

### Introduction

There's growing interest in foraging for food in the natural environment, and we recognise that sustainable use of our natural resources can benefit the people of Wales. We want to encourage responsible foraging on Natural Resource Wales's (NRW) land and have outlined, here, how we can achieve this.

### Definition

Foraging describes collecting food and plants from the natural environment. This can include wild food, such as fruit or mushrooms, as well as other natural products, such as moss or foliage. The different types of foraging include:

Foraging by individuals	Foraging by organised groups and events	Commercial foraging
Casual foragers collecting plants, berries, moss or foliage for their own use	Fungus forays, guided foraging walks and other types of group foraging	Picking plants and food for sale

**Please note:** This statement doesn't cover foraging for timber on the land we manage. Please read our firewood framework ([insert link](#)) for more information on buying firewood for individual use.

### Where you can go without needing our permission

Individuals foraging have the same right of access as other visitors on Public Rights of Way. However, it is not permitted to damage any plant in areas identified as Open Access Land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. In these locations, you will need the land owner's permission. NRW is happy for individuals to foraging to use the permissive trails and paths we provide on NRW managed land, where the land is not designated for nature conservation.

## **When you'll need permission from us**

- Individuals foraging for their own use should always contact us for permission if the area is designated for nature conservation.
- Organised groups and events always need permission from us to forage on NRW managed land.
- Any commercial foraging activity also needs permission from us.

## **How we support foraging**

- We will follow our [Guiding Principles](#) for community involvement with land that we manage.

## **What you'll need to do**

- Follow [Countryside Code](#) and the [foraging best practice](#) at all times.
- Beware of poisonous plant species and make sure you know what you're collecting.
- Don't forage in protected sites and take care not to damage rare plants in other places. Some species are specially protected against damage and sale – you can find a list of these in [Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act \(1981\)](#).
- Picking and transporting plant matter can significantly increase the risk of contamination, so you'll need to follow our '[Keep It Clean](#)' guidelines to protect against the spread of invasive species and biosecurity threats.
- Adhere to all our signs. NRW managed land is often a working environment and failure to follow safety signs can be dangerous for both foragers and land managers.
- Only collect flowers, leaves, fruits and seeds where they're in abundance. Wild food is vital for wildlife to survive. It's important to forage sustainably to ensure there's enough left for birds and other species, and to allow plants or fungi to produce seeds and spores that grow into the next generation. For fungi, only take mushrooms that have opened their caps, as these are likely to have dropped their spores – and don't collect small 'button' mushrooms.
- Try to minimise damage to nearby habitats and species, and take care not to trample down areas in which you're foraging.
- Always be careful not to disturb birds or animals. They are particularly vulnerable during the breeding season and in winter. Leaving routes and trails to forage may cause disturbance.

## **How you can apply for permission**

To apply for permission to use NRW managed land for foraging, please contact the regional team in your area. Their contact details can be found in the following document:

[NRW managed land permissions contact sheet](#)

## **Who to contact for more information**

If you'd like further information, you can find out more using the following links:

- Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland: [www.bsbi.org](http://www.bsbi.org)
- The Association of Foragers: [www.foragers-association.org.uk](http://www.foragers-association.org.uk)