

4-3 Identifying Local Edible Plants

In Task 4-2, the team conducted a deeper assessment of several food access points. You learned more about what types, quality, and prices of foods offered at these places. However, stores and markets are not the only places humans can access food. Edible plants that grow naturally in your community can be a sustainable source of food. In many communities, this can be part of a solution for urban and rural communities where food access points are not always accessible.


Objective



In this task, the team will conduct a plant survey within the area of the research site. Then, using credible resources, the team will determine whether any of these plants are edible. Using this data, the team can determine if these sources of food could be useful for the community.

In this task, the team will be focusing on the following questions from the question map.

- **Where are all of the access points for food in the community?**
- **What evidence could we collect to help define food- and nutrition-related problems in our community?**

1. Go to the Task 4-3 folder and get the plant survey instructions, Plant Survey Identification Form, and discussion questions . You  will also need your research site map.
2. Survey your research area for plants, following the directions in the task folder.
3. Use resources to identify each plant and determine if it is edible or not.
4. Discuss the questions in the task folder, based on whether you did or did not find edible plants.
5. As a team, discuss the following:
 - How could this survey be useful when thinking about the question, **Where are all of the access points for food in the community?**
 - How could this map be useful when thinking about the problem question, **How do we ensure good nutrition for all?**



Task 4-3. Identifying Local Edible Plants

Survey Your Research Area

With your team, visit the research area that is designated on your map from Task 2-1. Search for any plants you find within the research area. Sketch and, if possible, take pictures of the plants you find.

Optional: Take one or two samples, **if appropriate**, of plants you sketched or took pictures of. If you find a plant on private property, **do not take a sample without express permission from the property owner**.

If your research area is too large to reasonably survey on foot, select a section of your research area to survey. If you are surveying only a portion of your research area, be sure you and your team marks the map to show which portion of your research area was surveyed.

Identify Plants

Using the visual documentation you made and any samples taken from your team's survey of the research area, identify all the plants that you were able to find, using any field guides or other resources you have available. We suggest PlantSnap (free version) for those with access to mobile devices. Use the Plant Survey Identification Form to record your data.

Search for Edible Plants

Using your class copy of *Edible Wild Plants: A North American Field Guide to Over 200 Natural Foods* (or any other credible edible plant field guide), check to see if any of the plants your team identified are edible. Use the Plant Survey Identification Form to record your findings.

Team Discussion

If your team **found edible plants** in your survey area, discuss:

- Did it look as if people actively use those plants as food?
- Do you think people in your community know those plants are edible?
- Do you think using edible plants as landscaping and in community spaces is a good way of providing food for your community? Why or why not?

If you team **didn't find any edible plants** in your survey area, discuss:

- Are there any edible plants that you learned should be growing in your community?
- Why do you think these plants aren't present in your community?
- Do you think using edible plants as landscaping and in community spaces is a good way of providing food for your community? Why or why not?



Plant Survey Identification Form

Drawing (and, if applicable, picture file name)	Common name	Scientific name	Edible? (yes or no)



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