



Ramps

Allium tricoccum

Ramps are an edible plant found in NJ. They are a species of wild onion, related to leeks and shallots.

If you go looking for ramps, make sure that you are allowed to harvest them on the property you are on. State parks, forests and wildlife management areas are places where you cannot pick plants.

The leaves are light green and smooth. Leaves grow in a clump of 1, 2 or 3 leaves. The leaves are 1-2.5" wide and 4-12 inches long. They may have reddish purple stems with a white stalk and bulb.. They grow closely together in clumps.

They are one of the earliest spring edibles to appear.

They have a very pungent flavor—similar to a cross between onion and garlic –but stronger.

People prepare ramps in many ways such as frying them with potatoes and bacon, scrambled in eggs, pickled and used in stews and soups.

Ramps are used medicinally to treat colds and croup, the juice is used to treat earaches and they can be used to the juice from crushed bulbs can be used to treat insect bites.

To harvest these slow growing plants sustainably, so that you have them year to year, you should cut one leaf and leave the bulb and second leaf to continue growing. If you choose to take the bulb as well, clear away the dirt from the bulb. Then take a sharp knife and cut the top two thirds of the bulb off, leaving the bottom third and the roots in the ground. Cover the roots back up with soil so they regrow the next year.



Ask A Naturalist

Fun facts about ramps:

- The entire plant is edible
- The can be eaten raw or cooked.
- There are festivals dedicated to this plant
- Ramps are high in vitamins A and C
- They can take 6 months to a year to germinate
- They take about 7 years to reach maturity! Wow!