

Five Plants To Forage in Autumn in Glasgow

Rose, *Rosa canina*, Rosaceae

Appearance: Shrubby, often growing in hedgerows; large flowers with 5 petals, often white or pink; thorny; bright red rosehips in autumn.

Parts Used: Flowers, Rosehips (in autumn)

Uses: Rose petals are soothing for the nervous system and can help with insomnia and when feeling sad. They are also anti-viral and boost the immune system. Rosehips in autumn are full of Vitamin C.



Recipe idea: Rosehip syrup - packed with Vitamin C, can be used instead of diluting juice. Pick 2lbs (900g) of rosehips and boil them in 3 pints of water. Boil for 20 minutes. Strain rosehips out and put liquid back to boil until it thickens slightly. Add 1lb (560g) of sugar and boil for 5 more minutes. Pour into clean bottles or jars. Keeps for a few months in the fridge.



Ribwort Plantain, *Plantago lanceolata*, Plantaginaceae

Appearance: Long, ribbed leaves with parallel veins; long flower stalks with brown seed heads; often grows on path edges, in meadows and urban habitats.

Parts Used: Leaves and Flowers

Uses: Plantain is great for bites, stings, splinters and general skin irritations. It has a drawing and soothing effect. It can also be used internally for hayfever, sinusitis or catarrh. The seedheads taste like mushrooms.

Recipe idea: Plantain infused oil - this can be used for cooking or for skin care, you could even go a step further and make it into a balm by mixing the infused oil with beeswax. Simply fill a jar with chopped plantain and then top up with oil - olive oil and almond oil work well but any oil you have will work. Leave to infuse (ideally on a sunny windowsill) for a couple of weeks, then strain the plantain out.

Nettle, *Urtica dioica*, Urticaceae

Appearance: Grows up to 1.5 m high, has opposite toothed leaves with stinging hairs. Small green flowers in late summer which turn into clusters of small green seeds.

Parts Used: Leaves (in spring) and seeds (in late summer/autumn)

Uses: Nettle is full of vitamins like Vitamin C and A and minerals like iron, calcium, silica and potassium. The leaves can be picked in spring



and used instead of spinach in meals. They are extremely nutritious. The seeds in late summer/autumn are used in herbalism as a treatment for burn-out and low energy as they have a mood-lifting quality. They are also packed with protein and minerals.

Recipe idea: Nettle seed salt - full of minerals and mood-lifting qualities. Can be used whenever you would use normal salt. Collect nettle seeds and dry them on a paper towel or newspaper for a day or so. Put in a food processor to blend, you will get a green powder. Mix with salt - quantity is up to you and how salty you like it! Nettle seeds taste a bit salty/savoury already due to their high mineral content so if you are trying to cut out salt, you can try substituting it by using more nettle seed powder than salt.



Brambles, *Rubus fruticosus*, Rosacea

Appearance: Jaggy hedgerow plant which has beautiful white flowers in early summer that turn to black berries in late summer.

Parts Used: Berries

Uses: The berries are anti-oxidant and full of Vitamin C. They can be used like raspberries or other berries, for example in crumbles, jams, jellies, cakes, and compote.

Recipe idea: Bramble infused gin - just put some brambles into a bottle of gin and let it infuse for a couple of weeks before straining the berries out. The gin will turn a beautiful red colour. Makes a lovely gift.

Elder, *Sambucus nigra*, Adoxaceae

Appearance: Shrubby tree with brittle stems. Makes clusters of fragrant white flowers in spring and purple clusters of berries in the autumn.

Parts Used: Flowers in spring and berries in the autumn

Uses: Elderflowers and berries are good preventatives for colds and flus. They strengthen the immune system and have antiviral actions. Elderberries are also good for fighting coughs and other respiratory issues.

Recipe idea: Balsamic elderberry vinegar - fill a jar about halfway to three quarters with elderberries. Top up with apple cider vinegar and leave to infuse for a couple of weeks. Strain out the berries and measure the liquid that you have left. Put this in a pot with the same quantity of sugar and bring to a boil. Simmer for 10 minutes then pour into clean jars or bottles.

