

# Foraging in Tucson's Parks

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As the world population increases, there is less and less space for people to interact with nature. Urban foraging practices connect people with nature within the urban landscape, are "important for maintaining cultural identities and have the potential to contribute to food security and human and community well-being" (McLain et al., 2014). Due to the lack of research on the implementation of an edible city in a hot and arid climate region, this study attempts to gauge public attitudes toward urban foraging and identify legal barriers that would prevent an edible city initiative in Tucson, Arizona.

## Research Questions:

What types of barriers prevent the implementation, normalization, and use of edible landscapes in Tucson parks, what specific laws prohibit foraging?

## Methodology

- 1 Review all laws affecting public parks, AZ state parks, and streetscapes
- 2 Review UA Campus Arboretum Campus Tree Care Plan
- 3 Send out student Survey (16 responses out of 21)
- 4 Conduct expert interview

**Literature Review:** Barriers to the successful implementation of an urban foraging initiative

### Behavioral Restrictions

- Urban Food Production
- Gathering/ Planting
- Penalties
- Rural vs Urban Areas

### Management

- Species Selection
- Site Selection
- Community Stewardship
- Plant Maintenance

### Safety Concerns

- Vandalism/ Damages
- Injury to Passerby
- Contamination
- Pest Control
- Plant Infection

## Data and Results

Content Analysis Results: 78 laws were reviewed

"No person in a park shall:  
Dig, **remove** or damage soil, rock stones, trees, shrubs or plants..."

- Tucson's Code of Ordinances, Section 21-3 (1)

"Within a state park, a person shall not deface, injure, destroy, **remove, or use,** without authority any: Wildlife, **plant,** or animal..."

- Arizona Administrative Code, R12-8-103

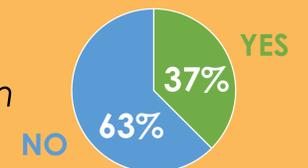
### Interview:

Q: How does providing edible plants change the role of parks for residents?

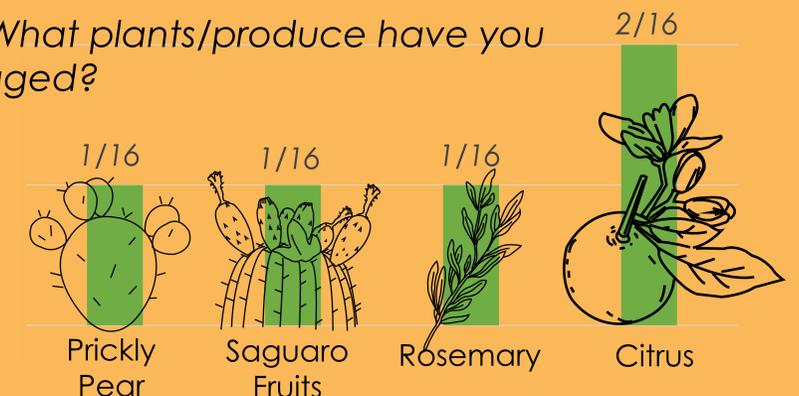
A: "Information could be provided about the plants and be used as a study opportunity. Ultimately, it is a form of recreation- to forage."

## Survey Results:

Q: Are you familiar with the term 'urban foraging'?



Q: What plants/produce have you foraged?



Do not need to forage

Perceived social stigma

Safety concerns

Don't know how

Q: What has stopped you from foraging?

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**Discussion/Conclusion:** The results indicate that legal challenges need to be addressed before an edible city initiative can take place. There are already food harvesting groups, foraging tours, community gardens, a diverse population, and a desire to connect to nature, making Tucson an ideal city for a bottom-up approach. The focus of the study is on parks because it is easier to modify already existing greenspaces in cities rather than finding an open space in the urban fabric to rehabilitate, however this is a limitation of the study. Including the community throughout a project and continuing to engage them with an educational program or regular events will foster the appreciation for all that the Sonoran Desert has to offer.