



# La Pélite

*The red gorge shows up in your mailbox when you least expect it.*

## Discovering...

### Wild berries

Meanwhile nature is getting ready to overwinter, the nature reserve displays a rich collection of berries quite delightful to the eyes. The wild fruits' colours range from red to yellow, and even blue.

They are visual signals that attract birds, like perching birds, with well-developed visual acuity. Small mammals, rabbits, and foxes eat them as food supplements, mostly straight from the ground. Berries are rich in vitamins; it is an essential intake to get through winter. Bushes too benefit from leaving their berries to animals: the seeds contained in the droppings are scattered around and the animal participates in seed dispersal.

Be careful, many berries may be edible; but some look just like them and are very toxic!

Berry-picking is forbidden inside the reserve. A fruit is a plant's way to disperse naturally and wildlife needs it more than hikers with a sweet tooth. One clause of the reserve's management plan consists in drafting legislation to allow the locals to pick small quantities of plants.

In the reserve, some shrubs are easy to spot: the rowan is adorned with orange-red berries, the common juniper develops strings of bluish fruit, and the common whitebeam which astringent fruit was once used to cure coughing fits.



Tit on a dog rose © C. Nicolas

## Meeting...

### A picker

Léonore Ifrah lives in *la Ribière*, in Guillaumes. She is a young and dynamic farmer with an extensive professional background. She is specialised in wild flower, fruit, berry, and mushroom picking. More than a job, it is a passion passed down from generation to generation. Her harvests come from her 13 hectares of plots labelled "Agriculture Biologique". Léonore is always looking for new flavours; she turns her harvests into a wide range of products, a real treat for children and adults alike.

At this time of the year, Léonore is harvesting wild berries, mainly from rose hips, hawthorns, common sea buckthorns, and rowans. Her recipes are not limited to jam; she also makes syrup, vinegar, coffee, and flavoured salt. You can discover them in local markets under the name "Les cueillettes de Léo" (Léo's harvests). *Bon appétit!*

## Upcoming...

### Advisory board in Léouvé

On 10<sup>th</sup> November, the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual advisory board of the reserve will be held in the Croix-sur-Roudou mine museum; it is the perfect opportunity to ask experts what they think of the undertaken actions.

## Did you know...?

### Dog rose (*Rosa canina* L.)

The dog rose is a shrub belonging to the rose family. The flowers are tiny white and light pink roses. The fruit, the rose hip, turns red when fall comes and can be harvested from the first frosts onwards. It is the famous itching powder with which children love to play, and that we call "gratte-cul", meaning "butt-itching" in French. The official name comes from the greek word "kunarhodon" meaning "dog rose". The root was once used to treat rabid dogs. The berry is known for being rich in vitamin C.

Pictures: © A. Moine, © S. Larbouret, © M. Bensa