

Project Update: April 2013

We recently completed a field work season in the temperate forests of southern Chile. We had the opportunity to live in a Mapuche community for 5 months where we conducted ethnography actively participating in diverse community events and daily activities including labour in home gardens, cooking, gathering of wild edibles, cider preparation, weaving, wool dyeing with natural dyes and attending a *Nguillatun* the main religious celebration of the Mapuche. We regularly visited other nearby communities in order to interview key informants. We documented ethnobotanical knowledge of wild edible/medicinal plants through free lists exercises, photo-elicitation techniques, semi-structured and informal interviews with community members most of them in situ (while on gathering trips). In addition, weekly food diaries were carried out in several households in order to assess food use patterns as well as local market surveys to evaluate wild edibles market trade.

Given women's crucial role in food production and provision, of vital importance to our research was the work with women of the community, with whom we had the opportunity to join in gathering trips to collect useful plants (edible, medicinal and dyeing) and then participate in the processing and preparation of many species present in their territories.

