August 7, 2023

Dear Purdue EMG Volunteers,

Thank you for engaging with clientele who visit the Purdue Plant Info to Go Booth! We really appreciate your efforts to provide home gardening information to the public!

With the addition of the interactive "Lawn Weed Challenge", several visitors have mentioned that dandelion is an edible plant. It is true that most every part of the dandelion, except for the stem, is edible (https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/dandelions_for_food). However, we wanted to be sure EMG volunteers were equipped to respond to these statements and any questions about wild edibles.

Purdue EMG volunteers and Extension staff should not attempt to identify or recommend wild edibles for consumption. This includes wild plants, fungi, or insects. There is just too much risk of harm to clientele, if there is an error.

How should we respond? People interested in foraging for wild edibles should take the following steps to ensure safe consumption:

- Be absolutely sure of correct identification of the plant or other wild edible. Many plants and other wild species mimic other species and can be extremely poisonous. If not 100% certain, do not eat it!

- Once absolutely certain of proper identification, be knowledgeable about the proper handling and preparation before consumption. Food borne illness is a danger with any harvested plant or other related species. Proper washing, and in some cases cooking, may be required for safe consumption.

- Only harvest wild edibles from areas that are **NOT** subject to pesticide or fertilizer applications. Be aware of other forms of pollution or heavy metals in the area.

- **Again, when in doubt, do not consume foraged plants, fungi, or insects. It's not worth risking your health or the health of others.**

Thank you for serving as a Purdue Extension Master Gardener!

Sincerely,

John Orick, Purdue EMG State Coordinator

Karen Mitchell, Home Horticulture Extension Specialist