

Survival Foraging on the Move

Survival Foraging

One of my favorite techniques for finding survival food when practicing survival skills is what I call “Survival Foraging on the Move”. This simple but effective method requires the survivor to expend little additional energy yet can produce a bountiful harvest of very nutritious wild edibles. The sheer amount of survival food you can conjure up with very little extra effort is sometimes more than you can possibly eat!

The main criteria for the Survival Foraging on the Move method are:

1. You are attempting to walk from point A to point B, perhaps toward help.
2. That the wild foods you gather be on the direct route of travel and require a minimum of time and effort for acquisition.
3. You do not veer off your chosen path to chase after anything fleeing, and thereby use up precious energy and time that may become wasted effort.
4. You throw away any food prejudices you may have. Remember, insects and other creepy crawlies are being used as food on a daily basis by many cultures throughout the world. Do not put your survival at risk due to ignorance.



Hungry Survivor

The idea for successful survival foraging is to keep a constant eye out for easy-to-get wild edibles no matter how small or of what type (animal, insect, or plant) they might be. Stick to your route and pause momentarily to collect edibles of opportunity as you go. This means that anything you harvest is almost free energy since you have to walk the route anyway and you will need occasional rest breaks that the collection of food will conveniently provide.

Practicing Survival Foraging

On a recent survival skills trip I decided to practice Survival Foraging on the Move. As I walked through the forest for several miles toward my intended destination I continually scanned my immediate surroundings for anything I might be able to add to the cooking pot with only minimal effort.

Edible Clover

The first edible wild food I chanced upon was a bed of woods sorrel. This clover like plant prefers to grow in cooler, damp areas of the forest. It is an excellent salad green with a delicious lemony flavor that tastes great in soups and stews. Though low on calories as are many vegetables, this wild edible plant contains many important nutrients that will help your body maintain and heal itself.



In short order I collected about a 1/4 liter or 1/4 quart of woods sorrel and then was on my way. The brief pause while collecting the woods sorrel was a welcome break and I resumed my walk refreshed. This is an important part of Survival Foraging on the Move: the short breaks you take while gathering the food items provide the necessary rest-stops as you travel over long distances.

Slugs are Good Survival Food

Next up on the wild foods survival menu was a common slug inching across a damp rock. It took little effort to merely stoop down and pick it up, hardly breaking my stride. Along the route of march I came upon ten or twelve of his kind, all of which went into the survival food

larder.



My technique for dealing wild survival foods that can run, wiggle, or fly is to put them into a container that has several inches of water in it. This immobilizes the creatures so that they cannot escape when I open the cover to add more.

Eat the Bugs that Eat You!

As I continued walking there was an annoying buzz around my head. Two deer flies were attempting to make a meal of me, but I captured them as they landed on my arm. Like most insects flies are an excellent source of fats and protein. Though about the size of a large housefly I put them into the container with the slugs. In a survival situation do not pass up any source of free food. It all adds up and may help you live another day.



Indian Cucumber

When your survival is at stake you need to put aside any preconceived notions as to what you can and cannot eat. People the world over eat insects as a matter of course and you can too. The way I see it, if you can eat a clam (a worm in a shell that fliter feeds from sewerage) , then you can eat anything.

Eating Grasshoppers - Excellent Survival Food

Eventually I came upon a little clearing in the woods. As I walked through the tall grass dozens of large grasshoppers were jumping away from me. It was like herding miniature livestock. Some of these grasshoppers were almost as large as my little finger and quite easy to catch because the cool weather made them somewhat lethargic.

Because the grasshoppers were an easy to gather source of high protein and fat energy, I took a five minute break and captured seven or eight of this excellent survival food (see Grasshopper Recipies).

Survival Starches



Common Slug

Back in the deep dark forest I continued on. Here and there I harvested an Indian Cucumber. The Indian Cucumber plant is easily identifiable and has a starchy root that is something between a cucumber and a potato. This nutritious root is easily harvested with a short digging stick. It only takes a few seconds to extract the root using the narrow end of my tomahawk.

Pausing here and there along my journey, I was able to dig up a dozen or more Indian Cucumber roots. This provided me with a handful of excellent survival food high in starch and at little cost in terms of time or energy expended.

Ants are Good Survival Food Snacks

The next survival food I came upon was a nest of black ants that had created a mound on the surface of the ground. A bear had already harvested the nest, and the ants were busy rebuilding. Following the bears method, I dug into the nest with a swipe of the tomahawk to expose a swarm of angry ants and ant pupae, both of which I gathered and put into the jug of water. It was easy to capture the ants as they attacked my hand but were too small to do anything but give a light pinch.



Be warned that some species of ants have the ability to sting or bite and can be very dangerous especially in large numbers. Even so, all species of ants are edible.

Wood Sorrell

Pine Needles are Nutritious

Next up on the menu was a white pine tree (*pinus strobus*) the needles of which are very high in vitamin C and other nutrients. It was an easy matter to gather a handful of its green needles.

Vitamin C is a very important nutrient for the survivor as it is essential for the recovery process and the healing of wounds. The Survival Topic *A Native American Cure for Scurvy* has an historical account related to this.

In a real survival situation I could also strip off the edible inner bark of the pine tree, which comes off in thick sheets quite easily. This of course would kill the tree and so is not a good thing to do unless absolutely necessary. When boiled this bark makes a very good survival food that Indians of my area once ate during times of famine.



Cooking the Survival Food

Pine Needles

As I traveled along I knew that I was going to need a fire in order to cook the wild survival foods I was gathering. Cooking is important as this will not only make the food more appealing but also destroy parasites or disease causing organisms that may be in the water, the insects, or the dirt on the roots I gathered. So when I chanced upon a sheet of birch bark that had fallen from a tree I picked up this excellent fire starter.

Nearing the end of the journey I came upon a small stream. A excellent place to obtain water for cooking and for refilling my water containers. Of course any untested source of water must be treated to destroy pathogens, no matter how pristine it may appear. This beautiful clear brook may harbor giardia or even a dead moose just upstream.



Birch Bark Firestarter

My favorite method of making water safe to drink is to boil it. As discussed in other Survival Topics, boiling is the best method for destroying disease causing organisms. And for this purpose I always carry a 1-pint Kelly Kettle that also serves as the container for a survival kit. My Kelly kettle is rigged with a pot holder extension so that I can use it for cooking food at the same time I am boiling drinking water.

In the picture you can see the Kelly Kettle in action boiling drinking water. The afternoon meal of foraged on the move wild survival foods are simmering in the cook pot:

- 1/4 liter wood sorrel petals
- 11 slugs
- 2 deer flies
- 8 large grasshoppers
- 50 medium size black ants and ant pupae
- A handful of Indian Cucumber roots
- A handful of pine needles, chopped
- One chicken bouillon cube, from my survival kit

The wood sorrel quickly cooked down into a small amount greens, something like spinach but much more tasty. Its lemon flavor makes for excellent soup flavoring!

Chock full of protein, fats, carbohydrates, and vitamins, Survival Foraging on the Move provided me with an ample tasty meal in just a few hours time during which I was completing my journey. Survival Foraging on the Move is like a large treasure hut in which you put your survival food gathering skills to the test.

Whether you are supplementing the food you are carrying or living totally off the land, I suggest you give Survival Foraging on the Move a try, it is a lot of fun and can very well save your life.

Ah, surviving in the wilderness. Bon Appetite!



These two pesky deer flies were attempting to bite me. Into the pot they go!

Most, but not all, insects are edible if you cook them (to destroy parasites and disease causing organisms). People throughout the world routinely eat insects.

A survival situation is not the time to be squeemish. Don not waste any source of nutritious food that comes your way. AND get revenge on those biting insects.