



## Rosé wines:

Japanese knotweed spears *Fallopia japonica* make a Rhubarb-like pinot that is especially good carbonated and chilled

**Also:** rosehips, Flowering Currant flowers and Black Elder (the flowers are pink). Willowherb flowers also impart a nice rosé colour but need to be mixed with something else for flavour.

## White wines:

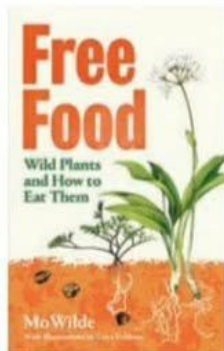
**Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*:** use the open flowers to make an excellent white wine. The flower heads must be fully open and removed from the stalk. Don't soak the flowers for more than three days or you'll spoil the flavour

**Elderflower *Sambucus nigra*:** the flowers make excellent champagne-style wines and a good mead

Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* the flowers make a good white wine and a good

mead. Don't soak them for too long or a note of wet bandages creeps into the flavour

**Also:** flowers of Cowslip, Primrose, Honeysuckle, Coltsfoot, Gorse, Goldenrod, Linden and Pineappleweed. Crab Apple and Quince also make lovely white wines. For the fruits, chop them up and measure 4.5 litres of water. You need to allow more volume than the flowers as there will be more air gaps between chunks.



Extracted from  
**Free Food: Wild Plants and How to Eat Them** by Mo Wilde (Simon & Schuster), with illustrations by Talya Baldwin.

## How to make a basic flower wine

For a classic flower wine in a standard demijohn you'll need:

3.5 litres of flowers

4.5 litres of water

1.4 kilograms of sugar rind and juice of two lemons and one orange

A pack of wine yeast

Yeast nutrient

450 grams of raisins

**1.** Put the flower heads in a large stainless-steel saucepan, boil the water and pour it on to the flowers. Cover with the lid. Stir every day for three days, keeping it covered in between.

**2.** After three days, bring to the boil, adding the sugar and citrus rinds, and simmer for an hour. Remove from the heat and add the citrus juices. When the temperature has dropped to 20–21 degrees C, add the yeast and the yeast nutrient. Cover and leave for a further three days.

**3.** Strain into a demijohn, add the raisins and a fermenting lock (a bubbler) to seal the demijohn. Leave until the wine clears then siphon it into a clean jar, cork and leave for 6 months. Siphon it off into bottles and keep it for a further 6 months to mature to its best.

**4.** This recipe can be used for all the flower wines. For a sweeter dessert wine, increase the sugar to 1.5 kilograms (stopping fermentation to leave sweetness or you'll end up with a stronger alcohol %); for a dry wine reduce to 1.2 kilograms.

*“Drinks can be simple – a sprig of wild mint, or a handful of Cleavers steeped in cold water overnight, can replace the next day’s drinking water. Or you can put a great deal of effort into fermenting country wines or infusing exotic vermouths”*



## Lizzie Farmer, director / owner of Tellus Mater

Wild food foraging. The trend, its rise in popularity and the general public's desire to learn how to forage their own wild foods has been gaining pace at astounding speed these last few years here in the UK. For other neighbouring countries and beyond, the practice, art and tradition of foraging for one's family was largely unheard of a decade ago here in the UK as a mainstream hobby or activity, and also had a stigma attached to doing so.

The rise of social media as a platform to share both beautiful images of wicker baskets filled with wild foraged ingredients for additions to meals, and 'How To' guides with wild foods dominating both reels and stories (and now a growing number of quality books too), has led to an acceleration of it as an established trend, starkly aligning with our desire collectively to do both better for both our bodies and the environment. Foraging is wonderful –

it's clean, free eating, sustainable, easy to get started with even as a beginner, and a hobby and lifestyle choice that you can immerse yourself in quickly... with a few simple rules to be mindful of.

*“Foraging is wonderful – it’s clean, free eating, sustainable, easy to get started with even as a beginner, and a hobby and lifestyle choice that you can immerse yourself in quickly”*

Some folks I have witnessed discussing the 'art' or act of foraging, have alluded to the fact it is imperative you are an aspiring mycologist or botanist to get started with discovering wild foods that you can consume safely. Of course, utmost care is needed as you develop a taste for wild foods and wish to progress with your learning to identify more advanced species as you grow in confidence. I urge everyone entering the wild food world to arm themselves with a good book or two to use as a reference point. However, if you start off gently and focus on the simpler species such as dandelion, nettles, wild garlic and dock (this is my new favourite to talk

about as many of us are so familiar with it already re nettle stings), you can be well on your way without an unsubstantiated fear of needing a visit to the hospital. With the food industry here in the UK now recognising the growing demand, there has been an influx of new products both in stores and dishes in restaurants showcasing some of the beautiful wild foods native to the UK. Which is wonderful. When stepping foot outside to start exploring what you may have locally to eat, on top of books start simply and look firstly at a hedgerow, lane or greenspace local to you. Most of what I forage for to incorporate into daily meals is to be found within three miles of my home. A rule of thumb is if you are not sure DO NOT consume it. Perhaps take photos or a sample home to research.

Do think like a deer and graze gently at your foraging spots. A little here, a little there and by doing this your impact is both minimal, and in keeping with the consensus and values of the foraging community are doing it with grace and care, and who knows – you may find the process itself therapeutic too.