

Wild Plants in Folk Life of Karauli District, Rajasthan

***Dr. Sitaram Khandelwal**

Abstract

The present paper dealt with wild edible plants used in daily life by natives of Karauli, district of Rajasthan. During the ethnobotanical survey, 238 plant species occurring in Karauli district were studied, out of which 65 species belonging to 34 families were found to be used as food.

Key Words: Plants, Folk life, Wild, Food, Ethnobotanical

INTRODUCTION

The state of Rajasthan comprises 33 districts. Karauli is relatively a new district designated only in 19 July 1997. The district is bounded on the north by Alwar and Bharatpur, on the south west by Tonk and north west by Jaipur.

The general climatic condition of the area is dry, except a short duration of rainy season. December to February is cold season, March to June summer, July to September rainy season and October to November is autumn season.

The average annual rainfall of the study area is 686mm. The average max. and min. temperatures remain 41° and 25° respectively. The study area comprises of hill slopes, ridges, valleys, rocky plateau, cliffs gorges ravines as important physical features.

Studies on wild edibles carried out by Baghel (2002), Das (1990,1997), Joshi (1995a), Katewa (2003), Khandelwal (1998), Sebastian (1990), Sen (1979), Sharma (2006), Singh and Singh (1981), Singh and Singh (2011) and Singh and Pandey (1998).

METHODOLOGY

The objective of the present study is to document the plant species which are used as food by natives of study area. Regular field surveys were carried in the study area during 2013- 2015 using questionnaire cards. Generally two types of interviews were taken, firstly of individuals and secondly of groups.

The selected informants were field validation (Martin 1995). Collection of plant species was done alongwith informants. About 614 data-sheets were prepared from the findings made during study period. All the plants and their parts were collected and herbarium specimens were prepared,

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preserved and identified with help of Flora of Indian Desert (Bhandari 1990), Flora of Rajasthan-vol.1-3 (Sheety & Singh 1987-93), Flora of North-East Rajasthan (Sharma & Tiagi 1979) and BSI (Botanical Survey of India), Jodhpur. Specimens were collected and deposited in the herbaria of University of Rajasthan (RUBL), Jaipur.

ENUMERATION OF PLANTS

1. *Abelmoschus ficulneus* (L.)Wight & Arn.(MALVACEAE)

Ran bhindi, Malbhindi

Small erect shrubs. Leaves with long petioles, circular, heart shaped at base, toothed rough on both sides and 3-5 lobed. Flowers are white turning pink, with a dark purple spot in the centre. The plant has small hairs which cause itching.

Fruits are cooked as vegetable. Fresh extract of plant is boiled with sugarcane juice to clarify and improve the quality of jaggery.

2. *Abelmoschus manihot* (L.) Medicus (MALVACEAE)

Jungli bhindi, Ran bhindi

Undershrubs with minute, simple or stellate hairs. Leaves orbicular to broadly ovate, cordate, entire and 3-7 lobed. Flowers solitary axillary or in racemes, white or sulphur yellow with dark purple centre. Capsule oblong.

Tender twigs and flower buds are cooked as vegetable.

3. *Abelmoschus moschatus* Medicus(MALVACEAE)

Jangli bhindi, Bhinda

Annual or perennial, strigose undershrubs with 3-5 lobed, ovate, cordate leaves. Flowers bright yellow with dark purple centre. Capsules acuminate and villous.

Young leaves, shoots and fruits are cooked as vegetable. Leaves and seeds used as souring and flavouring agents. Edible oil also obtained from the plant.

4. *Abrus precartorius* L.(FABACEAE)

Chirmi, Chirmoli, Ratti

Woody climbers with pinnately compound leaves. Leaflets 10-20 arranged in opposite pairs. Flowers light pink in axillary clusters. Pods 3-5 seeded with black blotch around the hilum.

Leaves are chewed to quench thirst.

5. *Acacia catechu* (L.f.)Willd (MIMOSACEAE)

Kattha, Khair, Khera

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Deciduous trees, with bipinnate, alternate leaves. Leaflets 10-30 pairs, spike pale yellow. Pods flat.

The gum exuding from the stem is eaten raw or fried.

The kattha is made from the chips of heartwood and eaten with the leaves of Piper betle.

6. ***Bacopa monnieri*** (L.) Wettst. (SCROPHULARIACEAE)

Brahmi, Baam, Jalbooti

Creeping herbs with obovate-oblong or spatulate leaves. Flowers purplish or pink. Capsules ovoid.

Leaves are cooked as vegetable.

7. ***Balanites aegyptiaca*** (L.) Del. (BALANITACEAE)

Hingot, Hingota, Hingotio, Hingudi

Spinous trees or shrubs with bifoliate leaves, greenish-yellow flowers, in axillary fascicled cymes. Fruits ovoid, yellowish-green when ripe.

Kernels are eaten raw or roasted.

8. ***Bambusa arundinacea*** (Retz.) Roxb. (POACEAE)

Bans, Vnahada

Tufted, stout, woody, thorny reed-bamboo with triangular-lanceolate, acuminate leaves. Spikelets pale lanceolate, acute and glabrous. Caryopsis oblong, with persistent style-base and grooved.

Tender shoots are relished as vegetable.

9. ***Basella alba*** L. (BASELLACEAE)

Poi

Glabrous, fleshy, perennial, much branched twining herbs. Leaves petioled, ovate, acute or acuminate, thick, often cordate at base. Flowers sessile, pedunculate spikes, white or black.

Leaves are cooked as vegetable, *curry, pakori and parantha*.

10. ***Bauhinia racemosa*** Lam. (CAESALPINIACEAE)

Seta, Sainto, Jhira, Jhinja

Small trees or erect shrubs, with drooping branches and simple, deeply two-lobed leaves. Flowers white, in terminal or leaf-opposed racemes. Pods somewhat falcate and glabrous.

Flower buds, flowers and pods are cooked as vegetable. Fruit pulp is mixed with the flour for making *chapati*. Leaves are pickled. Pods are eaten to quench thirst.

11. *Bauhinia variegata* L. (CAESALPINIACEAE)

Kachnar

Medium sized, deciduous trees, with orbicular, two lobed leaves. Flowers white to pink. Pods flat, glabrous and brown.

Flower buds, flowers and pods are cooked as vegetable. Pulp of the fruits is mixed with the flour to make *chapati*.

12. *Blumea lacera* (Burm.f.) DC. (ASTERACEAE)

Kakrona, Phatakadi

Erect, aromatic, glandular-pubescent, annual herbs, with a stout tap root. Leaves obovate- oblong or elliptic- oblong, narrowed into a short petiole at the base, glandular and densely hairy. Heads yellow.

Leaves are cooked as vegetable.

13. *Boerhavia diffusa* L. (NYCTAGINACEAE)

Santhi, Santha, Gandhpurna, Punarnava

Decumbent- ascending or diffuse, perennial herbs, with ovate- oblong leaves. Flowers rose or pink, in panicles or subcapitate umbels.

Leaves and roots are cooked as vegetable.

14. *Bombax ceiba* L. (BOMBACACEAE)

Semal, Semar, Sanwal, Heembal

Deciduous, tall trees, with prickly trunk. Leaves digitately 5-7 foliate, ovate-lanceolate and glabrous. Flowers crimson or yellow, crowded at the end of leafless branches. Capsules woody, minutely apiculate and 5-valved.

Tender leaves, buds and fruits are boiled and cooked as vegetable. Roots are eaten to allay hunger. Seeds are fried and eaten.

15. *Bacopa monnieri* (L.) Wettst. (SCROPHULARIACEAE)

Brahmi, Baam, Jalbooti

Creeping herbs with obovate-oblong or spatulate leaves. Flowers purplish or pink. Capsules ovoid.

Leaves are cooked as vegetable.

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Kernels are eaten raw or roasted.

17. ***Basella alba*** L. (BASELLACEAE)

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18. ***Bauhinia racemosa*** Lam.(CAESLPINIACEAE)

Seta, Sainto

Small trees or erect shrubs, with drooping branches and simple, deeply two lobed leaves. Flowers white, in terminal or leaf opposed racemes. Pods somewhat falcate and glabrous.

Flower buds, flowers and pods are cooked as vegetable. Fruit pulp is mixed with the flour for making *chapati*. Bark powder is mixed with the flour for making *chapati* during famine.

Leaves are pickled. Pods are eaten to quench thirst.

19. ***Bauhinia variegata*** L. (CAESALPINIACEAE)

Kachnar

Medium sized, deciduous trees, with orbicular, two lobed leaves. Flowers white to pink. Pods flat, glabrous and brown.

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Semal, Semar

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Tender leaves, buds and fruits are boiled and cooked as vegetable. Roots are eaten to allay hunger. Seeds are fried and eaten.

23. *Capparis spinosa* L. (CAPPARACEAE)

Kabar, Kabra

Diffuse, prostrate shrubs. Leaves orbicular, acute, ovate to obovate. Flowers white, solitary, axillary. Berries obovoid, ribbed and red.

Flower buds and fruits are cooked as vegetable. Fruits are pickled.

24. *Cardiospermum halicacabum* L. (SAPINDACEAE)

Kanphuti, Kapalhod-bel Bari-chirmi, Chirphuta

Selender, glabrous or sparsely, hairy climbers, with alternate, ovate-lanceolate leaves. Flowers in terminal cymes on the tendrils and white.

Leaves are cooked as vegetable.

25. *Celastrus paniculatus* Willd. (CELASTRACEAE)

Jangli- mali, Malkangni

Deciduous, shrubby climbers, with ovate or elliptic leaves. Flowers terminal or axillary racemes, greenish-yellow.

The gum is eaten raw by children.

26. *Celosia argentea* L. (AMARANTHACEAE)

Chhirbari, Suredi

Erect, annual herbs with linear, lanceolate or ovate-elliptic leaves. Flowers terminal or axillary spikes. Seeds lenticular, black and shining.

Tender leaves, shoots and inflorescence are cooked as vegetable.

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27. *Chlorophytum tuberosum* (Roxb.) Baker (LILIACEAE)_

Safed musali

Herbs, with many cylindric root- fibres ending in ellipsoid tubers. Leaves linear-lanceolate. Flowers in racemes and white. Capsules obvoid.

Roots are cooked as vegetable and eaten raw to allay hunger.

28. *Citrullus colocynthis* (L.) Schrad. (CUCURBITACEAE)

Anarni, Indrayan, Tumbi

Perennial herbs, with tendrils and deeply 3-5 lobed leaves. Flowers greenish- yellow. Fruits globose.

Seeds (treated by salt water) are powdered to make *chapati* solely or after mixing with Bajara flour and sometimes with flour of Moth (*Vigna aconitifolia*).

29. *Citrullus lanatus*(*Thumb.*) Matsumura & Nakai (CUCURBITACEAE)

Matira

Trailing, hispid herbs,leaves 3- lobed, ovate, cordate, pinnatifid. Flowers pale yellow. Fruits subglobose or ellipsoid.

Fruit pulp eaten raw. Rind of fruit is cooked as vegetable. Powdered seeds are used to make chapati (with flour of Bajra) during famine period. Seeds are also eaten. Seeds oil is edible.

30. *Coccinia grandis* (L.) J. O. Voigt (CUCURBITACEAE)

Perennial,dioecious, herbaceous climber. Leaves palmately 5-nerved, base cordate.inflorescences solitary axillary.flowers ovoid, red.

Unripe fruits are cooked as vegetable.

31. *Colocasia esculenta* (L.) Schott (ARACEAE)

Arai

Perennial herbs, with tuberous root stock of various size and shape. Leaves cordate and entire. Spadix with an apical barren appendage. Wild along water courses in the forests of Chittorgarh, Kota and Sirohi districts.

Rhizomes are cooked as vegetable. Leaves are cooked with *curry* and *pakodi*.

32. *Commelina benghalensis* L. (COMMELINACEAE)

Bakhana, Kana gokhana

Decumbent herbs, with elliptic-ovate leaves. Flowers blue, spathes sessile or subsessile. Capsules tri

gonous.

Tender leaves and shoots are cooked as vegetable and *curry*. Leaves are mixed with gram flour, water, salt and chillies and fried to make *pakodi*.

33. ***Dactyloctenium scindicum*** Boiss. (POACEAE)

Monthi

Profusely branched, stoloniferous perennial grass with pubescent nodes. Leaves glaucous, sparsely hairy, margins ciliate; ligule membranous with a minute fringe of hairs. Spikes 3-4, spikelets 3-9 flowered. Grains rugose and brownish.

Grains are powdered and mixed with the flour of Bajra to make *chapati* or boiled in water with and spices.

34. ***Dendrocalamus strictus*** (Roxb.) Nees (POACEAE)

Bans, Vnahado

Arborescent, densely tufted bamboos, with smooth culms. Leaves articulated with sheath. Spikelets in dense clusters along the panicle branches. Caryopsis brown, subglobose.

Leaves and young shoots are cooked as vegetable and pickled.

35. ***Dichrostachys cinerea*** (L.) Wight & Arn. (MIMOSACEAE)

Birbira, Goya khair

Polygamous shrubs, with branches ending into spines. Pinnae 4-14 pairs and leaflets 12-24 pairs. Spikes bicoloured, yellow in upper half and rose pink or purple below. Pods twisted and torulose.

Dried pods are relished by children.

36. ***Digera muricata*** (L.) Mart. (AMARANTHACEAE)

Lehsua, Khanjru

Erect, annual herbs, with glabrous, spreading branches. Leaves ovate or elliptic, glabrous. Flowers in axillary racemes and pinkish. Utricles globose, and muriculate.

Tender leaves are cooked as vegetable and *curry*.

37. ***Dioscorea bulbifera*** L. (DIOSCOREACEAE)

Gainthi, Kanda-giloy

Twinning, glabrous, dioecious herbs, with globose tubers. Leaves alternate, ovate-cordate to suborbicular, acute to acuminate. Male flowers pendulous simple or paniculate spikes. Female flowers axillary, solitary or fasciated, pendulous spikes. Capsules oblong, straw coloured.

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Bulbils and tubers are cooked as vegetable.

38. *Ficus carica* L. (MORACEA)

Anjeer

Tall trees, without aerial roots. Leaves broadly ovate, entire and softly pubescent beneath. Receptacles axillary, obovoid- oblong.

Ripe fruits are eaten raw or dried.

39. *Ficus hispida* L. f. (MORACEAE)

Daduri

Hispidly hairy shrubs or small trees, with ovate to obovate, dentate or serrulate leaves. Receptacles extra-axillary on leafless branches or on special shoots. Achenes lenticular and keeled.

Raw fruits are eaten.

40. *Ficus palmata* Forssk. subsp. *Virgata* (R oxb.) Browicz (MORACEAE)

Jangli anjeer, Anjiri

Medium sized trees, with pubescent branches. Leaves alternate, broad, ovate and rough on the upper surface. Receptacles subglobose or pyriform.

Receptacles are cooked as vegetable. Ripe fruits are eaten raw.

41. *Ficus racemosa* L. (MORACEAE)

Goolar

Evergreen trees, with short aerial roots, ovate- oblong or elliptic - lanceolate leaves. Receptacles axillary, obovoid- oblong, pubescent.

Mature fruits are eaten fresh, dried or roasted. Dry receptacles and stem bark are powdered and mixed with the flour to make chapati during famine.

42. *Grewia demine* Gaertn. (TILIACEAE)

Gangaran, Chabeni

Shrubs : young parts tomentose. Leaves ovate- oblong or ovate- lanceolate, serrulate. Flowers in axillary, umbellate cymes, yellow. Drupes globose, reddish- yellow when ripe.

Ripe fruits are eaten raw.

43. *Grewia flavescens* A. Juss. (TILIACEAE)

Geengri, Chabeni

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Shrubs or small rounded trees. Leaves simple, alternate, hairy ovate-oblong. Flowers yellow, star like, in axillary, umbellate cymes. Drupes globose, stellate hairy, orange coloured.

Ripe sourish, sweet fruits are eaten.

Grewia hirsuta (Vahl) A. Juss. (TILIACEAE)

Ghiski

Large shrubs, leaves 4-7 nerved, ovate, serrate, acute. Inflorescence axillary, umbellate cymes. Flowers yellow. Drupe rounded or reniform.

Raw fruits are eaten.

44. ***Grewia tenax*** (Forssk.) Fiori (TILIACEAE)

Multistemmed shrubs, with alternate, ovate-cordate or ovate-oblong leaves. Flowers solitary or in pairs, axillary and white. Drupes 2-4 lobed, orange-red and subglobose.

Ripe fruits are eaten.

45. ***Grewia subinaequalis*** DC. (TILIACEAE)

Phalsa

Shrubs, with broadly ovate-orbicular, crenate, hairy leaves. Flowers in axillary or extra axillary cymes, yellow. Drupes rugose, dark purple when ripe.

Ripe fruits are eaten.

46. ***Launaea procumbens*** (Roxb.) Ramayya & Rajagopal (ASTERACEAE)

Jungle gobi

Glabrous, annual or perennial herbs. Leaves mostly radical, rosette, oblong. Heads yellow, with white pappus.

Leaves are cooked as vegetable and *curry*.

47. ***Leptadenia pyrotechnica*** (Forssk.) Decne. (ASCLEPIADACEAE)

Kheep

Erect much branched, bushy shrubs, with caducous linear-lanceolate leaves. Flowers greenish-yellow. Fruits follicles, terete, tapering to slender beak, glabrous.

Fruits are cooked as vegetable.

48. ***Leptadenia reticulata*** (Retz.) Wt. & Arn. (ASCLEPIADACEAE)

Jhumka, Jeevanti

Much branched, laticiferous, twining shrubs, with yellowish brown, deeply cracked bark. Leaves broadly ovate- lanceolate, coriaceous. Flowers greenish yellow. Follicles broadly lanceolate, with thick curved beak.

Unripe fruits are eaten with salt.

49. ***Leucas aspera*** (Willd) Link (LAMIACEAE)

Kumbi

Hairy herbs, leaves elliptic. Inflorescence axillary, terminal globose whorls. Flowers white. Nutlets black.

Tender leaves and shoots are cooked as vegetable.

50. ***Mucuna pruriens*** (L.)DC. (FABACEAE)

Konch, Kaunch

Twining, hirsute, annual herbs, with trifoliolate leaves. Flowers in drooping racemes, purple. Pods slightly curved at both ends in opposite directions.

Fruits are eaten during famine.

51. ***Nelumbo nucifera*** Gaertn. (NELUMBONACEAE)

Kamal-kakari, Kamlani

Large, perennial, handsome, aquatic herbs with milky juice. Leaves orbicular, glaucous. Flowers solitary, white or light pink, mildly fragrant.

Rhizome is pickled. Rhizome, petiole, flowering scape and root stock are cooked as vegetable. Cotyledons and seeds are eaten raw or roasted.

52. ***Nymphaea nauchali*** Burm. f. (NYMPHACEAE)

Kamal, Kumudini

Perennial, aquatic herbs, with orbicular, peltate floating leaves. Flowers solitary, violate, pale- blue, or white. Fruits globose.

Rhizome, petiole and flowering stalks are cooked as vegetable. Seeds are edible.

53. ***Ocimum canum*** Sims. (LAMIACEAE)

Nagad bavri, Bapchi

Annual herbs; branches subquadriangular, grooved on opposite sides. Leaves ovate- lanceolate to ovate- oblong and acute. Flowers whorled in long racemes and white. Nutlets ovoid.

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Seeds are used to make *kheer*.

54. ***Portulaca oleracea*** L. (PORTULACACEAE)

Lunkha

Prostrate or diffuse herbs, with obovate-spatulate, sessile, spatulate leaves. Flowers yellow. Capsules obovoid to ovoid.

Leaves are cooked as curry.

55. ***Pueraria tuberosa*** (Roxb. Ex Willd.) DC. (FABACEAE)

Gudbel, Ghoda bel

Shrubby twiners, with large tuberous roots. Leaflets broadly ovate, acuminate, hairy beneath. Flowers in axillary racemes and bluish. Pods long, flat and 3-6 seeded.

Tubers are eaten raw to quench thirst.

56. ***Rhus mysurensis*** G. Don (ANACARDIACEAE)

Dansar, Darsan, Khatta

Small trees or shrubs, with trifoliolate, serrate leaves. Flowers small, polygamous, in terminal and axillary panicles. Drupes subglobose, small and glabrous.

Leaves and mature fruits are eaten. Dried fruits are powdered and eaten with salt.

57. ***Rivea hypocrateriformis*** (Desr.) Choisy (CONVOLVULACEAE)

Gwal-kakri, Phang

Large, woody, climbing shrubs, with ovate to orbicular, cordate -based, shortly acuminate leaves. Flowers axillary, 1-3 together at the end of peduncles, white. Capsules ovoid or globose and mucronate.

Fruits and seeds are eaten raw. Tender leaves and shoots are cooked as vegetable and *curry*.

58. ***Salvadora persica*** L. (SALVADORACEAE)

Jal, Pilu, Mitha- jal

Evergreen trees, with drooping branches and linear- lanceolate leaves. Flowers pedicillate, yellow, in compound panicles. Fruits globose, red when ripe.

Ripe fruits are eaten raw.

59. ***Telosma cordata*** (Burm.f.) Merrill (ASCLEPIADACEAE)

Bisotiya

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Twining undershrubs; branches pale, more or less pubescent. Leaves membranous, ovate, shortly acuminate, cordate at base. Flowers in umbellate cymes, pale- creamish to white. Follicles woody, lanceolate, shortly acuminate.

Flowers are eaten . Fruits are eaten cooked as vegetable.

60. *Terminalia bellerica* (Gaertn.) Roxb. (COMBRETACEAE)

Bahera, Deshi-badam, Veda

Deciduous trees, with dark grey bark. Leaves broadly obovate, cuneate, coriaceous. Flowers in axillary spikes, greenish-yellow or creamy white. Drupes ovoid or ellipsoid, grey-velvety.

Seed kernels are eaten by children and ladies.

61. *Typha angustata* Bory & Chaub. (TYPHACEAE)

Patera, Pota, Pata

Erect, perennial, rhizomatous herbs. Leaves spongy, thick, linear, acute and vertical. Spikes cylindrical. Achenes elongated- ovoid, brownish.

Rhizome and tender stem are cooked as vegetable during scarcity.

62. *Urginea indica* (Roxb.) Kunth (LILIACEAE)

Jangli piaz, koli kanda, Safed kanda

Scapigerous, perennial herbs, with ovoid, tunicated bulbs. Leaves radical, linear, strap - shaped and acute. Flowers pale- brown and in racemes. Capsules oblong.

Bulbs are boiled for longer time and then cooked as vegetable.

63. *Wrightia tinctoria* (Roxb.) R. Br. (APOCYNACEAE)

Dudhi, Khirni, Khinni

Deciduous trees, with elliptic- lanceolate or oblong leaves. Flowers in dichotomous cymes and white. Follicles cylindrical and drooping.

Latex is licked by the children because it resembles butter in taste. Latex is used for instant curdling by shepherds.

64. *Ziziphus mauritiana* Lam. (RHAMNACEAE)

Beriya, Ber, Bada- bor, Pamli - bor

Evergreen, much- branched shrubs, with ovate- elliptic to suborbicular ovate leaves. Flowers in axillary clusters or in short peduncle cymes. Drupes fleshy and yellow.

Mature fruits are eaten raw or after drying.

65. *Ziziphus nummularia* (Burm. f.) Wt. & Arn. (RHAMNACEAE)

Jhar- ber, Beri, Bor

Much branched, thorny, bushy shrubs, with orbicular or ovate leaves. Flowers in axillary cymes, greenish- yellow. Drupes globose, glabrous and red.

Ripe fruits are eaten raw. Dried fruits are also stored for future consumption.

DISCUSSION

Tribal and traditional communities are familiar with the different types of plants and have extensive knowledge about edible and non edible plants. They use roots, rhizomes, leaves, flowers, seeds, gums, other parts and products for eating, after processing or after cooking.

Many edible plants are collected, dried and then stored. Sun drying is the pre-treatment adopted before storing of food grains, fruits and leaves.

Due to modernization, industrialization, urbanization and migration to cities for study and to earn livelihood, the new generation has less knowledge about wild edibles.

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