

Wild Grapes

Story By: Andrew Frinkle



Jason paused as he walked down the street. He walked this particular stretch of road often, but he did not ever remember seeing the vines that covered the bushes next to the road. He supposed they might have always been there, but with the recent rains and the strong sun, perhaps they had grown larger and longer. Now, the vines seemed to cover everything.

He looked closer. Bunches of dark berries or fruit seemed to be clustered under the broad leaves. That was odd. The dark berries almost looked like grapes, though they were pretty small. Grapes didn't grow here, did they?

Jason shook his head and finished his walk, but on the way back home, he stopped to look at the fruit once more. Convinced that they were indeed grapes, he snapped a bunch off the vine along with a couple leaves.

Back home, Jason compared the leaves and fruit to the pictures he found online. He read up on the fruits that grew locally in his state, and checked several resources to help correctly identify the plant. Local wildlife organizations had whole pages dedicated to edible wild fruits and plants, as well as imposter plants that looked similar but were actually bad for you.

After much research, he decided they were indeed wild grapes. He pinched one between his fingers and felt the dark skin separate from the flesh inside. Four little seeds were inside the jellied center of the grape. He taste-tested one carefully, savoring the tartness of the supposed wild grape.

Then he began waiting an hour to see if there was any sort of reaction, just in case he'd made a mistake. Later, he had no stomach pains, there was no swelling of his throat or tongue, and he hadn't broken out in hives or had any other sort of reaction. The grapes were safe!

He ate a few more and then got a bag. He also took some scissors with him to cut the vines where needed. Sometimes the skinny tendrils of vines that held the grapes were surprisingly strong. With his dog at his side this time, he collected all he could find.

Afterward, he rinsed and ate a few, but most of them he crushed to make juice. The juice needed sugar, but it was sweet already, because it tasted wild and natural, not to mention that it was free!

From then on, he kept an eye out for other local edible plants. He learned a lot about plants and wildlife, and he got some wonderful treats as he did it.

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Use the information in the story to answer the questions below.

1. What did Jason see as he walked along the road?
 - A. a snake
 - B. a squirrel
 - C. money
 - D. wild fruit

2. Why is Jason careful about picking and eating the wild fruit?
 - A. it might be harmful
 - B. it might make him fat
 - C. it might not be delicious
 - D. none of the above

3. How does Jason decide that the fruit is safe?
 - A. someone told him it was fine
 - B. he researched carefully
 - C. he saw it on TV
 - D. he called a doctor

4. Which of the following is a reason why the fruit tasted sweet to Jason?
 - A. it was free
 - B. it was expensive
 - C. he bought them
 - D. it was hard work

5. How did finding the wild grapes change Jason?
 - A. He started appreciating nature more.
 - B. He ate more healthily.
 - C. He got bitten by a snake.
 - D. He stopped buying store food.

Wild Grapes – Answer Key

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