



# Quick Guide - How to find and use Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica* & *U. gracilis*)



Wear gloves when harvesting and handling unless you have a lot of experience with this plant!



## Geographic Range

European stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and American stinging nettle (*Urtica gracilis*) may be found in every US state except for Hawaii. European stinging nettle is introduced. American stinging nettle & subspecies are native.



## Key Features

1. Leaves: Green; spear/heart-shaped; serrated edges; opposite arrangement on stems.
2. Stems: Four-sided square-shaped.
3. Flowers: Small clusters of inconspicuous flowers in summer.
4. **Key: Trichomes (stinging hairs) on stems and underside of leaves (photo 4 above).**



## Season

Breaks dormancy when ground thaws in late winter to early spring. Produces flowers and seeds in summer. Freezes to ground at first hard freeze.



## Warnings

Wear gloves to harvest! Cook or pulverize before eating. Eat prior to flower formation. Poisonous lookalike: White Snakeroot, has smooth round stems.



## Tasty tips

Flavor: Cooked stinging nettle tastes similar to spinach. Use 1:1 as spinach substitute in recipes.

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Foraging wild foods involves risk. This information is for educational purposes only—always confirm identification and safety before consuming any wild plant or fungi.

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