



10 BERRIES YOU SHOULD LOOK FOR IN THE WOODS

Posted on July 27, 2021 by Stacy Filton

Mother Nature Has Given Us A Berry Abundance! But Which Ones Should You Be On The Look Out For In The Woods?

Walking in the woods is such a serene experience. When walking in the woods, you may often come across some elements of nature that you know nothing about and wonder what they are and what they do!

Berries are one of those elements! With over 400 varieties of berries in America alone, it's often difficult to recognize the edible from the inedible and the good from the not-so-good.

Berries that grow in wooded areas can vary significantly in size, shape, color, and of course, variety. But how on earth do we tell which ones are which? And how do we know whether they have hidden benefits or hidden risks underneath the often attractive exterior?

Let's take a wander through 10 of the varieties of berries you might find while out in the woods and how you can use them when you come across them.

Blackberries

Scientific Name: Rubus

Where To Find Them: Eastern America/Pacific Coast

When To Find Them: July-August

Blackberries are amongst the most common berries found in woodland areas the world over and can grow in vast amounts year after year.

They grow on thorny bushes and look similar to raspberries in their appearance but are distinguishable by their deep purple/blue color.

How To Use Them:

Blackberries are incredibly versatile, and when they are ripe, you can eat them straight from the bush!

Given their high antioxidant properties, eating them in any way will be particularly good for your health!

You can use blackberries to make jams, fruit pies, or make the most beautiful blackberry-infused tea, by steeping the berries in hot water. This is equally delicious to drink as an Iced tea too!

Buffaloberries

Scientific Name: Shepherdia Argentea

Where To Find Them: Central and Western North America

When To Find Them: July-September

Don't let the strange name fool you into thinking these berries are big!

These tiny little bright red berries grow in clusters on banks and hillsides and are very similar to cranberries in appearance, and pack a seriously sour punch!

Native to Central and Western North America, you can find these berries from California to Arizona.

How To Use Them:

These berries can be eaten whole, but it can be a very sharp experience!

We recommend using these in the more sugared preparations such as jams or in a sweet and sour sauce and the sour component.

These tiny red gems are rich in lycopene, which is said to reduce the risk of some types of cancer.

Barberries

Scientific Name: Berberis

Where To Find Them: Southern/Central North America

When To Find Them: August/September

Barberries are a red color and can be found on thorny shrubs across all Southern parts of North America, but the Barberry originates from Europe!

Small and elongated in shape, Barberries are particularly difficult to pick, given the spiky surroundings of the bush.

How To Use Them:

Rich in vitamin C, these small pale red berries can be dried and freeze-dried for use in rice dishes and earthy dishes that require a sour punch.

The Barberry will benefit from adding sugar or syrup if they are being used as an ingredient in the kitchen, so dishes such as summer puddings and chutneys may be an appropriate use!

Chokeberries

Scientific Name: Aronia

Where To Find Them: Eastern North America

When To Find Them: September- December

Now, these berries have a name that raises the alarm! But this is only a part-caution to these deep purple, medium-sized berries.

While they may not actually choke you in the asphyxiation sense, they are so bitterly sour they may make your face reflect the overriding sourness!

They hold many antioxidants that may help to relieve symptoms of some chronic illnesses, such as high blood pressure and inflammation.

How To Use Them:

Chokeberries can be eaten raw with no culinary intervention; however, any additional sweetness would counteract their sharpness given their natural tart flavor.

You may also find chokeberry inside some health capsules as a supplement.

[Click Here for a Complete Guide to 400 Wild Plants That You Can Forage For](#)

Cloudbberries

Scientific Name: *Rubus chamaemorus*

Where To Find Them: Alaska, Maine, Minnesota, New York, and New Hampshire.

When To Find Them: May-August

The cloudberry is a mix of blush peach and pink in color and forms the "berry" with small segmented clusters of juicy pockets, similar in appearance to a raspberry or blackberry.

Cloudbberries grow on the ground in far northern parts of America, Canada, and Alaska and are incredibly tart to taste!

How To Use Them:

Extremely high in vitamins

A & C, Cloudbberries may help the body protect itself from ailments such as cardiovascular disease and may help to strengthen the immune system.

Again, their sharp flavor would benefit from additional sweetness for cooking, such as sugar syrup, meringues, and sweetened whip!

Dewberries

Scientific Name: *Rubus caesius*

Where To Find Them: Southern North America

When To Find Them: March-April

Dewberries are very closely related to the blackberry and raspberry, and this is evident in the segmented appearance of the whole fruit, although smaller in size. Found growing low on woodland floors or the roadsides, they creep as they grow and have very spiky surroundings, which may be to protect the very delicate fruit itself.

How To Use Them:

The Dewberry is a wholly beneficial plant as the leaves can be safely consumed too (Usually herbal tea).

However, the dark purple-to-blue berries are naturally sweet to be eaten at source or added to other berries for a summer Berry salad or in jello for an adult dessert.

Saskatoons

Scientific Name: Amelanchier alnifolia

Where To Find Them: Central North and Western North America

When To Find Them: June/July

Saskatoons are a berry that is a doppelganger for a blueberry, but instead of growing in a carpet style, they grow in tiny clusters on trees.

Deep blueish color with a dusty coat, saskatoon berries are packed full to the brim with antioxidant properties that will see you in good health.

How To Use Them:

Although not as sweet as a blueberry, saskatoons have the delicate flesh you'd expect from a berry and can still be eaten straight from the tree, as well as be used in pancakes, smoothies, and scattered on desserts.

Cowberries

Scientific Name: Vaccinium Vitisidaea

Where To Find Them: Pacific Northwest to Alaska, Massachusetts, and Maine

When To Find Them: June-August Cowberries grow beautifully in clusters, and the berry itself is a plump, shiny red jewel.

Similar in berry status to the cranberry, these small and perfectly round berries are pretty firm and

have a sharp and tart taste.

How To Use Them:

They are packed with vitamin C, much like the cranberry, and lend themselves perfectly to preserves and baking.

They would also be a tremendous and contrasting accompaniment to a cheeseboard.

Huckleberries

Scientific Name: *Vaccinium membranaceum*

Where To Find Them: Widespread Clusters, Specifically Northwestern Territories

When To Find Them: July-August

You will find Huckleberries in mountainous, cool, and moist woodland settings, hiding amongst the lush green leaves of their host!

You'd be forgiven for easily mistaking them for a blueberry, and if it wasn't for the fact that the huckleberry grows on trees as opposed to a floor-level blanket style, you might easily get the two confused! The huckleberries are very similar in color to a blueberry, too, sporting a deep purple/blueish color.

The deep color often denotes the level of goodness in fruit by way of antioxidants, and the huckleberry is no different.

How To Use Them:

Well, you can use these berries similarly to blueberries, so using them in breakfast dishes, baking and smoothies will all get the best out of this beautiful berry.

Full of antioxidants, the huckleberries will bring an extra layer of health benefits to your day.

Elderberries

Scientific Name: *Sambucus canadensis*

Where To Find Them: East Of The Rocky Mountain, and Southward

When To Find Them: July-September

Elderberries are an immune-boosting dream berry!

Packed with immune-boosting properties and minerals, elderberries grow in large bunches of tiny dark purple berries on red stems.

Elderberries thrive in cooler climates and will grow in large numbers for a well-established bush.

How To Use Them:

Given that they can grow in huge numbers in the right environment, elderberries are usually cultivated and used in health-boosting products for natural wellbeing.

You will find elderberries the perfect berry for preserves, cordials, and put-in summer drinks for that special health-conscious touch.

Cooked ripe elderberries are perfectly edible. Unripe elderberries are poisonous. Raw berries can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, among other symptoms, so be sure to cook them before eating. Cooking the berries also improves their flavor.

There is such a rich abundance of wild berries you can look for when out on a woodland walk, and many of these are edible right from the tree or bush and so full of great things for your health and immune system.

Of course, finding certain berries on your travels will totally depend on where you are in America and what berries are native to your local area; there will likely be many more you find on your travels!

Have fun finding berries, but always make sure that you can identify them successfully before you decide to consume them in any way!

You may also like:

[How to Use Mulberry Medicinally](#)

[Erratic Blood Sugar? Never Eat This Veggie](#) (Video)

[How To Make Your Own Raspberry Vinegar](#)

[Elderberry Syrup With Echinacea and Goldenseal](#)

[DIY Elderflower And Rosehip Salve](#)

Comments



Elaine Miller - 2022-07-26 18:24:49

You did mention the raw Elderberries were toxic if eaten raw or underripe. Love receiving all your info on wild plants.



Ruby - 2022-07-03 13:27:17

I recently purchased 2 acres in Northern California and I have blue and red huckleberries. Mostly red, though. Can't wait to harvest them.



Cosette - 2022-05-12 04:33:19

American native elderberry varieties are the only ones that are not toxic when eaten ripe and raw as only the American native varieties do not contain cyanide. When foraging, it is best to assume they are not an American variety and cook them unless you know for sure that they are an American variety.



Charles - 2021-10-14 09:02:16

I have this tree here it produces berries. I am not sure if they are edible but the birds eat them. They are dry, not much juice but taste nice. Is there somewhere I can send or upload the picture



Margo Moore - 2021-10-10 01:16:53

Could you post a picture? I live in northern Illinois and don't recall seeing anything like a silverberry.



Kelly - 2021-10-06 12:44:35

Here in NW Arkansas the black raspberries are the first to ripen in late May to early June. Occasionally you can find them in a golden color, which is a treat. Makes great jam if you freeze them until you have blackberries and blueberries to add. This "black and blue" combination is really tasty.



Lynne - 2021-10-06 05:08:18

Love this article, thanks., but you've overlooked one berry that has ten to twelve times the antioxidant value of blueberries, known as Autumn Olive: *Eleagnus Umbelata*, also known as silverberry. This semi tart, single seed fruit has tiny white specks and leaves that have a silvery underside. It grows abundantly in fields and forest edges and is considered to be invasive in some states., nonetheless this beautiful berry is delicious as a snack, in jams and as fruit leathers. It blooms in late Fall.



Scott Markham - 2021-08-24 10:53:16

I've eaten raw also but to me they're nasty tasting. I make what I call Dr.Toe's Tonic for the Flu season. Been doing this for over 6 years. It better than any poisonous Flu shot. 2tbls. of each AVC,lemon juice, local honey, elderberry syrup and 1/4tsp. of cinnamon mixed with 20oz. of water drink once a month for the Flu season or year round, your preference !



The Lost Herbs - 2021-08-11 12:58:29

Hi Paul, Cooked ripe elderberries are perfectly edible. Unripe elderberries are poisonous. Raw berries can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, among other symptoms, so be sure to cook them before eating. Cooking the berries also improves their flavor. Many blessings and good health!



The Lost Herbs - 2021-08-03 14:38:42

Hi Aimee, Thank you so much for your feedback and for your continuous support. We apologize that the article was incomplete. In the meantime, we added the safety concerns as well. Cooked ripe elderberries are perfectly edible. Unripe elderberries are poisonous. Raw berries can cause nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea, among other symptoms, so be sure to cook them before eating. Cooking the berries also improves their flavor. Many blessings and good health!



The Lost Herbs - 2021-08-03 14:33:53

Hi Fanny, Thank you for your comment. I'm glad to hear you liked our article. Many blessings!



Deb - 2021-08-03 00:35:07

Older huckleberry shrubs actually grow into small trees in the southeast.



Eliza - 2021-08-02 15:49:37

That's great to know, thanks, Margo!



Margo Moore - 2021-07-30 03:36:24

I should have spotted that one myself, having picked and eaten wild black raspberries, also called blackcaps, throughout my childhood. Here in Northern Illinois, they grow in woodlands, and on the North edges of wooded areas. They grow on a low bramble that is quite thorny. For some reason, they nearly always ripen on or around the 4th of July weekend. Oh, and in Wisconsin, especially around Delavan Lake, there grow RED chokecherries on enormous trees. You'd need lift-type equipment to pick them but the yield per tree might be worth it. Can't recall in what season they ripen.



Russ - 2021-07-29 12:13:06

Anyone know if any of these berries can be found in Central Europe? (Other than Elderberry of course).



Theresa Pedittomber - 2021-07-29 10:53:11

Invasive here in my yard. Zone 7. They are as bad as the worst wisteria.. impossible to i Eradicate!



Theresa Pedittomber - 2021-07-29 10:49:45

My name was jumbled in the reply. Its Theresa Pember



Theresa Pedittomber - 2021-07-29 10:47:43

Ditto



Theresa Pember - 2021-07-29 10:45:27

I was eating my elderberries raw until i learned from reputable sources that Consumption of raw elderberries can cause an accumulation of Cyanide inducing glycosides. Now I'm reading comments of flowers and berries are ok. I've eaten raw berries for years without any apparent issues. I don't want to heat them and ruin their medicinal properties. I need to get some solid reputable answers. More research needed.



Margo Moore - 2021-07-29 00:00:17

In Illinois, they begin to ripen in the first week of June; wait for them to ripen to a deep purplish color if you want to enjoy the full flavor. Here they are usually referred to as serviceberries. They are one of the best choices if you are interested in making pemmican since they are less juicy than blueberries.



Cynthia - 2021-07-28 18:04:43

Elderberries are listed for cool climates but they're so rampant here in the deep south they can be invasive!



Rivk - 2021-07-28 16:56:47

InnWestern Washington we also have native blackberries (smaller and grow on low growing vines) , thimble berries, salmon berries, red huckleberries, shalal berries and Oregon grape



Rick - 2021-07-28 16:50:37

And in western Washington state they usually are red!



Ronald Bolt - 2021-07-28 13:01:41

Let me correct myself, raw elderberries can cause stomach upset and unripe berries are toxic. Aimee is correct in that the whole tree is toxic except for the flowers and ripe berries



Ronald Bolt - 2021-07-28 12:49:49

It is surprising, but elderberries are not toxic. It is the stems and branches that is toxic. If you read up on them, all books tell you to make sure to remove all stems from the berries.



Paul - 2021-07-28 09:08:31

Aren't elderberries toxic unless cooked?



Aimee - 2021-07-28 07:06:48

I'm pretty sure elderberries are toxic unless cooked.... Surprised that's not mentioned as a warning. You should never eat them fresh. And only the fruit and flowers are edible at all. The rest of the plant is toxic. Also, the difference between blackberries and raspberries isn't the color, but a solid center in blackberries and hollow center in raspberries. There are actually black raspberries that are the same color as blackberries and they're common in the woods around me. I really like what this website is trying to do, and I like the books, but please edit your articles more carefully for better accuracy and important safety information!



Sally Walsh - 2021-07-28 03:06:52

Elderberries should not be eaten raw. They need to be cooked to avoid gastric upset.



Beth H - 2021-07-27 23:40:46

You missed black raspberries that grow wild nearly everywhere in the Midwest. Plus wild grapes.



Janna Kats - 2021-07-27 20:28:56

Interesting but I live in Europe and I would like information over berries in that environment. I know blackberries. They grow in my garden.



Ronald Bolt - 2021-07-27 15:41:52

In the South we have a Huckleberry that is the size of a BB, but It grows on a bush, not a tree. It is the same color as the other Huckleberry or Blueberry and is it ever wonderful.



Ronald P Mattison - 2021-07-27 15:35:03

Do any of these have poisonous or digestive upsetting look a likes?



Fanny Laure - 2021-07-27 15:34:25

This is really nice! Useful guide for wild picking☺thanks



Alicia - 2021-07-27 15:22:05

Huckleberries do not grow on trees, actually. They grow on bushes low to the ground.



Eliza - 2021-07-27 14:43:12

Never seen saskatoons before; will definitely be on the lookout, thanks!