Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force

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Date: December 2, 2025
To: Minnesota Sustainable Foraging Task Force
From: Nick Nero, Research Analyst
RE: Wisconsin and Washington County, MN Foraging Information

Wisconsin Laws and Regulations

For State lands in general:

NR 45.04(1s) Collecting. Except as specifically provided in this subsection, a person may collect any of the following materials for noncommercial use:

> **1.** Edible fruits, edible nuts, wild mushrooms, wild asparagus, and watercress may be collected by hand for the purpose of personal consumption by the collector.
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> **2.** Herbaceous plant species that are listed as prohibited plant invasive species under s. NR 40.04 (2) (b), listed as restricted plant invasive species under s. NR 40.05 (2) (b), or considered non-restricted invasive species under s. NR 40.03 (1), may be removed without written permission or a permit issued under this chapter.
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> > **Note:** A list of non-restricted invasive species is available on the department's website at https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/what.html. Possession, movement, and proper disposal of invasive species is regulated under ch. NR 40 and an invasive species permit issued under that chapter may be required unless the invasive plants are left or disposed of onsite.
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> **4.** Except for edible fruits, edible nuts, and edible seeds collected for personal consumption under this paragraph, a person wishing to collect seeds from herbaceous plants, including grasses and wildflowers, or seeds or nuts from woody plants, or both, on department lands shall apply for and obtain a seed collecting permit from the department.

Note: The seed collecting permit application form is available at https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/forms/1700/1700-039.pdf.

For State Natural Areas (SNA) in particular:

23.28 State natural areas; designated state natural areas.
3) PROTECTION OF NATURAL VALUES; RESEARCH NATURAL AREAS. The department shall not permit any use of a designated state natural area which is inconsistent with or injurious to its natural values.

NR 45.13 Specific property rules. (1) STATE NATURAL AREAS — GENERAL. Within the boundaries of state natural areas posted with appropriate signs:

(c) No person may destroy, remove or attempt to remove any plant or plant part, without permission from the department except as provided for in s. NR 45.04(1s)

Washington County Foraging Permit Confirmation Email:

Thank you for obtaining your 2025 Foraging Permit for Washington County Parks. Please follow the guidelines below and visit our website to obtain additional information on foraging as a recreational activity, including safety precautions, tips, and tricks. Please contact Parks staff if you have any questions.

- For your safety and to protect plant habitats, **only forage in areas that are clearly marked as allowed**.
- **You are responsible for correctly identifying plants**. Some poisonous plants look similar to edible ones, so be careful!
- **Know the right season to harvest each plant or mushroom**. Picking at the right time helps keep the plants healthy and ensures they are safe and good to eat.
- **Only take what you plan to use**. Leave some behind for wildlife and to allow the plants and fungi to grow back for future seasons.
- **Use the proper tools** and harvest in a way that causes as little harm to the environment as possible.
- **Do not dig up roots**. You may only collect fungi, berries, nuts, seeds, flowers, and leaves. Avoid disturbing the soil to help prevent the spread of invasive species.