Can a Portland Woman Survive On Wild Food for Thanksgiving Week?

Contributed by Culture Change
19 November 2009

News release

Survival Challenge:

Can a Portland, Ore. Woman Live Off Wild Food for Thanksgiving Week In the City?

Most people head to the supermarket to prepare for Thanksgiving dinner, but urban forager Rebecca Lerner is trying an entirely different approach: the sidewalk! From Friday Nov. 20 through Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 26, Lerner will attempt to survive exclusively on wild food she gathers from sidewalks, parks, wilderness areas and yards in the city of Portland, Ore.

Portland, Ore. / November 19, 2009

CONTACT:

Rebecca Lerner

Urban Forager & Blogger

RebeccaELerner [at] gmail.com

www.FirstWays.com

Jan Lundberg

Publisher of CultureChange.org

(215) 243-3144

Jan [at] CultureChange.org

www.CultureChange.org

[cont.]

There will be no Dumpster diving, mooching from gardens or picking from cultivated fruit trees, and not even any table salt -- Lerner will stick to a 100% wild diet. Lerner's unusual menu will include acorns, chestnuts, hazelnuts, crab apples, and black walnuts harvested from city trees; mushrooms; stinging nettles; hawthorn berries; yellow dock seeds; cleavers, thistle, sumac, dandelion and other weeds; fat she gathered from a roadkill deer; the root vegetable wapato; and more.

"Foraging is a fun and free way to get healthy local food," Lerner said. "It's a survival skill that can come in handy in an emergency, and a great way to get in touch with our roots as hunter-gatherers. Even in the city, nature is all around us."

As reported by the Boston Globe, ABC News, KBOO Community Radio, The Oregonian, Utne Reader and other media outlets, Lerner attempted a similar challenge in May but did not succeed. Lerner cut that project short five days in after struggling to find enough food -- but not before munching on ant eggs. This time, bolstered by the abundance of the harvest season and lessons learned from her last attempt, Lerner is determined to make it the whole way through -- including a wild-food Thanksgiving dinner with three friends in the foraging community.

Lerner will blog daily about her adventures for the nonprofit web magazine www.CultureChange.org during the project, updating readers with photos, video and writings about the foods she finds, how she prepares them, how she is feeling (satisfied? starved? desperate for brownies?) and how the experience changes her life.

Lerner is a 27-year-old freelance journalist living in northeast Portland who writes about wild food, wilderness survival and primitive skills on her blog, www.FirstWays.com.

CultureChange.org is a nonprofit web magazine published by Jan Lundberg that explores issues of post-oil sustainability. Lundberg is a California native and former oil-industry analyst who founded the Sail Transport Network.

Lerner is available for interviews in person or by e-mail at RebeccaELerner [at] gmail.com. Reporters and photographers are welcome to come along on foraging jaunts during the wild food week. Photos are available for media use upon request and may be taken from www.FirstWays.com as long as they are credited.

For more information about the May experiment, please visit FirstWays.com/About and Week of Wild Food - Day Seven

See Ms. Learner's new article for this series: On roadkill, seasonal foraging, and getting by with a little help from my tribe.