

# A Checklist for Foragers



- ☐ Be prepared for being outside in areas of possible poison ivy and mosquitos
- ☐ Know the site—ask permission on private land, be aware of restrictions on public land, and avoid any areas where pesticides have been applied (e.g. roadsides, powerlines, golf courses)
- ☐ POSITIVELY identify the plant—DO NOT: “make it fit,” identify using a single characteristic or assume similar plants are equally edible
- ☐ Ensure a healthy population by harvesting responsibly (guidelines vary depending on: invasive plants, annual/perennial growth, and part being harvested)
- ☐ Taste a tiny portion first—if it tastes bitter or distasteful, spit it out
- ☐ When trying a new food, eat a small serving alone or only in combination with foods you know are safe for you. Wait a day before eating the food again.
- ☐ Get to know a few of your favorites and become familiar with those plants in all seasons and stages—you have now made a wild food friend!

**White Pine** (*Pinus strobus*)—medium needles in bundles of 5, wispy branches on large tree.



**Sassafras** (*Sassafras albidum*)—small to medium understory tree. Fragrant leaves in 3 shapes.



**Beech** (*Fagus grandifolia*)—large tree of rich woods. Alternate branches with toothed leaves. Three—sided nuts.



## Wild Food Recipe

### Late Summer Dolmades, makes 24

24 (plus extra) medium sized grape leaves  
1/2 C wild rice blend  
2—4 green milkweed pods (silk should be tightly packed, with no brown seeds)  
1/4 C pine or beech nuts  
Lemon juice from 1/2 lemon  
Salt  
Pepper  
Olive oil

In medium saucepan, bring 1 3/4 cup of water and rice blend to boil. Slice open milkweed pods, add silk strands to rice, reduce to simmer and cover. Cook rice 45 to 50 minutes.

Meanwhile, trim petiole (stem) from grape leaves. Fill stock pot 1/3 to half full with water and make it “salty like the sea.” When water comes to a full boil (aiming for 10 minutes before rice is done), add leaves, dunking completely into water with a spoon. Boil gently 1 to 5 minutes, till leaves have changed color and are tender. Remove from heat and add lemon juice, stirring gently. Strain leaves and allow to cool.

When rice is done, add nuts and salt and pepper to taste, stir well to incorporate. Lightly oil a cookie sheet and form assembly line of ingredients. Place grape leave vein side up (carefully remove any tough veins at base). Place a scant tablespoon of rice at base, roll and tuck in sides. Place dolmades on oiled sheet and proceed until all leaves have been filled. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve. May also

## Foraging resources

“Wildman” Steve Brill, New York City  
[www.wildmanstevebrill.com](http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com)

*Forager's Harvest, Nature's Garden*  
Samuel Thayer, Birchwood, WI  
[www.foragersharvest.com](http://www.foragersharvest.com)

**Prodigal Gardens**  
Rose Barlow, Viroqua, WI  
[www.prodigalgardens.info](http://www.prodigalgardens.info)

*Stalking the Wild Asparagus*  
Euell Gibbons

**USDA NRCS Plants Database**  
<http://plants.usda.gov>

*Michigan Trees*  
Burton V. Barnes and Warren H. Wagner, Jr.

*Newcomb's Wildflower Guide*  
Lawrence Newcomb

**Wild Grape (*Vitis sp.*)**—vine with brown, peely bark and variable maple—shaped leaves.



**Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)**—herbaceous plant with milky juice. Leaves opposite, oblong, short—stalked. Flowers pinkish—purple.

