

The fiddlehead is a seasonal delight that many people enjoy.

Boil or steam this delicacy. Just add butter, salt and pepper or add to a variety of recipes. It is a fantastic option to consider.

FIDDLEHEADS are an excellent source of iron, potassium, and fibre. Contains vitamins A and C, omega-3 and 6 and antioxidant power!

Harvest in the springtime as fresh wild edibles and freeze to prolong your enjoyment.



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## Sustainable Harvest of Fiddleheads Ostrich Fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*)





#### Background:

Fiddleheads are the fronds of young developing Ostrich fern. This species of fern grows naturally throughout the Great Lakes, Maritime Provinces and the North East United States.

The Ostrich fern is propagated as an ornamental plant for its beautiful plumage and for its delicious fiddlehead.

*This delicacy should be enjoyed each Spring, but not overharvested.*

#### Ecological Function:

Fiddleheads are found in early Spring in partial or fully shaded forested areas. They also flourish along wetlands. This species requires continually moist soil and prefer an acidic ph of 5.5 or 6 to reach optimum growth and production.

The presence of Ostrich fern along riparian zones feed white tailed deer and mother larvae. It also prevents erosion and aids in sediment remediation.

Ostrich fern's clumped root systems grow from a vertical crown and produce lateral stolons. This species requires a cold winter season to complete its growth cycle. The spores mature over the winter and disperse in early Spring.



#### Sustainable Harvest and Propagation:

About 7-9 fiddleheads emerge from a single clump each year. When harvesting this perennial, it is encouraged that you harvest no more than 1-2 fiddleheads from each plant. Avoid using a knife to ensure sustainable harvest. **Overpicking will kill the plant!**

#### Cooking Instructions:

Health Canada recommends that fiddleheads be cleaned in preparation to cooking. Don't over cook, but raw or undercooked fiddleheads have been linked to food related illness in specific cases. Boil or steam for 10 minutes as a side dish or before adding to recipes.

These instructions should be followed prior to sauteing, frying, baking or adding to other foods like soups or casseroles.

#### Freezing:

Clean and blanch in boiling water for 2 minutes. Immerse in cold water and drain. Discard the water, pack in a sealed container or bag and freeze for up to 1 year.

**Follow cooking instructions before serving!!!**

