

## Tannins in the water



Photo: The Life of Py

Rivers and streams of the south-west are often a brownish colour, produced by the leaching into the water from plant material of a particular group of chemicals – tannins.

Tannins are found in most plants. They are an astringent chemical which are thought to deter herbivores and might help in regulating plant growth. The dry, puckery feeling in the mouth when consuming unripened fruit, red wine or tea is caused by tannins. They are highly water soluble, which promotes the leaching into waterways from decaying vegetation.

Water stored in the campsite tanks might take on the appearance of weak tea due to tannins originating from leaf litter on the roof and in the gutters. A stronger colour is therefore more likely for shelters which have greater amounts of litter fall from overhead.

The tannins in the tank water pose no health risk to walkers.

The colour of the water can be commented on in your campsite inspection report, but no action needs to be taken as a result of tannin discolouration.