



FORAGING FOR STINGING NETTLES

What is stinging nettle?

Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is a perennial herb that can grow up to 2m in height. On the central coast, it starts poking through the soil around March and can be harvested throughout the spring.

What parts are edible?

The roots, stems, seeds, and leaves are all edible! The fibers from mature plants can also be made into twine.

What are the nutritional and medicinal benefits?

The leaves of nettles are packed with iron, protein, and minerals. Many people find that regular consumption of stinging nettle tea can help to lessen the symptoms of seasonal allergies and gently boost iron levels.

How do you responsibly harvest?

We recommend that you gently clip no more than 1/3 of the leaves from healthy nettle stalks and leave the rest of the plant to mature and go to seed.



How do you preserve and use?

Lay flat in thin layers and dry in a dehydrator or on low in an oven, then store in an airtight container for up to a year. If you prefer fresh nettles, blanch the leaves by dipping them in boiling water then lay flat on freezer paper and rolling to store in the freezer in a plastic bag. Alternatively, make “nettle pesto” by blending fresh nettles with a bit of olive oil and freezing in an ice cube tray.

Cautionary notes

Stinging nettle will sting you when you touch it! The fine hairs can cause an irritation or stinging sensation. If your skin becomes irritated, wash with soap and water or treat the irritation with milk or baking soda paste. The stinging properties will go away when you blanch, cook, or dry your nettles.

Responsible foraging

Before you go foraging, always make sure you are confident in your ability to correctly identify plants! Look for locally relevant field guides or ask a knowledge holder from your community for guidance.