

# A Word to the Wise

The art of foraging for food is as old as mankind. What is a hobby to us was a necessity for all people of historical hunter/gatherer societies. Before the advent of agriculture and domesticated plants, food gathered from the natural environment was the sole means of survival.



## Tips for safe wild edibles foraging:

- **Never consume wild food unless you are 100% sure of its identification**, as well as possible look-alikes. (Obtain several reliable wild edible field guides & cross reference your identification.)
- Know which part of the plant is edible and how to correctly prepare it.
- Never remove the entire plant - only harvest sustainable portions of that plant.
- Make sure you have permission from the landowner.
- Make sure you are knowledgeable of laws and restrictions/rules and regulations- especially if you harvest from public parks and areas.
- Do not collect rare, endangered, or fragile species.
- Do not over-harvest.
- Avoid areas where pollution is a problem in the soil, water, or nearby, or where chemicals such as herbicides or pesticides have been applied.
- Only sample a small portion at first to ensure you are not allergic to a new food.

You will note the obvious omission of mushrooms from this publication. Although several species like morel (Morchella), sulfurs (Laetiporus sulphureus), and shaggy manes (Coprinus comatus) are readily identifiable, many other mushrooms are easily confused. Some inedible species create indigestion; others can kill the chef.

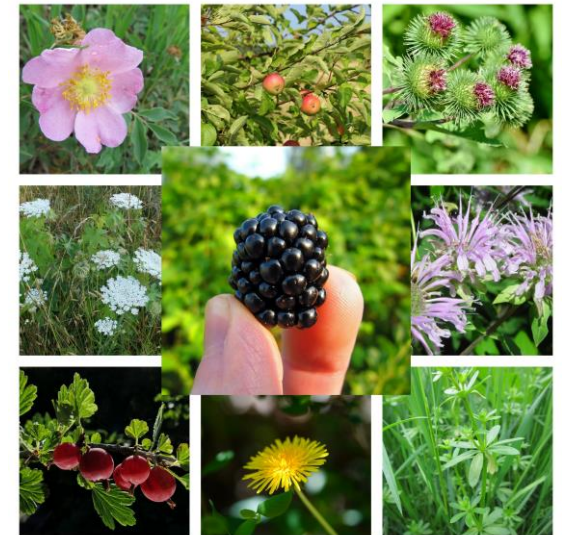
## Trail Notes:

- As you walk the trail, you will find **10** posts that highlight specific plants.
- **Be sure to look all around as highlighted plants could be anywhere within sight of the numbered post.**
- Once you have identified a plant, see if you can identify that same plant elsewhere on the trail. Many plants are found throughout the trail.



For more information, visit the  
Central Park Nature Center or  
[www.jonescountyiowa.org/conservation](http://www.jonescountyiowa.org/conservation)

# Welcome to the Central Park Trail of Wild Edibles



This brochure will help you discover and appreciate some common plants found in Iowa. Please refer to the pictures and information on the inside of this brochure or scan the QR code to learn more about each plant.



**Bedstraw/Cleavers:** Fruits can be dried and roasted to be used as a coffee substitute, leaves and stems can be used as a leaf vegetable or dried for tea. **Native**



**Black Raspberry Vine:** Fruits are eaten fresh or used in pies, cobblers, and other baked goods. **Native**



**Black Walnut Tree:** Nuts can be used in baking and confections. **Native**



**Burdock:** Young stems are boiled and cooked as greens. First year inner roots stir-fried. **Naturalized Non-native**



**Blackberry:** Fruits are harvested for pies, preserves, or eaten fresh. **Native**



**Chickweed:** Leaves are used in salads and on sandwiches. Stems can be used in stews. **Native**



**Hackberry:** Fruits can be crushed and used for meat seasoning. **Native**



**Common Violet:** Flowers are often used in decorative confections along with jellies. Leaves and flowers can also be used in salads. **Native**



**Dandelion:** Young leaves, flower heads, and roots can all be used for various recipes from salads, fritters, to wine. **Introduced Native**



**Garlic Mustard:** Leaves, flowers, roots, and seeds can be eaten in salads, soups, and pesto's. **Invasive, Non-native**



**Gooseberry:** Ripe fruits are often used in pies, jams, and jellies. **Native**



**Jewelweed:** Young shoots are cooked as greens. **Native**



**Plantain:** Leaves are used to make herbal tea, cooked, or eaten raw in salads. **Native & Non-native**



**Queen Anne's Lace:** First year roots are used in soups and stews. Leaves and flowers can be used in salads. Seeds can be used as flavoring in cooking. **Non-native**



**Box Elder:** Sap can be made into syrup, seeds are roasted, inner bark is boiled for carbohydrates and young shoots are used raw or cooked. **Native**



**Red or White Mulberry:** Ripe fruits are harvested for eating, or made into pies, jellies, or drinks. **Native & Non-native**



**White Pine:** Needles can be used in tea or baking and cooking in survival situations. **Native**



**Apple Tree:** Fruits can be eaten as they ripen in the fall. **Introduced, Non-Native**



**Wild Bergamot:** Flowers and leaves can be used in herbal tea, eaten raw, or cooked. **Native**



**Wild Grape:** Young leaves can be used in a tossed salad and grapes are known to make good jellies, juice, raisins, and fermented beverages. **Native**



**Wild Rose:** Flowers and buds are most often eaten raw but can be boiled for a variety of health benefits. **Native**



**Wood or Stinging Nettles:** Young leaves can be washed, cooked, and eaten as potherbs. **Caution:** Stems are prickly **Native**

