

Extract from the Bio Suisse Standards

Directives for wild collection

1. Definitions

For the purposes of this documentation wild plants are defined as edible plants and mushrooms and parts thereof which grow naturally in woodlands and on farmland and are not cultivated using agricultural methods. The collection of wild plants is considered as being complementary to agricultural production. Wild plants subject to cultivation measures are agricultural products and not wild plants within the meaning of these directives.

2. Conversion period

There is no conversion period for the collection of wild plants.

3. Declaration

If products are comprised entirely of wild plants this must be declared under the designation. In the case of combinations with cultivated products their collection in the wild must be declared in the list of ingredients (e.g. "certified from collection in the wild").

4. Inspection

A complete description of the collection area (see Point 5), collection activities (Point 6), evidence that the collection is ecologically sound (with regard to habitat stability and biodiversity; Point 7) and description of storing and processing (Point 8) must be furnished at the inspection. The documents mentioned in Points 5 to 8 must be included in the inspection report.

5. Collection area

The following data on the collection area must be known and documented for the inspection:

- The topographic and pedo-climatic situation in the collection area
- Property rights and beneficial interest in the collection area: ownership or usufruct rights of local communities and indigenous peoples must be respected
- Sources of emission/contamination in the area in question and its surroundings: What are the sources and to what impact do they have on the area?
- The Size, geographic location and delimitation of the collection area
- Evidence that no auxiliary inputs prohibited in organic agriculture have been used during the past three years.

In normal cases, a plausible declaration is sufficient, together with an inspection of the land by the inspector. In case of doubt, a letter of confirmation from landowner must be furnished, or a residue analysis can be requested. This information must be documented in plot maps, topographic maps or land registry maps at a scale generally not exceeding 1:50'000. The boundaries of the collection areas, potential sources of emissions as well as the collection and storage sites must be indicated.

6. Collection activity

The following details must be documented and made available for inspection:

- The entire sequence of collection activities from planning, to harvesting, storage, processing and marketing
- Collection report (collectors, quantity, date)
- Qualification and training of the collectors.
- Identity of the main persons responsible for the collection
- Common and botanical name of the wild plants collected

The following additional documents pertaining the collection activities must be available:

- Authorization for collection (if required by law)
- Lists of collectors (all adult persons engaged in collection must be listed)
- Sample of a contract between the manager of the wild collection project and collectors, in which the collectors agree, among other things:
 - to collect only in the areas defined by the manager of the wild collection project
 - to comply with the instructions and provisions governing sustainable collection (applicable regulations, collection technique, intensity of use, timing of collection etc.)
 - Not to collect from areas at risk of ambient contamination
 - Not to collect or store the same product at the same time under other criteria
 - only to use residue-free containers that meet food quality standards

The collectors must know about sustainable collection; the person in charge of the wild collection activity is held accountable for the collectors' instruction in this regard.

The manager of the collection project must not be the manager of a non-organic agricultural holding at the same time.

Collectors must meet Bio Suisse requirements for the entire quantity collected of all the plant species.

7. Habitat stability and biodiversity

The collection of wild plants must be conducted in an ecologically sound manner. This is the case as long as there is no negative impact on habitat stability and biodiversity. Each individual case must be assessed as to its potential ecological impact. International agreements and national laws, regulations and provisions must be observed. To this end, the following details must be known and documented for the inspection:

- Description of the area (incl. inventory)
- Which parts of the wild plants are collected (whole plant, leaves, flowers, etc.) and how much of each plant is used (e.g. 1/3 of the root)
- Intensity of exploitation in the collection area
- Other collection activities in the same area, including those by other collectors who do not belong to the project

The inspector confirms that the activity is ecologically benign. If necessary, an independent expert must be consulted.

8. Processing and storage

The same standards and regulations apply to the processing and storage of wild plants as to agricultural products.