

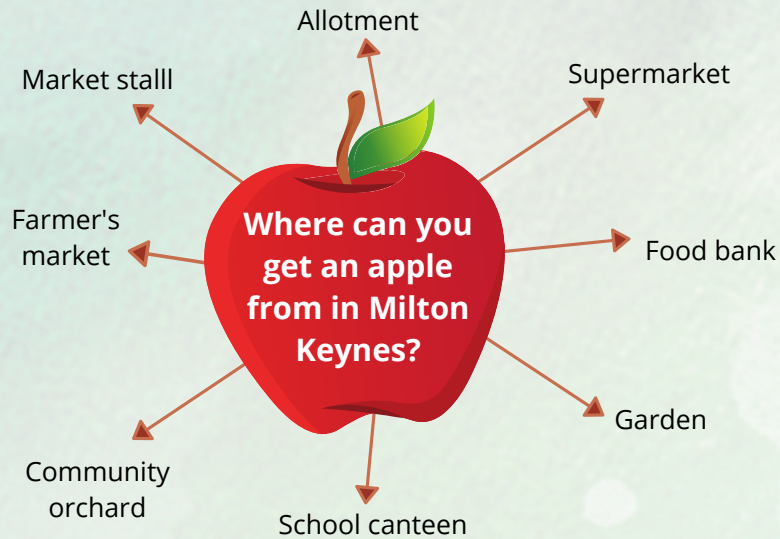
Foraging

Foraging is the activity of finding, gathering and harvesting wild foods and materials. It provides an opportunity to spend time in nature, connecting with the world around us and understanding where our food and other products come from.

Think about the last meal you ate. Can you list all of the ingredients? Do you know where they all came from? This could be the actual place e.g. local shop or allotment or the original country the food was grown in.



Choose 3 of the locations below and consider the advantages and disadvantages of each one. We have done the supermarket for you.



	Advantages	Disadvantages
Supermarket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce available all year round - Convenient as you can get lots of ingredients in one place - Variety of produce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cost - Food miles as produce may have been imported - Excess packaging

Free food!

There are lots of different species of edible plants that grow in the UK and some can be found right here in Milton Keynes. **We wouldn't recommend eating anything you find in the parks** without getting an adult who has a good knowledge of wild plants to double check your identification. This is because some plants can look almost identical to another species which may be poisonous.

Elderflowers and berries



Elder is commonly found in woods and hedgerows. The white flowers and the reddish-black berries are edible and are best eaten raw. The berries are ripe when the clusters begin to turn upside down. They contain a high dose of Vitamin C and have anti-viral properties. Many foragers will stock up for winter flu season!



Rose hips

Rose hips were collected during the war years in place of oranges as they contain 5x as much vitamin C per weight! The best time to harvest them is September when you can squeeze the sweet syrup out of them. Take care to remove the seeds as they contain an irritant which causes itching.



Blackberries

Who doesn't love a blackberry and apple crumble? Brambles bearing blackberries can be found all over MK and they are best picked in late summer and early autumn when they are ripe and juicy.



Wild garlic

Wild garlic is also called Ramson. It has broad leaves and white flowers. It is found in damp woodland. It is commonly used in salads and sauces



Dandelion

A very common weed that many gardeners try to get rid of but dandelion leaves make a good sandwich filling and the roots can be made into coffee!

Water mint



Typically found in damp soils and along the waters' edge. Water mint is often made into a tea to aid digestion, an ointment for soothing muscles or used raw to freshen up salads and baking.



Hawthorn

The most nutritional part of hawthorn are the leaf tips and budding flowers in spring. Although it doesn't have much flavour, hawthorn contains a chemical which gives the feeling of a full stomach and used to be nicknamed "bread and cheese" during war times when food was short.

Choose one of these ingredients and find some recipes that use it. Have a go at making a dish for your family to try.

Remember to get an experienced adult to check your plant identification if you are going to forage for any ingredients.

Don't forget to ask your tasters to complete a sensory evaluation rating your dish for texture, taste, appearance and smell.

Other uses...

One of the most common uses of foraged produce is to dye fabric. If you have a piece of old cotton fabric such as a T-shirt or pillow case, why not have a go for yourself.



Throughout history, foraged produce has had many different uses including medicines, clothes, hair dye, paint and lots more. See what other examples you can find.

Not all fabric can be easily dyed with natural materials. The best ones to use are those made from natural materials themselves. **Cotton, silk, wool, and linen will take dye the best.** Some synthetic fabrics will hold dye but the result is usually a much lighter colour.

Preparing the fabric

1. Wash the fabric but don't dry it – it needs to be wet.
2. Prepare your fixative to help the fabric take up the natural dyes more easily. For berries, use salt and for any other plant material, use vinegar.
Salt: dissolve ½ cup salt in 8 cups cold water
Vinegar: blend 1 cup of white vinegar to 4 cups cold water
3. Place your damp fabric in the fixative solution for an hour.
4. Rinse with cool water. Now it's time to dye the fabric...



You might want to experiment by creating different colours and using different materials. Try using different parts of the plant and seeing how the colours change.

Dyeing the fabric

Before you start, cover the surface of your work area with newspaper to protect it . If you have rubber gloves it's a good idea to wear them to prevent staining your fingers.

1. **Place the plant material in a large stainless steel pan. Remember the dye could stain some pots and spoons, so make sure you have permission to use them!**
2. **Fill the pot with twice as much water as plant material.**
3. **Simmer gently on the hob, until you get a nice dark coloured liquid. Strain out the plant material and return the liquid to the pot.**
4. **Carefully place the fabric in the dye bath and bring to a slow boil. Simmer for an hour or so, stirring occasionally. Do not let the pan boil dry.**
5. **Check your fabric. Remember, it will be lighter when it dries. If you want to achieve a darker colour, turn off the heat and leave it to soak overnight.**
6. **When you get the color you want, take the fabric out and wash in cold water to seal it.**
7. **Dry as usual. Remember the first few times you wash the item, some of the colour will run as the excess dye washes out.**