



**Food and the
Environment**



PART OF THE
Keep Scotland Beautiful
CHARITY

Local Wild Food

A First Level Creative Inquiry

Introduction

Wild food can be described as anything edible that is harvested or collected for human consumption outside of areas set aside for food production. Wild foods include different parts of plants (leaves, flowers, berries, or nuts) and can often be found in corners of our local environment in urban and rural places.

This creative inquiry focusses on well-known and well-loved wild foods that are likely to be easily identified by someone in your staff team or school community. It uses a foray/treasure hunt as a key challenge which combines observation skills from different contexts. It suggests lines of inquiry to take the learning further and lists some online sources of information.



Key Challenge

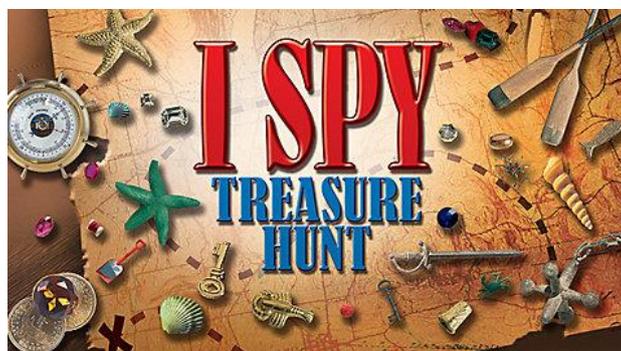
Run a wild food treasure hunt.

Plan and run a treasure hunt in your local area or grounds using wild foods that you can add to a dish for a One Planet Picnic.

The treasure hunt format provides a way to explore your local environment through the lens of wild foods. It is a frame for observation skills, mapping skills and plant identification skills. It is an impetus for discussion about food, seasonality and sustainable harvests as well as a source of great ingredients for a One Planet Picnic. The format described here is not prescriptive; you can adapt it to suit your own context and opportunities. This explanation will use blackberries but you can choose another wild food for your wild food treasure hunt.

Use your Wild Food Treasure Hunt to:

- Introduce the idea of wild food
- Use wild food as the lens to explore and map your local area
- Discuss ways to share a resource
- Consider sustainable harvesting
- Develop place-responsive approaches for learning and teaching



Wild Food Treasure Hunt – How it Works

Children follow a route looking for blackberries. They note where the blackberries are found. This is recorded on a map, either later or at the time: *the hunt is to locate*, not to harvest. When back altogether, the children share their knowledge about where the blackberries are found and how abundant they are. They discuss ways that the blackberries could be shared and who might receive a share. If there are too few to go round, this might mean using them as an ingredient. Harvest, prepare and eat some blackberries. This can

happen on another day or as part of a whole day focus. Discuss what the children can do to increase the wild food treasures next year. Their map will be a useful tool to help their thinking.

Structure the treasure hunt to suit your resources and route, e.g.

- As an individual challenge, following a route all together and relying on memory to later record on a map where the blackberries were.
- In small groups, following different prescribed routes. You can use the same route in a different direction.
- The children mark the locations of the blackberries on a map during the hunt OR after returning from the hunt, relying on memory recall.
- Would technology help? Could the children photograph the blackberries they find as evidence?
- Introduce a competitive element. How can they avoid alerting others to the blackberry locations? Who can spot the most or largest?
- Use your school grounds or routes in the local community.
- Create your own blackberries for the children to find if there are none growing wild near you. Use real fruits, or printed images placed along your route. What is the smallest one that is found?



Before you go

- 1) You need to know that there are blackberries to be found along your route. They are widely found across Scotland in Autumn and there is often someone in a staff team or in the local community who can

confidently identify blackberries. Go for a walk to discover where they may be near you. If you cannot find any, construct your own blackberry stashes as described above.

- 2) The children will need a map of the route they are to follow and for them to record their findings. Make your own or download local maps.
- 3) Follow your usual protocol for external visits if using paths in the community. The children can practise with buddies or helpers how they will negotiate hazards safely before you go.



- 4) The children will all need to be able to recognise blackberries on their wild food treasure hunt. Practise identification skills using real fruits and/or images. Ask the children to draw and describe different berries, comparing and contrasting them. Looking at other parts of the plant can help too.
- 5) Reiterate that the hunt is for finding and mapping the locations – the children should be able to harvest, taste and eat blackberries afterwards. Discuss reasons for a separate tasting/harvesting activity. (e.g. sustainability, safety)

Key Learning Focus

Looking at the local environment from a wild food perspective and sharing wild food harvests sustainably.

Some of these suggested lines of inquiry can be presented for individuals to reflect upon as they hunt and/or used as a basis for group discussions at the end. Some could be activities for another time.



Further possible ideas that may be explored through the challenge;

- What sort of spaces does wild food grow in? Why?
- Would you enjoy more spaces for wild foods to thrive in? What would/wouldn't you enjoy about them?
- What sort of outdoor spaces do you enjoy being in?
- What do notice mostly in your local area? Why do you notice that?
- How is wild food that I find for myself different to other food? How are they alike?
- Is sharing important to you? What is a fair share?
- How can sharing food strengthen relationships?
- Can what and how I eat affect my health and happiness?
- Can my food choices be respectful / disrespectful of others? How? Why?
- What food grows nearby and when?
- How much food do I need? How can I reduce waste food?
- Organise a One Planet Picnic and include your harvested wild food

After the treasure hunt - Reflection

Here are some questions you can use after your wild food treasure hunt to encourage your class to reflect on their experience and what they might like to do next.

- What parts did you decide on for yourself?
- How was responsibility for the activity shared?

- How did your work reflect the part of Scotland you live in?
- Did you have to change direction or go back over your work?
- How did you share and enjoy each other's work?

Here are some suggested questions to help with this reflection.

Q: How did you decide on a strategy for finding the blackberries?

Q: Who did you work with during this activity?

Q: When else might you use what you have learnt? For example, could you go and pick some blackberries together?

Q: How did your treasure hunting strategy work for you? Did you build on, develop or alter your ideas as you hunted?

Q: Have you shared what you learned with others in the class or other friends? Family? People from different generations? What else could you share?

Harvesting tips for Blackberries

Arrange a blackberrying trip to harvest some to taste. Here are some tips for a successful harvest:

Prickles – blackberries have thorns on the stem and sometimes on the main vein on the underside of the leaf. Take care when picking!

Blackberry juice can stain hands and clothes. Old clothes or a cloth to wipe fingers will be useful.



Are they ripe? Blackberries will readily come away from the stalk with a small tug when ripe. The colour is a great clue – they are black when ripe. Don't pick any red or green ones as they will not ripen any further once picked.

Aim higher up – pick berries from higher up, above adult knee height to avoid berries that may have been splashed by rain bouncing up from the ground or urinated on by animals.

Be certain that it is a blackberry. Some berries are toxic. Never pick it if you're not sure.

Sunny spot – the best tasting berries will have ripened in direct sunshine. Which compass direction do your blackberries face? Are they in sun or shaded?

How will you transport the harvest?



Taking Learning Further

- Create a new space for wild foods to colonise and thrive in.
- Plant seeds that can be grown in the school grounds and used in a future One Planet Picnic. Think carefully about the kind of food that you might want to make for the picnic and the season in which you will be hosting your next picnic event.
- Your school might investigate shopping direct from the producer at the farm or farmers market or online. <http://thefoodassembly.com/en#buy>

- What other autumn wild harvests would you like to look for?
<http://www.countryfile.com/countryside/top-10-foods-forage-september>
- Investigate the role of wild foods for people around the world.
<http://blog.cifor.org/30418/wild-food-means-good-food-cifor-study?fnl=en>
- Write a poem about wild foods. Here's a poem called 'Blackberrying' by Sylvia Plath. <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/49004>
- Explore how people in the past in Scotland got their food, and particular times when people take advantage of wild harvests. These soldiers in WW1 are gathering blackberries. What is odd about the trees?
<http://www.seaforthhighlanders.ca/people/703>



Canadian soldiers blackberrying in Bourlon Wood after capturing it. Visible shrapnel damage to trees, October, 1918. Canada. Dept. of National Defence/Library and Archives Canada/PA-003275

- Improve your identification skills and survey a hedgerow
<https://www.opalexplorenature.org/biodiversitysurvey>

Looking out for learning

Head



I have reflected on my own experience of wild foods, my local area and the importance of them in my life.

I have explored how food can be shared and influences on a person's access to food.

I can compare and contrast different foods, where they come from and how they reach my plate.

I can identify and see the benefits of seasonal and locally sourced food.

Heart



I understand what a person eats is an individual's choice.

I can try new foods and discover new tastes and textures.

I choose to eat foods and to learn skills that help me look after myself.

I can show my care for others by sharing food fairly.

I can take action to demonstrate my care for the environment locally.

Hands



I can examine my local area and make informed decisions about what I see.

I can use maps to navigate in my local area and to record my own observations.

I can identify at least one wild food that grows in my local area.

I can help plan, prepare and share a snack with my family and friends.

CfE Experiences and Outcomes

Literacy

When I engage with others, I know when and how to listen, when to talk, how much to say, when to ask questions and how to respond with respect.

LIT 1-02a

I can show my understanding of what I listen to or watch by responding to and asking different kinds of questions.

LIT 1-07a

When listening and talking with others for different purposes, I can exchange information, experiences, explanations, ideas and opinions, and clarify points by asking questions or by asking others to say more.

LIT 1-09a

Using what I know about the features of different types of texts, I can find, select, sort and use information for a specific purpose.

LIT 1-14a

I am learning to use my notes and other types of writing to help me understand information and ideas, explore problems, generate and develop ideas or create new text.

LIT 1-25a

Numeracy

Through exploring how groups of items can be shared equally, I can find a fraction of an amount by applying my knowledge of division.

MNU 1-07b

I can use a calendar to plan and be organised for key events for myself and my class throughout the year.

MNU 1-10b

I have begun to develop a sense of how long tasks take by measuring the time taken to complete a range of activities using a variety of timers.

MNU 1-10c

Social Subjects

I can describe and recreate the characteristics of my local environment by exploring the features of the landscape.

SOC 1-07a

I can consider ways of looking after my school or community and can encourage others to care for their environment.

SOC 1-08a

Through activities in my local area, I have developed my mental map and sense of place. I can create and use maps of the area.

SOC 1-14a

I can contribute to a discussion of the difference between my needs and wants and those of others around me.

SOC 1-16a

I have participated in decision making and have considered the different options available in order to make decisions.

SOC 1-18a

Technology

Throughout all my learning, I take appropriate action to ensure conservation of

materials and resources, considering the impact of my actions on the environment.

TCH 1-02a

Religious and Moral Education

I can show my understanding of values such as caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love.

RME 1-09b

I am becoming aware that people's beliefs and values affect their actions.

RME 1-09c

Health and Wellbeing

I make full use of and value the opportunities I am given to improve and manage my learning and, in turn, I can help to encourage learning and confidence in others.

HWB 1-11a

Through taking part in a variety of events and activities, I am learning to recognise my own skills and abilities as well as those of others.

HWB 1-19a

By investigating the range of foods available I can discuss how they contribute to a healthy diet.

HWB 1-30a

When preparing and cooking a variety of foods, I am becoming aware of the journeys which foods make from source to consumer, their seasonality, their local availability and their sustainability.

HWB 1-35a

Resources

One Planet Picnic

<http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org/sustainable-development-education/food-and-the-environment/one-planet-picnic/>

Sustainable Development Goals

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/?menu=1300>

Food Resources

<http://www.wildfoodschool.co.uk/urban/wfsurbanguide.pdf>

<http://www.ediblewildfood.com/foraging-for-food.aspx>

<http://www.foodafactoflife.org.uk/Sheet.aspx?siteId=20§ionId=85&contentId=692>

<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/blackberry>

Social Eating

http://www.sparkpeople.com/resource/nutrition_articles.asp?id=439