

Sustainable collection

of wild plants in the Canton of Grisons

Introduction

The picking, collection, harvesting or removal of wild-growing plants or parts thereof must not endanger the survival of the prevailing populations in the area of collection nor lead to the extinction of the species. The collection of wild-growing plants for commercial purposes requires a cantonal permit. For the commercial production of derivatives from wild-growing organisms, a

registration with the Cantonal office for food safety and animal health is necessary. When a wild-growing species is needed on a regular basis and in significant quantities, be it for private or commercial use, the Office for Nature conservation and Environment recommends cultivating local populations of the species. This procedure bears however one risk: when

a cultivation is planned, great care should be taken not to mix genetic proveniences with the local living populations in the wild. The professional cultivation of wild-growing species does not only protect natural populations and their local genetic diversity but it can also generate promising, supplementary income.

Checklist

Please consider the following checklist before collecting plants in the wild:

Likelihood of confusion – botanical determination
Can I correctly recognize and determine the species in the field?

Recommendations: Ask for expert advice / consult relevant literature

Is the species easily mistaken, or do similar or related species exist that are protected, endangered, rare or poisonous in the area?

Recommendations: In doubt, refrain from collection

Biology of the species
When is the period of flowering?
Is seeding assured?

Recommendations: Ask for expert advice / consult relevant literature

Is the species annual or perennial?
Does it also reproduce vegetatively?

Ask for expert advice / consult relevant literature

Distribution of the species and state of the populations
Is the species widely distributed or does it only exist locally?

Recommendations: Ask for expert advice / consult relevant literature

How big is the population of the species I want to collect, how many individual plants are in the plot where I want to harvest?

Recommendations: Ask for expert advice / consult relevant literature

Additional pressure on the species
Do the plants look vigorous and healthy?
Is fungal attack or feeding damage (insects, herbivores) visible?

Recommendations: Ask for expert advice / consult relevant literature

Are there indications that plants have already been removed from the «harvest area»?

Recommendations: Ask for expert advice / consult relevant literature

Recommendations

When collecting for private use or commercial purposes, the following rules are to be complied with:

Part of the plant: (only) leaves

Recommended maximum quantities for collection:

- Leaves can be harvested on a maximum of one third of the plants in a population, two thirds should be spared.
- Per individual plant, only collect a maximum of 50% of the leaves.

Part of the plant: (only) flowers or (only) seeds

Recommended maximum quantities for collection:

- Flowers or seeds can be harvested on a maximum of one third of the plants in a population, two thirds should be spared.
- Per individual plant, only collect a maximum of 50% of the flowers or seeds, respectively.
- Populations of less than 100 individual plants are to be spared.
- In populations of less than 30 individual plants, no removal is permitted.

Part of the plant: Roots (entire plant)

Recommended maximum quantities for collection:

- Roots may be collected from a maximum of 10% of a population.
- Populations of less than 100 individual plants are to be spared.
- In populations of less than 30 individual plants, no removal is permitted.
- In a subsequent year, removal is to be shifted to an area not yet affected by collection.

Part of the plant: Entire plant (without roots)

Recommended maximum quantities for collection:

- During the flowering and fruiting period a maximum of 10% of a population of entire plants without roots may be collected. 90% of the population (entire plants without roots) must be preserved.
- After maturity (when plants drop their seeds): 50% of the population must be reserved.
- Populations of less than 100 individual plants are to be spared.
- In population of less than 30 individual plants, no removal is permitted.

Rules of thumb

To ensure the collection of wild-growing plants in a sustainable way, the following rules must be observed:

- Do not pick species contained in the Red List or protected species list. For more information visit: www.anu.gr.ch/florageschuetztz.
- Do not pick species in the Swiss National Park or in plant protection sanctuaries. For more information visit: www.anu.gr.ch/pilzpflanzenschutzgebiete.
- If you want to collect plants from plots in private properties or from cultivated plots, you must previously request authorization from the owner and comply with the prevailing land law of the municipality. You can find more information related to landowners under the cantonal geoportal at (www.map.geo.gr.ch) or in the ÖREB land register at (<https://oereb.geo.gr.ch>).
- Collect with restraint and only the species which are widely distributed / widely available. More information is available below under «Checklist». You find further information on the distribution and vulnerability of species in the Grisons at: www.anu.gr.ch/artenfoerderung.
- Only harvest what you can process: the roots, which are a vital part of the plant, must remain in the soil. More information is available below under «Recommended maximum removals».
- Lichens are slow growing organisms with limited competitiveness. The Society for Bryology and Lichenology in Central Europe (BLAM: <http://blam-dl.de>) explicitly discourages the collection of lichens for commercial purposes.



Collection of wild-growing plants. The collection of wild-growing plants or parts thereof for commercial purposes requires authorization. Protected or rare plants (Red Lists Plants) must not be collected.

(Picture source: Marketa Novakova / Alamy Stock Foto)



Production of spirits from wild-growing plants. The term «natural» does not always mean harmless or healthy. Whoever wants to fabricate products from wild-growing plants should avail themselves of the required skills.

(Picture source: Shotshop GmbH / Alamy Stock Foto)



Dried Gentian roots. The removal of roots from wild-growing plants by the roots, has the worst possible negative effect on the conservation of a population and directly compromises the genetic diversity of a species. This is why the cultivation of local populations is recommended.

(Picture source: Westend61 GmbH / Alamy Stock Foto)



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