

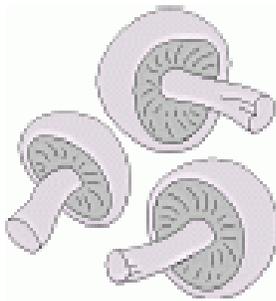


Nutritious Delicious Cooking Resources
[www. SustainableLivingProject .net](http://www.SustainableLivingProject.net)

Nutritious Delicious!

Spring Cleansing with Wild Edibles

Fresh Food from the Wilds of the North Country Edible Landscape



History

Humans have been gathering wild plants and seeds since 8000 BC with the birth of the “fertile crescent” of Mesopotamia. This area was in its prime for the growth and harvesting of wild greens. At that time, gathering and hunting was not optional but a source of survival. Anthropologists now agree that the term “gathering and hunting” is more appropriate than “hunting and gathering” because foods which were gathered created the staples of their daily diet. Gathering may be an ancient practice but cultures around the world still rely on hunting and gathering as a means of survival. Currently in America, wild harvesters may not be seeking out wild greens for survival but still practice gathering to take advantage of foods in their most natural, unprocessed state.

Nutrition

The spring season offers a variety of fresh, nutrient-dense, greens, plants and herbs. All greens contain antioxidants and phyto-nutrients which play a crucial role in prevention of serious health conditions such as heart disease, cancer, stroke, Alzheimer’s disease and birth defects during pregnancy. These delectable edibles can be enjoyed by raw consumption, dried and crushed to make teas or combined to create in-season dishes. The majority of wild greens offer a wide-variety of rich vitamins and minerals which the typical American diet is lacking

www.SustainableLivingProject.net

due to over-processing of commercial foods. Wild greens are cost-effective, low calorie yet nutrient packed, fun to pick, and highly beneficial to your health. However, as delicious as some wild plants may look, it is wise to research all plants prior to consumption. Many plants can be toxic and detrimental to your health if poisonous.

Nutritional Glossary

Iron – iron is both an element and mineral needed by our bodies to aid in transportation of oxygen through the blood via hemoglobin. In the typical American diet, iron stores are deficient. Most sources of iron come from animal products and dark leafy greens.

Folic Acid – folic acid is a vitamin of the B-vitamin complex that helps with red blood cell formation and carrying out metabolic processes. A deficiency in folic acid will result in anemia. This vitamin is especially essential for women of child-bearing age. Folic acid can be found in dark leafy greens.

Phytosterols/Phytochemicals - plant based chemicals that are promoted for their wide range of health benefits. Phytochemicals can come from fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, and nuts.

Vitamin C – vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin that aids in metabolism, immunity, and fighting off dangerous free radicals that are produced in the body.

Alliums – alliums are a genus of vegetables that stem from the Latin word that means “garlic.” Vegetables found in this group are onion-like with grass-like foliage and have bulb roots.

Anti-Inflammatory – reduces inflammation throughout the body and can prevent the onset of inflammatory diseases.

Fiber - this is the parts of plants that cannot be digested, namely complex carbohydrates; also known as bulk or roughage.

Wild Greens

Spring greens are typically leafy greens.

1. **Rhubarb** (*Rheum rhabarbarum*) - this is considered a vegetable but often is treated as a fruit when cooking.
2. **Nettles** (*Urtica dioica*) – traditionally nettle has been used to treat sore muscles, arthritis, and anemia and is also high in vitamin-K. Careful handling techniques are needed!
3. ***Fiddleheads** (*Onoclea Struthiopteris*) – contain carotenoids and phenol which are compounds have anti-oxidant properties. Fiddleheads can be toxic when raw unless cooked properly.
4. **Leeks / Ramps** (*Allium porrum*) – they are part of the allium vegetable group which contain a combination of flavonoids and sulfur. Also, they are high in vitamin – K, vitamin – A and Manganese.
5. **Spring beauties** (*Claytonia Virginiana*) – high in antioxidants.
6. **Mushrooms** (family name is “*Amantia*” – many varieties) – contain phyto-nutrients that are cancer-fighting. Research shows they have a strong connection with breast cancer prevention. The high niacin content of mushrooms has been linked with prevention of Alzheimer’s disease. Niacin appears to prevent or delay cognitive diseases by as much as seventy percent. Mushrooms are truly a super food, working to prevent increased risk of heart disease, stroke and osteoarthritis as well.
7. ***Young Milk Weed** (*Asclepias Syrica*) – has been used throughout history to treat diarrhea.
8. **Milk Thistle** (*Silybum marianum*) – has been used to aid in liver detoxification for hundreds of years.
9. **Dandelion Greens** (*Taraxacum officinale*) – high in potassium, vitamin-A, calcium, B vitamins, and have a reputation for adding in weight loss.
10. **Cattail** (*Typha Latifolia*) – high in protein, carbohydrates, phosphorous, and sulfur. It can be crushed into flour for baking nutrient-dense treats. In the fall you can use stalks to cook or eat raw.

Cultivated Veggies

1. **Asparagus** (*Asparagus officinalis*) – can detoxify your body, has been used to reduce pain and inflammation within the body, has aphrodisiac properties, contains anti-cancer nutrients, is high - in calcium, is high in folic acid which can prevent birth defects during pregnancy, and is high in anti-aging antioxidants.
2. **Beets** (*Beta Vulgaris*) - Their red pigment antioxidants present in root as well as top greens have found to offer protection against coronary artery disease and stroke, lower cholesterol levels in the body and have anti-aging effects.
3. **Sweet Onion** (*Allium Cepa*) – rich in cancer fighting compounds, help control blood sugar in diabetics, high in chromium, are anti-inflammatory, and also have been shown to have anti-bacterial/anti-viral properties.
4. **Green Onions/Scallions** (*Allium Wakegi*) - rich in cancer fighting compounds, help control blood sugar in diabetics, high in chromium, are anti-inflammatory, and also have been shown to have anti-bacterial/anti-viral properties.
5. **Carrots** (*Daucus carota subsp. sativus.*) - High in vitamin-C, high in beta-carotene which has all the functions of vitamin A such as vision, reproduction (sperm production), maintenance of skin health, growth and development
6. **Chard / Cardon** (*Cynara cardunculus L. subsp. Cardunculus*) - It is an excellent source of vitamins C, E, and K, carotenes, chlorophyll, and fiber. It is also an excellent source of several minerals including potassium, magnesium, iron, calcium, folic acid, and manganese.
7. **Radishes** (*Raphanus sativus*) - the radish offers vitamin-C, folate, B vitamins and vitamin K as well as essential minerals that include potassium, manganese, magnesium, calcium, iron, phosphorous, sodium, copper and zinc. In addition, it contains compounds called isothiocyanates which research shows can both prevent and fight cancer cell growth. The radish is very low in calories and high in fiber; consuming more radishes can aid weight loss.
8. **Artichokes** (*Cynara cardunculus subsp. Cardunculus*) – high in antioxidants, produce an increased bile flow to aid in stomach

digestion, support liver health and can aid in hangover treatment, decrease the “bad” or LDL cholesterol, and are also high in fiber to fight against colon cancer.

9. **Spinach** (*Spinacea oleracea*) – spinach is a nutritional powerhouse! It is high fiber, anti-inflammatory, has been shown to decrease high blood pressure, contains lutein and zeaxanthin to support eye health, is very high in vitamin – A which encourages moisture in the skin to fight skin disorders, increases immunity by building up the bodies mucous membranes and improving the health of the digestive and urinary tracts, is high in vitamin – K for blood clotting and a healthy nervous system.
10. **Fava Beans** (*Vicia faba*) - these little bean pods are an excellent source of vegetarian protein. They offer up to 10 g of protein per quarter cup serving. In addition, they are low in fat, have zero saturated fat, are high in manganese, promote a healthy heart, and also high in fiber.
11. **Collard greens** (*Brassica Oleracea*) - high in antioxidants, high insoluble fiber intake to prevent constipation and prevent colon cancer, high in vitamin – A, high in vitamin – K, consumption has been shown to decrease risk of Alzheimer’s disease and Osteoporosis, and is a good source of essential minerals such as zinc, calcium, copper and iron.
12. **Rainbow Swiss Chard** (*Beta vulgaris subsp. Cicla*) - It is an excellent source of vitamins C, E, and K, carotenes, chlorophyll, and fiber. It is also an excellent source of several minerals including potassium, magnesium, iron, calcium, folic acid, and manganese.

Preparation of Wild Greens



Before cooking, it is highly advised to wash all wild greens two or three times to cleanse your greens of insects, toxins, or bacteria. Be sure to strain the water off thoroughly after each rinse. Methods of cooking wild greens are dependent on the plant, the recipe, and its use but all greens should to be cooked lightly or consumed raw. Overcooking these soft,

leafy greens will create a mushy mess. Also, cooking methods that use less water such as steaming, grilling, or dehydrating will preserve more of the vitamins and minerals. They are easy to disguise and hide into soups, pasta dishes, and stews to provide health benefits to picky eaters. Some of the stronger tasting greens and herbs can be cooked along with more mild greens to offset the bitterness and still gain their nutritional value. What a better way to reap the benefits of a spring harvest than to use fresh spring herbs along with spring greens!

Fruit

1. **Strawberries** (*Fragaria Virginiana*) – high in antioxidants, vitamin K, copper, manganese, potassium, B -2 (Riboflavin,) B-5, B-6, and folic acid.

Preparation - fresh fruits are delicious straight from the source or can be dehydrated for an energy-packed, easy to carry along snack. This is the only North Country Spring fruit we found.

Herbs

1. **Peppermint** (*Mentha Piperita*) – primarily used to soothe the stomach, with nausea, for colic, nervousness, headaches, and for use with general bowel complaints.
2. **Parsley** (*Petroselinum crispum*) – high in antioxidants, is a “chemo-protective” food that helps neutralize carcinogens that cause cancer, has been shown to decrease the risk of Rheumatoid Arthritis, supports heart health and is high in folic acid which is essential during a woman’s child bearing years.
3. **Chives** (*Allium schoenoprasum*) – all plants within the allium family share common health properties. They contain allicin which can lower cholesterol, lower blood pressure and increase heart health. In addition, chives improve digestion and have anti-cancer properties
4. **Dill** (*Anethum graveolens*) - contains monoterpenes and flavonoids which are healing components that fight against injury and disease.
5. **Kale** (*Brassica oleracea*) – high in cancer-fighting antioxidants, high in lutein and zeaxanthin or eye health and also helps to lower cholesterol.
6. **Mustard greens** (*Brassica juncea*) - they have more vitamin A, carotenes, vitamin K, and flavonoid anti-oxidants than many commonly consumed fruits and vegetables.

7. **Wild Ginger** (*Asarum Canadense*) – helps with digestion of food, settles a nauseas stomach and is high in antioxidants.

Tea

1. **Nettle** (*Urtica Dioica*) - traditionally nettle has been used to treat sore muscles, arthritis, and anemia and is also high in vitamin-K. Nettle grounds can also be used to fertilize gardens or be fed to chickens to increase egg production.
2. **Peppermint** (*Mentha Piperita*) – primarily used to soothe the stomach, with nausea, for colic, nervousness, headaches, and for use with general bowel complaints.
3. **Dandelion** (*Taraxacum Officinale*) – is commonly used as a tea but can also be used to make a healthy decaffeinated coffee. It is high in Vitamin-C, Vitamin-A, Iron, Vitamin-B1 and B2, Niacin, Phosphorous and Calcium. Dandelion can also be consumed raw and is a great vegetarian source of protein.
4. **Strawberry** (*Fragaria Virginiana*) – dried leaves can create a tea great for bed wetting prevention in children when mixed with St. Johnswort and they also will help alkalize the system for someone consuming a high-acid diet.
5. **Wild Ginger** (*Asarum Canadense*) – helps with digestion of food, settles a nauseas stomach and is high in antioxidants.

Guidelines for Selecting Safe Plants to Eat:

- Make positive identification by using a good book, like the Peterson Field Guide to Wild Edible Plants.
- Know the poisonous plants and warnings about plants in your region.
- Know how to use the plants, what parts to use and when to use them.
- Wash your weeds to avoid the pathogens in the dung of birds, insects and other animals.
- Don't collect near roads, dumps, power lines, train tracks or other contaminated areas.
- Eat only small amounts of plants that are new to you, and only after you have positively identified them.
- Try just one plant at a time at first, to determine any allergies you might have.
- And last but not least—if you are in doubt, DON'T eat it!

TO CHECK FOR ALLERGIES:

Crush the plant between your fingers and rub it on the inside of your wrist, about an inch from your palm. Don't rub hard. If your wrist turns red within 10 minutes, you are likely to be allergic. If that method doesn't create a reaction, try a tiny bit in your mouth, chew for 10 seconds and spit it out. Wait 10 minutes for any swelling, tingling, itching etc. If no symptoms appear, try a teaspoon full, chewing slowly. If still no problems, enjoy. However, do not over-imbibe and do not ever eat anything you are unsure about. Be sure to have medical care close at hand during experimentation.

The “Paleo Diet” Concept

Although the *Local Living Venture* neither recommends nor disavows the Paleo diet, it is an interesting nutritional theory worth mentioning. The Paleo diet, short for “Paleolithic,” focuses food selection around only the foods that our nomadic forager (also called “gatherer-hunter”) ancestors would have had access to. This would exclude all grains, processed foods, beans, legumes, sugar, dairy products, root vegetables and starchy tubers. The emphasis would be on the leanest cuts of wild game, wild fish and shellfish, poultry, eggs, organ meats, *wild greens*, fruits, nuts, seeds and moderate amounts of healthy oils. This approach to eating could be highly beneficial for people with foods allergies involving wheat gluten or lactose because it eliminates gluten and lactose containing grains and dairy. When trying to determine which foods should be avoided it is easiest to think “Is this a food my nomadic ancestors would have had access to?” For more information on the Paleo diet please see the “Paleo Diet” handout, also available as one of these Nutritious Delicious Cooking Resources.

Spring Recipes

- Strawberry Rhubarb Pie
- Radish, Arugula, and Onion Salad with Tangerine (Bonappetite.com, 2012)
(find alternate fruit for tangerine)

