



GETTING STARTED WITH WILD CROP HARVEST CERTIFICATION



Overview: Wild crop harvest certification is a process regulated by the USDA National Organic Program (NOP) that allows for the sustainable collection of wild crops while ensuring they meet organic standards.

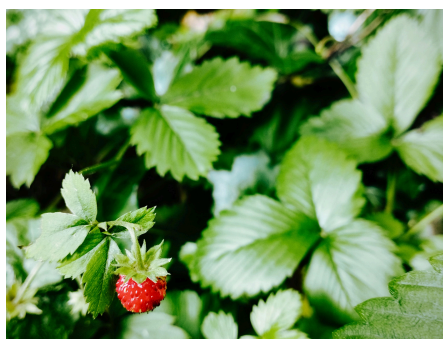
This guide outlines the key steps for beginners to achieve certification.



STEP 1: UNDERSTAND ORGANIC STANDARDS

Familiarize yourself with the USDA NOP guidelines:

- **Definition of Wild Crops:** Any plant or portion of a plant that is collected or harvested from a site that is not maintained under cultivation or other agricultural management.
- **Allowed Practices:** Organic wild crop harvest must adhere to sustainable practices that protect the environment and biodiversity.
- **Prohibited Substances:** Know what substances are not allowed in organic production (e.g., synthetic fertilizers and pesticides).



STEP 2: IDENTIFY CROP AND HARVEST SITE

- **Select Your Crop:** Determine which wild crops you intend to harvest. Common examples include berries, mushrooms, and herbs.
- **Research:** Learn about the ecological requirements and harvest practices specific to your chosen crop.
- **Harvest Site:** Ensure that the site has not been treated with prohibited substances in the last 36 months.



STEP 3: DRAFT AN ORGANIC SYSTEM PLAN (OSP)

- **Documentation:** Develop an OSP that outlines your practices for harvesting, handling, and processing.
- **Key Components:** Include details about:
 - Harvesting techniques
 - Land management practices
 - Measures taken to prevent contamination



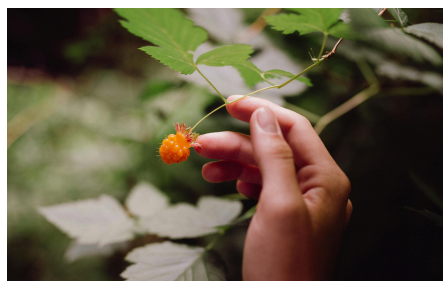
STEP 4: CHOOSE A CERTIFYING AGENT

- **Certification Body:** Select an accredited USDA certifying agent. Research their requirements and services.
- **Initial Consultation:** Schedule a consultation to understand the application process and fees involved.



STEP 5: SUBMIT YOUR APPLICATION

- **Complete Application:** Fill out the application provided by your certifying agent, including your OSP.
- **Fees:** Pay any associated fees for the certification process.



STEP 6: UNDERGO INSPECTION

- **Schedule Inspection:** Your certifying agent will conduct an on-site inspection to verify compliance with organic standards.
- **Prepare Documentation:** Have all relevant records and your OSP ready for review during the inspection.



STEP 7: RECEIVE CERTIFICATION

- **Approval:** If you meet all standards, you will receive your organic wild crop harvest certification.
- **Renewal:** Keep in mind that certification is an ongoing process; you will need to renew your certification annually.



STEP 8: IMPLEMENT SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

- **Harvest Responsibly:** Follow sustainable harvesting methods to avoid over-harvesting and ensure long-term viability of the crop.
- **Record-Keeping:** Maintain records of harvesting dates, quantities, and locations to provide evidence of sustainable practices.
- **Land Access:** Secure necessary permission or permits for land that is being harvested on.



TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Stay informed about changes in organic standards.
- Network with other wild crop harvesters for shared knowledge and best practices. The Organic Integrity Database can be a helpful resource.
- Participate in workshops/training on organic certification.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Organic Integrity Database: <https://organic.ams.usda.gov/integrity>

USDA National Organic Program:

<https://www.ams.usda.gov/about-ams/programs-offices/national-organic-program>

Organic Certification Cost Share Program: <https://ofrf.org/news/cost-share/>