# New mother embraces wild foraging to nourish family and soul



I welcomed my daughter into the world during one of the coldest spells of early this year, and now, my primary role is to produce sustenance for her. My days stretch from dawn until the midnight hours, punctuated only by brief respites that might allow for a moment of respite. This new phase of life has unexpectedly transformed my appetite, prompting me to forage for wild edibles native to Britain—most recently, indulging in nettles, dandelions, and hedge garlic, which I consume with abandon.

The vividness of early May, a month that encapsulates the essence of bloom and vitality, invites exploration of its rich, green larder. With my hands deep in the earth, I discover that I can feast on foods like hedge garlic, also known as Jack by the hedge. This wild plant, closely related to the brassica family, has a striking taste profile reminiscent of horseradish and garlic, making it an intriguing addition to any dish. The enthusiasm for such foraging mirrors trends in urban settings, where chefs and home cooks alike are increasingly turning to the natural bounty right around them.

In London, for example, Michelin Green Star chef Chantelle Nicholson advocates for urban foraging, utilising the city’s green spaces as her pantry. She encourages exploration of wild garlic, three-cornered leek, and nettles, which not only provide flavour but also crucial nutrients. Nicholson highlights how this return to our culinary roots is motivated by a desire for sustainability, fresh ingredients, and even mental health benefits derived from connecting with nature.

The nutritional advantages of foraging are hard to overstate. Many wild edibles, such as nettles, are rich in vitamins and minerals, including calcium and iron, while dandelions offer a bounty of vitamin C and antioxidants. The consumption of such plants significantly contributes to overall health and wellness, providing a complement to more traditionally cultivated foods. Additionally, the high fibre content found in foraged options supports digestive health and lowers the risk of chronic diseases.

Yet, foraging cannot be undertaken lightly. Awareness of potential hazards is essential. The UK’s flora is vibrant and plentiful, but not without its traps; many edible plants have toxic counterparts. It is crucial to consult experts or reliable guides before diving into foraged feasts. For instance, while dandelions and nettles are delicious and safe, they share their habitat with dangerous lookalikes like lily of the valley and buttercups. Proper identification and sustainable harvesting practices are vital for both our safety and the environment.

On a personal note, my current foraging endeavours are underscored by gratitude and privilege. I have the autonomy to gather freely from the earth while also accessing the global food market. This blend of resources enhances my kitchen, as I transform wild greens into pesto, bhajis, and salads—dishes that fill my family with nutrition and joy. The scenery I navigate, with its vibrant greenery, is both an endless buffet and a balm for a new mother’s soul.

As the seasons shift and the bounty of blackberries and apples comes into play, I anticipate a further deepening of my foraging journey. With every harvest, my connection to the earth strengthens, and I embrace a lifestyle that balances convenience with conscious eating. The lush landscape that surrounds me is not just an edible garden; it is a reminder of the flourishing beauty of life itself, ripe for the picking.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/24/hedgerows-horse-healthy-nettles-hedge-garlic-britain), [[2]](https://www.ft.com/content/6a21f136-2add-454f-a9d1-469c33319457)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/24/hedgerows-horse-healthy-nettles-hedge-garlic-britain), [[3]](https://www.foragingandmore.com/post/uncovering-the-nutritional-wealth-the-hidden-benefits-of-foraging-for-wild-edible-plants-in-the-uk)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.foragingandmore.com/post/uncovering-the-nutritional-wealth-the-hidden-benefits-of-foraging-for-wild-edible-plants-in-the-uk), [[4]](https://www.nature.scot/doc/foraging-wild-plants)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.wildfooduk.com/articles/foraging-for-your-health/), [[6]](https://www.topsante.co.uk/womens-health/foraging-benefits-from-stress-relief-to-immune-support/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/24/hedgerows-horse-healthy-nettles-hedge-garlic-britain), [[7]](https://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/medicinal/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/24/hedgerows-horse-healthy-nettles-hedge-garlic-britain), [[6]](https://www.topsante.co.uk/womens-health/foraging-benefits-from-stress-relief-to-immune-support/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/may/24/hedgerows-horse-healthy-nettles-hedge-garlic-britain> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ft.com/content/6a21f136-2add-454f-a9d1-469c33319457> - This article explores urban foraging in London with Michelin Green Star chef Chantelle Nicholson. It highlights the diverse edible plants found in the city's green spaces, such as wild garlic, three-cornered leek, and nettles. Nicholson shares tips on identifying and sustainably harvesting these wild ingredients, emphasizing their nutritional value and flavor. The piece also discusses the growing popularity of foraging among chefs and home cooks, driven by sustainability concerns and the desire for fresh, native produce. It underscores the importance of responsible foraging and the mental health benefits of connecting with nature.
3. <https://www.foragingandmore.com/post/uncovering-the-nutritional-wealth-the-hidden-benefits-of-foraging-for-wild-edible-plants-in-the-uk> - This article delves into the nutritional benefits of foraging wild edible plants in the UK. It highlights that many wild edibles provide essential vitamins and minerals, such as nettles rich in vitamin K, iron, and calcium, and dandelions abundant in vitamin C and antioxidants. The piece also emphasizes the high antioxidant content of foraged berries like blackberries and elderberries, which can help reduce inflammation and support general health. Additionally, it discusses the high fiber content of wild plants like wild sorrel and cleavers, contributing to digestive health and lowering the risk of chronic diseases.
4. <https://www.nature.scot/doc/foraging-wild-plants> - This guide from NatureScot provides information on foraging wild plants in Scotland, detailing various species and their uses. It includes plants like dandelion, birch, English stonecrop, watercress, and hazel, describing their edible parts and health benefits. For example, dandelion leaves are a good source of iron, calcium, and vitamin A, while birch sap serves as a natural spring tonic. The guide also offers advice on sustainable foraging practices and cautions about potential lookalikes and toxic plants, emphasizing the importance of proper identification and responsible harvesting.
5. <https://www.wildfooduk.com/articles/foraging-for-your-health/> - This article discusses the health benefits of foraging, emphasizing its positive impact on physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It highlights that foraged foods are often more nutrient-rich than cultivated ones, citing examples like nettles rich in vitamins A, C, B's, and K, and high in calcium, iron, and magnesium. The piece also notes that foraging can serve as a form of exercise, improving flexibility and balance, and that spending time outdoors can reduce stress and enhance overall well-being. Additionally, it mentions the benefits of exposure to sunlight, boosting vitamin D levels.
6. <https://www.topsante.co.uk/womens-health/foraging-benefits-from-stress-relief-to-immune-support/> - This article explores the mental health benefits of foraging, noting its calming influence and grounding effects. It highlights that spending time outdoors and engaging in activities like foraging can reduce stress and enhance overall well-being. The piece also discusses the connection to nature that foraging fosters, helping individuals engage more with the environment and appreciate the changing seasons. Additionally, it mentions the immune-boosting properties of natural fragrances found in nature, such as those produced by evergreen trees and oaks, which have been shown to decrease stress hormones and increase natural killer immune cells.
7. <https://plantlife.love-wildflowers.org.uk/medicinal/> - This resource from Plantlife provides information on medicinal wild plants in the UK, detailing their uses and health benefits. It includes plants like nettles, dandelions, elderflowers, yarrow, and hawthorn, describing their edible parts and medicinal properties. For example, nettles can be made into teas, tinctures, and soups, and are known to alleviate seasonal allergies and boost iron levels. Dandelions are rich in vitamins A, C, and K, and have diuretic and liver-detoxifying properties. The guide also offers advice on sustainable foraging practices and cautions about potential lookalikes and toxic plants.