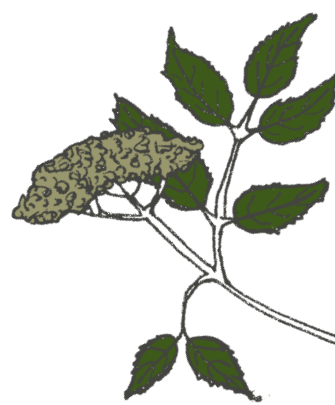
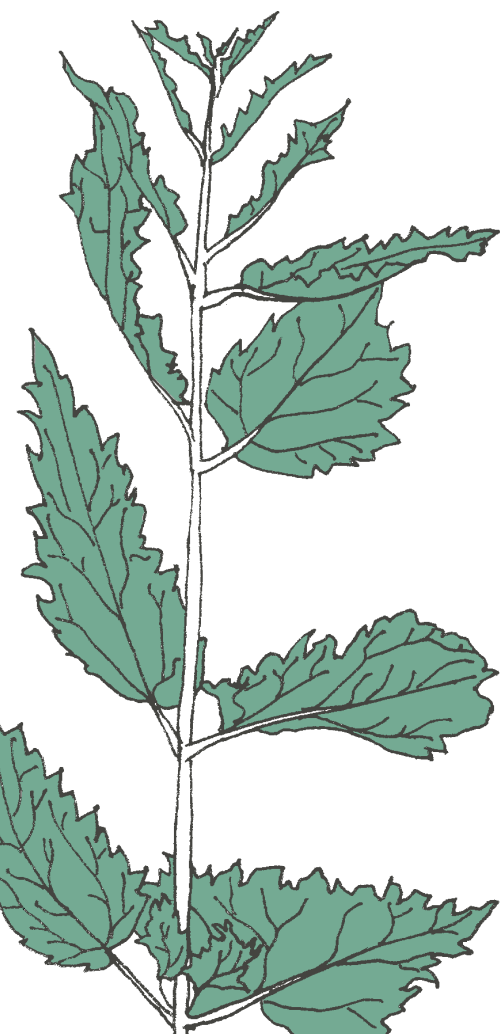


EDIBLE PLANTS

TOOLS FOR YOUTH
WORKERS



YEE!
YOUTH AND
ENVIRONMENT
EUROPE

This publication was created by Coline Malot, as part of her European Voluntary Service in Youth and Environment Europe (YEE).

YEE is network of 42 youth organisations from all over Europe that study nature or are active in environmental protection. YEE aims to enhance international cooperation, to increase knowledge about nature, to raise awareness of environmental problems and to strengthen youth participation in environmental decision-making.

The European Voluntary Service (EVS) is a programme that gives young people the opportunity to spend up to 12 months abroad as volunteers, helping in local projects in various fields. In this way, it seeks to develop solidarity, mutual understanding and tolerance among young people, thus contributing to reinforcing social cohesion in the European Union and to promoting young people's active citizenship.

The European Voluntary Service is funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

FORE WORD

Environmental education is commonly associated with children, for they are considered able to absorb new concepts and behaviours more quickly than adults. Raising environmental awareness among children is no doubt important, as children represent the next generation whose ideas and actions will shape the future of our planet. However, it is still important to also focus on adults - especially young adults. First, because they will be the ones who will raise the next generation. Even more importantly, because environmental destruction is already a reality. Reducing the human impact on the environment is a question that has to be solved by the current generation of adults, whose decisions and behaviours can make a positive change for our environment and our societies as a whole.

This booklet will focus on tools and ideas for youth workers so they can provide environmental education for young adults, through foraging and cooking wild plants. The aim is to connect young adults with their direct environment and to develop environmentally-friendly behaviours. A broader aim is to solve environmental issues in a way that fosters individual and collective well-being and emancipation, taking into account other society issues like socio-economic disparities or cultural differences.

This approach will follow the principle of non-formal experiential learning. This vision of the learning process is linked with direct experience (learning by doing, personal inquiry), and is also connected with past individual experiences, for a better incorporation into people's everyday behaviours.

The first part of this booklet will explain what environmental education means, what the challenges and aims are when it comes to educating young adults to environment, and how environmental education can be implemented through the use of edible plants. The second part will focus on practical tips for workshops and will introduce easily recognizable plants as well as ideas for recipes.

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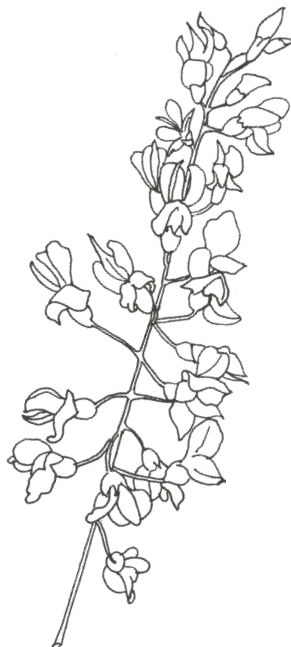
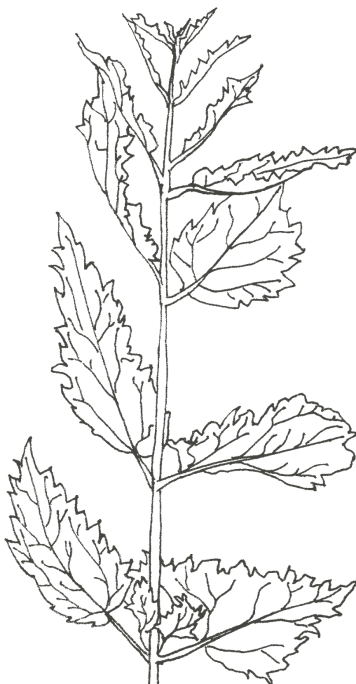
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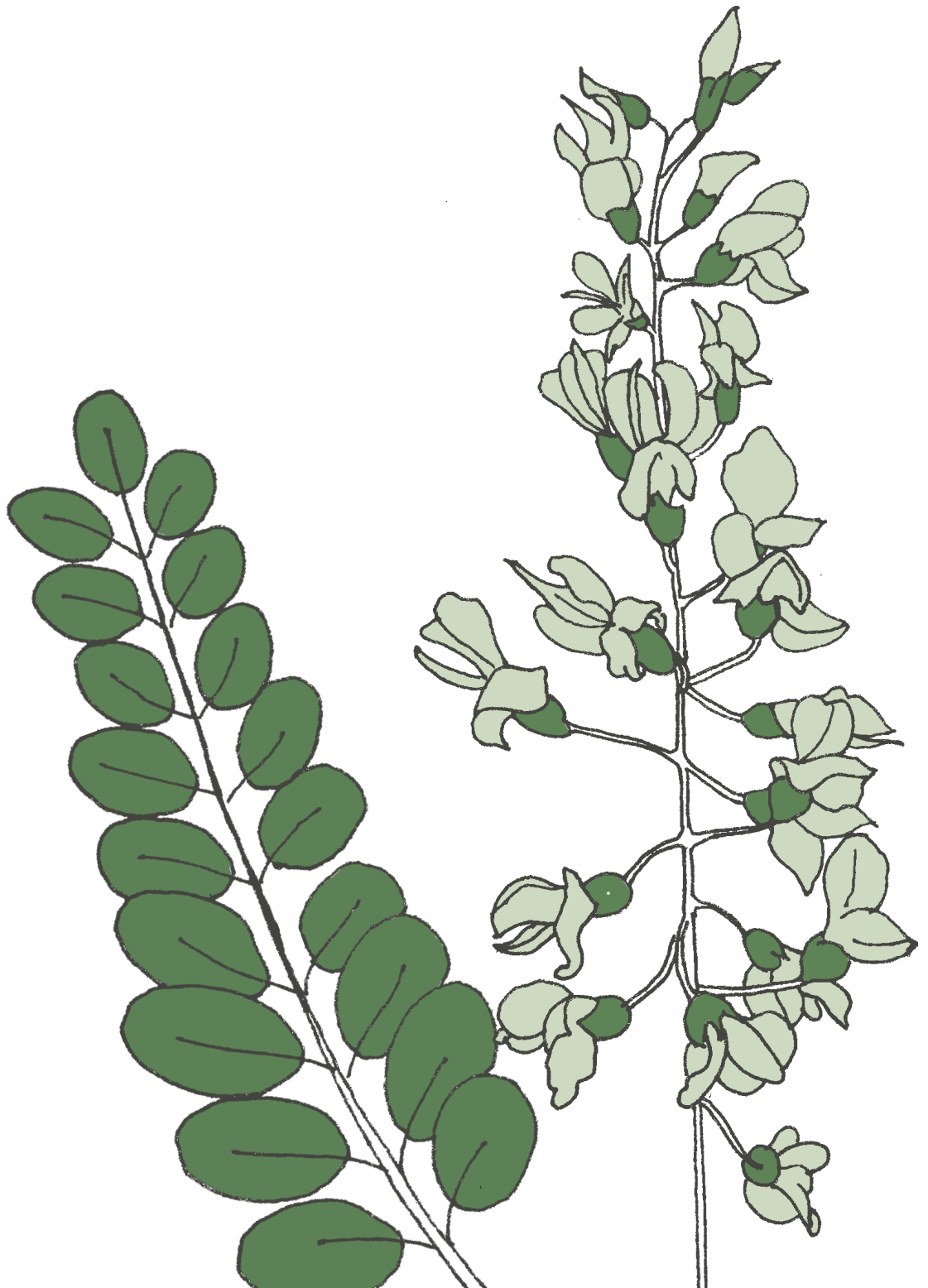
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EDIBLE PLANTS

& YOUNG ADULTS



WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION?

DEFINITION

According to the definition established in the **Belgrade Charter (1975)**, environmental education is:

“a **process** aimed at developing a world population that is aware of and **concerned about the total environment and its associated problems**, and has the attitudes, motivations, knowledge, commitment and skills to **work individually and collectively towards solutions of current problems and the prevention of new ones.**”

Belgrade Charter (1975), goo.gl/kAxJtv

In **1977**, the UNESCO organised the world's first Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education that gave birth to the **Tbilisi Declaration**. According to the Declaration, **the three goals** of environmental education are:

- “to foster clear awareness of, and concern about, **economic, social, political, and ecological interdependence** in urban and rural areas;
- to provide every person with opportunities to acquire the **knowledge, values, attitudes, commitment, and skills** needed to protect and improve the environment;
- to create **new patterns of behavior** of individuals, groups, and society as a whole towards the environment.”

Environmental education focuses on:

“**Awareness** - to help social groups and individuals acquire an awareness and sensitivity to the total environment and its allied problems.

Knowledge - to help social groups and individuals gain a variety of experience in, and acquire a basic understanding of, the environment and its associated problems.

Attitudes - to help social groups and individuals acquire a set of values and feelings of concern for the environment and the motivation for actively participating in environmental improvement and protection.

Skills - to help social groups and individuals acquire the skills for identifying and solving environmental problems.

Participation - to provide social groups and individuals with an opportunity to be actively involved at all levels in working toward resolution of environmental problems.”

Learn more:

- *Belgrade Charter (1975), goo.gl/kAxJtv*
- *Tbilisi Declaration (1977), goo.gl/6jWCMK*





A SHIFT IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: TIME TO GET SOCIAL

From this point, the international community gave to environmental education a growing social focus.

1987

The UNESCO-UNEP International Congress on Environmental Education and Training in **Moscow** introduced the idea of environmental education for sustainable development, as a way to “**change people’s habits and behaviour**”, for a “**social and cultural change**” that corresponds to the needs of different age-groups, and socio-economic and cultural contexts.

1997

The **Thessaloniki Declaration** emphasized **poverty reduction, health, food security and human rights** as challenges to be solved by environmental education.

2007

The **Ahmedabad Conference** (also called “**Tbilisi +30**”) insisted on the **peer-learning and life-long dimension** of environmental education:

“We are all learners as well as teachers. Education for Sustainable Development encourages a **shift from viewing education as a delivery mechanism to a lifelong, holistic and inclusive process.**”

Ahmedabad Declaration (2007), goo.gl/kVTRk2

Researchers who worked on environmental education also advocated for establishing a stronger link between environmental protection and other social issues, for two reasons:

- Human impact over the environment is **highly connected to social issues** (socioeconomic disparities, consumption choices, etc).
- Taking into account the social side is a good way **to reach people from diverse backgrounds and include them in the learning process** so they can contribute with their skills and experience.

This social side is even more important when it comes to teaching adults specifically, for it resonates with their own lifestyles and preoccupations. Environmental education can be used to deal with health issues, economic struggles, overconsumption, inequalities, ...

Learn more:

- UNESCO-UNEP Congress in Moscow (1987), goo.gl/QmM7Sr
- Thessaloniki Declaration (1997), goo.gl/xG2K9R
- Ahmedabad Declaration (2007), goo.gl/kVTRk2
- Ardoin Nicole M., Clark Charlotte, Kelsey Elin (2012), “An exploration of future trends in environmental education research”, *Environmental Education Research*

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR YOUNG ADULTS

“Young people and adults will be called upon more and more frequently to defend and protect their environment, to conserve and preserve the surroundings where they live, and to build their dreams of the future.

Without them we will not be able to provide our children with education, nor will we be able to create the conditions they need to teach themselves.”

DVV International, “REAJA! Environmental Education for Young People and Adults”, goo.gl/ddL2LF

A FIELD THAT REMAINS WIDELY UNEXPLORED

The UNESCO Institute for Education has established in their research that adult and non-formal environmental education are “**less developed than in schools**” and that the teaching practices were usually “**limited to knowledge transmission rather than fostering the development of critical approaches**”.

Environmental education also remains “**highly theoretical**” and “**disconnected from individual realities**”. Finally, adults are not invited to challenge their own preconceptions during the learning process. Therefore, **people remain embedded in a way of life that is environmentally-problematic**.

“Rather than critiquing dominant models of development and economic growth, **adult environmental education remains locked within ideologies which have caused many of our contemporary environmental problems**”.

UNESCO Institute for education (1997), “Adult Environmental Education: Awareness and Environmental Action.”

YOUNG ADULTS' LEARNING NEEDS

Teaching environmental education for young adults invites to **reconsider the formal side of education**, the same way it is done today for children. The use of non-formal techniques may be a way to fit young adults' needs, especially because for some of them, school is already far away.

According to **Malcolm Knowles, adults learn the best when:**

- **They find it relevant and important:** they feel a connection between the learning and their own goals, see a concrete reason for learning according to their personal life and direct environment.
- **They can learn in their own way:** they feel free to decide themselves what they want to learn, for how long they learn, define their learning goals.
- **They learn by experience:** they feel more comfortable with a practical approach, need to feel active in the learning process and feel that what they learn can be used immediately.
- **The learning process is positive and encouraging:** they need to be shown respect, to be treated with equal trust and consideration.

Learn more:

- UNESCO Institute for education (1997), “Adult Environmental Education: Awareness and Environmental Action.”
- Malcolm Knowles (1970), *The Modern Practices of Adult Education*
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011), *Facilitation Skills and Methods of Adult Education: A Guide for Civic Education at Grassroots Level*

NON-FORMAL LEARNING



What is non-formal education?

Non-formal education **happens “outside the formal educational curriculum”**.

1. Unlike school that usually focuses on the mind, non-formal education strives to create **a balance between the body, the mind, and feelings** in the learning process.
2. It creates an **interaction between the individual and the whole group** and fosters cooperation.
3. It makes it easier for people to **connect the learning to their own lives and experience**.

Non-formal learning is based on:

- **active participation**
- **self-reflection**
- **experiential and interactive learning**

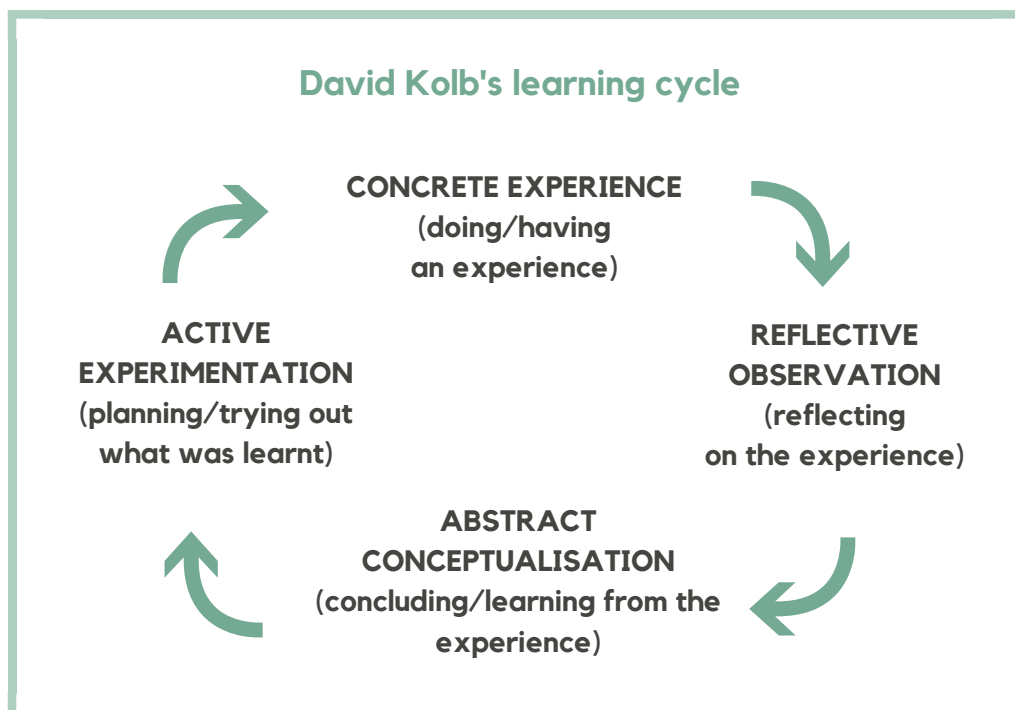
Experiential learning

It is one of the key points of non-formal learning. It allows students to **learn in their own way what is the most relevant for them**. Learning through experience provides space for people to **use the skills they already have**, to **develop some others**, and to **self-reflect on the learning**.

Experiential learning also allows to **connect the learning with individuals’ past experience**, which is determinant for adults who need to see the relevance of the learning process for their personal lives.

Learn more:

- Klocker Sabine, *Manual for facilitators in non-formal - education involved in preparing and delivering the programme of study sessions at European Youth Centres*
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011), *Facilitation Skills and Methods of Adult Education: A Guide for Civic Education at Grassroots Level*
- Kolb David (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*



ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION THROUGH EDIBLE PLANTS

A TOPIC CONNECTED WITH PEOPLE'S EVERYDAY LIFE AND EXPERIENCE

Alternative and healthier consumption

The new generation of adults is more and more curious about **alternative ways of consumption** and keeps an eye on lifestyle trends that focus on **personal health and well-being**. Using wild plants in everyday life answers these preoccupations.

Socioeconomic issues

Learning through edible plants is also a way to tackle important **socioeconomic issues**. Young adults can learn about how to change their consumption in order to access quality products at a very low cost. It can also be one of the solutions in order to tackle **food insecurity**.

Local anchor

The topic of wild plants connects as well with young adults' own experience. People **rediscover their local environment** and integrate new knowledge into their everyday surroundings. It is especially interesting for **urban areas** that contain wild corners which may not be valued so much in locals' minds.

Learn more:

- Ardoin Nicole M., Clark Charlotte, Kelsey Elin (2012), "An exploration of future trends in environmental education research", *Environmental Education Research*
- Bgen, "Encouraging healthy eating", goo.gl/yCSTN5

According to Edgar Dale's "cone of experience", we **remember only 10% of what we read**, 50% of what we hear and see and **90% of what we hear and do**.

Edgar Dale, Audiovisual methods in teaching, 1969

LEARNING BY DOING

Edible plants workshops are **highly practical** and imply:

- plant identification
- cooking techniques
- walking in nature
- tasting new flavours
- socialising within a group
- participating in the collective learning by sharing ideas and experience.

It helps individuals to **absorb more information**, to **connect the learning with their personal experience and needs** as well as to **self-reflect** on their own lives, their relation to the community and their environment.

Capacity-building

Learning how to recognise and cook wild plants is **a skill that is directly useful for young adults** in their everyday lives. It develops new interests, curiosity and maybe even vocational ideas. It is also and mainly **a vector of empowerment** for young people who feel more skilled, autonomous and confident to take initiatives.

LEARNING THROUGH THE BODY AND SENSES



Reconnection to nature

Collecting wild plants as well as cooking them **implies the use of all senses**. A direct contact with nature is the best way to make people more attentive to their surroundings and to look for ways for valuing them. In peculiar, these workshops can be of tremendous help in order to **fight plant blindness**.

Plant blindness can be defined as “the **inability to see or notice the plants** in one’s own environment, leading to the inability to **recognize the importance of plants in the biosphere** and in human affairs”.

Fraze L J., Morris-Marano S., Blake-Mahmud J., Struwe L., “Eat your weeds: Edible and Wild Plants in Urban Environmental Education and Outreach” (2016)

Challenging individual perceptions on nature

An introduction to edible plants can also trigger a reflection on **how nature looks and feels, compared to how it tastes**: some attractive species can be very toxic or without any taste, whereas some unpopular plants, like stinging nettles, make very good soups. **Changing the way we see “ugly” vegetables** is a good way to start a reflection on food waste for example.

Emotional learning

These changes of perspectives belong to the scope of “emotional learning”: through **direct contact**, individuals experience some immediate reactions and tend to **change some of their attitudes**. They **internalise new behaviours** regarding their environment as well as people they are in contact with.

Learn more:

- Frazee L J., Morris-Marano S., Blake-Mahmud J., Struwe L., “Eat your weeds: Edible and Wild Plants in Urban Environmental Education and Outreach” (2016)
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011), Facilitation Skills and Methods of Adult Education
- On food waste, check the YEE “Office cuisine” blog dedicated section: goo.gl/kH7j7r

One of the main incentives for adults to start a training is **the perspective of meeting new people** and establishing new contacts as well as **participating as a member of a community**.

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011), Facilitation Skills and Methods of Adult Education

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Social and intercultural learning

The topic of edible plants can speak to people from very different social and cultural backgrounds, which gives space for **intercultural learning**. Non-formal learning gives people the freedom to **share their knowledge to a diverse group** and to learn from others.

This contact helps people to:

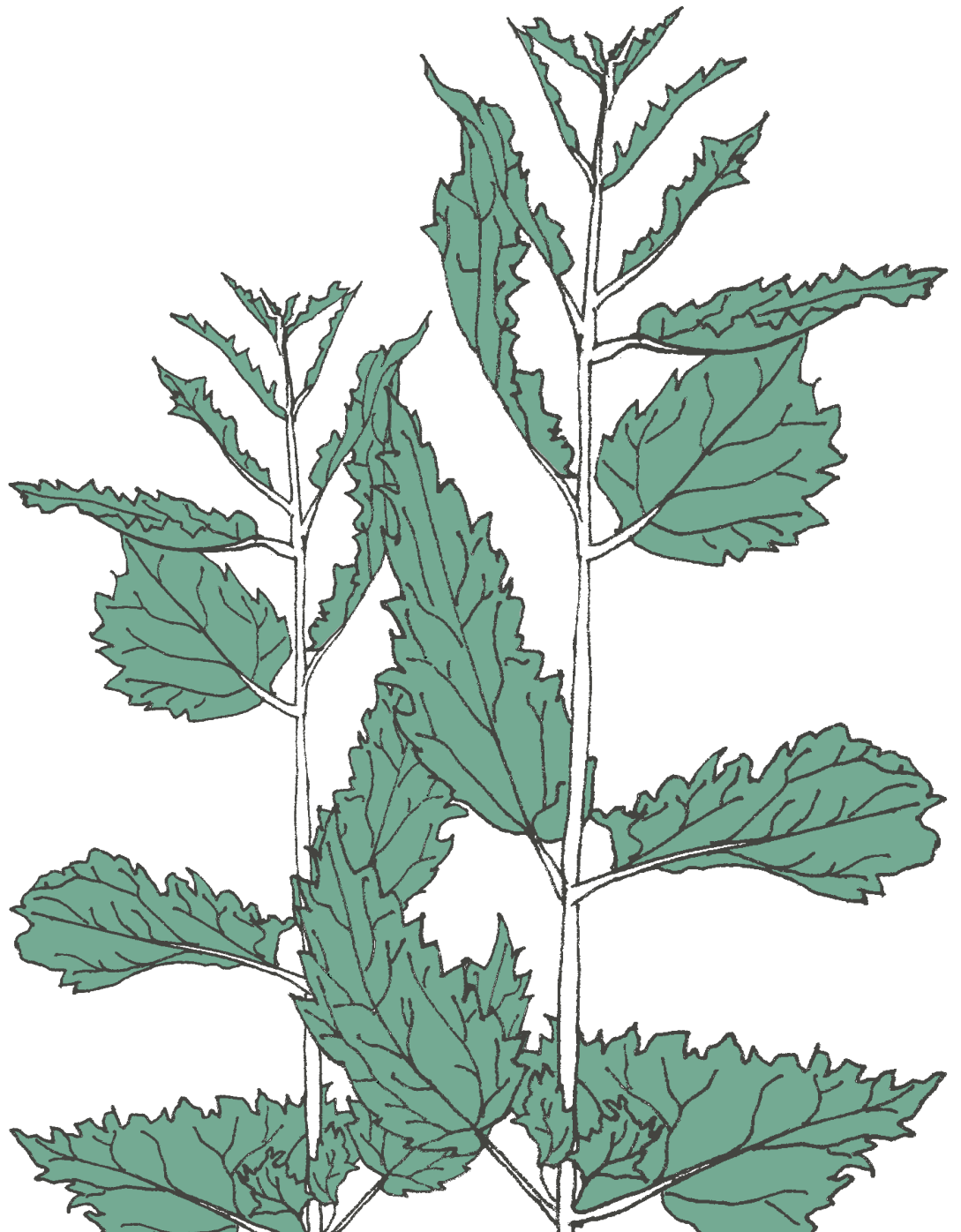
- put themselves in other person’s shoes,
- share values and mutual respect,
- change their behaviours and conceptions
- apprehend conflicts differently
- communicate in different and more universal ways.

Cooking together

Cooking gives participants the opportunity to **break the ice** and **share informal moments** with people they would not necessarily meet in their daily life. It is also a tool to **acknowledge differences as well as similarities** in each-other’s everyday practices. Young people hear about others’ ways of cooking, they learn about cultural differences regarding food, take some tips, ...

WORK SHOPS

TOOLS AND IDEAS



BASIC INFO

IMPORTANT RULES

To become a plant hunter, it is important to get acquainted with some important rules in order **avoid causing damages to yourself, your group, and the environment**. Foraging edible plants can be very **risky if you are inexperienced and not well-informed**.

Protect yourself and others

- **Inform yourself beforehand:** Ask for **help from someone who knows wild plants very well**. Ask them to show you the plants you are looking for and to introduce you to other edible (or toxic) plants in your surroundings. **Carry with you a hand guide** that details the characteristics of the plants growing in your area.

- **Know what you are picking:** Collect and cook **only the plants you know for sure**. If you are not absolutely certain about what a plant is, do not pick it. Remember that **one characteristic only** (shape of the leaves, ...) **is not enough** to identify a plant.

- **Be organised:** Do not put the plants you collect altogether. **Having separate bags for different species** allows you to ensure that you did not pick some lookalikes by mistake.

- **Stay away from toxic areas:** Do not forage **next to the roads or fields**, to avoid pollution or contamination from herbicides and insecticides.

- **Eat safely: 1 meter over the ground is the limit.** **Do not eat raw any plant or fruit that grows lower**. This is a safety precaution to avoid being contaminated by "Echinococcosis", a parasitic disease that is transmitted through contaminated animals' excrements.

Protect your environment

- **Know where you are picking:** To respect the environment, **do not forage in restricted areas**. In some natural parks, for example, picking flowers is forbidden to **protect endangered species**. **Do not trespass in private properties** and ask for the permission of the owner before foraging on their property.

- **Pick only the amount of plants you need:** Forage only in places **where the specimens you need are plentiful** so it can regenerate and does not impact the ecosystem.

- **Do not damage the surroundings:** If you decide to organise a workshop, **make sure that everybody understands the importance of respecting fauna and flora**. Always check that you are not leaving any waste behind and you can also collect those you see on your way.

What you need



Good shoes
& long trousers



Gardening
gloves



Scissors



Canvas
bags



First aid
kit

Learn more:

- Thayer Samuel (2006), *The Forager's harvest: A guide to identifying harvesting and preparing edible wild plants*
- World Health Organisation, "Echinococcosis", [goo.gl/Dx5rjc](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/echinococcosis)
- Woodland trust, "Foraging guidelines", [goo.gl/5F77H2](https://www.woodlandtrust.co.uk/foraging-guidelines)

WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

Aims

- To **connect young adults with their direct environment** so they become aware about the interdependence between humans and nature and **develop environmentally-friendly behaviours**.
- To foster **individual and collective well-being and emancipation** by taking **into account other society issues** like socio-economic disparities or cultural differences.

Objectives

- To **equip young people with knowledge about how to forage and cook edible plants** which are growing in their surroundings.
- To develop together an **explorative approach of nature through the body and senses**.
- To start an individual and collective reflection on **alternative and natural ways of consumption and their socioeconomic impact**.
- To **establish a group made of young people from different sociocultural backgrounds**.

What?

The workshop is divided into **two parts: foraging and cooking**. It can happen during one whole day or be spreaded over two days. Remember that if you wait more than one day between the two parts, the plants collected will lose their taste.

Where?

This **depends on the local context**. It can be organised **near urban areas as well as in the countryside**, depending on your field of action. All the plants that are mentioned in this booklet can be easily found in both areas.

Think about **where your cooking workshop should take place**. You can find large and well-equipped kitchens in local youth centers or maybe schools, high schools, ...

When?

All the plants listed below can be **foraged in the end of spring / beginning of summer**. Of course, this depends on nature: climate fluctuations, heat waves, heavy rains,...

Some flowers blossom for a very short time. Therefore, you need to stay attentive and walk a lot in nature before planning your workshops. **Expect to set a date for your workshop maximum one week and a half in advance**.



WORKSHOP PREPARATION AND FACILITATION

The following tips are especially dedicated to youth workers who already have experience in organising workshops and would like to learn more about how to use more non-formal learning in their work, through the prism of edible plants.

FACILITATION

For a successful non-formal learning, you need to **be a facilitator more than a trainer**. You are here to deliver content but equally to lead and consider the learning as **a collective and participational process**. At any stage, **start from the knowledge of the group** and **welcome any comment or question**.

"A facilitator **assists participants** to bring the **full potential of every individual and the entire group**."

Definition developed by the participants of the training course for facilitators, in Klocker Sabine, Manual for facilitators

Some qualities that make a good facilitator:

- **Adaptable**: reacts to group dynamics, changing the plan if needed
- **Affirmative**: gives space and assess positive contributions
- **Humble**: takes distance from their own work, accepts the fact that they do not know everything and that there are some elements they cannot control.
- **Good observer**: keeps an eye on quiet people and on the group dynamics to react adequately
- **Time-keeper**

A few techniques for encouraging participation:

- **Paraphrasing**: rephrase what the speaker just said in your own words to make sure that you and the group understood the point correctly.
- **Mirroring**: repeat the speaker's exact words to encourage them to develop their thought or to foster reactions from the group.
- **Creating space**: using sentences like "Maybe someone else has a different opinion?", "Someone who has not spoken yet?". **Keep an eye on quiet people**, especially the facial expressions. If they send the message that they wish to speak, encourage them: "Would you like to add something?"
- **Stacking**: if many people want to speak all at once, ask everybody who would like to speak to raise their hand and **establish an order so they speak in turns**.
- **Intentional silence**: give to the person who is speaking **some more time to find their words** and to "discover" what they want to say. Just keep eye contact, stay relaxed and pay attention.

Learn more:

- Klocker Sabine, *Manual for facilitators in non-formal education involved in preparing and delivering the programme of study sessions at European Youth Centres*
- Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011), *Facilitation Skills and Methods of Adult Education: A Guide for Civic Education at Grassroots Level*

PLANNING YOUR WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Prepare your workshop carefully by **describing each activity, its objectives, the method, the materials needed.**

Method example: "1 to 100"

The working space is virtually considered as a scale, on which participants are invited to position themselves according to what they think about a given affirmation. For example "Human beings need to change their way of consumption for environmental reasons".

One side of the working space means "yes", the other means "no". The more participants choose to stand close to the "yes" side, the more they agree with the affirmation, and vice versa. They can also stand anywhere in between.

After each proposition, participants are invited to explain their position (why they chose to stand where they are, and what they think about it).

Remember that **the facilitator's role is not to do everything perfectly**. A same method may work very well with a group and way less with another. This depends on the context, the space, the weather, group dynamics,... **Stay relaxed and accept that some things do not go according to the plan.**

More methods in:

- Klocker Sabine, *Manual for facilitators in non-formal education involved in preparing and delivering the programme of study sessions at European Youth Centres* - Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (2011), *Facilitation Skills and Methods of Adult Education: A Guide for Civic Education at Grassroots Level*

GETTING COMFORTABLE IN NATURE

Opening yourself to nature is not an easy exercise, especially when you are in a group. **Start with some light activities to get to know each-other within the group** (ice-breakers, name games). The aim is to establish a mutual trust so that people feel comfortable and confident to experience nature and share their thoughts and ideas with others.

You can continue your workshop with some **activities to get acquainted to nature and to exercise the senses**. For example, you can play the "natural patterns" game. Invite participants to choose 3 connected lines on their palms and to mark them with a pen. Then, they try to find the same pattern in nature.

More games for nature in:

YEE (2010), "Games for nature: Environmental education through the eyes of young people", goo.gl/h1pPMb

FOSTERING THE PERSONAL AND COLLECTIVE REFLECTION

Before starting the foraging part, ask the participants where they are from, why they are attending this workshop, what they are looking for. Then, **set altogether the learning expectations** so that the workshop **matches broadly the personal and collective needs and interests**.

You can already **start a discussion** about edible plants, which role they can play for individuals and the society. At the end of the whole workshop (foraging part and cooking part) you can **invite people to discuss again, to see if other ideas came out and if some participants changed their views**.

CLOSING

Summarising

Before ending your workshop, do not forget to **give space for self-reflection** and for **assessing the personal and collective learning**.

A method for learning assessment - "My symbol, my learning"

Each participant is invited to walk around on their own for 15 minutes. This is the time for them to think about what they learnt during the workshops, what they take home with them. They need to bring back from their walk an object from nature that will symbolise their personal learning process and learning outcome. When everybody is back, each person presents their symbol and how they relate it to their learning.

Remember to ask people to focus on the learning, more than on the symbol itself, which is only a support.



Debriefing

Start a discussion that will **allow everybody to raise some important points, share ideas and feelings, ask questions**, ... Anything that comes out at the end of the workshop.

- The personal and collective reflection **can be triggered by some questions**, for example: "What does this workshop mean for you, personally?", "Did you change some of your views?", "What do you take home from this workshop?".
- If you have the feeling that it will help quiet people, **ask the group to make a circle and invite each participants to share something to the group** (statements, impressions, ...). You can use a **"talking stick"**, that each person will pass to the next speaker.
- After this debriefing, **summarise what were the important points and conclusions**.

Evaluation

As a facilitator or workshop organiser, **you are also learning yourself**. Evaluation is important in order to **establish if the objectives and learning expectations were fulfilled** but also to understand **what could be done differently**.

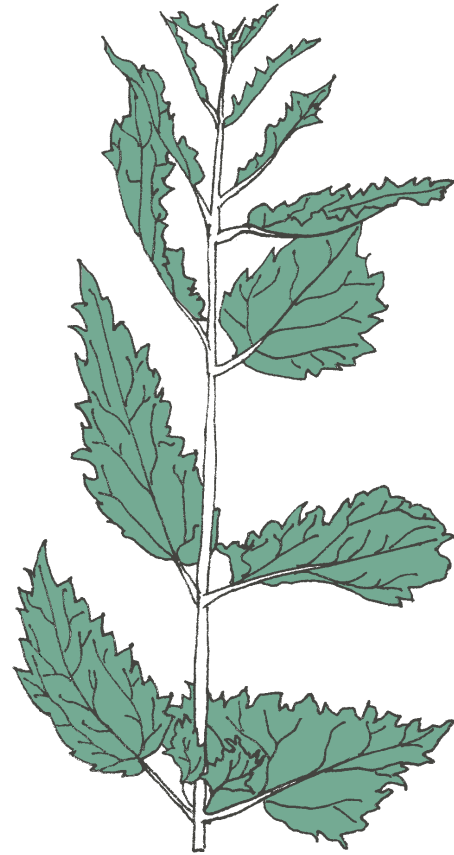
A method for evaluation - Take a stand in a circle

The participants make a circle. Anybody (should it be the participants or the facilitators themselves) can come to the centre and say something about the logistics, the learning process, the facilitation, the group...

People are invited to react to this declaration by moving in the circle: the closest they stand to the circle, the more they agree with this sentence and vice versa.

FORAGING

All the plants listed below have been chosen because they are easy to find and easy to recognise. They are common in European temperate climates, and people are used to seeing them around or to tasting some of them in the form of herbal teas, lemonades, ... However, make sure that you know very well the plant yourself before starting your workshop.



STINGING NETTLES (*URTICA*)

Cooking nettles is the best way to realise that, as roses have thorns, everything in nature has a beautiful and interesting aspect. What seems ugly and useless can have a wonderful hidden side.

When?

From March to November. Avoid the flowering period (around May-June-July in Central Europe, even if you can still find nettles without flowers around May-June): the leaves get a bitter taste.

Where?

Nettles grow **everywhere**. Once you start cooking them, you see every wild corner as a potential dish. They prefer **nitrogen-rich soils** and in general they spontaneously grow **in abandoned places** (along walls and paths, in forests, ditches, gardens...).

Characteristics

From 50 cm (small nettle / *Urtica urens*) **to 1 m** (common nettle / *Urtica dioica*), the whole plant is **covered with stinging hairs**. Nettles have **opposite leaves**, green and soft, with **sharply toothed margins**.

Confusions

It is possible to mistake nettles with plants from the *Lamiaceae* family. Despite their name, the **“dead nettles” (*Lamium*)** are still **perfectly edible**. The best way to differentiate the two plants is to touch the leaves. Dead nettles are... dead, because **they do not sting**.

Unlike nettles, dead nettles have a **square-shaped stem** and grow very nice-looking white or purple flowers that are very different from the green string-looking nettle flowers.

How to collect it?

Stay **far from the roads and fields** to avoid pollution and toxic herbicides. Pick only **the highest parts of the plant**, that means **the three first leaves**. Try to avoid the ones with eaten leaves and that already grow flowers.

Take with you a **pair of gloves** to harvest comfortably. Do not forget to dress appropriately, with **good shoes and long trousers**.

BLACK LOCUST (ROBINIA PSEUDOACACIA)

Black locust flowers are not so much used in our daily lives, however it has a wonderful and sweet taste. During the flowering period, you can smell around some hints of vanilla and of orange blossoms.

When?

May-June is the flowering period. Pay attention, it does not last long... you have only a few days before the flowers fade.

Where?

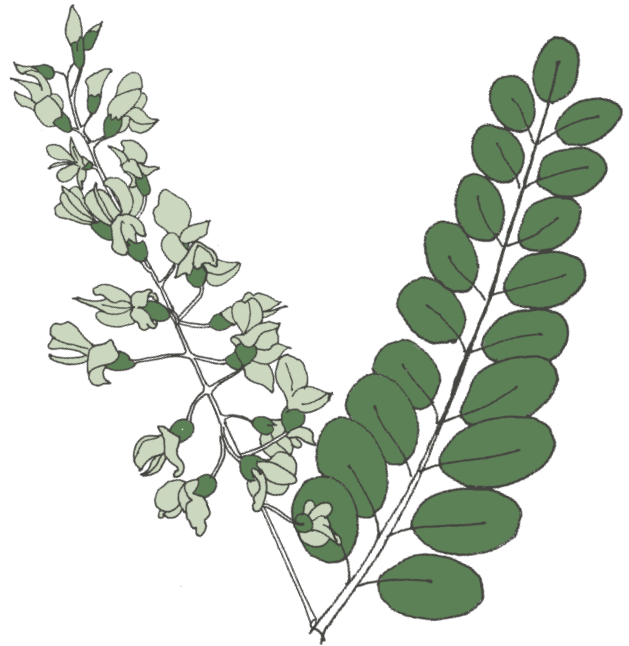
Nowadays, Black Locust is considered as an **invasive species**, which means that you will not have so much difficulties to find some of these trees in your surroundings, **even inside the cities** (in parks, for example). Black locust prefers **grounds that are moderately rich and humid**.

Characteristics

Black locust is a **tree** that **can reach 20 meters high**.

The flowers are **white** and grow in **generous clusters**.

Leaves are **alternate and compound**, with **9 to 19 oval leaflets**.



How to collect it?

Equip yourself with **scissors** and collect some of these flower bunches. **You do not need a lot**, so try to leave some of them for other foragers as well as pollinators.

You can eat the whole flower cluster, including the stems. You can for example fry them as doughnuts.

BLACK ELDER (SAMBUCUS)

You may have heard of elderflower and tasted it in some lemonades. Black elder is everywhere and easy to recognise. You can use the fruits as well as the flowers to make refreshing drinks or delicious desserts.

When?

May-June for the flowers, August-September for the fruits

When?

Black elder is **considered as an invasive specie**. You can find it easily in **parks, gardens, nearby rivers, ...**

Characteristics

Black elder is a **small tree** that can reach **6 meters** and **up to 10 meters high**.

The flowers are **ivory-white** and grow in **large and flat umbels**. Each flower is 5-6 mm diameter.

Petals are round and surrounded by 5 **stamens** that grow between each petal.

The leaves are **compound**, with usually 5 (to 7) **leaflets**.

The fruits are black berries, 3-5mm diameter, clustered by red **stems**.

How to collect it

- **Flowers:** Take some scissors with you and **collect the umbels**. Take only the quantity you need and leave some for pollinators.

- **Fruits:** Same principle. **Be careful, elderberries have to be cooked before being eaten**, otherwise they are not digestible at all.



Confusions

It is possible to mistake Black elder with a plant from the same family known as **Danewort or Dwarf elder (Sambucus ebulus)**. This one is **toxic** (though not very dangerous for adults) and can provoke diarrhea and nausea. However, it is very simple to differentiate the two species.

The Danewort is an **herbaceous**, which means that **it is not a tree**. It is way smaller (1-2 meters) and does not contain any wooden part. Therefore, **if you see some wood, it is the Black elder**.

Some other characteristics to identify the Danewort:

- The flowers look the same but have a **white-pinky colour and pointy petals**. They smell like bitter almond.
- The **leaves contain more leaflets** (from 7 to 11) and they have an **elongated shape**.



LINDEN (*TILIA*)

Linden flowers are known for their relaxing and sedative effects. You can indeed use linden to prepare herbal teas, but also for example to give a delicate flavour to your homemade creams.

When?

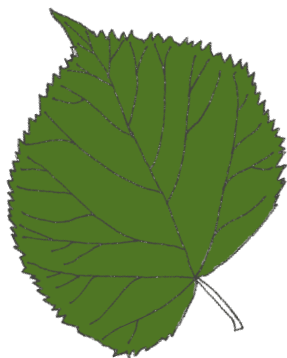
End of May - beginning of June. You need to be careful with linden flowers, for **they blossom only for 3-4 days.**

Where?

Linden is everywhere, especially in **cities and parks.** If you keep your eyes and nose open, you will smell its delicate flavour.

Characteristics

Linden is a **tree** that can reach **20 to 30 meters.** The **flowers are greenish-yellow** and are composed of usually **3 little flowers and a ribbon-like bract.** The **leaves are heart-shaped and asymmetrical.**



How to collect it?

Collect the flowers when **three of the buttons are open.** You need to **take the whole flower, that includes these three flowery parts and the bract.**

Confusions

You can use all sorts of Linden, except maybe the **Silver Linden (*Tilia Tomentosa*).** This one **blossoms later (July),** and can be recognised by its peculiar leaves. Their colour is very different on the top (dark green) and on the bottom (silver green).

COOKING

Here are some examples of the ways you can cook the wild plants described above. Each of these recipes can be used for several plants, therefore it is a good base for cooking some other plants you will discover during your foraging experience. It was chosen here to introduce only plant-based recipes to remain in the topic, but also to open new perspectives on meat-free and dairy-free dishes as a way to tackle environmental issues.

HERBAL TEAS

Making herbal teas is very simple, you only need time (or a good old dehydrator). You can make herbal teas from black locust flowers, elderflowers, linden flowers and even stinging nettle leaves.

1. Straight after your harvest, rinse the flowers or leaves very delicately in a bowl of water to get rid of the insects and dust. Remove the water with a salad dryer for example.
2. Let it dry for a few days in a warm, dry and well-ventilated place. If you are in a hurry you can also put your flowers and leaves in a dehydrator or simply in a low temperature oven (for example, after you used your oven for baking), for a few hours. Leaves can also be dried in bouquets.
3. Once everything is dried, store your herbal teas in tin boxes or paper bags in a dry place away from the light.



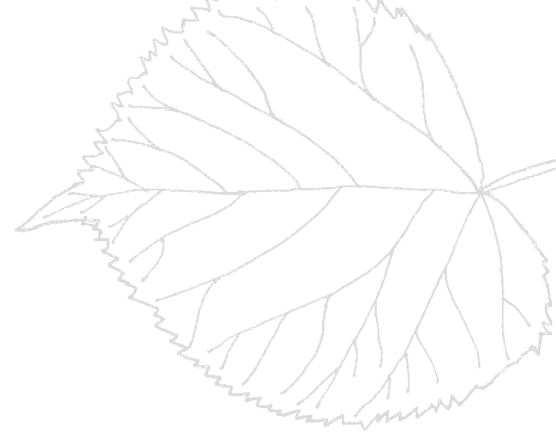
LEMONADES

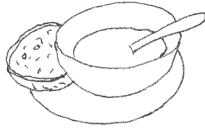
You can use many flowers and plants to realise homemade lemonades (rosemary, sage, ...). Here is a recipe for realising very quickly a refreshing elderflower lemonade.

Ingredients (for 1,5l of lemonade):

- 5 elderflower umbels
- 50cl of water
- 50g of sugar
- 1 organic lemon
- 1l of sparkling water

1. Rinse delicately the flowers several times to take out the possible insects.
2. Heat up the water with the sugar and lemon zests. Add the elderflowers, cover and let brew for 30 minutes.
3. Filter and pour in a carafe. Cut the lemon and add it in the carafe. Let cool.
4. Add the sparkling water and serve very fresh with ice cubes.





SOUPS

Nettles are like spinach, they lose a lot of water while cooking. Therefore, remember to collect a fair amount of nettles when you forage them

Ingredients (for 2 persons):

- A fair amount of nettles
- 1 Garlic clove
- 1 Onion
- 2 potatoes
- Soy cream
- Olive oil
- Salt, pepper
- Thyme and bay leaf

1. Put on a good pair of gloves and rinse the nettles in water with vinegar. Then, rinse again for at least two times.
2. Separate the leaves from the stems and keep the healthy leaves only.
3. Chop the onion and garlic and fry them in a pot with olive oil, salt, ground pepper, thyme and one bay leaf.
4. When the onions are transparent, add the nettle leaves and the potatoes peeled and cut in small pieces.
5. Fry for a few seconds, then cover with water. Cover with a lid and cook for about 30 minutes over a gentle heat.
6. Take off the bay leaf. Blend, add cream, salt and pepper at your taste.
7. Serve and enjoy with a slice of bread.

PANCAKES

Here is a recipe for black locust flower pancakes. You just need a pancake dough, in which you will add the petals and pistils.

Ingredients (for 2 persons):

- 3-4 bunches of Black locust flowers
- 100g of flour
- 20g of corn or potato starch
- 25g of sugar
- 1 spoon of chemical yeast
- 160 ml of soy milk
- Oil

1. Rinse delicately the flowers in water, take off the green parts to only keep the petals and pistils.
2. Prepare the dough: stir the dry ingredients together and progressively add milk. Keep stirring uniformly to avoid lumps. Add one spoon of oil.
3. Add the flowers, stir again, and let it rest for half an hour.
4. Oil a pan, let it warm over a middle-to-high heat.
5. Pour some dough and wait long enough until you see small bubbles. Turn the pancake around to cook the other side.
6. Serve with some sugar or local honey



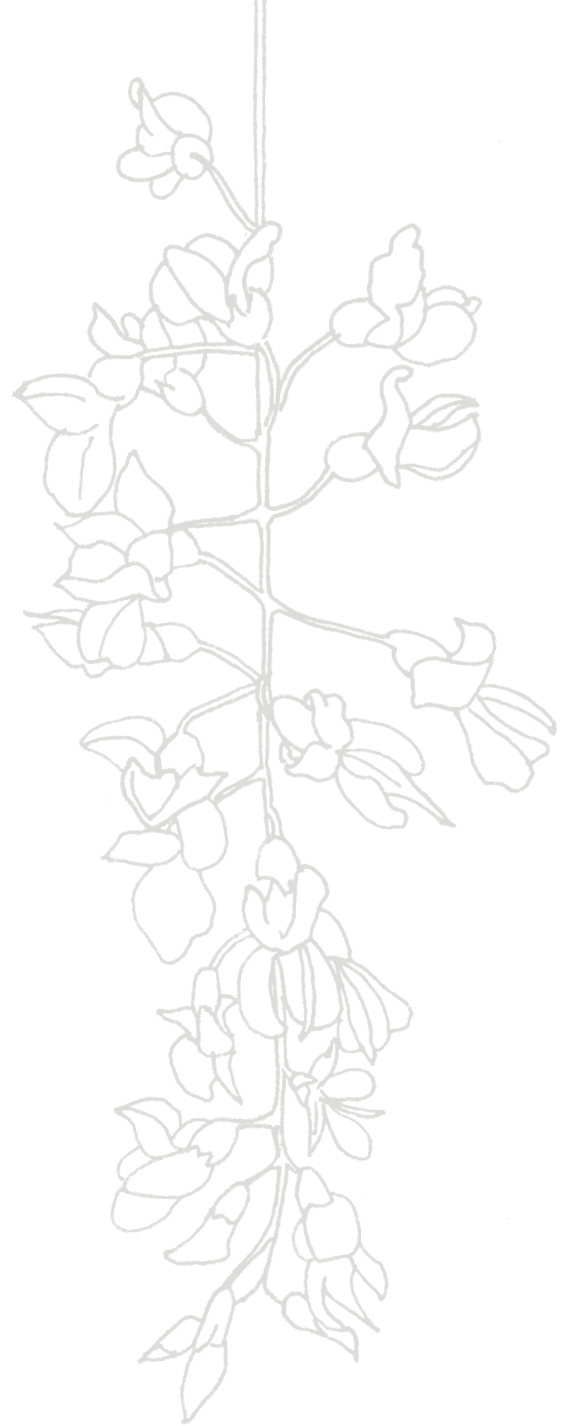
CREAMS

By using this technique described below allows you to flavour your homemade creams with various flowers and plants. Thyme, mint, lavender, ... be creative and try new associations. Here is a recipe for linden flower cream.

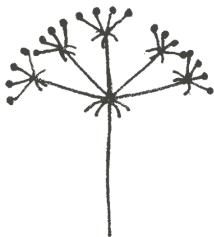
Ingredients (for 2 persons):

- 60g of linden flowers
- 50cl of soy milk
- 40g of sugar
- 20g of corn or potato starch

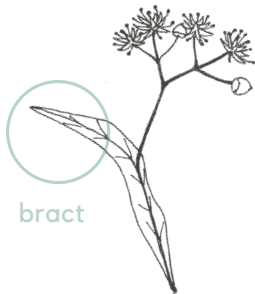
1. Rinse delicately the flowers in water, dry them in a clean towel.
2. Put the flowers and the milk in a pot, cover and heat up. Stop the fire right when it starts boiling. Let it brew for 20 minutes.
3. Filter and add sugar.
4. Mix the starch with a bit of cold milk and add it to the preparation.
5. Heat up again for 3 minutes and do not stop stirring
6. Pour immediately in small cups and let it cool.
7. Serve it fresh



PLANT VOCABULARY



umbel



bract



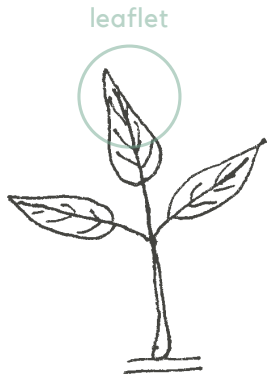
opposed leaves



alternate leaves



simple leaf



leaflet

compound leaf

LAST WORDS

Hopefully, this booklet gave you new ideas about how to shape your workshops so that environmental education speaks to young adults from various backgrounds. Environmental education is also about sharing a passion, enjoying what nature brings us and learning how to respect it. Therefore, let's wish you a lot of success, but also to share good moments and to have fun!

This booklet is the result of one year of volunteering in Youth and Environment Europe. All of the above is based on the extensive learning and experience that happened during this whole year. I would like to thank warmly the whole YEE team for their everyday help and support and for this exceptional and unforgettable experience.

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