout the season until the plant begins to flower.

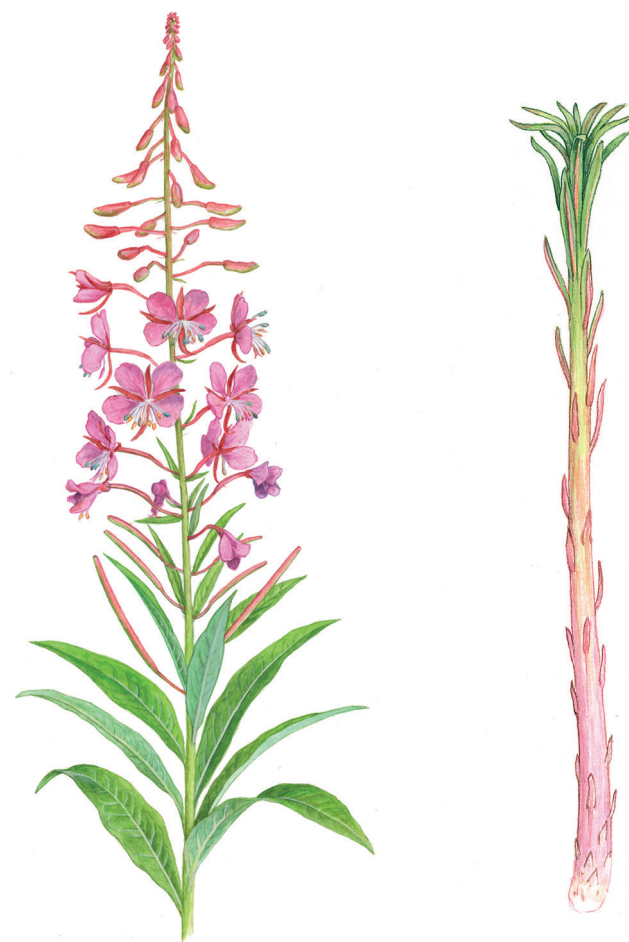


**Edible parts:** Young leaves and seeds.

**Culinary tips:** Soups, pesto, smoothies, pie filling and bread-baking.

## Geitrams *Chamerion angustifolium*

Geitrams is a plant which thrives under all kinds of conditions and can be found on a roadside near you. The young shoots with a small tuft of leaves at the top can be prepared in the same way as asparagus. The leaves can be used fresh in salads or fermented and dried for tea. The flowers look great in salads, they can be candied for cake decoration, and they produce a beautiful colour if you make a squash or concentrate of them.



**Edible parts:** Young stalks, leaves and flowers.

**Culinary tips:** Young shoots fried in butter, pesto, in salads, tea, squash or concentrate.



## Nyperoser *Rosa spp.*

We have a number of wild, hip-bearing roses in Norway, all of which have edible flowers and hips. One species you can pick from as much as you like with a good conscience is called rynkerose (*Rosa rugosa*). This is an introduced species that we do not wish to see spreading in the Norwegian countryside. The lush petals lend a beautiful colour to rose sugar and rose jelly. The hips are large and particularly good for soups and purées, or you can dry them to make tea.



**Edible parts:** Flowers and hips.

**Culinary tips:** Sugar, jelly, in fruit salad, purée, ketchup, soups, tea.

## Meldestokk *Chenopodium album*

Meldestokk is a nutritious, tasty plant often found along field edges or on bare ground. Strandmelde and tangmelde are in the same family and grow along the shoreline. The leaves can be blanched and frozen to be enjoyed throughout the year.



**Edible parts:** Leaves and seeds.

**Culinary tips:** Soups, pesto, stews, omelettes and pie filling.

### Engsyre *Rumex acetosa*

Engsyre usually grows in meadows, pastures and woods. The taste of the leaves is fresh and acidic and makes a good replacement for lemon in some recipes. Calcium binds the oxalic acid that the plant contains, so a beneficial combination could be to finely chop the leaves and mix them in with other products such as cream or sour cream.



**Edible parts:** Leaves, young flowers as garnish.

**Culinary tips:** Green sauce, herb butter, soups, herb filling for fish.

### Løvetann *Taraxacum spp.*

Løvetann is one of the spring's earliest plants and is really appreciated by bees. Maybe you have løvetann in your garden? If so, try putting a flower pot over the plant for a week to "bleach" the leaves: the lack of light means that the plant stops producing its normal bitter substances and acquires a milder taste. In southern Europe, løvetann leaves are frequently sold at vegetable markets. Why not try løvetann instead of cultivated salad stuffs from the supermarket?

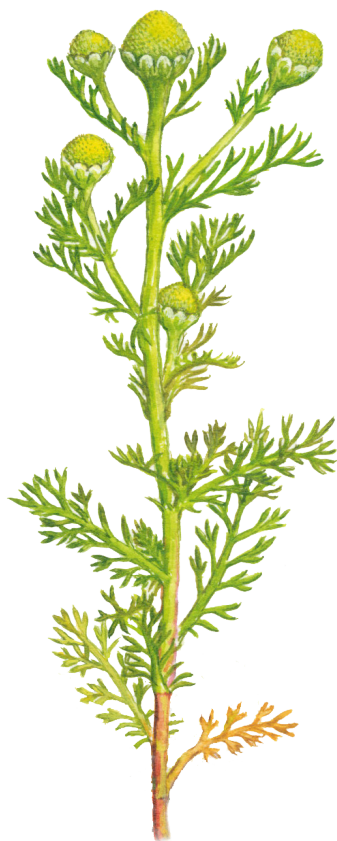


**Edible parts:** Roots, young leaves, flower buds, stalk and flowers.

**Culinary tips:** 'Capers' of the buds, oven-baked buds, in salads, green tagliatelle, jelly, syrup.

### Tunbalderbrå *Matricaria discoidea*

Tunbalderbrå weed commonly grows in courtyards and along field edges and pathways. The young flowers have a lovely flavour which can be enjoyed fresh in salads and tea. Freezing after a quick blanching is recommended for storage as drying tends to make them crumble.



**Edible parts:** Young flowers.

**Culinary tips:** In salads, made into squash, refreshing iced tea, pickled flower-buds, can be infused in milk/cream as a basis for desserts, ice cream for example.

### Gjöksyre *Oxalis acetosella*

Gjöksyre grows in woods and has leaves reminiscent of clover, which is also edible. The green leaves have a fresh, acidic flavour and taste great in anything from fish dishes to desserts. The same can be said of the flowers.



**Edible parts:** Leaves and flowers.

**Culinary tips:** Green sauce, in salads, herb butter, in sorbets and ice cream.



## HOW DO YOU USE EDIBLE WILD PLANTS IN THE KITCHEN?

Foraging in the wild is only half the job. Here are a few tips for what you can make when you get home to your kitchen.

### HERB SALT

Mix 60% of your chosen wild plants with 40% salt. Finely chop the plants and blend them with the salt in a food processor. Dry the mixture on a baking tray in the oven at 40°C (104°F), keeping the oven door slightly open with a wooden spoon to release moisture. Alternatively, use an herb dryer if you have one. Once the herb salt is completely dry, break it up and process it again in the food processor until you reach the desired consistency. For a sweet variation, substitute salt with sugar to make herbal sugar. Store in a cupboard at room temperature.

### GREEN SAUCE

Take a generous handful of green plants and an oil of your choice, such as sunflower or rapeseed oil. Finely chop the plants and blend them with the oil until you reach the desired consistency. This mixture is delicious when combined with pasta, used as a sauce for various dishes, or mixed with nuts and cheese to make a flavorful pesto. Best enjoyed fresh, but it can be stored in the refrigerator for a longer period if the oil fully covers the mixture.

### WILD FRUIT SQUASH

Fill a bucket with flowers and add the juice of three lemons. Boil approximately 10 liters of water, and sweeten to taste; 2 kg can be a good starting point. Also, add a packet of citric acid to the mixture (this can be found in most grocery stores). Pour the mixture over the flowers and let it sit covered for three days, stirring the flower water once a day if possible. Strain and pour into sterile bottles. The squash has a shelf life of about a week in the refrigerator but can be frozen for use throughout the year.

### HERB BUTTER

Finely chop your desired wild herbs and blend them with a package of butter softened to room temperature. Store the herb butter in the refrigerator or freeze it for later use.

### WILD HERBAL TEA

Tightly pack your desired leaves into a glass jar, and secure the lid. Place the jar in the oven at 40°C with a wooden spoon propping the oven door slightly open, allowing the leaves to sweat in their own juices for one to two days. After this, dry the leaves on a kitchen towel using the same method, or utilize an herb dryer if available. Once dried, you can enjoy the world's best tea. Store the tea in airtight glass containers.

### WILD HERB SOUP

Sauté finely chopped onions, two large cooked potatoes, and some handfuls of wild greens in butter until they soften slightly in the pot. Then, pour in 1 liter of water (preferably with added stock) and let it simmer for about 20 minutes. Use an immersion blender to achieve the desired consistency, and season to taste.

### CREAMY WILD SOUP

Melt a few tablespoons of butter in a pot, whisk in an equal amount of all-purpose flour, then pour in 1 liter of stock. Add a generous handful of finely chopped wild greens and simmer until they are tender. Stir in cream and season to taste with spices.



## Sustainable foraging

The species presented in this booklet are found throughout the country in thriving populations, allowing for unrestricted harvesting. However, it's important to note that some populations cannot withstand heavy harvesting, and in urban areas, certain species or locations may experience high pressure. Therefore, the Norwegian Association for Mushrooms and Foraging (Norges sopp- og nyttevekstforbund) is increasingly focusing on sustainable foraging.

### Poisonous plants and look-alikes

Be aware that there are toxic plants in Norwegian nature, some of which resemble edible species. You should never consume anything unless you are completely certain of its identity. Species knowledge is the foundation of a successful foraging trip. Learn to recognize some of the species in your local area and discover where they grow; this way, you can return year after year. You can expand your knowledge by learning a couple of new species each year. On each trip, identify a plant you're unfamiliar with and try to determine what it is. This approach builds your knowledge to become a proficient forager.

### Join excursions and courses!

A great way to learn is by joining the Norwegian Association for Mushrooms and Foraging on their excursions and courses. You can find an overview at [soppognyttevekster.no/kalender](https://soppognyttevekster.no/kalender).



If poisoning is suspected, call the Poison Information Centre: 22 59 13 00  
[helsenorge.no/Giftinformasjon/tema-planter-og-bar](https://helsenorge.no/Giftinformasjon/tema-planter-og-bar)



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## LEARN MORE

You can find an overview of all excursions and courses nationwide at:  
**[soppognyttevekster.no/kalender](https://soppognyttevekster.no/kalender)**

Online course offerings are available at:  
**[soppognyttevekster.no/kurs](https://soppognyttevekster.no/kurs)**

Become a member at:  
**[soppognyttevekster.no/medlemskap](https://soppognyttevekster.no/medlemskap)**



Illustrasjoner: Hermod Karlsen. Grafisk utforming: Jette Lillstrand. Foto: SV DOLLE



**NORGES SOPP- OG  
NYTTEVEKSTFORBUND**

Norges sopp- og nyttevekstforbund  
Tlf.: 992 66 276  
**[post@soppognyttevekster.no](mailto:post@soppognyttevekster.no)**

**[soppognyttevekster.no](https://soppognyttevekster.no)**