

HARVEST TUBER AESTIVUM Vitt / Uncinatum

The truffles must be harvested ripe from mid-September to early January for *Uncinatum*, and from late May to the end of August for *Aestivum*.

The smell of an underground truffle is not detectable by humans. That is why an animal with finer smell is essential.

We use :

- Marks
- A dog
- Pig
- Fly

1) The marks

This method is based on ground's observation, often performed from late summer to early autumn (for *Uncinatum*) and from late spring for *Aestivum*.

Truffles growing, raise the ground, forming protrusions which may reach ten centimetres in diameter, and that crack (not to be confused with slots due to drought). Often, these are the trademarks of truffles that will be picked first, they will not be necessarily all mature at the same pickup time.

2) The dog

All breeds and mongrels are suitable. However, avoid the dogs trained for hunting that could be affected prey's presence.

We can find dogs already trained by professionals or train them yourself with technical sometimes jealously guarded tricks; but with a young dog with a fine nose and a close companion, training is actually not very hard.

As soon as the dog smells a truffle, he scrapes the ground with his legs. You replace the dog with a tool, and dig the ground to extract the truffles carefully. The dog receives a reward, a cake or a small piece of meat; and so, he returns to work.

3) The pig

He is not used very much anymore: bulkier, less mobile and more easily tired than a dog. He does not need to be trained, but muzzled as it seeks to consume truffles

Moreover, he is quickly excited because the smell of truffle reminds him of a female on heat.

4) Fly

This is a very special specie of fly: the *Helomyza tuberivora*.

It is more elegant than its cousins with an elongated body and light brown. It has a less bright flight, awkward, cumbersome and uncertain, as it is full of eggs she is about to lay.

It comes to rest above the truffle, attracted by its smell and lay eggs there.

This fly is delicate; it needs a mild, dry and sunny weather.

Arriving on the “burned”, facing the sun, it is sufficient to make the fly, using a stick, identify the place where it left and dig to find the truffle. Then, you must have patience to identify other flies on other truffles.

This is a process used when you have no dog; it requires a very good eyesight and experience.

Remember all the above that it is with a well-trained dog that you can harvest.