

Latest food fashion started life in Copenhagen

# Foraging and why we're going WILD about it

**COURSES:**  
Darina Allen  
of Ballymaloe  
Cookery  
School



By Warren Swords

WHY buy it when you can pick it for free? Irish foodies are turning into enthusiastic foragers. Now courses on foraging are selling out and there's a whole festival dedicated to it.

Chef Darina Allen and her mother-in-law Myrtle Allen have been organising foraging courses at Ballymaloe Cookery School in east Cork for the past 20 years.

Due to a recent surge in popularity, they've upped the number of courses and, despite the price tag of €195 a day, demand is high.

To meet the growing demand for information and courses on foraging, Roz Kelly set up [www.ecoactiveireland.com](http://www.ecoactiveireland.com).

Last weekend, it had to put on an extra day after its mushroom hunt course sold out. A foraging walk-and-talk event, costing €45 per person, is also proving hugely popular.

Earlier this month the Food Safety Authority of Ireland issued a warning about the dangers of foraging after it was revealed seven people had had to receive medical treatment after picking



## A feast of berries and nuts

FORAGERS can find an array of edible flora including:

- **WILD MUSHROOMS** – Food Safety Authority of Ireland recommends that you only eat mushrooms after consultation with an expert.
- **HAZELNUTS** - Ripe for the picking from September through to early November and found in hedgerows and woods.
- **DAMSONS** – Edible fruit, sub-species of the plum tree.
- **SLOES** – Used to make sloe gin. A fruit of the blackthorn and found in hedges.
- **BLACKBERRIES** – Can be eaten straight off the hedgerow.
- **ELDERBERRIES** – Elderberry wine takes six months to ferment.
- **CHICKWEED** – Can be used in salads.
- **WILD/WOOD SORREL** – Lemony taste, used in homemade lemonades, soups, salads.
- **CRAB APPLES** (pictured top) – Sour uncooked but excellent for jam or in a pie.
- **NETTLES** (right) – Can be used in sauces and as a tea.



## 'We were doing wild foods when Noma was in nappies'

the wrong type of mushrooms, days into the mushroom-picking season. It's believed part of the surge in interest is due to the good summer, which has yielded a bounty of wild food.

But Ms Allen also attributes it to the fact that wild foods are highly nutritious and to the global influence of Noma, a two-star Michelin restaurant in Copenhagen that is considered by many experts to be the best restaurant in the world.

'It's partly the Noma effect. Noma and a lot of the Nordic chefs, instead of looking to the Mediterranean and copying all the Michelin star chefs from Europe, have decided to concentrate on what they had that was unique to the Nordic region. So they are incorporating their wild and foraged foods into their menus. That's made such a hit that a lot of people started to look at incorporating wild foods into their menus.'

Ms Kelly said: 'I noticed it was very hard to find anything online about foraging. We only set it up in July and we have got a huge amount of visitors. People are saying it's down to the recession.'

During the summer, restaurateur Evan Doyle and food writer and former Riordan's star, Biddy White Lennon, released Wild Food, a guidebook

on how to gather, cook and preserve wild Irish food. Next month Mr Doyle will be hosting the Wild and Wicklow Food Festival, an off-shoot of the biennial Wild and Slow festival, Europe's largest wild food festival.

Mr Doyle, who owns Ireland's only certified organic restaurant – Strawberry Tree in Macreddin Village, Co. Wicklow – said: 'For the last 23 years, I've employed someone full-time to do foraging. Noma has had an influence but we've been doing wild foods while Noma was still in nappies.'

The Wild and Wicklow Food Festival will take place at the Brooklodge and Macreddin Village on November 16.

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**ATTACKED:** Suzy Arthur was thrown to ground

## Cleric calls for burglars to be flogged after victim, 89, dies

A CHURCH of Ireland minister has called for the flogging of a gang who terrorised an 89-year-old woman during a burglary.

Suzy Arthur died in hospital on Thursday night, weeks after she was thrown to the ground during a raid on her Co. Donegal home.

She suffered a broken hip. Her sister Isa, 91, was with her in their home in Raphoe when they

were attacked in July. Rev David Crookes, who will officiate at her funeral today, said: 'The people who did this are simply evil. They should be whipped and publicly flogged.'

'If I had my way these type of people would be jailed, woken at 6am, given a cold shower, fed cold porridge and made to do hard labour all day.'

  
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