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WMIN2



► Singer Kelsey Michael and forager Rachel Lambert
Gav Goulder

Gathering the bounty of the land with a song in your heart

HERE'S a first for Cornwall that can be claimed by no other county - or country in the world, come to that...

Down in West Penwith you can now join a wild-singing-forager-experience that will not only have you warbling like the birds but will also teach you how to collect and eat delicious things for free.

Alternatively you can sign up for a wild-singing and foraging walk which will feature... "A sprinkling of foraging songs within a two-hour group singing experience for locals who love the outdoors and would like to sing together."

The events are the collective brain-child of well-known forager Rachel

It could be a world first... **Martin Hesp** reports on a West Cornwall initiative that combines wild food foraging with singing, and its exponents believe it will catch on

Lambert and professional singer Kelsey Michael, who both live in Penzance - and the idea might not be quite as new-fangled or as alternative as it sounds.

"Song, verse, sound and rhyme have been used by humans for thousands of years to communicate, respond and express," Rachel told the WMN. "Sound is an integral part of our daily landscape. It has been used functionally to explain things, as well as for fun, and as an essential part of celebrations, across the

world. "Why wild-singing? There is much scientific evidence to suggest that singing is good for the brain, heart, gets creative juices running, sends feel good endorphins round the body and can help counter anxiety and loneliness," she explained.

"Coupled with the great outdoors, which can legitimately claim similar health and well-being benefits, wild-singing is a pretty good boost for the body and soul."

Asked if the pair had come up with a world-first Rachel replied: "There is

a whole movement around wild-singing - more and more people are going out into the landscape and singing.

And obviously foraging has been around forever. But we don't know anyone else who's doing the combination.

"The idea came to us one night when we were going to the pub and we passed a gorse bush - as you do..." laughed Rachel, who has written successful books on the art of wild foraging and who is well known

for the courses she runs in Cornwall and the isles of Scilly.

"When I've researched past uses of plants I've often come across poems and songs. Songs tell of plant their uses, claims of curing ills, bringing love and old traditions. We've taken this idea and created new songs to tell of plant qualities I often share with participants on my foraging courses. "I was brought up singing and it us part of my life," Rachel concluded. "But I admit - this is quite niche. However, we are hoping our excitement with it will bubble over and it'll catch on."

■ Visit: www.wildwalks-south-west.co.uk/wild-singing-walks/