



Seaweed Harvesting and Storage Guide



Seaweed is gathered for a whole bunch of reasons, food, fertiliser, art, it's pretty amazing stuff. When we gather seaweed, we do it responsibly whilst showing respect for these natural spaces that we are a part of. Be a good example to those around you, give thanks and be gentle, these are all living things and an important delicate part of a bigger whole.

This is a best practice gathering/harvesting guide to help you collect seaweed in a safe way whilst having the least impact on the coastal ecosystem. If possible always find local knowledge and expertise to help guide you.

Gathering guide

1. Know your gathering/harvest site

- Is there a rāhui in place or is it a marine reserve?
- Is it an area that holds special significance to a community?

2. Know why you're gathering/harvesting

- For example; if gathering for food, avoid areas where the water might be unclean, like near a port or factory... this wouldn't matter if you're collecting for pressings or to go onto your garden.

If in doubt, head somewhere else

3. Take a little from each place and spread out your efforts.

Seaweed feeds lots of animals and plays an important role in many animal's lives. This is true when it washes up on the beach as well, so it's important there's plenty left behind.

4. Always check for animals that may have hitched a ride.

They want to stay in their home, not come to yours. Give it a good rinse and check before you take them away from the ocean.

Some animals look like seaweed, so always double check carefully

Where?

Although seaweeds can be found on almost any coast in the world, they are generally most abundant on rocky shores or attached to artificial substrates such as piers, docks, and jetties. Often the best places to collect seaweeds are areas where drifts of seaweed collect on the shore, called beach cast seaweed.

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The quality of drift seaweed should be carefully checked as they may be decomposing and not suitable for use. When you arrive at a collection spot, note the date, location, and general conditions; what you find can change a lot depending on time of year and the wave/wind strength and direction.

How?

Whole seaweed - Collecting the whole specimen can be helpful for identification purposes and can best represent the organism in general. When collecting whole, attached specimens, as gently as possible scrape them off of their substrate with a knife to keep any holdfasts. Use this method for smaller species.

Parts or sections of a seaweed - If only a fragment of the seaweed is being collected, use a pair of scissors to cut the blades off above the stipe, leaving a little of the blade attached so that it can grow again.

At the shore, move collected specimens quickly to a bucket of cold, clear seawater out of direct sunlight. Use a bucket to transport seaweed.

Storing your Seaweed

- Seaweed is best used when fresh, especially for activities like pressing and for food, so the sooner it can be used after harvesting the better.
- It can be stored for a couple of days maximum in cold clean seawater, in a dark place.
- Refrigerate the seaweed if possible.
- Do not store in freshwater as this will turn it into a slimy mess.
- When judging seaweed freshness your first and best tool is your nose, if it smells funky, then it's normally only good to go on the garden.

You don't have to be collecting seaweed to appreciate its beauty and colour. Grab a copy of the **Love Rimurimu Seaweed Identification Guide** and brush up on your seaweed ID skills!

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