

Creating a Guide to Foraging in Sacramento

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Foraging 101 in the Sacramento Area

If you have ever walked through a local park, around trails, or even in your backyard, there is a good chance you have dismissed many plants as weeds. As it turns out, many of these so-called weeds actually have useful purposes, but if you don't have the knowledge to identify them, they might as well be invisible.

Access to nutritious food is a challenge for many in our community. Food deserts and food insecurity are serious obstacles. To help offer a unique way to bridge the gap, we suggest utilizing these naturally growing and plentiful plants. However, foraging without guidance can be risky. Consuming the wrong plant that contains harmful substances could lead to illness. That's why education is the first step toward reclaiming these natural resources.

Is Foraging a Resource for You?

Understanding how to supplement your diet with local, wild-grown food starts with a question:

- Do you feel you lack knowledge as to what plants are safe for consumption, and those that are harmful?

If these questions resonate with you, there are others with similar inquiries. Our group has partnered with Alchemist Community Development Corporation (CDC) to design accessible, easy to understand, resources that inform on edible plants in the Sacramento region.

Explore Local Foraging Resources

In our time working with Amber Hamby (Garden Coordinator), Alma Wilcox (CalFresh at Farmers Markets), and Joe Robeustelli (Director of Food Access) at Alchemist CDC, we curated some elementary educational facts to inform the public on safe foraging practice.

Our group designed a foraging pamphlet and posterboard that showcases common edible plants in the greater Sacramento region. To make this information digestible, we included the following in our presentables:

- **Identification Guides:** Descriptions of edible parts of plants and uses.
- **Safety Tips:** Information to ensure you are not foraging and consuming toxic look-alikes.
- **Common Uses:** Pictures, recipes, and other uses that are practical for at home use.
- **Resources:** recommendations to books, guides, and programs for those interested in additional resources or seeking professional help.
- **Digital Access:** Our pamphlet guide can be found online by scanning the QR code on our posterboard at booths.



Figure 1. QR Code for Pamphlet Viewing

Our Time at the Farmers Market

In our nursing program at California Northstate University, our group (Matthew, Tyler and Ryan) are in a course focusing heavily on community engagement. As part of the course, we were tasked with producing a project partnering with Alchemist CDC that aimed to impact our local community, with regard specifically to food insecurity. In doing so, we have not only gained knowledge in foraging techniques and practices, but have gained experience in interacting, educating, and participating with our community members.

We wanted to do an in-person demonstration, so that we can interact with people in an outdoor environment and attract people who may have heard of foraging but have not committed to the activity. This is why we hosted community booths at the Alchemist CDC local farmers markets. We handed out pamphlets and answered any questions we could to the community. Our

booths were available for display at the Rancho Cordova and Elk Grove markets on alternating Saturdays.



Figure 2. Community Booth at Rancho Cordova Farmers Market