

A SPOTTER'S GUIDE TO FORAGING TROLLS, Mark Williams, [Galloway Wild Foods](#), April 2024

A vast majority of people who are genuinely interested in foraging are warm and polite, even when they disagree, and even online. I made this guide out of a sense of fun and fury to help foraging friends & I cope with the rude/ignorant minority. I have met every type listed and many of the comments are genuine quotes. For a more serious exploration of the benefits and perils of cyberforaging, please see my blogs here: <https://gallowaywildfoods.com/category/foraging-and-social-media/>.

Type*	Name	Key Characteristic	Abundance (1=common >10 rare)	Typical Comment/Post	Suggested Response (Polite)	Less Polite Response	Something they should read (but probably won't)
1	Hypocritical Haley	Makes assumptions about and criticises other's foraging activities, while feeling entirely ethical about their own	2	"Its unethical for you to harvest rowan buds, but fine for me to dig up dandelions, pick elderflowers and tap birch"	Share a screenshot of their foraging activity with them and politely ask how they think it differs	"Buzzer off you HYPOCRITE!"	Their own feed/food?
2	Virtue Signalling Vern	Trumpets their own virtues by criticising others. An archetypal foraging troll often hybridising with other types	1	"I saw some of these the other day, but left them for the bees"	"Good for you, and the bees. I ate some AND left plenty for the bees!"	"Did you know that bees are allergic to SANCTIMONY?"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-in-the-modern-world-dont-eat-nature/
3	Snipe and Scram Stevie	Takes pot-shots, then refuses to engage with reasoned responses. Often blocks people.	1	"I refuse to read your well researched blog post and hereby reassert all the criticisms it disproves"	"I'm sorry you choose not to engage with something that challenges your world view"	"Sorry, I didn't realise you couldn't read full sentences."	Lost cause?
4	Sanctimonious Sam	Like Virtue Signalling Vern, only more mansplainy	1	"I think you'll find that I've just made up some 'facts'"	"Please could you share a link to where you found that information?"	LOL	https://foragers-association.org/News/8137060
5	Well intentioned but ignorant Ira	Troubled by biodiversity loss and climate change, attacks foragers rather than agribusiness, capitalism & greed	1	"As I eat my out of season, hot-housed, food mile strawberries, I worry about the number of foragers out there eating weeds"	Politely ask what they eat that has less impact.	"Go smash a McDonalds up and leave foragers alone!"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-sustainability-and-the-media/
6	Pickshame Pip	Instantly pickshames images of full baskets, preferring to assume that it was all harvested from one place and without consideration	1	"Leave some for nature!"	"Of course, why do you assume that I didn't? Can I ask what you eat that has fewer consequences for nature?"	"What's wrong with you that makes you assume the worst in people?"	https://foragers-association.org/principles
7	Straw Man Sandy	Instantly invents highly unlikely scenarios in an attempt to discredit foraging activities	1	"What if everyone started picking rowan buds?"	"What if everyone became a dentist?"	"What if everyone went around making up implausible scenarios to try to win arguments?"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-in-the-modern-world-protecting-rare-species/
8	Heaven-taught Helge	Harp on about how they got to know plants through sitting with them. Assumes nobody else spends time with plants, and doesn't value plant teachers	3	"Whatever happened to sitting with a plant and letting it disclose secrets to a person?"	"I do that too, but needed books and teachers for the complex bits"	"Shame the plants didn't also teach you not to be a dick."	https://foragers-association.org/News/13233306
9	Look-but-don't touch Toni	Posts images of abundant, delicious, nutritious things, then points out that they didn't pick any	4	"I photographed these beautiful vegetables, then left them to rot"	"Your photos are very pretty, but not very nourishing"	"I took a picture AND ate some"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-in-the-modern-world-dont-eat-nature/
10	Silo Sasha	Specialist in a very niche area of botany/mycology, struggles to take a holistic approach and attacks anyone who comes near their patch	8	"The mushrooms you aren't interested in foraging a really rare you know!"	"Foraging was my entryway into a wider appreciation of this subject"	"You should probably get out more."	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-in-the-modern-world-protecting-rare-species/
11	Nazi Rewilder Rowan	Excited about rewilding, but not so bothered about humans	7	"Nobody is allowed to touch anything in our rewilding scheme"	"Humans are also part of nature - foraging is part of rewilding humans"	"Did you know that the Nazis were mad keen on a similar brand of rewilding to you?"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-in-the-modern-world-rewilding-humans/
12	Commercial Charlie	Imagines commercial foragers over exploiting wild foods at every turn, but struggles to produce evidence	2	"MY chanterelle patch (that I claimed only last year) was decimated by commercial harvesters this year"	"How do you know it was commercial foragers? Perhaps it was someone else's patch before you stuck your flag in it?"	"Evidence?"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-in-the-modern-world-foraging-for-money/
13	Intuitive Izzy	Attacks based on feelings rather than experience or evidence	1	"Although I'm new to foraging, I feel that you aren't doing it properly"	"I've been living and breathing foraging for 35 years, so please explain to me specifically what you <i>feel</i> I'm getting wrong"	"I have no interest whatsoever in your intuitions about foraging. Go read a book."	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/category/beginners-guides/
14	Racist Reece	OK with middle class foragers making jam, troubled by Polish people feeding their families	8	"I saw a group of people in the woods who seemed to know lots about mushrooms. They were clearly a GANG of commercial E European foragers"	Or perhaps they were a family, doing what comes naturally?"	"F off racist"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-sustainability-and-the-media/
15	Ranger Randy	Works in forestry/conservation and believes this gives them authority over what people should eat. Enjoys wearing a uniform, likes to lecture.	8	"We are imposing a ban on touching mushrooms despite the overwhelming evidence that picking them does not affect future fruitings"	"Please present some evidence to support your weird, illegal, unenforceable ban, or explain the real reasons for it?"	"Being lectured on conservation by the Forestry Commission is like being lectured on childcare by King Herod"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-in-the-modern-world-foraging-bans/
16	Sentimental Shay	Grew up in an age when foraging was normal. Doesn't like seeing it become normal again.	4	"It wasn't called foraging when I was a kid, it was just part of life, something we all did. Its awful that so many people are doing it now"	"We've lost our way, but people are finding their way back to nature through foraging. Nature seemed to cope fine with it in your day."	"How incredibly mean-spirited of you."	https://monicawilde.com/lament-for-the-loss-of-wild-foods/
17	Luddite Lee	Spends a lot of time on social media moaning about social media. Not strictly just a foraging troll, but common on foraging platforms. Unaware that they work for Meta.	4	"I'm sick of seeing all these photos people post of themselves having a good time in the woods. They should be in the woods, not posting pictures"	"Err...you do know you are saying this on Facebook don't you...?"	"Step away from the keyboard, warrior!"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/foraging-guide-books-and-other-resources/
18	Simplistic Sidney	Can't see the point in foraging because it won't instantly solve the world's food issues. Often hybridises with Straw Man Sandy.	5	"There's no way that foraging can solve the world's food crisis"	"I didn't suggest that it could, but I do think its a valuable tool in reconnecting humans with their food, and with nature"	"Do you have any positive ideas to contribute?"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/crediting-foraging-and-wild-food-in-the-uk/
19	Red top Rio	Gets most of their opinions about foraging from redtop newspapers & clickbait. Treats this as a scientific evidence. Always furious.	2	"Hordes of gangs are pillaging nature etc"	"I think you should read more widely on the subject before making these assertions"	"These are not the droids you are looking for - go and be angry elsewhere"	https://foragers-association.org/News
20	Colonial Chris	Jumps all over indigenous food harvesting, but cool with coffee, avocados and bananas	6	"Leave those dandelions alone and get to the supermarket you hippy!"	"Its quite rude of you to tell me what to eat"	https://www.foodmiles.com	https://monicawilde.com/the-wildbiome-project/
21	Negative Nick	Finds/invents negatives while never creating anything positive. Not strictly just a foraging troll, happily flitting between a range of things they are angry about	2	"This is terrible, leave everything alone"	"Do you have any positive suggestions to contribute to the debate?"	"I think you might need therapy"	https://www.themckewonclinic.co.uk/the-psychology-of-a-keyboard-warrior/
22	Vic the Dim Vegan	Militantly anti-meat, to the point where they attack foragers for eating hedgehog mushrooms, fat hen, chicken of the woods etc	8	"How dare you eat this thing that sounds vaguely to do with animals"	"Err...its a plant/mushroom/seaweed"	"If you are so into plants, why don't you learn about them?"	https://gallowaywildfoods.com/october-hedgehog-mushroom/
23	Hygienic Hayden	Thinks eating things that grow in dirt or out of the sea is unhygienic	5	"Ewww...seaweed...do you know that fish shit in the sea?" or "I would never forage anywhere near a roadside"	"I have researched and got to know my local environment and made informed decisions about what I choose to eat."	"I know where my food comes from - do you really know where your's comes from?"	https://forage.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/UrbanForagingPolicyBrief-2017-08-29.pdf
24	Non-Native Noel	Has an uninformed yet exaggerated sense of the threat posed by Non-Native Invasives and assumes that anyone handling them is ignorant/irresponsible. Often hybridises with Red Top Rio.	3	"I don't care how delicious and good for you it is - don't you know it can spread from a single atom and devour an entire city in minutes?"	"I am aware of this plant's potentially invasive tendencies as well as its benefits, and handle it appropriately"	"Plants move around all the time. How do you decide which are 'native'?"	https://www.nhbs.com/where-do-cameis-belong-book#:~:text=They%20evolved%20in%20North%20America,the%20tip%20side
25	Woke Winnie	A rare-but-on-the-increase foraging troll that sees foraging as a form of cultural appropriation	8	"Shame on you! Foraging is an appropriation of [insert ethnicity/race/gender/group here] culture"	"Every single human is descended from a foraging tradition."	"What do you eat that doesn't have influences from other cultures?"	https://bangersandballs.co/foraging/freedom-to-forage-foraging-and-race/
22	The Trollmeister	A boss level troll, that combines the features of all the other trolls	9	All of the above, in a big messy deluge	"I bow to you, Master of Trolls"	"I do not bow to you, Master of Trolls"	https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/feelings-symptoms-behaviour/feelings-and

NOTES: *Foraging Trolls are a randy bunch, often hybridising with one another, or hunting in packs. When in close proximity to one another they burn even more brightly with self righteous indignation
 If you are offended by anything in this guide, I'm sure we'll hear all about it
 Foraging friends - try playing "Foraging Troll Bingo" and see if you can collect them all!