

Guided wild plant tours and their contributions to the cultural transmission of knowledge in the city of Vienna

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- **Actor/s:** Master thesis: guides and participants on wild plant excursions
- **State of activity:** 2015 - 2016
- **Keywords:** ethno botany, excursions on wild plants in Vienna, transmission of knowledge, knowledge sources, motivations, wild plant gathering



Abstract

During the 20th century the traditional, horizontal transmission of knowledge on wild plants lost importance, due to diverse socio-economic changes. Currently, media reports and publications of popular science show an increasing interest in wild plants and new forms of knowledge transmission occur.

In this thesis the transmission of knowledge between guides and participants of five excursions on wild plants in Vienna in autumn 2015 was investigated. Data were collected by using participant observation and structured questionnaires, which were further analyzed with descriptive statistics and tests of significance. The four guides and six participants of the excursions were consulted subsequently by using guided interviews to explore their sources of knowledge and their motivations for gathering wild plants. The qualitative data was evaluated with content analysis.

During the five excursions, information on 64 plants and their possible applications was given. The participants were informed about plant identification, suitable gathering spaces and how collection can be done in a compatible way. Knowledge was transmitted in various forms and by

interactively involving the participants. Sources of knowledge are family members, members of the public, media, events and trainings. Especially for plant identification and practical applications, personal transmission of knowledge is preferred to media. Besides the direct use of wild plants, gathering is predominantly done due to intrinsic motivations: enjoyment of gathering, connection to nature, spirituality and social aspects.

Excursions on wild plants can contribute in connecting people living in urban regions to their natural environment and demonstrating the range of applications of wild plants. The combination of different knowledge sources can support exchange and extension of knowledge.

Source and contact

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