

WILD EDIBLES in the AGE of RELOCALIZATION

Guidelines for Foraging Wild Edibles

Eat only plants that you can positively identify. Never even nibble on an unidentified plant. Know the toxic species and plants that look similar. Research each edible in three to five references. Properly prepare potentially toxic plants. The first time you eat a wild edible that is new to you, eat only a small amount to check for personal intolerance or allergy. Some plants can only be eaten in small quantity. Edibility by animals does not imply the plant is edible for humans. Harvest only the edible part of a plant. Ask the plant's permission before you harvest, and if permission is given, offer gratitude.

RICH WOODS

Wild Leeks with Wild Ginger

Collect generous amounts of wild leeks (*Allium tricoccum*) and a few pieces of wild ginger (*Asarum canadense*). Separate the leek bulb from the leaf. Chop and sauté the bulbs first. Then add chopped leek tops and minced wild ginger.

Wood Nettle

Collect the tops of wood nettle (*Laportea canadensis*) and steam gently or add to stir-fry. Tops can be collected and eaten from early spring until a hard frost.

DISTURBED SOIL – GARDENS AND DOORYARDS

Lamb's Quarters Pesto

Allow lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*) to grow in the garden. Collect tender leaves. Combine with other herbs such as sage, cilantro, basil, parsley or use by itself. Grind herbs with garlic and oil. Add nuts and cheese if you like.

Marinated Dandelion Greens and Flowers

Collect dandelion greens, flower buds and flowers (*Taraxacum officinale*). Wash well and chop well. Steam until tender, 3-5 minutes. Marinate in olive oil, balsamic vinegar and tamari or Bragg's. Add lots of fresh chopped garlic and ginger and serve immediately.

Dandelion Flower Fritters

Collect dandelion flowers (*Taraxacum officinale*). Make a thick pancake-like batter using flour (whole-wheat pastry flour, spelt flour or cornmeal), liquid (milk, soymilk or water) and eggs (optional). Heat the frying pan and add oil when hot. Dip the dandelion flowers in batter, place in pan, and turn when crispy brown. Serve with yogurt, maple syrup, butter or jam, or eat plain.

Dandelion Root Coffee

Wash and chop dandelion roots (*Taraxacum officinale*). Set chopped roots out on a cookie sheet or screen until dry. Roast roots in the oven at 250 degrees (no higher) for 15-20 minutes until the coffee-like aroma fills the kitchen. Grind the roasted roots like coffee beans. Place in a coffee filter and pour boiling water through the filter. Lighten with milk or soymilk if desired. Note: When dandelion roots are roasted, fructose is created; those sensitive to sugars may experience a "sugar rush".

Burdock Root Stir-fry

Dig burdock roots (*Arctium* spp.) in the autumn of the first year or in the spring of the second year, when the plant is a rosette of basal leaves and has not yet sent up its stalk. Wash, chop roots and stir-fry with onions, carrot, turnip, garlic and wild ginger.

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Pickled Burdock

Chop burdock root (*Arctium* spp.) into thin slices, enough to fill a pint jar. Put a small amount of water with the roots in the bottom of a pan and steam until soft but still crunchy. Keep the water from the steaming. To make the brine, combine 1/3 C. tamari, 1/3 C. apple cider vinegar, and 1/3 C. of the water the burdock was steamed in, and bring to a boil. Place 3 whole cloves garlic and 4 slices of ginger root in a pint jar, pack in the steamed burdock slices, and cover with the boiling brine. Refrigerate, let sit a few days before eating.

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OLD FIELDS

Milkweed Shoots, Tender Top Leaves, Flower, Flower Buds and Small Pods

Collect milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*) shoots up to 6 inches tall or tender top leaves. Cover shoots or leaves with boiling water, boiling for 15 min. with several rapid changes of water - always use boiling water for the changes, as cold water would set the toxins. Flowers, flower buds, and young pods (1 ½ inch or less) may be prepared the same way as shoots or sauté them well in oil until tender. Note: Properly prepared milkweed should not taste bitter – bitter in milkweed indicates toxicity.

WET PLACES

Marsh Marigold

This early spring edible is abundant and distinctive. Contains acrid poison, which is dispelled upon cooking. Harvest young leaves. Boil in 2-3 changes of water for 20-40 minutes. Eat cooked only. Fondly referred to by Samuel Thayer as “green pudding”.

Cattail

Edible parts: spikes, pollen, laterals, shoots, leaf hearts and rhizomes for flour.

OPPORTUNISTIC DISPERSIVES (aka invasives)

Japanese Knotweed Stew

Collect Japanese Knotweed shoots, (*Polygonum cuspidatum*), up to 1 foot tall. Chop and place in a pot with a little water. Cook until tender.

References

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