



## PRODUCE

Harvesting plants, herbs, berries, mushrooms, hazelnuts, and other forms of traditionally harvested plants and produce have always been a vital source of food for the Ojibwe. Much like all foods, produce has potential to be exposed to bacteria, molds, and chemicals that would make them unsafe to eat. Follow these steps to keep your harvested produce fresh and safe from contaminants that can be harmful when eaten.



## HARVESTING CONSCIOUSLY



Since the earliest days, the Ojibwe (Anishinaabe people) have gathered and harvested a wide variety of plants throughout the seasons, carefully harvesting to ensure that these resources could be utilized in the future.

To this day, tribal elders encourage harvesters to be conscious about the amount of plants they are harvesting as some plants need more time to regenerate or to reproduce to create more plants.

Harvest responsibly to ensure you can enjoy all of your favorite plants into the future!

Strawberry Photo Credit—Purdue University

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# Traditionally Harvested Plants & Produce



## Keeping Traditionally Harvested Produce Safe from Contaminants

## **TIPS TO LOWER RISK:**

### **BEFORE HARVESTING**

#### ***Know Your Produce.***

Edible plants and fungi can be hard to distinguish from inedible look-a-likes. Additionally, some plants need to be harvested or prepared in a specific way in order to make them safe to eat. Only harvest what you can 100% safely identify.

#### ***Select Safe Harvest***

**Areas.** Some studies suggest that berries picked in previous mining areas contain elevated amounts of zinc, copper, and other metals. Check with tribal or state natural resource departments to find out if your harvest site was previously mined or otherwise contaminated.

***Avoid Areas of Likely Contamination.*** Roadsides can be unsafe places to harvest produce which are subjected to run-off from the road or pesticide applications. Additionally, flood waters are high in bacteria and carry viruses as well. Avoid harvesting produce which may have come into contact with contaminated water.



### **WHILE HARVESTING**

#### ***Inspect as You Go.***

Produce with signs of animal droppings (i.e. feces, urine, etc.) should be avoided. Animal droppings are a source of bacteria and parasites which can make people sick. Additionally, discard produce with visible damage as it can harbor bacteria and unseen molds that cannot be easily removed during washing.

***Keep it Cool.*** Cooling your produce down during and after harvest will help to slow the growth of bacteria and help the produce remain fresh longer.



### **AFTER HARVESTING**

#### ***Clean, Separate, and***

***Cool.*** Soon after harvest, remove extra debris you may have picked up (i.e. twigs) and if appropriate, clean your harvest. Some produce will rot quicker if cleaned too far in advance of eating (i.e. berries). Keep uncleaned produce separated from cleaned produce. As always, keep produce cool.