



# Pennsylvania harvesters in the wild ramp (*Allium tricoccum*) supply chain promote sustainable practices



Cathryn Pugh (MS Student), Eric Burkhart (Advisor)  
Ecosystem Science and Management, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA, 16802  
Shaver's Creek Environmental Center, Pennsylvania State University, Petersburg, PA, 16669

## Background

- Ramps are an edible wild onion, widely foraged in the mid-Atlantic.
- In recent years, ramps are perceived to be growing in popularity which have led to concerns of overharvesting.
- While foraging for ramps is observed, little is known about activities that harvesters practice to promote sustainability within harvest areas.
- Results reported here are part of a broader research project focusing on the cultural and economic importance of ramps to Pennsylvanians.
- A mixed-method ethnobotanical approach was used to interview and survey key informants in the PA ramp supply chain.

## Objectives

1. Assess harvester attitudes and approaches to promote sustainability.
2. Assess harvester observations of growth in ramp popularity in the last 5 years.

## Conclusion and Implications

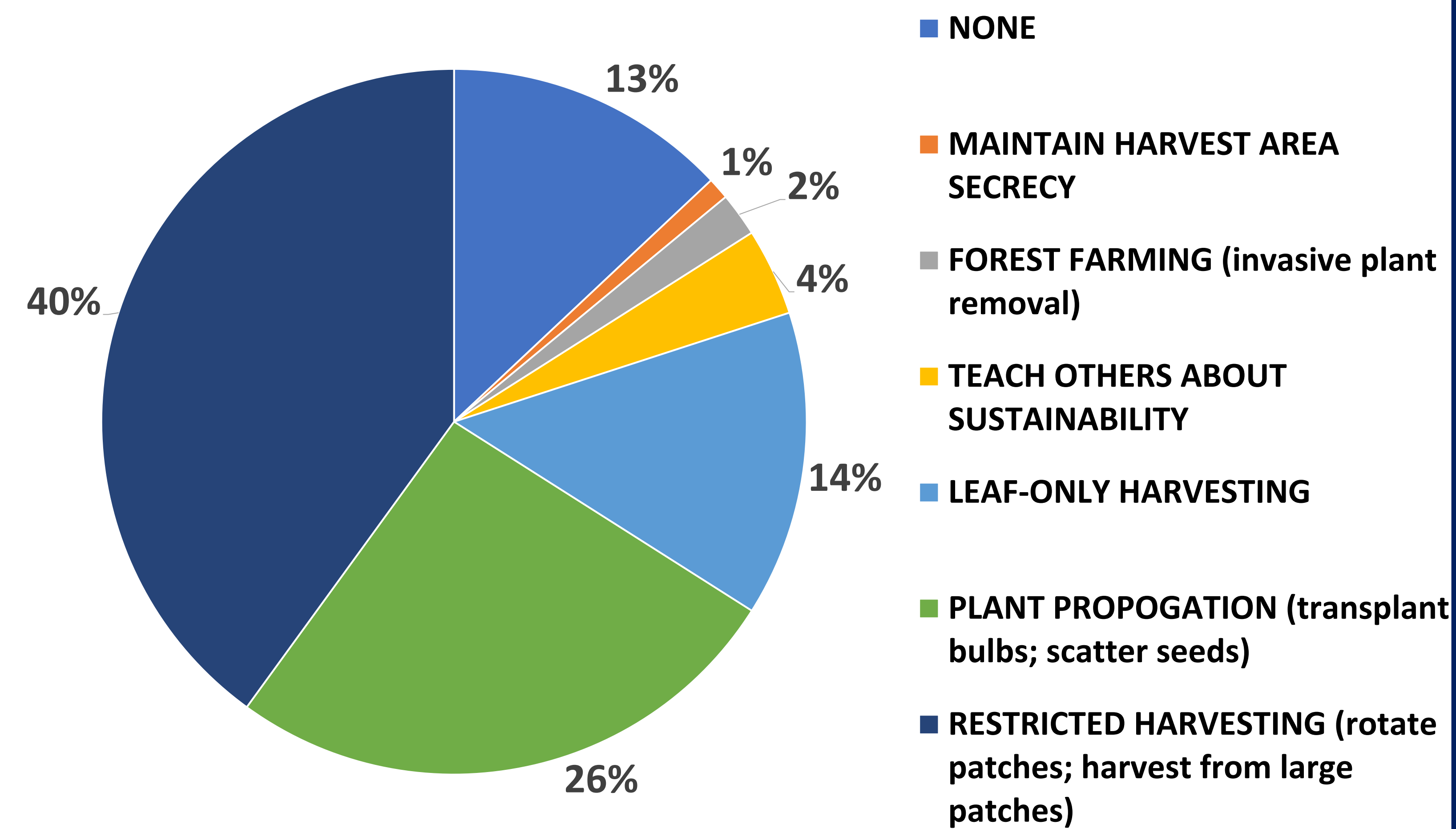
Ramp foraging in PA is more nuanced than merely the act of collection. My findings reveal that most harvesters are not concerned about sustainability, which is likely linked to land ownership. Harvesters who collect on private lands are more easily able to monitor and managed areas for ramp growth, whereas public lands are perceived to have higher harvesting pressures causing concern for sustainability. Findings reveal that harvesters have mixed observations about the popularity of ramps in their area. In the future, stakeholder surveys need to be paired with field monitoring to validate sustainability.



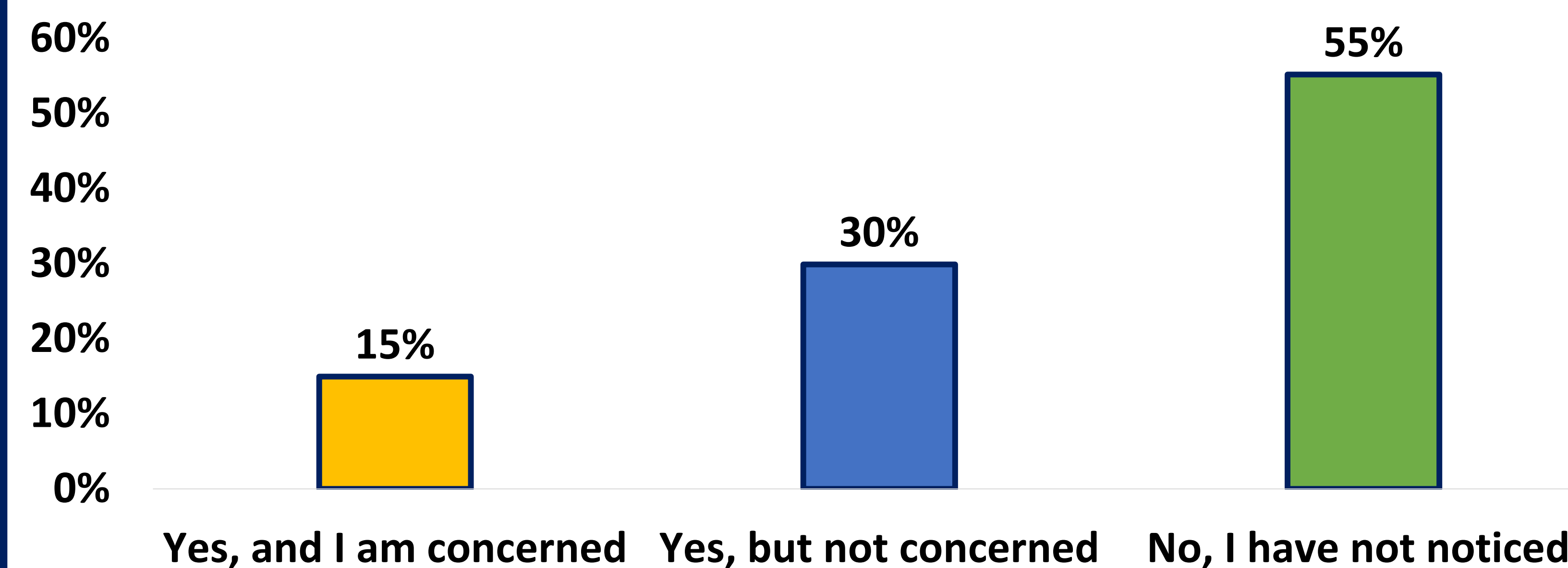
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## PRACTICES USED IN RAMP HARVEST AREAS



## FIGURE 2. IN YOUR EXPERIENCE, ARE MORE PEOPLE HARVESTING RAMPS IN YOUR AREA IN THE LAST 5 YEARS?



## Preliminary Results (Fig. 1)

1. Surveying revealed that nearly 9 out of 10 ramp harvesters engage in some type of practice intended to sustain their ramp harvest areas.
2. Interviews further reveal that some harvesters are conscious of their impacts on ramps and adjust their practices based on fluctuating annual growing conditions.

*"In the past 10 years, I've made an effort to kind of spread [the ramps] out...If it feels thin that year, I do only leaves. If it feels good, I do bulbs too. But if I pick really huge bulbs, I'll actually replant them or move them down a bit, further away, if it's mature. I try not to pull [mature plants] out."* – Harvester, 2021

3. Interviews reveal that concerns for overharvesting are tied to land-ownership.

*"Even if I think I'm being responsible in the way I'm harvesting [on public lands], I don't know how many other people have been along harvesting. So I, I don't really have a sense for the original size of the patch."* – Harvester, 2021

## Preliminary Results (Fig. 2)

1. Five out of ten harvesters have not noticed a difference in harvesting in the last 5 years.
2. Interviews reveals that there are mixed perspectives about ramp popularity.

*"Ramps used to be something that you could only get at somebody's house in the woods, you know, that actually harvested them...now it's trendy for all these restaurants to have ramps on hand in spring"*– Harvester, 2020

*"I'm really fortunate that they are so plentiful here and my general area here...so pretty much around here, everybody knows if you want to get ramps, they're easy to get."* – Harvester, 2020