

Overpicking threatens Greek herbs: officials

July 29 2013



An Iraqi man weeds his patch of medicinal herbs in Baghdad on June 9, 2004. Forestry officials on the Greek island of Crete have slapped a five-year ban on the collection of a variety of wild herbs snipped to near-extinction, the state-run ANA agency said.

Forestry officials on the Greek island of Crete have slapped a five-year ban on the collection of a variety of wild herbs snipped to near-extinction, the state-run ANA agency said Monday.

The forestry department of Hania, one of the island's main towns, placed

restrictions on picking sage, marjoram, oregano and sideritis, better known as Cretan mountain tea, in protected areas.

The department has outlawed the piecemeal uprooting of the plants until the end of 2018.

Special permission is required for commercial collection, and an allowance of up to 500 grammes is made "for personal use".

And Cretan dittany, a therapeutic plant prized since [antiquity](#) that is exclusive to the island, is off the table altogether.

"The mass collection of these aromatic plants, also for purposes of trade, threatens them with [extinction](#)," the forestry department said.

The herb-based Cretan diet has long been considered one of the healthiest in the Mediterranean basin and a contributing factor to the islanders' traditional longevity.

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