

Survival Skills: 5 Fall Edible Plants You Must Know About

by Tim MacWelch



If you find yourself in a wilderness emergency without food, and the wild game is scarce, you can rely on some of the wild edible plants that kept our forebears alive through tough times.

Here are five of the most common and most nutritious wild edible plants that you must know for the fall season.

Black Walnut

This eastern tree is a great resource for everyone in its native range. The high-fat nuts are nutritious; and that nasty husk surrounding the nut shell will keep the squirrels off of it for a while. The nuts are roughly the size and color of a tennis ball when they fall off the tree in September. The husks will quickly turn to a brown-black color, and they will remain that color as they shrink and dry out over the fall season. Crack some open and you'll see that the nut meats are rich tasting and fatty. They contain 173 calories an ounce and contain a fair bit of protein, magnesium, phosphorus, copper, and manganese.

Acorn

All oak trees produce edible acorns, and you'll find oaks growing coast to coast and throughout the northern hemisphere. One ounce of acorn nut meat from any species of oak contains 100+ calories. These high-carb nuts also have some fat and a little protein, giving them a nutritional profile similar to that of bread. The bitter tannic acid in them is easily removed by cracking them into pieces and soaking the acorn nut meat chunks in repeating baths of warm water, one hour at a time, until the bitterness is gone. Just don't boil them, as many books instruct.

Persimmon

Another eastern treat is the persimmon. It is related to the persimmon you may find in grocery stores, although the wild one is much smaller and sweeter. Look for very wrinkled, orange-colored fruits in late October. They are very bitter and will give you a strong case of cotton mouth if they

are not yet ripe. Generally, the uglier they look, the sweeter they are. Persimmon fruit has 127 calories and a full day's Vitamin C per 8-ounce cup of pulp.

Rose Hips

The tangy sweet, red colored fruits of wild rose bushes come in at 162 calories per cup. They're a good source of Vitamin E, Vitamin K, calcium, magnesium, Vitamin A, and manganese. They are also a Vitamin C powerhouse, containing 7 times the daily allowance. To avoid getting the wrong fruit, look for compound leaves and thorns on the rose bushes. The red rose hips should also be branching upward, not dangling fruits.

Pine Nuts

The nuts of any large pine tree are a classic survival food. The piñon pine is one of the biggest and best of the western species. Pine nuts are more than half fat by weight, measuring around 1,400 calories per 8-ounce cup. Pine nuts are not just globs of fat, either. They are also a good source of protein, carbohydrates, thiamine, and manganese, with a decent array of other B Vitamins and minerals.

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