

BEHIND THE COUNTER



The Vancouver Sun's Definitive Guide to Food & Drink

SHOPPING THE WILD

There are a lot of wild products coming out of our forests and they need to be showcased

BY MIA STAINSBY
VANCOUVER SUN

Foraging in B.C. forests is suddenly something to be reckoned with. It's graduated to the post-secondary level.

One of the projects undertaken by The Centre for Non-Timber Resources at Royal Roads University in Victoria is Buy B.C. Wild, which has sponsorship from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands, Thrifty Foods, VanCity and Service Canada.

"We realized there were a lot of wild products coming out of our forests and there was a need for wildcrafters and businesses to have a collective voice to showcase their wonderful products and services," says Holly Caine, coordinator of Buy B.C. Wild. A website directory listing 150 purveyors of wild food, herbs and craft material from B.C. forests showcases the non-logging side of our forests. (See www.buybcwild.com)

Some of the businesses selling edible products made from wild foraged plants are listed below.

"What we're trying to promote are the people who access the resources in our communities and provide local products," says Caine. While Vancouver Island's timberlands are mainly private, in the rest of the province, about 70 per cent is Crown land, she says.

"One of the really important things to the centre, as the sector emerges are policies regarding sustainability and guidelines on how to forage and we'd like to see money go back into the communities," she says.

The best source of information on where and how to forage is district forest offices.

"You need to contact them to let them know of your intentions. People also have to be aware of first nations cultural use of medicinal plants. A harvesting area might have been used for centuries and they have cultural and heritage rights to that area."

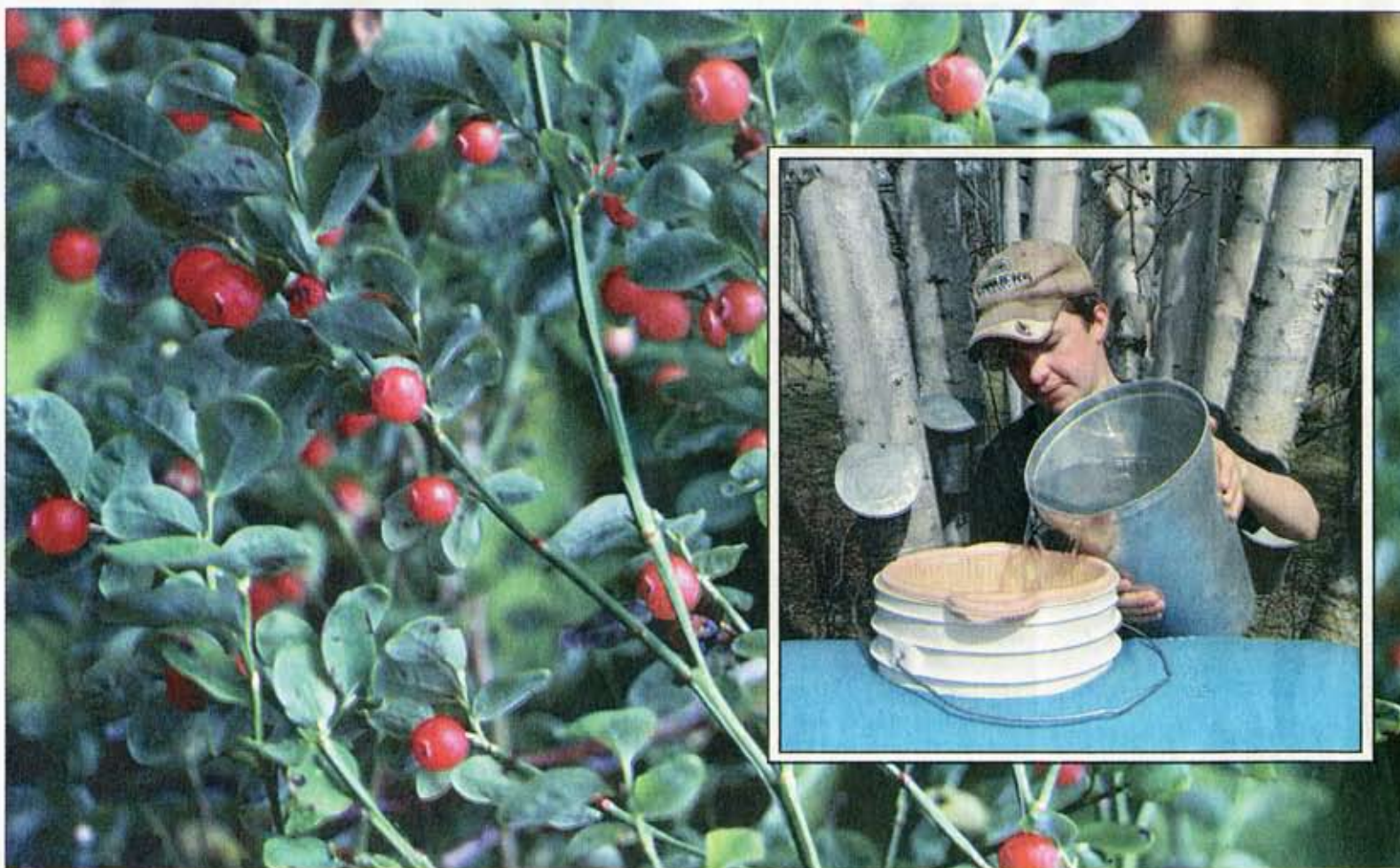
On Vancouver Island, she says, "everybody knows how wonderful and nutritional our native plants are. Our blueberries are amazingly nutritious with phytonutrients."

One of the centre's seminal events was a 2005 international symposium called Shop the Wild. "It was humongous," says Caine. "Researchers from around the world came and there were products from forests around the world."

Caine has a weak spot for wild berry jams. "Thimbleberry jam. Rose petal jam. I buy them already prepared. And on the weekend before Thanksgiving, you can find high bush cranberries at higher altitudes. It makes the most amazing jelly."

She invites the public to the third annual Buy B.C. Wild Festival, held at Royal Roads University on Oct. 4 and 5 of this year with more than 50 exhibitors and vendors.

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Red huckleberries are common in forests from southeastern Alaska and B.C. Collecting birch sap (inset) at Birch Place Farm.

A GUIDE TO THE B.C. BUSINESSES SELLING WILD EDIBLES

Here are some of the businesses around B.C. selling wild edibles or value-added products from the wild:

ARTISAN EDIBLES FINE FOODS

895 Dickinson Way, Parksville
250-248-0670
www.artisanedibles.com

Champagne rose petal jelly made with wild rose petals.

B'S HONEY

1464 Begbie St., Victoria
250-598-3442

Wild, unpasteurized honey.

BIGFOOT ORGANIC HERB FARM

104 Eagle Ridge Dr., Salt Spring Island
250-537-4466

BIRCH PLACE FARM

10151 Lee Rd., Quesnel
250-747-8455
www.birchplacefarm.com

Pure birch syrup as well as tours.

CHERRY POINT VINEYARDS

840 Cherry Point Rd., Cobble Hill
250-743-1272
www.cherrypointvineyards.com

Blackberry port wine made from wild blackberries.

GOLDEN MAPLES FARM

Cassidy, 250-245-2345
www.goldenmaplesfarm.com

300 kinds of gourmet condiments made from wild B.C. berries and plants.

HARDIE HONEY

4035 Robson Rd., Duncan
250-746-4389

Honey from fireweed and wildflowers of Vancouver Island.

JOY'S SPECIALTY PRESERVES

Osoyoos, 250-495-3921

Rowan berry, blackberry catsups; elderberry, blueberry, blackberry, sumac, Oregon grape, chokeberry, saskatoon berry jams, jellies, syrups, wild honeys, wild floral jellies.

Laurie's Mushrooms and More!

Woss, 250-281-3472

Wild mushrooms.

LILYPLAIN SUMMER

3199B Jemima Rd., Denman Island
250-335-9198

www.lilyplain.com

Wild berry jams, syrups, fruit leathers.

MOOSE MEADOWS FARM

2861 Nazko Rd., Quesnel,
250-249-5329

www.moosemeadowsfarm.ca

Wild jellies, jams, syrups from rose hips, saskatoon berries, dandelion blossom, mountain ash and birch.

MOUNTAIN ASH FARM

10084 Nassichuk Rd., Powell River
604-487-9340

Jams, jellies, marmalade, chutney, syrup, vinegars made from Himalayan and Evergreen blackberries; jams from dewberry, salal, elderberry, Oregon grape, rowanberry, red huckleberry, blueberry, dandelion, salmon berry.

N'QUATQUA BAND

D'Arcy, 604-452-3221

Mushrooms, huckleberries, swamp tea, blackcap berries, Saskatoon berries, soapberries, rose hips, devil's club, watercress.

PICK OF THE CROP MARKET

2928 Highway 3, Creston
250-428-5120

www.pickofthecropmarket.ca

Honey, huckleberries, saskatoon berries, fresh and frozen wild berry pies, jams, jellies.

TERRY'S HONEY FARM

4880 Well Rd., Grand Forks
250-442-5204

Honey from the Kootenays — fireweed from mountain forests and wildflower from wild grassland.

TUGWELL CREEK HONEY FARM AND MEADERY

8750 West Coast Rd., Sooke
250-642-1956

www.tugwellcreekfarm.com

Wild honey, mead (honey wine), mead jellies.

THE VINEGAR WORKS AT VALENTINE FARM

10216 Gould Ave., Summerland
250-494-7300

www.valentinefarm.com

Gourmet vinegars, wine jellies with infused wild greens and wild elderberries.