

Don't forget to use wild edible herbs and fruits



Wild edible herbs salad. Roser Cristóbal -CTFC-

Keywords

Rural economy

gastronomy

ecotourism

ethnobotany

aromatics

essential oils

natural remedies

wild harvested plants

NWFP

Aromatic & Medicinal Plants

Scale

Subnational



Context

Food is not only nourishing but also drinking, seasoning and preserving. The role of wild plants in food, linked to local popular knowledge, is still relevant in Catalonia. A Ratafia, traditional liquor from Catalonia, contains more than 100 different plants. The coscoll (*Molopospermum peloponnesiacum*) or the xicoina (*Taraxacum dissectum*) are much appreciated as a salad. Thyme soup (*Thymus vulgaris* or *Th. serpyllum*) is common in every house. The wild species that in a context is a weed, can be useful and should not be forgotten or belittled.



Objective

Wild species must be recovered and their uses incorporated daily as normal. We must document the traditional uses of vegetation and promote actions aimed at citizens to publicise them. The research and dissemination axes are essential, but they must be accompanied by the development of business models that also allow the commercialisation of products. In Catalonia (Spain) there are several associations and companies that work to value them, either in the gastronomic field or as a tourist activity.



Results

In Catalonia, the "Eixarcolant" collective recovers the traditional uses of vegetation, through research, product development and dissemination, organizing the "Gastronomic Day of Forgotten Plants". There are other fairs dedicated to herbs with a relevant role of culinary uses: "Forgotten Fruits and Herbs of Catalonia" (ARÇ day), the "Spice Market", "Remeiart", or the "Ratafia Herbs Market". And private initiatives: "Els Corremarges" promote wild foods, "Espècies a mà" produces wild salt, "La Calendula" restaurant offers a kitchen inspired by herbs and fruits collected daily, and "Naturalwalks" develops ecotourism and consulting activities to restaurants and catering schools.



Recommendations

We must make known the food uses of wild plants in the most experiential way possible, through tastings and workshops aimed at citizens, and exchanges between professionals, producers and technicians to create synergies that guarantee the knowledge, recovery and application of herbs and wild fruits in different fields and sectors. Apart from valuing the rich gastronomic tradition, it is necessary to promote healthy eating and new culinary uses. Thus, the recovery of ethnobotanical knowledge can serve as inspiration for the development of innovative products.



Impacts and weaknesses

Wild plants are products that we rarely imagine having food use, either they are considered low quality products or they can paradoxically be elitist products outside the consumer's supply. Therefore, it is understandable that it is difficult to enter the population schemes to incorporate them into a diet.



Future developments

It is necessary to continue documenting the traditional uses of vegetation, wild species and traditional varieties, used in food, for the cultural and natural heritage they represent and as an essential base from which to achieve the real recovery of these uses, species and varieties, duly adapted to the current socioeconomic context. The dissemination actions must go in this direction, but it is also necessary to make available to the consumer quality products that maintain environmental, social and economic sustainability at all stages of the process.



Tasting of meals made with wild vegetation during Gastronomic Day of Forgotten Plants in Igualada (Catalonia), organized by the "Eixarcolant" group.

Further information

Garnatje, T.; Muntané, J.; Parada, M.; Rigat, M.; Vallès, J. Plantes alimentàries del Pirineu català. Ed. Farell. 2012.

Col·lectiu Eixarcolant <https://eixarcolant.cat/>

ARÇ - Diada Fruits i Herbes Oblidades <https://www.facebook.com/Diadafruitsoblidats/>

El Mercat de les espècies <http://www.eltrill.org/mercat-deles-esppecies/>

Remeiart <http://remeiart.cat/>

Mercat de les herbes de la Ratafia <http://ratafia.cat/>

Espècies a mà <https://www.facebook.com/EsppeciesaMa>

Els Corremarges <https://elscorremarges.wordpress.com>

La Caléndula <https://www.iolandabustos.com/>

<https://www.lavanguardia.com/comer/siguela/20190508/462097278689/iolanda...>

Naturalwalks <http://naturalwalks.com/>

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About INCREDIBLE Project

INCREDIBLE project aims to show how Non-Wood Forest Products (NWFP) can play an important role in supporting sustainable forest management and rural development, by creating networks to share and exchange knowledge and expertise. 'Innovation Networks of Cork, Resins and Edibles in the Mediterranean basin' (INCREDIBLE) promotes cross-sectoral collaboration and innovation to highlight the value and potential of NWFPs in the region.



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