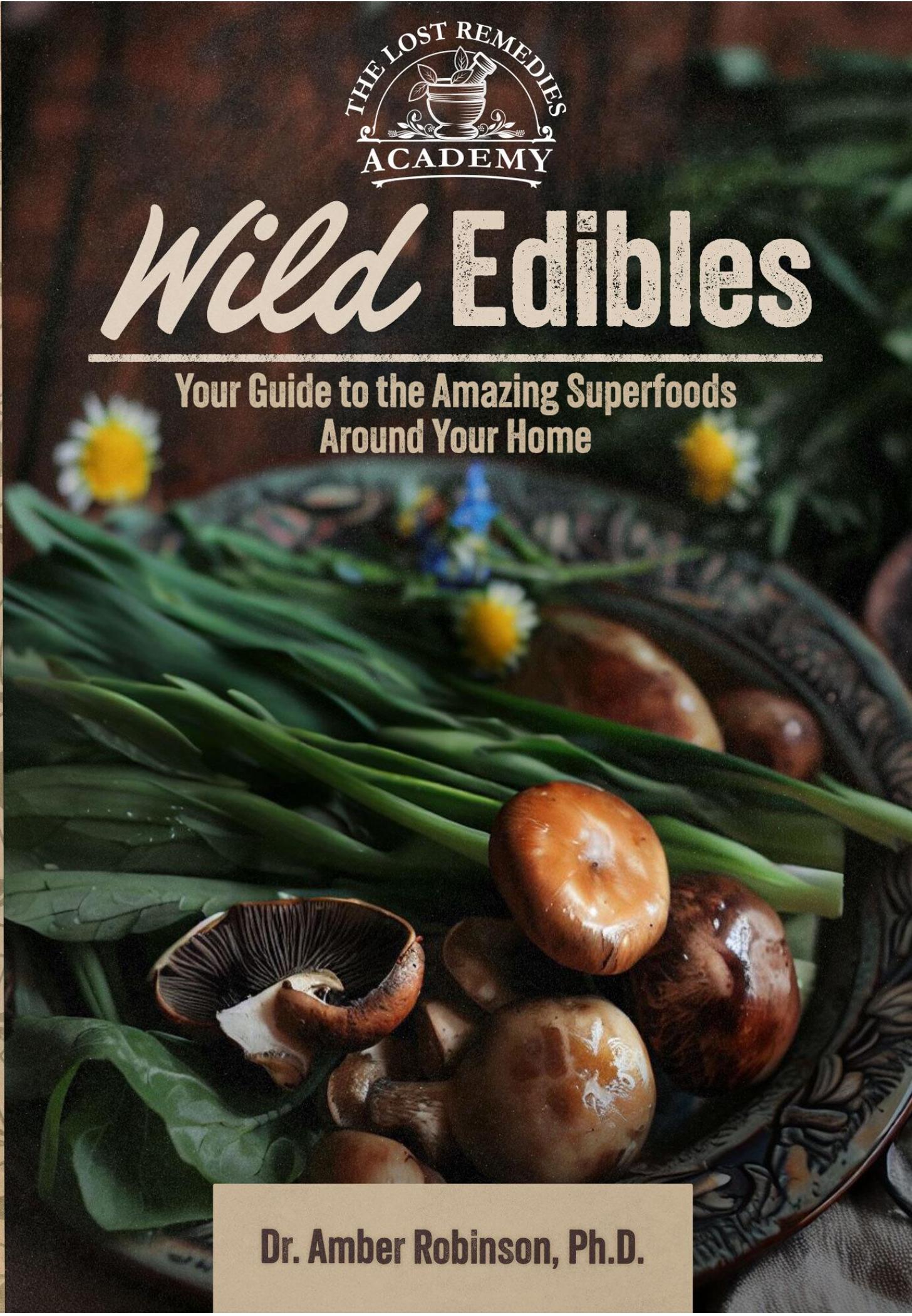




Wild **Edibles**

**Your Guide to the Amazing Superfoods
Around Your Home**



Dr. Amber Robinson, Ph.D.

WILD EDIBLES

Dr. Amber Robinson, Ph. D.

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However, it is important to note that some plants can be toxic if not prepared properly. It is recommended that you consult with a professional before consuming any wild plant.

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INTRODUCTION

There was a time in history when the majority of people could go outside and identify edible (and medicinal) plants, as well as use these plants in their daily cooking. These identification skills were taught out of necessity. This was a time before electricity was common in homes.

It was a much simpler time when most people, even those living in populated areas, had some sort of garden and were much more self-sufficient. My grandmother was born in 1938. She was one of nine children. During this time, most people in rural areas did not have electricity and grocery stores were not common. My grandma obtained food by raising chickens and foraging. She learned about wild edible plants from her parents, they learned from their parents, and so on. When the technology became more prevalent over the years and grocery stores popped up closer to home, my grandma didn't have to rely on the skills she learned as a child as much. Naturally, she didn't spend as much time working with my mom when it came to foraging.

The passing down of crucial plant identification information stopped after her generation for most people because this information didn't seem as relevant as it once was. However, as we have watched our world transform into something completely different in just one or two generations, the feeling that something is "missing" is creeping in. This is because it doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that we are now deeply dependent on our power grid and the system. Most people have no clue where their food comes from today. For them, it comes from the grocery store. Most people have no idea what plants are growing around them and whether or not those plants may be useful. The problem with this is that if we were to lose our power grid, if an emergency of some sort occurs, or if our food supply becomes tainted, people would panic. This is why it is so important to learn how to forage

for your own wild edibles. This skill that has been lost over the years needs to be revived and you can be the generation responsible for bringing back this lost yet crucial craft.

In addition to learning how to be more self-sufficient, consuming wild edible plants gives you a chance to eat something more natural. Most “food” in today’s grocery stores isn’t real food in the sense that it is full of additives, preservatives, chemicals, and other undesirable ingredients. Even our meat is full of antibiotics and other chemicals. With the advent of technology, transportation, and grocery stores on every block, it didn’t take long for people to become more unhealthy, overweight, stressed, and depressed. A lot of this is because people eat foods that are not conducive to health. Our bodies are designed to be self-healing and simply need sunlight, fresh water, and healthy food to heal. Over the past 100 years, people have not received sufficient amounts of these things in order to be truly healthy. The result is what we see today: illness, depression, obesity, and a lowered quality of life. How can it be that with all this technology and easy access to food, we as a whole are so unhealthy? It is because the old saying “you are what you eat” is much more accurate than most people realize. Food is fuel for our bodies. The nutrients from the foods we eat power a large number of vital bodily processes. Unfortunately, most foods on the market today do not contain the nutrients we need for our bodies to function as they should. As a result, deficiencies arise that cause or worsen health conditions. Another issue is that the foods not only contain reduced nutrition, they also contain a lot of chemicals that harm our bodies. This is why consuming more wild edibles is one of the best choices we could make for better health. Wild edibles are untainted by man. They were grown by mother nature, and nature knows how to best grow foods for optimal health. Wild edibles are full of vital nutrition; almost like nature’s vitamins.

Foraging for wholesome, healthy foods can actually help to restore health, relieve stress, and fight depression. This is why it is crucial that more people get back to a system of living that allows them to live naturally and in balance with nature.

Speaking of nature, when was the last time you took a walk in the woods? For a lot of people, this is not something they make time for. When you are able to get out into nature and forage for wild edibles, this act itself can have health benefits. Multiple studies have proven that spending time in nature reduces stress, anxiety, and depression. It is estimated that 50 percent of the world's population currently resides in urban areas. Additionally, it is estimated that this number will continue to rise. By 2050, it is estimated that 70 percent of the population will live in urban areas. This is certainly not good news when it comes to the rising depression statistics. I cannot help but notice the lack of trees and greenery as I drive through urban areas. Not only does the absence of trees create a dismal landscape, but it also completely removes any helpful shade from an area, making it much hotter. As someone who lives in a very rural area, I can attest to the power of spending time in nature. When I am feeling stressed or anxious, it really helps to take my foraging basket and go for a walk on my property. Breathing the fresh air, seeing the beauty of nature, and collecting nutritious plants to feed my family make my heart happy. You can find peace and calm in nature. Setting time aside each week to explore nature can impact your health in a very positive way, both mentally and physically.

Identifying Edible Plants in Your Area

Where do you start when it comes to learning how to forage? The answer is one plant at a time. There is no need to get overwhelmed. You don't have to learn everything there is to know about foraging for wild edibles overnight. You can use this book as a helpful tool on your journey. You will be able to learn about 30

common edible plants that are likely growing around you, as well as detailed descriptions of each plant. In addition to this, you will also be able to follow step-by-step recipes for each plant to give you more confidence as you learn! Let's get started below with some foraging tips, tricks, dos, and don'ts:

Foraging Tips and Tricks

Going out into the woods to forage is a lot of fun, but there are some things you really need to know before getting started.

When I was much younger, I would just go out into the woods or walk in the fields foraging while wearing a tank top and shorts. This was a mistake, but I learned a valuable lesson. It was a mistake because I came back covered in chigger bites. My skin was seriously like sandpaper with all the bites covering my exposed arms, back, and legs. I had ticks stuck to me that needed to be pulled off. I had weird rashes that were likely poison ivy.

Thank God the ticks that I pulled off over the years did not carry any diseases. I cannot say the same for my dear sister, who is struggling with a tick-borne illness right now. It is really important to prepare before you go out into nature so you don't have to worry about these things. Below are some tips to stay safe when it comes to avoiding ticks, insect bites, and poison plants that can affect the skin:

Dress appropriately: Wear long sleeves and long pants. Pull your socks up over your pants and wear boots made for hiking. I prefer waterproof boots as well. I do not wear hats, but a lot of people like to wear hats to protect them from the sun. I also pack gloves in my backpack so I have them when foraging plants like stinging nettle.

Wear repellent: I personally do not use anything with a lot of chemicals like DEET, but I spray myself with a blend of essential oils (this includes citronella, peppermint, lemongrass, cedarwood, and neem essential oils). This can help repel mosquitoes, ticks, chiggers, and other bothersome insects. I also dilute the aforementioned essential oils in a thick carrier oil (like olive oil) and slather this all over my arms, legs, neck, chest and face before getting dressed. This makes it harder for them to bite.

Bring duct tape: This has been a lifesaver. I cannot tell you how many times I have looked down to see hundreds of tiny seed ticks all over my pants. Instead of scrambling to pick them off my clothing, it is so much easier to take duct tape and press it onto the area. The duct tape instantly picks off the ticks with ease. Some people even put duct tape (sticky side up) around their ankles to prevent the ticks from crawling up the body. They get stuck there while trying to climb.

Poison plant oil removal tip: I used to get poison ivy rashes all the time until I started doing this after each foraging excursion. The oil on the plant's leaves is what causes the nasty skin reaction, so if you can scrub it off as soon as possible, you are much less likely to have a reaction develop. Since it is an oil, it needs something that breaks up the oil really well to get it off your skin. I highly recommend removing all your clothing outside before coming inside to take a shower.

This keeps any harmful ticks out of your home where they can harm your family and pets. Once you are in the shower, get a good scrubber or wash cloth and wash your body thoroughly with dish soap.

Scrub your arms, legs, torso, and so on.

This breaks up the harmful oil from the leaves and prevents it from causing a rash. I have waded through poison ivy, poison sumac, and poison oak and haven't gotten a

rash because I scrub with dish soap in the shower afterwards. The longer you allow the harmful oils to sit on your skin, the higher your chances of a nasty reaction. When you get back home after foraging, do not waste time doing anything else. First and foremost, take a shower and scrub with dish soap. You will be glad you took this step if you have ever had poison ivy rashes in the past!

Mind your Clothes: The clothes you took off before showering could have ticks, chiggers, and poison plant oils all over them. Just assume that they have these things on them. Handle them with caution! I cannot tell you how many times I have gotten poison ivy rashes from doing my husband's laundry. Now I am way more cautious when handling clothes that I think may have been outdoors. I do not hold them against myself when carrying them. After putting them in the washing machine, I scrub my hands and arms all the way up with warm water and dish soap. This was already mentioned, but worth mentioning again: make sure that you take your clothes off outside before coming in from foraging. The ticks that are likely on your clothes (some so small they are hard to see) can get into your home and on your family and pets.

Tick-borne illnesses are rampant right now and you do not want to experience these life-altering illnesses.

It pays to use caution in these situations.

Use a Plant ID app and field guide for cross-referencing: I do not fully trust plant identification apps because they are not always 100 percent accurate, but I like to use them and then cross reference what I find with information in other arenas, such as field guides. Using multiple resources helps you make a positive ID with better accuracy. There are also plant identification groups on social media where you can post photos of the plants you find (don't forget to include your general location).

Some field guides contain information about plants in your specific area, so look for a field guide tailored to your geographical location.

Tools of the trade: I don't want to be weighed down with a collection of tools while I'm walking through the woods, so I just bring a good knife to harvest the plants I want. I also wear a backpack so I can hike hands-free. However, there are a lot of other tools that foragers like to bring along to help.

These include a small spade or trowel for digging roots, good scissors, a foraging basket, gloves for harvesting prickly plants, and a stool or ladder (obviously these would have to be portable).

Foraging Dos and Don'ts

Below you will find some useful information when it comes to what you should and should not be doing while foraging. Make sure to familiarize yourself with the points below so you can stay safe and have fun while foraging.

DO:

- Ask permission from landowners and make sure you know property lines if you are foraging on private property
- Familiarize yourself with state park rules. If you are foraging on public land, each state park has its own rules when it comes to what you can and cannot take back with you. Some parks allow foraging for plants and mushrooms for personal use, but some do not. Do your research beforehand so you don't break any laws.
- Research specific plants you want to forage and make sure you are familiar with these plants before harvesting them.

- Bring a map of the area with you.
- Bring a good knife
- Bring a basket or container for carrying the plants you forage. If you are foraging for mushrooms, bring something with tiny holes (like a mesh bag) to allow the spores to spread while you walk. This helps promote more mushroom growth in nature.
- Let someone know where you are going. Whether it is a family member or a friend, tell someone your exact location, when you are leaving, and when you plan to return.
- Make sure to follow the tips and tricks above so you are prepared for biting insects, etc.
- Check out the weather forecast before you set out.
- Look into what plants are threatened or endangered in your area before harvesting. You don't want to harvest a plant that is in peril. You can find information on threatened or endangered plants by contacting your local conservation agent or going online to their website.

DON'T:

- Do not harvest something that you aren't 100 percent sure about. Also, make sure you follow the 90/10 rule: that means if you see a stand of plants, leave 90 percent untouched. Harvest only 10 percent (or less) of a certain plant. Only take what you absolutely need.
- Do not trespass.
- Respect private property. This includes waterways.
- Do not harvest the roots of a plant unless they are absolutely needed. Make sure you familiarize yourself with what parts of the plant you actually need. For example, if the edible parts are above ground, clip off some stems and

leave the roots so the plant can survive. Mushrooms are not the same as plants; harvesting a mushroom means that you are harvesting the fruiting body and the mycelium is still intact (it is underground and you cannot see it).

- Do not harvest from areas that have potentially been sprayed with chemicals. Some commonly sprayed areas include along train tracks, along power lines, and along roadways. I do not harvest plants from roadsides for this reason.
- Do not pick mushrooms to eat unless you are completely sure you have the correct ID. They are trickier than plants and can make you very ill if you misidentify. Unfortunately, many mushrooms have poisonous lookalikes that make identification much harder.

Lost in the woods? It pays to know the Universal Edibility Test

There is an edibility process that has been used by the United States Army for years. It is called the Universal Edibility Test. It was originally used to train troops on how to survive in the wild. Consider this information your “plan B” if you ever find yourself in a situation where you need to survive and aren’t sure what plants to eat. This information is really helpful to know for foragers and survival enthusiasts! This is just a test for edible plants, not for mushrooms.

What would happen if you found yourself lost in the woods with nothing to eat? What would you do? This can happen, so it pays to be prepared, educated, and ready for anything. It is advised that a person fasts for eight hours prior to conducting this test on a plant.

This helps to rule out a reaction from something you previously ate as opposed to the plant you want to test. If you are in a situation where you are lost in the woods, the odds are that you have already fasted this amount of time anyway. Below you

will find step-by-step instructions on how to conduct this test if you are ever in a position where you wish to know if a plant is edible:

First, take the plant you are wanting to consume and separate it into its different parts.

Separate the root, stem, buds, leaves, and flowers. Do not try multiple parts of the plant at one time. Choose one part to start with.

Smell the plant to try and detect unpleasant odors. Bad smells are a warning sign that something may be “off.” In addition, keep in mind that an almond-like or pear-like scent is also an indicator that the plant may contain cyanide. Avoid plants that have a musty or rotting odor, as well as plants that smell like pears or almonds.

To start, place a piece of the plant you wish to sample on your inner elbow or wrist and leave it there for eight hours. This will help you detect if the plant contains ingredients that you may be allergic to. If you notice burning, numbness, hives, rashes, or any kind of reaction, wash the plant off and do not eat this plant.

If the plant passes the test above and does not cause any kind of reaction on your skin, prepare a small piece to eat. It is advised to boil the plant if you are able.

Once you have prepared the plant to eat, place a piece on your lips to see if it causes any burning, itching, or a reaction of some kind. If you do not notice a reaction after 15 minutes, take a small bite, chew it, and hold it in your mouth for 15 minutes. During this phase, try to pay attention to the taste. If you notice a soapy or bitter taste, spit the plant out and wash your mouth out.

If you did not have a reaction when conducting the previous test, swallow the bite and wait eight hours.

If you don't have any negative effects during this time, you can assume the plant is edible. This doesn't mean eating a large amount of the plant, so try to eat in moderation.

Repeat this test for the other parts of the plant to see which parts are edible. Just because a part of a plant is edible doesn't mean the other parts are edible. If at any time during this phase, you start to feel sick, bring the plant up to prevent further issues.

As you are conducting this test, keep in mind the following plants, as they are very toxic. For most of the plants below, not only should you never consume them, but you should also try to avoid touching them or brushing against them in the wild.

Common Toxic Plants To Avoid

It pays to familiarize yourself with common toxic plants so you can avoid these while foraging. The first five plants on the list below are toxic if you even touch them. Below are some common plants to avoid when foraging:

Poison Ivy - "Leaves of three, leave them be." Keep this in mind while foraging. Poison ivy is unfortunately an aggressive spreader and seems to take over the woods during the summer months. Some people are highly allergic and cannot even be around it if the wind is blowing in their direction.



Even a tiny pin drop of the oil on this plant's leaves can make your skin feel awful. The rash is miserable, severely itchy, inflamed, and can ooze. You can avoid these rashes by taking steps in the "tips and trips" section above and scrubbing with dish soap when you come inside after foraging. The leaves of poison ivy plants are in sets of three. The mature leaves are green, but the young leaves have a red hue.



Poison Sumac - Another toxic plant if you happen to come into contact with this against your bare skin. Poison sumac plants often have red stems.

They can have anywhere from 7-13 leaves per stem. Poison sumac, poison ivy, and poison oak all

have poisonous leaves but do not assume that they aren't toxic in the winter months when the leaves have fallen off. The bark of all three plants can still cause a reaction if touched.



Poison Oak - Poison oak has leaves that are usually arranged in sets of three like poison ivy, but the leaves look like oak leaves (they are lobed around the edges). Watch for green, shiny, lobed leaves in sets of three. You may also notice hues of red on the plant from time to time.



Giant Hogweed – As the name suggests, giant hogweed gets very tall. It can grow up to 15 feet tall when fully mature. It is often mistaken for medicinal plants like angelica because it also has white clusters of flowers atop umbels. Look for large leaves and stems that are hollow with bristly hairs and reddish-purple spots. Do not touch this plant. Touching it can cause adverse reactions. Consumption can cause violent poisoning or even death.

Water Hemlock – This plant is often mistaken for wild carrot, elderberry, valerian, or yarrow. However, if you really examine the plant, you will see major differences. Hemlock tends to grow in moist areas. It is often found growing in roadside ditches because they can collect water. One of the most distinguishing features about this plant is the stems. They have distinct purple blotches.

Touching water hemlock can cause an adverse reaction and consuming it can cause kidney damage, tremors, muscle damage, or even death.



Bittersweet Nightshade – Nightshade plants are strange. Some are perfectly safe to eat and some are really dangerous. It pays to do your research on plants in this family. Tomatoes are in the nightshade family. Some nightshades, like bittersweet nightshade, have fruit that looks like little tomatoes. However, consuming this fruit would cause a potentially serious reaction. Look for dark stems, tomato-like berries, and arrowhead-shaped leaves.



Datura (Jimsonweed) – A long time ago, parts of this plant were used to help those with asthma and bronchial issues. This is a very common weed in many parts of the northern hemisphere. It is also a member of the nightshade family. The leaves



are often toothed around the edges and the flowers are trumpet-shaped. The seed pods are very prickly. It may look unassuming, but if you consume this plant, you may experience severe hallucinations, poisoning, and death.

Foxglove – Researchers were able to take certain glycosides from this plant to make a medicine for congestive heart failure. However, just because it is used to



make prescription medicine does not mean it can be consumed or used medicinally in the wild.

It takes manipulation of the plant's compounds in a lab to make this medicine safely. If you were to consume any part of foxglove, it could lead to serious adverse health issues such as

heart failure. The plant is known for its beauty. It has tube or bell-shaped flowers growing up the stem that range in color from white to purple or pink.

Yew - Don't assume berries on all evergreen plants are safe. Yew is definitely not



a berry you want to consume in the wild. Look for an evergreen tree or shrub with berries that have an orange or red hue. Leaves appear like most evergreen leaves and are needlelike. Consumption of the berries can cause poisoning.



Baneberry – The good news about this plant is that it has a very distinguishing characteristic: white berries. As a general rule, do not eat any white berries in the wild. Most of them are toxic, and baneberry is no exception. If ingested, this plant can

cause respiratory distress or cardiac arrest. Even eating as little as six berries can cause severe reactions.

Pokeberry – This plant’s toxicity is often overstated, but it is worth mentioning because it is constantly mistaken for elderberry. It is worth noting that the young leaves are edible and have been consumed for centuries. Many trained herbalists actually work with pokeberry, both the berries and the root, in a clinical setting. Having said that, it is vital to understand that pokeberry and root usage should be left to the professionals in a clinical setting.



Overconsumption of the berries or root could result in poisoning. Pokeberry is easy to identify because it has a unique, bright pink stem going all the way up the mature plants. The berries hang from grapelike clusters that also have bright pink stems. Elderberry doesn’t grow like this. It has large clusters of berries in umbels. Elder doesn’t have a pink main stem.

Just make sure to be completely sure about the plants you harvest when you are foraging. Be aware of your surroundings to avoid coming into contact with any potentially toxic plant.

Following the tips mentioned earlier and wearing long sleeves, long pants, and taking a shower as soon as you come home will help prevent any adverse reactions from the plants you may encounter on your excursions. Be vigilant, be safe, be thorough, and have fun!

IDENTIFYING AND USING 30 COMMON EDIBLE PLANTS IN YOUR BACKYARD

Acorn, (Quercus sp.)

Acorn Info: Acorns are the nuts provided by oak trees. There are many species of oak trees throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Two very common species of oak trees include the white and red oaks. Both of these mature trees produce a sizeable number of acorns.

Oaks are usually easy to identify with their lobed leaves, often large size, and distinctive acorns with caps called cupules. Acorns contain a compound called tannins.



Tannins can be harmful, so it is important to follow the steps in the recipe below to remove these before using acorns for food. However, when prepared properly, acorns are a great source of nutrition and can be used to make wild flour.

Leaf: Oak leaves are very distinctive, because they have little fingerlike lobes around the edges. They can be anywhere from four to eight inches long and three to five inches wide. Different oak species turn different colors in the fall, which can help indicate



the species. Red oaks turn a dark red color and white oaks are often burnt orange.

Flower: They can produce greenish catkins that hang in clusters from the branches, but not traditional flowers.

Harvest: Acorns can be found in abundance during the fall months from August to October. Look for acorns that are intact, without holes or rotten areas.



Edible Parts: The leaves and nuts of the oak trees are edible. Both need to be prepared by boiling them and/or soaking in a few changes of water first to remove tannins.

How to Eat: After collecting acorns, you will first need to wash them to remove hitchhiking bugs and debris. Then you need to remove the caps. This is usually really easy, but if they aren't coming off right away, you can use a nutcracker. Next, you will need to process the nuts to safely remove tannins. This can be done by dropping them into boiling water until the water turns a dark tea color. Then repeat this process with more water and strain them out. After boiling they will also need to be dried or dehydrated and then ground into flour if you wish to use them for this purpose. However, you can also roast them (a recipe for this is below).



Recipe: Acorns are a valuable and plentiful food that can provide you with natural flour in times of need. They are a source of protein, fat, carbohydrates, fiber, vitamins, and minerals that can be a major asset to health. The recipe below is an

easy way to enjoy acorns if you don't want to make flour. Roasting them also removes tannins, but enjoy these in moderation to be on the safe side.

Nutritious Roasted Acorns

You will need:

- A cookie sheet for roasting the acorns
- As many acorns as you have room to roast on a cookie sheet (spread evenly in one layer)
- Salt to taste (sea salt is best)

Directions:

→ Preheat the oven to 350 degrees Fahrenheit (180°C)

→ Place the acorns in a single layer on an ungreased cookie sheet with a rim (so they don't roll off and make a mess)

→ Cook the acorns for an hour or until they turn a dark, chocolate-brown color

→ Remove the acorns from the oven and allow them to cool.



Sprinkle sea salt on them to taste and enjoy!

Serving Size:

This recipe should make three to four cups of roasted acorns, depending on the size of cookie sheet you use. The serving size is one ounce (28 g) per person.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount	% RDI
Calories	144 kcal	-
Protein	2 g	4%
Fat	9 g	14%
Carbohydrates	15 g	5%
Fiber	-	16%
Vitamin A	-	44%
Vitamin E	-	20%
Iron	-	19%
Manganese	-	19%
Potassium	-	12%
Vitamin B6	-	10%
Folate	-	8%

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Make sure the nuts you collect have a cap, which is indicative of an acorn. Do not confuse with poisonous horse chestnuts, which do not have a cap. Horse chestnut are round, leathery in consistency, and have a white spot.



Calendula (Calendula officinalis)

Calendula Info: Calendula, sometimes referred to as “pot marigold” is often regarded for its ease to grow and its medicinal properties. However, this flower is also edible and nourishing. It is easy to spot with its bright orange hue. It looks like a marigold, but it is not the same species as ornamental marigolds (don’t worry – most marigold species are edible as well). These are popular in gardens because they are so easy to grow.



Leaf: Leaves are light green and ovate. They can be larger at the bottom. They range in size from two to six inches long and one to two inches wide.

Flower: The flowers are bright orange and petals are arranged more like a daisy than a marigold. Resinous bracts are underneath the flower and are revered for their medicinal uses.



Harvest: Harvest flowers throughout the summer and fall months.

Edible Parts: The flowers are edible.

How to Eat: Flowers can be eaten raw in salads or prepared in any number of dishes, from soups to omelets.

Recipe: Add a pop of color to your next meal with calendula flowers! The recipe below allows you to create a colorful and nutritious crustless quiche with calendula flowers:

Crustless Calendula and Oregano Quiche

You will need:

- 4 eggs
- 1/3 cup (80 g) of cheddar cheese
- ¼ cup (60 g) of dried oregano leaves
- 1 cup (240 g) of calendula petals (fresh or dried)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 oz. (60 ml) of almond milk (or milk of your choice)
- A pan with a lip for baking quiche
- A few sprays of olive oil to grease the pan

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350 F (180 °).
- Beat the eggs and milk in a bowl and then add salt, cheese, pepper, oregano, and calendula petals. Beat some more until everything is blended well.
- Spray the baking dish with olive oil spray to coat it before pouring the ingredients inside
- Bake for 20 minutes or until the quiche is cooked all the way through.
- Remove from the oven, cut, and serve.



Serving Size:

Serving size is two slices of quiche

Nutrition Facts:

One serving contains the following nutrition:

Nutrient	Amount	% RDI
Calories	570 kcal	-
Carbohydrates	5 g	2%
Fat	44 g	68%
Protein	35 g	70%
Fiber	2 g	8%

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Do not confuse calendula with other yellow or orange flowers, especially any in the aster family. Asters may cause reactions to sensitive or allergic people. Look for light green, lobed leaves and know that calendula is mostly grown in gardens - not found in the wild as often.

Cattail (Typha sp.)

Cattail Info: Most people overlook these common marsh plants, but they can be very useful. Cattails can be found in ponds, lakes, along rivers, and generally in wet areas. They are widespread, and can be found throughout the Northern Hemisphere. Make sure the wet areas where you harvest this plant are not polluted, as they can suck up pollutants from the water.

Leaf: Leaves are long and thin.

They grow from simple stems arranged alternately up the plant.



Flower: Small flowers, both male and female, may develop in racemes. Clusters of female flowers are arranged on a sausage-shaped spike. The head of the plant is shaped like a sausage (it is brown in color) as well and contains seeds that disperse in the wind.

Harvest: The young shoots are edible and are best harvested in spring through early summer. The large rhizome is also edible and can be harvested at any time, although it is bigger in the winter.

Edible Parts: The young shoots near the bottom of the plant, as well as the rhizome, are edible and have been used as food for thousands of years.

How to Eat: The young shoots need cooked in order to become tender. If eaten raw, they taste like cucumber, but may be hard to eat. Harvest the first six to eight inches from the base of the plant. The rhizomes need washed thoroughly and

prepared for eating by peeling first. Think of them as a potato: a starchy root that needs peeling before eating. After washing and peeling, they can be dehydrated and powdered into flour, or boiled and prepared like potatoes.

Recipe: If you are craving asparagus in the wild, but can't find any, cattail may be just what you are looking for. Below is a delicious recipe for roasted cattail shoots that tastes a lot like asparagus:

Tasty Young Cattail Shoots

You will need:

- Ten to fifteen young cattail shoots
- Enough vinegar to soak these in
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp. olive oil

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 350 F (180°C).
- Thoroughly wash the shoots and then soak them in vinegar for up to 20 minutes to remove any excess bacteria
- Remove from vinegar, dry the shoots, and place them on a cookie sheet
- Toss the shoots in olive oil until they are all evenly coated. Add sea salt and cracked pepper to taste.
- Bake for ten to fifteen minutes and then turn them over
- Bake another ten to fifteen minutes, and remove when they are tender and cooked through.



Serving Size:

This recipe makes enough for one to two servings of cattail shoots.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount	% RDI
Manganese	0.144 mg	6%
Magnesium	12 mg	3%
Dietary fiber	1 g	4%
Iron	0.2 mg	1%
Vitamin B6	0.03 mg	2%
Sodium	21 mg	1%

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Because of where cattails grow and their distinctive appearance, there are no poisonous lookalikes for this plant.

Chanterelle (Cantharellus sp.)

Chanterelle Info: These vibrant, golden orange mushrooms appear in mid to late summer throughout most of North America, as well as parts of Europe and Asia. They will often pop up after a good, soaking rain in July or August. Look for orange mushrooms with a convex cap, no true gills, and a solid stem with white fibers inside.



There should not be a bulb at the base. Due to their vibrant color, they are very easy to spot in the woods. They are not often found in clumps, but rather individually growing (with the exception of two growing close together sometimes).

Leaf: No leaves because this is a mushroom. Look for a convex-shaped cap with the absence of true gills underneath.



Flowers: No flowers.

Harvest: More plentiful during rainy summers. Look for chanterelles from late June to Mid-August. They have symbiotic relationships with hardwood trees, so they are usually found growing around trees.

Edible Parts: All above-ground parts are edible.

How to Eat: These, like all other mushrooms, need to be lightly cooked before consumption. Whether you want to boil them, put them on pizza before cooking, cook them in an omelet, or fry them, they will taste wonderful.

Recipe: Chanterelles make a great addition to pasta dishes, so the recipe below will cover how to use them in a pasta dish with a delicious lemon butter sauce.

Chanterelle Pasta with Lemon Butter Sauce

You will need:

- 4 cups (960g) of bowtie pasta
- 2 cups (480g) of chanterelles
- ¼ cup (60g) of butter
- 4 tbsp. fresh lemon juice (or more until you get the taste you want)
- ¼ cup (60ml) chicken broth
- ¼ tsp. dried and chopped basil



- ¼ tsp. dried and chopped oregano leaves
- ¼ tsp. minced garlic
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

- Bring a large stock pot of water with a little sea salt to a boil.
- Cook the pasta, stirring occasionally, until it is cooked through (this takes roughly 12 minutes) and then drain it.

→ In a saucepan, melt the butter and stir in chicken broth, lemon juice, oregano, basil, and garlic. Bring this to a simmer and add the chanterelles. Cook them in this sauce for 4-5 minutes and then turn heat to low.

→ Pour the chanterelle and lemon butter sauce into the bowl of strained pasta and coat everything evenly. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve and enjoy!

Serving Size:

This recipe makes four servings.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount	% RDI
Calories	240 kcal	-
Fat	13 g	20%
Protein	6 g	12%
Vitamin C	6 g	10%
Carbohydrates	30 g	10%
Calcium	16 g	-
Iron	2 g	11%
Potassium	92 mg	3%
Dietary fiber	1 g	4%

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Do not confuse chanterelles with poisonous jack-o-lantern mushrooms. Thankfully, the easiest way to tell a jack from a chanterelle is to open the stem. If it is hollow inside, it may be a jack so do not eat it. Chanterelles do not have hollow stems. They have solid stems with white fibers inside. Also, jacks tend to grow in clusters and clumps of mushrooms and chanterelles grow individually most of the time.



Chickweed (Stellaria media)

Chickweed Info: Chickweed is a very common plant that is often overlooked because it tends to grow low to the ground. It can be found in meadows, yards, ditches, and fields beginning in early spring. By the time summer arrives, it becomes sparser because it doesn't like heat.

If you missed your chance to harvest it, don't

worry. It often reappears in the fall as the weather cools off. Chickweed is common throughout North America and Eurasia.



Leaf: Leaves are very small and somewhat heart-shaped going up the stem.

Flowers: Flowers are very small and white. They look like little white stars.

Harvest: Harvest in the spring and fall months.

Edible Parts: All above-ground parts can be eaten.

How to Eat: Chickweed is excellent raw and makes a great addition to a fresh spring salad. It can also be added to any number of dishes such as omelets and pasta dishes.

Recipe: Since chickweed has such a delicate and fresh taste, it is excellent in a salad. Below is a recipe for a fresh spring salad utilizing chickweed.

Fresh Chickweed & Strawberry Spring Salad

You will need:

- 2 cups (480 g) of freshly harvested chickweed
- 1 tbsp. of freshly chopped basil leaves
- ½ cup (120 g) of fresh strawberries
- 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. poppyseeds
- 1 tbsp. raw honey
- 2 tbsp. pecans



Directions:

- Wash the chickweed, strawberries, and basil thoroughly and strain.
- Fill a food processor or blender with the strawberries, apple cider vinegar, raw honey, and poppy seeds. Blend until smooth and liquid consistency.
- Fill a bowl with the chickweed and basil
- Cover the chickweed and basil in the strawberry dressing and toss well
- Add pecans on top and enjoy

Serving Size:

This meal makes one serving.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount	% RDI
Calories	250 kcal	-
Fat	15 g	23%
Carbohydrates	10 g	3%
Vitamin C	100 mg	167%
Calcium	2 g	-
Iron	1 g	6%
Potassium	10 mg	-

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Do not confuse chickweed with flowering spurge, which has a milky substance inside when picked. However, flowering spurge doesn't have white flowers or heart shaped leaves like chickweed.



Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)

Chicory Info: Chicory is a really common sight along roadsides in the summer months. The pretty, purplish-blue flowers really stick out. Chicory has a long history of use, both as an edible and medicinal plant. The roots are especially useful, and have a similar taste to coffee.

During the civil war, they were roasted and blended with coffee ground rations to make them last longer. However, unlike coffee, they do not contain caffeine.

Leaf: Leaves are arranged alternately up a segmented stem. They look a lot like dandelion leaves and get smaller as they go up the stalk.

Flower: The flowers are a violet blue color and can be from two to four centimeters wide. They have two rows of bracts, with the outer row being shorter. The flowers appear from July to October.

Harvest: Harvest in summer and late fall.

Edible Parts: The flowers and roots are edible.

How to Eat: You can eat the flowers raw and add them to dishes as a colorful garnish. You can also eat the roots by digging them up and roasting them on a baking sheet in the oven. After roasting them, you can grind them up and use them like coffee. They make a healthy coffee alternative sans caffeine.



Recipe: The recipe below utilizes the flowers as a colorful garnish, but with a sweet twist: they are candied. Feel free to utilize the recipe below for other edible wild flowers as well!

Candied Chicory Flowers

You will need:

- 1 large egg white at room temperature
- 1 tsp. of water
- 1 to 2 cups (240 g-480 g) of wildcrafted chicory flowers
- ½ cup (120 g) of super fine sugar



Directions:

- Whisk the water and egg white gently with a fork until a few bubbles appear
- Using a small brush, paint the flowers carefully (front and back) by dipping the brush in the beaten egg white mix and coating the flowers. Cover the flower's entire surface well.
- Hold each flower over a bowl of sugar and carefully sprinkle the sugar over the flowers (both the top and bottom) with an even coating.
- Do not allow any large clumps of sugar on the petals. If you notice any, gently dust them off.
- Place the flowers on a wire drying rack and allow them to dry completely. Smooth the petals out however you like to keep them looking nice.

- Allow the flowers to sit at room temperature until they are completely dry. This will take anywhere from 4-24 hours depending on the humidity in your house. They are finished when the petals are stiff.
- Add these as a garnish to anything you like! Place them on pastries, baked goods, and whatever you wish.

Serving Size:

Makes 16 servings

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	29 kcal
Sodium	5 mg
Carbohydrates	6 g
Sugar	6 g
Vitamin C	1 mg
Calcium	7 mg
Potassium	13 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

As far as purple flowers go, make sure to avoid flowers that do not meet the flower description for chicory above. You can use edible flowers like violets in this recipe as well, but avoid purple flowers like monkshood (which has a distinctive hood and looks nothing like chicory).



Chives (Allium schoenoprasum, tuberosum)

Chive Info: Chives are a flavorful herb that has been used for centuries to add a zing to various dishes. They can be found growing wild throughout Europe, Asia, and North America. This herbaceous perennial emerges from a bulb with dense clusters of roots under the ground.

Leaf: Leaves are green, long, and slender like many species in the allium family. Grass-like leaves are shorter than the scapes. They are hollow and tubular.

Flower: Flowers are a pale pink color and star-shaped. They grow in a dense inflorescence.

Harvest: The plant flowers from April to May in southern areas and in June for the northern areas. This is the best time to harvest the aerial parts.

Edible Parts: The flowers and leaves are edible.

How to Eat: These can be eaten both raw or cooked.

Recipe: You can really bring out the flavor of chives by making a salad with the leaves and flowers. Below is a recipe for Korean garlic chive salad.



Korean Garlic Chive Salad

You will Need:

- 2 cups (480 g) of garlic chives, chopped to one inch in length
- 2 tbsp. red chili pepper powder
- 1 tsp. white vinegar
- 2 tsp. white sugar
- 1 tsp. brined or salted shrimp (optional)
- 2 tsp. fish sauce
- ½ tsp. beef soup powder
- 2 tsp. sesame oil
- 1 tbsp. toasted sesame seeds
- Ground black pepper to taste



Directions:

- Wash the chives with water thoroughly and cut them into one-inch (2.5cm) pieces. Set them aside in a small bowl.
- Mix all the ingredients together in another small bowl.
- Add the sauce to the bowl of garlic chives and blend thoroughly. Enjoy!

Serving Size:

One serving

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	26
Fat	2 g
Sodium	495 mg
Dietary Fiber	0.83 g
Sugars	0.48 g
Protein	2 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Do not confuse wild chives with death camas. The leaves of death camas are V-shaped, and have a long curve in the middle. The leaves of chives are grass like and smell like onions. Death camas do not usually smell this way. The flowers atop death camas are not pink like chives and are often arranged in white clusters.



Cottonwood (Populus deltoides)

Cottonwood Info: This species is one of the most common species of cottonwood, and can be found growing throughout most regions of North America. One of the largest North American trees, its bark is silvery white. It starts out smooth, but the grooves in the bark deepen as it ages.



Leaf: Leaves are often large and triangular in shape. They can get up to four inches long and four inches wide. They are also coarsely toothed around the edges.

Flower: Catkins are produced on single sex trees in early spring. Male catkins are reddish-purple in color, while female catkins are green.

Harvest: The best time to harvest the leaves is spring through summer. In late summer and early autumn, the leaves will fall off. There are also reports of people (and horses) eating the bark in hard times. The bark can be harvested any time.



Edible Parts: The leaves and bark are edible. Both require processing to be palatable. It is said that the bark can be cut off in strips and cooked like noodles by boiling them.

They can also be powdered into flour for hard times. The leaves are nutritious and a great source of amino acids.

How to Eat: The bark would need boiled or powdered into flour before consuming. Eat it in moderation, as it contains salicin (salicin is used to make aspirin). The leaves can be eaten raw, but are much better when cooked because they are often bitter tasting.

Recipe: Lightly sauteing cottonwood leaves in a tasty coating makes them not only palatable, but delicious.



See the recipe below to learn how to prepare them:

Herb and Parmesan Encrusted Cottonwood Leaves

You will need:

- 10-15 cottonwood leaves
- 2-3 eggs
- ½ - 1 cup (120g-240g) of finely grated parmesan cheese
- 1 tsp. oregano leaves
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- Enough oil (prefer olive oil, but you can use whatever you want) to fill the bottom of a skillet (no need to completely cover them, you will turn them as you cook)

Directions:

→ Fill a bowl with the eggs, oregano, sea salt, and pepper. Whisk until well blended.

- Fill another bowl with the parmesan cheese
- Wash the leaves and pat them dry
- Heat oil in a skillet
- Dip the leaves into the egg mixture and then lightly into the cheese on each side.
- Gently place them in the hot oil. Cook them for one to two minutes on each side.
- Gently remove from oil, serve, and enjoy!



Serving Size:

This recipe makes two to three servings

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	300
Fat	20 g
Sodium	10 mg
Carbohydrates	10 g

Nutrient	Amount
Sugar	4 g
Calcium	10 mg
Potassium	15 mg

Curly Dock (Rumex crispus)

Curly Dock Info: These unassuming plants are not only some of the most common yard “weeds,” but also have multiple edible (as well as medicinal) uses. You can find curly dock leaves emerging in a basal rosette in early spring. Soon, a stalk will emerge with seeds on top.

They can be found on disturbed ground, as well as fields, meadows, waste areas, and yards throughout the Northern Hemisphere.

Leaf: Leaves are lance-shaped and grow in a basal rosette pattern. They are curly/ruffled on the edges, which is what gives the plant its name. They are a dark green color, and grow up to 12 inches long and 4 inches wide.



Flower: This plant doesn't produce flowers, but produces a tall stalk with clusters of seeds on top. The seeds are green at first, but soon turn a dark brown color as they age.

Harvest: The best time to harvest the leaves is in the spring when they are young. The best time to harvest the seeds is summer through winter when they turn dark brown.

Edible Parts: Both the seeds and leaves are edible. The root has a long history of use as well, but is mostly used medicinally.

How to Eat: The leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. The seeds are best consumed when ground into a fiber-rich flour.

Recipe: Enjoy a delicious recipe using young curly dock leaves to make a traditional “wilted lettuce” dish. This recipe is detailed below:

Wilted Dock Leaf Salad

You will need:

- 4 bacon strips, cut into pieces
- ¼ cup (60ml) white vinegar
- 2 tbsp. water
- 2 green onions with tops, sliced into pieces
- 2 tsp. of sugar
- 8-10 cups (1.9kg-2.4kg) of young curly dock leaves
- Sea salt and pepper to taste
- 1 hard-boiled egg, chopped into pieces



Directions:

→ Using a large skillet, cook the bacon over medium heat until it is crispy.

Remove this when it is finished and place it on paper towels to drain.

→ Keep the bacon grease and add vinegar, water, onions, sugar, salt and pepper. Stir everything together well until the sugar is dissolved.

→ Place the young curly dock leaves in a large bowl and immediately pour the bacon grease dressing over it. Toss it lightly and top it with the hard-boiled egg and bacon pieces. Serve immediately.

Serving Size:

This recipe makes six servings.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	120
Fat	10 g
Sodium	200 mg
Carbohydrate	5 g
Protein	5 g
Fiber	4 g
Iron	3 g

Poisonous Lookalikes: None known. Just make sure to positively identify dock leaves by checking for ruffled edges. Use the identification above for dock to make sure you have the right plant.

Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)

Dandelion Info: One of the most common yard and garden “weeds” around the world, you are likely to find dandelion where you live. This is because it has spread around the world in nearly every region. This is great, because dandelion is so useful. All parts of this plant have a valuable use. It is easy to identify, and full of useful nutrition.

Leaf: Dark green leaves can be shallow or deeply lobed and are toothed around the margins. They grow around the base of the stalk but are not found growing up the stalk. Dandelion leaves are full of nutrition. They contain many vitamins and nutrients.



Flower: Flowers are a signature part of the dandelion plant. They are a lovely, bright yellow color and comprised of ligulate florets. They are found at the end of a hollow stalk.

Harvest: Harvest the flowers during the spring, summer, and fall months. You may even find flowers to harvest during mild winters. Harvest the leaves in early spring. You can harvest them any time of the year, but they will get more bitter the older they are. It is worth noting that the taproot has medicinal properties and can be harvested in the fall to make tea.

Edible Parts: The leaves and flowers are edible. The taproot can be used to make tea.

How to Eat: The leaves and flowers can be prepared in a variety of ways, whether consumed raw or cooked.

The leaves are excellent in a salad and when served raw, they have more nutrients intact. The flowers have a thick consistency, and although they can be eaten raw as well, they are often cooked in fritters.

Recipe: The recipe below is for a traditional dandelion flower fritter dish. The flowers are plentiful, and although some people think they are an important food for bees, this is not true. They lack the nutrients bees need to be healthy. Other flowers are better for bees to get nectar.

Dandelion Flower Fritters

You will need:

- 4 cups (960g) fresh (washed) dandelion flowers
- 2 cups (480g) flour
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups (500ml) milk
- Olive oil for frying the fritters (only a few Tbsp, no need to fill the skillet)



Directions:

→ Blend the milk, flour, and eggs together well

→ Warm a little olive oil in a skillet on medium heat

- Dip the flowers into the batter until they are thoroughly covered and place them into the skillet of oil with the flower side down
- When they are brown, flip them over and allow the other side to brown
- When they are a golden brown on both sides, remove them and set them on a plate on a paper towel to soak up excess oil
- Serve plain or drizzle with raw honey while they are still warm for a sweet treat

Serving Size:

This recipe makes four servings.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	125
Fat	10 g
Sodium	42 mg
Carbohydrates	10 g
Fiber	3 g
Protein	5 g
Vitamin K	420 mcg

Nutrient	Amount
Iron	2 mcg
Vitamin A	200 mcg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Do not confuse dandelions with cat's ear. The only aspect they have in common is the flower head shape. However, cat's ear flowers grow atop a much longer, thinner stalk.

In addition, cat's ear flowers are a bright orange rather than yellow. It is also worth mentioning: Make sure when collecting dandelions, you avoid areas of heavy foot traffic. Avoid areas that may have been exposed to pollution or pesticides as well. Because dandelions grow in yards and parks, they are often exposed to heavy foot traffic and toxic sprays.



Elderberry (Sambucus nigra, canadensis)

Elderberry Info: Elderberry can be found growing wild or in the gardens of those living in the Northern Hemisphere. In Europe, *Sambucus nigra* is prevalent. In North America, the wild elderberry variety is *Sambucus canadensis*. However, it is not uncommon to see *S. nigra* growing throughout North America, as people plant it regularly.



Both varieties are edible and very tasty. While the berries are known for their medicinal properties when it comes to immune system health, they have been enjoyed for thousands of years as a tasty snack.

Leaf: Leaves are lance-shaped and finely toothed around the edges. They come to a point at the end. They are often arranged opposite, with anywhere from five to seven leaves per stem.

Flower: Flowers are easy to spot in the early summer months, particularly in June for most North American states. They are tiny and white. They grow in large clusters atop umbels. The clusters of flowers can get pretty large, with some easily reaching 12 inches in diameter. The flowers have a light, sweet fragrance. As the flowers fall away, the berries will appear, often in late summer or early fall. The stems holding the berries will turn pink in color as the berries ripen. The berries turn a very dark purple-black when they are fully ripe.

Harvest: The best time to harvest elderflowers is in June for most areas of North America. The best time to harvest the berries is in late summer or early fall. Once they are dark purple or black in color, they are ready.

Edible Parts: The flowers and berries are edible.

How to Eat: Because elderberry plants contain cyanogenic glycosides that may harm the gastrointestinal tract and other bodily functions, it is advised that the berries be cooked before consumption. Cooking the berries destroys these glycosides and renders them perfectly safe to eat. Whether you steam them, boil them, etc. even a few short minutes of heat is enough to make them safe to eat. This is not a concern for most people because the majority of elderberry recipes require heating of some kind.

Recipe: The recipe below is for traditional elderberry jelly. This delicious jelly will become a staple in your home!

Elderberry Jelly

You will need:

- 3 cups (750 ml) of elderberry juice (which can be taken from around three pounds of elderberries. Juice them or boil them and strain them to get the juice. There are juicing directions below)
- 3 tbsp. fresh squeezed lemon juice
- Pectin (follow the directions on your favorite brand of pectin)
- ½ tsp. unsalted butter
- 3 cups (720 g) sugar (Organic cane sugar preferred)
- ½ tsp. Ceylon cinnamon (optional)

Directions:

- Prepared the jars for canning by washing five half-pint jars, as well as the bands and lids. Place them in a water-bath canner and fill the canner $\frac{3}{4}$ with water and heat this until boiling.
- Pour hot water into a bowl and add the jars, lids, and screw bands.
- Juice the berries by warming them (with the stems removed), and crush them well.
- Stir until the juice and berries begin to boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.
- Place a strainer over a large bowl and then pour the mixture into the strainer. Lightly press the berries to make sure you get all the juice out of them. Discard the berries.
- Take three cups of juice from the bowl and place it in a large pot. Add the lemon juice. Turn heat to medium and add pectin. When it comes to a boil, it will begin to foam. This is normal.
- Once this begins to boil, add the butter and this will reduce foaming. Turn the heat to high until you have reached a rolling boil.
- Add the sugar two cups at a time and stir constantly. Continue stirring until the mixture returns to a boil and boil for one minute. Remove from heat.
- Carefully get your jars, lids, and screw bands and pat them dry. Use a plastic ladle and canning funnel to fill the jars with the hot jelly mixture. As you do this, leave a half inch of headspace.
- Wipe the jar rims to remove drips or they may stick shut.
- Top with lids and screw on the bands. It is advised to process the jars in a boiling water bath for five minutes afterward. The water level should cover the jars by at least one and a half inches during this time.

→ Allow the jars to cool completely by letting them sit at room temperature. You will hear them seal when they “pop” loudly.

→ When you wish to use your jelly (it is great on toast), simply pop open the seal. Once the seal is popped open, refrigerate the jar.



Serving Size:

This recipe makes five half-pint (240 ml) jars.

Nutrition Facts (per 1 Tbsp/ 15 g):

Nutrient	Amount
Carbohydrates	13 g
Glucose	12 g
Calories	50
Vitamin A	<1% DV
Vitamin C	<1% DV
Calcium	<1% DV

Poisonous Lookalikes:

For whatever reason, one of the most popular plants mistaken for elderberry is pokeberry. However, if you look a little closer, you will realize that these plants look nothing alike. The leaves are much different, with poke leaves being much larger.

The berries are arranged completely different on poke and elderberry, with elderberry being in umbel clusters and pokeberry being in grape-like clusters hanging downward. The actual berry is larger on poke than elder as well. Poke has a bright pink stem going all the way up and elder does not.



Jerusalem Artichoke (Helianthus tuberosus)

Jerusalem Artichoke Info: These plants are noticeable from afar because they can grow to great heights. Some grow to over nine feet in height. They are topped with small yellow, sunflower-like flowers. This is because it is in fact a species of sunflower. These plants were once farmed on a larger scale by indigenous people in North America, and the plant is native to many areas of North America.



Leaf: Leaves are arranged opposite on the lower portions of the plant, but arranged alternately on the upper portions. They have a rough and hairy texture which helps with identification. Leaves on the lower portions of the stem are broad and ovoid-acute. However, leaves on the upper regions of the stem are smaller and narrower.

Flower: Yellow flowers appear on capitate flowerheads. They can grow from two to four inches in diameter. Each flower has anywhere from ten to twenty ray florets and up to 60 small disc florets.



Harvest: Harvest tubers after late summer. They can even be harvested as needed during mild winters.

Edible Parts: The tubers are the edible part of this plant.

How to Eat: Tubers are often prepared by cooking them, whether they are boiled like potatoes or chopped to add to a stir fry.

Recipe: One of the best ways to enjoy this nutritious tuber is to bake it in the oven with flavorful herbs and olive oil. See the recipe below for this excellent dish:

Roasted Jerusalem Artichokes

You will need:

- 1 pound (450g) of Jerusalem artichoke tubers
- ¾ cup (180ml) olive oil
- 2 tbsp. dried rosemary
- 1 tbsp. minced garlic
- Sea salt and pepper to taste



Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 350 F (180°C)
- Scrub the tubers well and cut out the eyes
- Cut the tubers into one-inch chunks
- Blend the olive oil, rosemary, garlic, and sea salt together in a bowl and add the Jerusalem artichoke pieces. Toss them until everything is evenly coated.
- Arrange the coated pieces in an evenly-spaced layer on a baking sheet

→ Roast this in the oven until the pieces are tender, which takes around 35-45 minutes.

Serving Size:

This recipe makes four servings.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	450
Fat	41 g
Carbohydrates	22 g
Protein	3 g
Dietary fiber	3 g
Vitamin C	6 mg
Calcium	61 mg
Iron	8 mg
Potassium	514 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Make sure that you have a positive identification for Jerusalem artichoke before harvesting tubers. Other members of the aster family do not have edible tubers.

Do not confuse with other plants in the aster family.

Japanese Knotweed (Reynoutria japonica)

Japanese knotweed Info: Many people would consider this to be one of the most aggressive and invasive plants to exist. It can choke out native plants and should be pulled out when discovered. However, why waste this potentially valuable resource when you can actually use it for food? Japanese knotweed can be found throughout North America and Europe, and is native to Asia. It is classified as an invasive species in many regions, so avoid planting this or trying to grow it. It comes by its invasive status honestly because believe it or not, it can grow up to three feet (one meter) a month! You can help the environment by harvesting it (and pulling it up) when you see it.

Leaf: The leaves of this plant are broad and oval-shaped. They have a truncated base and can grow up to six inches in length. New leaves may appear dark red in color.

Flower: Flowers grow in erect racemes and are a creamy white color. They will often be found blooming from late summer to early autumn.

Harvest: Harvest the young shoots (less than ten inches long) in early spring. If you wait too long to harvest them, the shoots will become hard and woody. If you want to



harvest them in late spring or early summer, you still can, but you will need to peel away the hard outer layer of the shoot before cooking it.

Edible Parts: Young shoots are edible.

How to Eat: Shoots will need to be cooked before consuming them. They have a pleasantly tart, citrusy flavor similar to rhubarb.

Recipe: The best way to use Japanese knotweed is to use it like you would rhubarb in any recipe that calls for rhubarb. This opens the doors to all kinds of recipes and possibilities! Try the tasty recipe below if you are craving something sweet:

Japanese Knotweed “Rhubarb” Pie

You will need:

- 4 cups (960 g) of chopped, fresh Japanese knotweed
- 1 nine-inch (23 cm) pie shell
- ¼ cup (60 g) of butter, softened
- ¼ cup (60 g) sugar
- 2 cups (480 g) apple sauce
- 2 eggs
- ¼ tsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ tsp. cinnamon



Directions:

→ Preheat your oven to 425 F (218°C)

→ In a bowl, combine the butter, sugar, and eggs. Beat this until it is smooth.

- Add the applesauce, Japanese knotweed, and vanilla. Blend everything together well.
- Bake this for 30-40 minutes or until the pie crust has browned and the Japanese knotweed is tender.
- Remove from the oven and allow the pie to cool before serving.

Serving size:

This recipe makes one, nine-inch pie (23cm). One slice of pie is one serving.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	290
Fat	9 g
Carbohydrates	51 g
Protein	4 g
Dietary fiber	3 g
Sugar	30 g
Vitamin C	6 mg

Nutrient	Amount
Calcium	60 mg
Iron	2 mg
Potassium	2 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

There are other knotweed species that look similar and are called “lesser knotweeds.” They can appear similar in the fact that they have bamboo-like, hollow stems.

Major differences include: Leaves of lesser knotweed are long, thin, and ovate, unlike Japanese knotweed leaves which are broad. Lesser knotweed is also much smaller, growing only to 1.5 meters tall, if that. Flowers of lesser knotweed are bigger and bell-shaped. They also come in different colors, such as pale and bright pink.



Lambsquarter (Chenopodium album)

Lambsquarter Info: This plant is often overlooked, but once you learn how to identify it, you are going to see it everywhere! It can be found growing throughout Europe and North America, as well as parts of Eastern Asia, Australia, and Africa. It grows practically everywhere but Antarctica. It is amazing to think about such a common and widespread plant being so useful, but lambsquarter is extremely nutritious and has a very similar flavor (and nutrition) profile to spinach.



Leaf: Leaves are toothed around the edges, and have a rough diamond-like shape. A big identification factor for the leaves is the underside.

They are much lighter on the underside than they are on top. On top, they appear as a medium to dark green color, but underneath they are silver-green.

Flower: Clusters of greenish flowers grow in small cymes up a densely branched inflorescence. These can be found growing on top of the plant in late summer through fall months.

Harvest: The best time to harvest the leaves is when the plant is young, in the spring months. However, you can also harvest the leaves throughout the summer,

they just may be a little more bitter. The best time to harvest seeds is in the fall months.

Edible Parts: The most popular edible part of this plant is the leaves, which grow all up the stem of the plant. The seeds are also edible, as the plant is a relative to quinoa. They taste similar and can be enjoyed as a wild grain.

How to Eat: Lambsquarter leaves can be eaten raw, but cooking is advised because it decreases oxalates in the plant which can cause issues for some people. Those with kidney issues and those who are sensitive to oxalate-rich plants should steam or cook lamb's quarters before consuming.

Recipe: The recipe below is a great way to enjoy lambsquarters. Have fun with this recipe, and feel free to add your own twist with foraged mushrooms, herbs, and whatever else you desire!

Savory Lambs quarter Pizza

You will need:

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Corn meal
- 16 oz (450 g) pizza dough at room temperature
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 small yellow onion, thinly sliced
- 2 cups (480 g) lambs quarter leaves
- 8 ounces (225 g) of edible mushrooms, thinly sliced (your choice: you can use morels, chanterelles, or portabella, etc.)



- 2 cups (480 g) mozzarella cheese
- Sea salt and cracked pepper to taste

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 425 F (218°C)
- In a large skillet on medium heat, add a few drizzles of olive oil and let this get hot
- Add onions and sauté them until they are softened
- Add mushrooms and continue to sauté them until they are soft and caramelized. Add the minced garlic and sauté for two more minutes, then set aside
- Allow the dough to set out until it reaches room temperature, then place a small amount of corn meal on a sheet pan and spread out the dough with your hands.
- Drizzle the dough with olive oil and top this with 1 and ½ cup (120g) cheese
- Cover everything with the lamb's quarter leaves, as well as the onion and mushroom mixture
- Cover this with the remaining cheese and sprinkle with sea salt and cracked pepper
- Cook this for 15-20 minutes until you notice that the cheese is melted and the dough is cooked.

Serving Size:

Makes one 16-inch (40.5cm) pizza with one-quarter of the pie as a serving size

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	170
Fat	9 g
Sodium	300 mg
Carbohydrates	18 g
Sugars	1.6 g
Protein	8 g
Potassium	140 mg
Iron	10 mg
Vitamin C	80 mg
Calcium	250 mg
Magnesium	34 mg
Phosphorus	65 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Do not confuse this plant with black nightshade.

Black nightshade has similar shaped leaves, but they are not lighter underneath like lamb's quarters. Black nightshade has sparsely toothed leaves, but they are not as toothed as lamb's



quarters. Black nightshade also produces clusters of dark-colored berries when ripe, and lamb's quarters do not produce berries. However, it is important to make sure you have a positive ID before consuming lamb's quarters, as even a few bites of black nightshade can cause illness or death.

Lavender (Lavandula angustifolia)

Lavender Info: A popular medicinal herb, lavender also makes a great and flavorful addition to certain dishes and drinks! This common garden herb produces fragrant, herbaceous-scented flowers that can calm the body and mind by just inhaling them. Lavender is native to the Mediterranean region, but today it can be found all over the world.

It is often cultivated, but sometimes found growing wild as well. It is somewhat easy to grow, and does well in containers with well-draining soil. Consider adding lavender to your herb garden to make your dishes and drinks pop!

Leaf: Leaves are lanceolate in shape and have a distinct, silvery green color. They are sometimes as fragrant as the flowers themselves.

Flower: Flowers are lavender in color, but can appear purple-blue in color as well. They start out as buds that surround the top of the stem, and later open to reveal tiny petals. They have an herbaceous, floral aroma and flavor that lends an interesting zing to a variety of dishes and drinks.

Harvest: Lavender starts perking up in early spring, and blooms throughout the summer and early fall months. It can be harvested at any time after the flowers have appeared. Harvest aerial parts only.

Edible Parts: All aerial (above-ground) parts are technically edible. Most people harvest only the flowers to make tea, but really the whole plant can be infused in



water to make tea or added to dishes. Because of its strong flavor, it is best eaten in small amounts, or added to dishes to give them an herbaceous and floral flavor.

How to Eat: Harvest aerial parts and infuse these in hot water to make tea, or boil aerial parts with lemon juice and add sugar to make lavender lemonade. You can also add chopped lavender to omelets, quiches, and any dish. However, lavender is especially tasty in dessert recipes!

Recipe: Since lavender is amazing when paired with something sweet, the recipe below blends lavender and raw honey to make an ice cream you won't soon forget:

Lavender and Raw Honey Ice Cream

You will need:

- 1 cup (250 ml) heavy cream
- 2 cups (500 ml) whole milk
- ¼ cup (60 g) dried lavender (aerial parts, mostly flowers)
- 1/3 cup (80 g) of raw honey
- 5 large egg yolks
- ¼ cup (60 g) organic cane sugar



Directions:

- In a saucepan, combine the milk, lavender, and raw honey. Bring this to a boil and then cover it. Remove it from heat.
- Allow this to steep for five minutes
- Strain out the mixture. Keep the milk and discard the strained lavender pieces.

- Combine egg yolks and sugar in a bowl and use an electric mixer to beat this on medium-high until it is thick and pale yellow in color. This usually takes 3-5 minutes.
- Return the milk to a saucepan and bring this to a simmer on medium-low heat.
- Add half of the milk to the egg yolk mixture and whisk until it is blended well. Stir the mixture into the remaining milk and cook this on low heat, stirring constantly.
- Keep stirring until the mixture is thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon.
- Remove this from the heat and stir in the cream. Strain this into a medium mixing bowl that sits in an ice-water bath. Allow this to stand until it is chilled, stirring it occasionally.
- Freeze this in an ice cream maker according to the directions on your model. Store this in an airtight container, where it will keep for up to two weeks in the freezer.

Serving Size:

This recipe yields one quart. A serving is one-half cup (120 g).

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	190
Fat	12 g

Nutrient	Amount
Sodium	20 mg
Carbohydrates	19 g
Sugar	18 g
Protein	1 g
Fiber	1 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Perhaps the most common plant mistaken for lavender is Russian sage. It has the same color flowers and they also appear to grow in a similar manner.

Russian sage is not an edible flower, and there are several major differences between Russian sage and lavender to help distinguish the two. First, Russian sage often grows much taller than lavender. Second, it has a different, although pleasant, scent. Russian sage also appears more bush-like and grows many branching stems with flowers up the main stem.



Lemon Balm (Melissa officinalis)

Lemon Balm Info: An incredibly easy plant to grow, it is no wonder lemon balm is a favorite of herb gardeners across the globe. Lemon balm is a member of the mint family, so it shares many characteristics with mints. It is native to Europe, Central Asia, and the Mediterranean. However, due to centuries of popularity among gardeners and a fast-spreading disposition, lemon balm can now be found throughout North America as well. Be careful if you plan to grow this plant, as it can spread easily and take over a garden.



Leaf: Leaves look much like many members of the mint family. They are light green, heart-shaped, and have a rough surface. They are toothed around the edges. The most distinguishing characteristic of this plant isn't what you can see, it is what you can smell. The leaves smell very much like lemons! This can help you distinguish it from other mints like peppermint and spearmint.

Flower: When allowed to flower (a lot of people pluck off flowers as they begin to bloom to help encourage more leaf growth), the plant produces very small flowers at the top.

The flowers range in color from pale pink to white.

Harvest: The best times to harvest lemon balm range from spring to early fall, as the plant is flourishing. It will often die out in the winter but comes back in the spring.

Edible Parts: The leaves of this plant have a history of edible and medicinal use.

How to Eat: The leaves can be consumed raw or cooked. They are often infused into hot water to make tea as well. The tea is very flavorful and lemony. They can add a dash of citrusy flavor to any dish.

Recipe: Since lemon balm flourishes in the summer months, what better way to use this plant than to make a flavorful and refreshing popsicle? This is the perfect treat for children and adults alike and combines well with lavender, chamomile, and other culinary herbs. Feel free to add different edible plants to this recipe to create something special. In addition to being a tasty and healthy treat, these popsicles can also help calm the body and mind due to the medicinal properties of lemon balm.

Refreshing Lemon Balm Popsicles

You will need:

- 2 cups (500 ml) water
- 2 tbsp. chopped and dried lemon balm leaves
- 2 tbsp. raw honey

Directions:

- In a pot on the stove, heat the water and dried lemon balm leaves until they almost reach the boiling point.
- When the water first begins to boil, remove it from heat and carefully strain out the leaf debris.

- Add the raw honey to the hot infusion and stir it until it is blended well.
- Allow the mixture to cool completely and carefully pour it into popsicle molds.
- Freeze the popsicles for at least 24 hours.
- When they are fully frozen, grab a popsicle and enjoy!



Serving Size:

One serving is ½ cup (120g) of the mixture.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	75
Carbohydrates	10 g
Fat	0 g
Sugar	15 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

There is a toxic member of the mint family called germander that grows native in a lot of areas of North America. Germander has a mint-like appearance and scent, but

the leaves are much more lance-shaped than lemon balm, which has heart-shaped leaves.

In addition, lemon balm has a distinct lemony scent, whereas germander has a faint minty scent. Germander also tends to grow much taller than lemon



balm. Make sure you have positive identification on lemon balm before harvesting for use, as ingesting germander can cause liver failure.

Morel (Morchella esculenta)

Morel Info: Morels can be found throughout North America, as well as parts of Brazil and Bulgaria. They are considered the height of edible mushrooms and are very popular. They have an incredibly delicious, buttery flavor. In most parts of the United States, morel season is in early spring. However, in Canada, morel season may be closer to June. Morels tend to grow around trees, especially sycamore, beech, ash, and oak.

Morel ID: Morels have a distinctive appearance, and are easy to hunt because they only grow at certain times of the year



and do not have any poisonous lookalikes. They look like a sponge on top, with deep holes pitted into the cap. The stem is completely hollow, as is the cap. If the mushroom is not hollow, do not harvest it or eat it. They range in color from white to grey, beige, and black.

Harvest: Morels can be harvested in early spring (around April) in most regions of the United States, and closer to June for northern areas. When harvesting morels, make sure to cut the bottom of the stem off with a sharp knife and store them in a bag with holes to promote spores spreading as you walk.

Edible Parts: Aerial parts are edible.

How to Eat: Almost all mushrooms should be cooked before consumption to negate potentially problematic compounds like Monomethyl hydrazine (MMH).

Most people fry morels, but you can also add them to pizza, omelets, soups, and more. Do not consume any mushrooms (especially morels) with alcohol, as these two can interact negatively in the body and cause gastric distress and/or vomiting. Many people think perfectly safe mushrooms are toxic because they got sick after eating them, but the true reason for their sickness was drinking alcohol with them.

Recipe: Nothing beats the traditional way most people cook morels: a simple recipe is sometimes the most memorable! Below is how most Midwesterners consume morels:

Traditional Fried Morels

You will need:

- 1 pound (450 g) of freshly harvested morel mushrooms, washed gently and halved lengthwise
- 1 cup (240 g) of flour
- 3 eggs (have a few more on hand just in case you run out of the batter)
- salt and pepper to taste
- Enough frying oil (canola, vegetable, peanut, etc.) to fill a skillet about 1/3 of the way

Directions:

- Add the flour to a bowl and set it aside
- Crack the eggs and place them in a separate bowl
- Whisk the eggs until they are well-blended
- Add salt and pepper to the flour bowl and blend it in the flour well
- Heat the oil until it is ready for frying

- Dip each mushroom half in the egg batter first, then in the flour to coat it completely.
- Immediately place the dipped morel into the oil to fry. Turn as needed until each side is a golden-brown color.
- Place fried morels on a plate with a paper towel to soak up any excess oil.
- Serve immediately and enjoy!



Serving Size:

This recipe makes a total of four servings. For nutrition facts, a serving size is ¼ pound.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Carbohydrate	29 g
Fat	5 g
Sodium	20 mg
Dietary fiber	2 g
Vitamin C	3 mg

Nutrient	Amount
Sugar	1 g
Calcium	5 mg
Iron	3 mg
Potassium	33 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:



Mushrooms called “red morels” are often mistaken for true morels. They are not edible, although many people argue this point. These are false morels and have a few distinguishing characteristics from true morels. First, false morels are often a dark, rusty brown or red color. True

morels are typically cream, beige, or grey in color. Second, false morels are not hollow-stemmed, unlike true morels. Ingesting false morels can cause liver damage.

Peppermint (Mentha piperita)

Peppermint Info: One of the most popular culinary and medicinal herbs of all time, peppermint has a great reputation.

Not only is it very easy to grow, many different species of peppermint grow wild throughout the Northern Hemisphere. If you choose to grow this plant, make sure it is in a contained area, as it is notorious for spreading and choking out other plants. The species we know as peppermint today is a hybrid cross between water mint and spearmint.



Leaf: Peppermint leaves are medium to dark green. They have a rough texture due to veining on the leaves. They are ovate and toothed around the edges. The most distinguishing factor for identification purposes is the smell. The leaves smell strongly of peppermint when crushed.

Flower: Flowers grow in tiny clusters at the top of the peppermint plant. They range in color from pale pink to pale violet or white.

Harvest: The best time to harvest peppermint is during the spring and summer months when the leaves are healthy. If you live in a colder climate, peppermint will not be available throughout the winter months, but it will come back in the spring.

Edible Parts: The leaves of the peppermint plant are used for culinary and medicinal purposes.

How to Eat: A little peppermint goes a long way due to the presence of strong oils in the plant that gives it a signature “peppermint” aroma. It can be made into jelly, candy, or added to dishes and drinks for a nice zing.

Recipe: The recipe below will create a tasty and aromatic candy for you to enjoy. You will also have fresher breath after eating this!

Old-Fashioned Peppermint Candy

You will need:

- ½ cup (120 g) raw honey
- ½ cup (120 g) peppermint leaves
- 1 cup (250 ml) water
- 2 tsp. sea salt

Directions:

→ In a small pot on the stove, bring the water and peppermint leaves to a boil. Remove from heat and allow to sit and steep for one minute. Strain out and keep the infused water.

→ Return the infused water to the pan (you might need to rinse it out first if there is any leaf debris inside).

→ Add the honey and sea salt to the infused water. Turn heat to medium and stir continually.



- Gradually increase the heat until the contents of the pot begin to boil. You want to boil off most of the water content in the pot, so allow this to boil and keep stirring.
- As this mixture boils, use a candy thermometer and watch for it to reach 235 degrees F (113°C). When this happens, it is ready to place on a sheet.
- Have parchment paper spread out and ready for this step. When the candy mixture reaches 235 degrees F (113°C), you can take a spoon and carefully pour drops onto the sheet. These drops will harden after sitting a while.
- You can also place the parchment paper in the refrigerator to cool and harden faster.
- When the candy has hardened, you can peel it off the parchment paper and place it in a container for storage.

Tip: Sprinkling a little ground cinnamon or powdered sugar on the candies before placing them in a jar keeps them from sticking together.

Serving Size:

This recipe makes around ½ cup (120g) of candy total. A serving size is 6 pieces.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Fat	0 g
Calories	100

Nutrient	Amount
Sugars	20 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

There is a toxic member of the mint family called germander that grows native in a lot of areas of North America. Germander has a mint-like appearance and scent, but the leaves are much more lance-shaped than peppermint, which has ovate leaves.



In addition, peppermint has a distinct peppermint scent, whereas germander has a faint minty scent. Germander also tends to grow much taller than peppermint. Make sure you have a positive identification on peppermint before harvesting for use, as ingesting germander can cause liver failure.

Persimmon (Diospyros virginiana)

Persimmon Info: Most people are familiar with the Asian persimmon, but are unaware that native persimmon trees are also widespread throughout North America. The persimmons produced by *Diospyros virginiana* are smaller than the Asian variety but taste very much the same. The flavor of persimmons is very reminiscent of sweet potatoes, pumpkin, or sweet squash. If you come upon a grove of persimmon trees, you have hit the jackpot! It isn't hard to find a grove if you live in the lower Midwest, Southern, or Eastern United States.



Leaf: Leaves of this tree are ovate and turn from green to yellow in the fall months. Leaves are arranged alternately and can range in size from four to six inches long.

Flower: Small flowers are not very visible to the naked eye (mostly because they are up in the tree and blotted out by leaves). These fragrant flowers are a favorite of pollinators.

They will eventually turn into persimmons.

Harvest: The best time to harvest persimmons is in mid-fall for most areas. If you harvest the too early, you will know it because they will taste very bitter. They can be so bitter that your tongue will go numb after trying a bite. Wait until they are fully ripe before harvesting the fruit. You will know when to harvest when you

notice that they are falling off the tree. If you give the tree a gentle shake, it will rain down around you. Then you can collect them off the ground.

Edible Parts: The fruit and leaves are edible. However, the fruit is the most popular edible part of the tree. The leaves are mostly used to make tea. The fruit is a pale orange or peach color and doesn't get very big, a little smaller than a half-dollar. It can be very seedy- often full of anywhere from one to eight seeds!

How to Eat: You can eat persimmon fruits raw, which is a very tasty way to enjoy them. However, you can also cook them and make pudding, pies, pastries, and more.

Recipe: The recipe below is for persimmon pudding. It is the perfect fall treat, with notes of cinnamon, nutmeg, and vanilla.

Autumn Persimmon Pudding

What you Need:

- 3 cups (720 g) of ripe persimmons
- ½ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 to 1 ½ cups (250 ml-375 ml) milk (you can use almond, coconut, or oat milk if you want)
- 1/3 cup (80 g) raw maple syrup
- 2 tsp. cornstarch



Directions:

- Remove the seeds from the persimmons. This can be tedious, but try to save as much “meat” from the fruit as you can.
- Use a beater to blend the persimmon meat, milk, maple syrup, vanilla, cinnamon, cornstarch, and nutmeg.
- Add the mixture to a saucepan and gradually heat it to medium heat. Stir continually and allow this to come to a boil.
- Remove the mixture from heat as you notice it thicken. It should coat the back of a spoon when it is ready.
- Transfer this to small pudding bowls and refrigerate it immediately. Serve chilled.

Tip: This is really good with whipped cream topping!

Serving Size:

This recipe makes around three cups. For nutrition facts, one serving is one cup (240g).

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	270
Fat	9 g
Protein	5 g

Nutrient	Amount
Carbohydrates	30 g
Potassium	80 mg
Vitamin C	15 mg
Calcium	10 mg
Vitamin A	2 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Due to the unique appearance of persimmon fruit, there are no known poisonous lookalikes.

Pine (Pinus sp.)

Pine Info: Pine trees can be found all over the world. They are especially common in the Northern Hemisphere.

They have been utilized for centuries for medicinal, edible, and textile purposes. They certainly have a lot to offer! If you live in the Northern Hemisphere, it probably won't take long to find a pine tree if you go for a short walk.

They are easy to spot, as they are evergreens with distinctive leaves (needles), cones, and bark. More identification info is below.



Leaf: The leaves of the pine trees vary slightly among different pine species, but almost every pine will have what is called “needles” instead of leaves. They are long, thin, and green. They are very sturdy compared to other tree leaves. They have a pleasant, pine aroma. Leaves are a good source of vitamins C and A.

Flower: Pine trees really don't produce flowers, but they do produce noticeable cones. These cones start out small and grow into the typical pine cones most people recognize. Pines have male and female cones on the same tree. Male cones are small and yellow. They fall off after releasing their pollen in the spring. Female cones are harder and more like the typical cones most people recognize on pine trees.

Harvest: Harvest pine pollen in the spring when the small cones are full of yellow pollen. You can harvest the leaves at virtually any time of the year, as they stay green year-round. Resin can be harvested at any time as well. Cones are often available throughout the spring and summer months, but only very young cones are

edible or palatable. This means that they may not be palatable if you harvest them any later.

Edible Parts: The very young cones are edible on many pine species. Pine pollen is also edible and used to create several dishes, especially in Asia. Pine leaves are edible and have a history of use in tea.

How to Eat: Very young pine cones can be used to make a flavorful syrup to add to dishes. The leaves can be added to dishes or tea to give them a nice, exhilarating flavor. The pollen can be collected and sprinkled on a variety of dishes for nutrition and health purposes.

Recipe: One of the most flavorful foods you can make with pine involves the very young, green cones.

These create syrup that you can use on pancakes or anything else! It perfectly captures the essence of the forest.

Pine Cone Syrup

You will need:

- Young green pine cones (enough to halfway fill a quart size (950ml) mason jar)
- Golden granulated sugar (enough to halfway fill a quart size (950ml) mason jar)

Directions:

→ Sterilize the mason jar and pour a little sugar into the jar. Place a layer of cones on it. Cover this with more sugar and repeat this process until the jar is full or you run out of ingredients.

→ Leave this in a cool, dark place for three weeks to ferment.

→ The moisture in the cones will combine with the sugar to create a delicious syrup.

→ When the three weeks is up, sieve this into a dry glass jar and refrigerate it.

→ Use this like you would syrup, honey, or sweetener. Pour over pancakes, pour on treats, add to coffee or tea, etc.



Serving Size:

This recipe makes about one quart (950ml), but a serving size is one tablespoon (15ml).

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	130
Fat	0 g
Sugars	20 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Most species of pine are fine to use to make this syrup. However, there are a few to avoid. These include the Norfolk Island Pine, Yew, and Ponderosa Pine. Make sure you are certain of the pine you are using when collecting pine cones for this recipe. The yew produces



Yew

a fruit and is much smaller, almost a shrub. This means it is easy to differentiate from other evergreens. The Norfolk Island Pine is typically only found in semi-tropical locations, so it is not common. The Ponderosa Pine is only found in of Western North America.



Ponderosa Pine



Norfolk Island Pine

Plantain (Plantago major)

Plantain Info: Plantain is a very common plant that can be found in backyards, growing through sidewalk cracks, and along paths the world over. It was originally native to Eurasia, but has since spread all over the world and can be found on nearly every continent. It grows in a basal rosette pattern with ovate leaves growing in a circle around green stalks that reach up to eight inches in height.

Leaf: Leaves are a vibrant green color, with vertical strips going down the length of each leaf. They are thicker in consistency than other



types of leaves, and can produce a small amount of gelatinous substance when mashed up between the fingers. Leaves are almost as wide as they are long, and can average 4-5 inches in height and 3-4 inches in width. Look for oval-shaped leaves that grow in a circle around central stalks.

Flower: *Plantago major* doesn't have flowers, but it does have central stalks that are green in color and emerge from the center of the plant, reaching up to 8 inches in height.

Harvest: The best time to harvest the leaves is when they are young in the spring. However, they can be found and harvested throughout the summer and fall months as well. During mild winters, you may also find plantain. Harvest what you want, dehydrate, and store in an airtight jar for later use if you choose.

Edible Parts: Leaves

How to Eat: Leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. They have also been added to soups to help thicken the consistency.

Recipe: Plantain leaves are a source of vitamin A, vitamin C, B vitamins, and vitamin K. The leaves are also a source of crude fiber, dietary fiber, protein, iron, calcium, chromium, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, selenium, potassium, zinc, and carbohydrates. Try the tasty recipe below to utilize this beneficial plant:

Plantain Leaf Chips

You will need:

- 3 to 4 cups (90 g- 120 g) of plantain leaves
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

→ Preheat your oven to 300 degrees Fahrenheit (150°C)

→ In a large bowl, toss the (rinsed and dried) plantain leaves in the olive oil until they are evenly coated

→ Spread these evenly on a baking sheet

→ Sprinkle sea salt (and cracked pepper if you want) to taste

→ Bake these for 20 minutes, or until they appear crispy. Turn them over after 10 minutes (or halfway through cooking) to ensure crispiness of the final product.



****Keep a close eye on the leaves to prevent them burning. Due to different oven types and other factors, they may cook faster than 20 minutes.**

→ When they are finished baking, remove them from the oven and spread them evenly on a paper towel to cool

Serving Size:

This will make three to four cups (90 g- 120 g) of plantain leaf chips total. They make a great snack for anywhere from one to four people.

Nutrition Facts (for 3-4 cup serving size):

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	250
Fat	27 g
Cholesterol	0
Fiber	3 g
Protein	1.5 g
Carbohydrates	40 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

No poisonous lookalikes. However, since plantain is very common and tends to grow in populated and well-trodden areas, make sure that you only harvest from pollution-free areas that you know have not been sprayed with toxic pesticides, etc.

Purple Deadnettle (Lamium purpureum)

Purple Deadnettle Info: In the spring months, you may notice the landscape looking somewhat purple.

Oftentimes, this is because of purple deadnettle. While this plant is not native to North America, it has become widespread and somewhat invasive in many areas. Purple deadnettle is native to Europe and Asia. This member of the mint family doesn't taste minty at all, but it is edible, widespread, and can be used in a variety of dishes.



Leaf: Leaves are toothed around the edges. They have fine hairs all over them. They often start out green at the bottom and turn dark purple near the top. Leaves grow around a square stem, which is typical of plants in the mint family.

Flower: Flowers are very small and grow near the top of the plant. They are bright purple or pink in color and have a top petal that looks like a hood, with two smaller bottom petals.

Harvest: The best time to harvest this plant is in early spring when it is young and fresh. However, you may find this plant in early summer as well. Just make sure

you harvest from areas you know are not polluted or traversed heavily. Once the weather gets hot, these plants usually disappear.

Edible Parts: All aerial parts are edible on this plant.

How to Eat: This plant can be consumed raw or cooked. Whether you want to toss it in a salad or make a stir fry, the options are unlimited.

Recipe: One of the best ways to enjoy this plentiful plant is by making pesto! See the delicious recipe if you want to make this quick and tasty dish.

Purple Deadnettle Pesto

You will need:

- 4 cups (200 g) of purple deadnettle
- ¼ cup (60 g) blanched silvered almonds, walnuts, or pine nuts
- 3 cloves garlic
- zest of one lemon
- 2/3 cup (160 ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 3 tbsp. grated parmesan cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste



Directions:

- Wash, drain and pat your purple deadnettle dry
- Use a food processor to pulse the garlic and nuts to a rough meal
- Add the purple deadnettle, parmesan, and lemon zest to the processor and pulse until everything is blended well.
- Slowly add the olive oil and process until your desired consistency is reached

→ Add salt and pepper to taste

→ Serve immediately with crackers or your choice of dipping items. Freeze any remainder.

Serving Size:

One serving is one tablespoon.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	92
Fat	9.5 g
Sodium	150 mg
Carbohydrates	1 g
Fiber	1 g
Protein	1.5 g
Calcium	33 mg
Phosphorus	35 mg

Nutrient	Amount
Potassium	31 mg
Magnesium	10 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Henbit looks a lot like purple deadnettle, but don't fret, it is not poisonous. However, they do grow next to each other in the spring and identification can be difficult for those who are new to wild edibles. Henbit is edible and just as nutritious as purple deadnettle, so



feel free to collect both to make pesto if you want. Henbit has completely different leaves than Deadnettle. Henbit's leaves are fan-shaped and attached to the stem all the way around. Leaves seem to circle the stem in segments going up. Henbit's leaves also do not have purple at the top. Both have very similar flowers.

Rosemary (*Salvia Rosmarinus*)

Rosemary Info: Rosemary lends a delicious flavor to all kinds of dishes. It is a very popular culinary herb for this reason. It pairs especially well with meats and potatoes. This herb is easy to grow and native to the Mediterranean region. It doesn't require much water and appreciates well-draining soil. It is an herb that can be found in gardens across the globe.

While it may not be common to find this plant growing in the wild, it is common to find it growing in herb gardens or indoors in pots in just about any location.

Leaf: Leaves are evergreen and can grow up to 1.5 inches long. They are hairy, but the hairs are so small that you probably can't see them with the naked eye. They are soft to the touch. Leaves are highly aromatic and smell herbaceous. Leaves grow from a woody stem.

Flower: In temperate climates where rosemary is grown, flowers can emerge on top of the plant. The small flowers are violet to periwinkle in hue.

Harvest: You can harvest rosemary from spring to fall, and in some climates, you may even be able to harvest rosemary in the winter months. As long as the leaves are green, you can harvest them for culinary use.

Edible Parts: The leaves are the edible part of this plant.



How to Eat: The leaves are excellent when added to dishes with meat, potatoes, carrots, or any vegetable. They have a strong flavor, so a little goes a long way.

Recipe: The recipe blends rosemary and parmesan cheese with potatoes for a roasted and flavorful dish.

Rosemary Roasted Potatoes

You will need:

- 1.5 pounds (680 g) of new potatoes cut into one-inch pieces
- 3 tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1.5 tbsp. chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 tbsp. grated parmesan cheese
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F (225°C) and line a baking sheet with aluminum foil
- Blend the potatoes, olive oil, parmesan cheese, and rosemary in a bowl and add salt and pepper as desired.
- Spread this mixture evenly on the baking sheet
- Bake for 20 minutes and then stir the potatoes. Continue baking for another 20 minutes, or until the potatoes are golden brown.



Serving Size:

This recipe makes four servings. One-quarter of this recipe is one serving.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	234
Fat	11 g
Carbohydrates	34 g
Protein	4 g
Dietary fiber	4 g
Vitamin C	34 mg
Calcium	50 mg
Iron	1 mg
Potassium	723 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Various mountain mints, such as Virginia mountain mint, look like rosemary. The leaves are very similar on both rosemary and mountain mint. While the leaf shape is very similar, the leaf color is different. Rosemary is usually much darker green.

In addition, Virginia mountain mint has white flowers in clusters at the top and rosemary has purple/blue flowers.

Also, rosemary has a much more herbaceous aroma compared to Virginia mountain mint which smells minty. The good news is that Virginia Mountain mint is also not toxic.



Stinging Nettle (Urtica dioica)

Stinging Nettle Info: Don't let the stinging hairs dissuade you from harvesting this beneficial edible and medicinal plant. Bring a pair of gloves with you as you forage so you can harvest stinging nettle safely.

The leaves of this plant are nature's vitamin. They are filled with a variety of vitamins and minerals to support overall health and nutrition. Stinging nettle is native to Europe, parts of northern and western Africa, and most of temperate Asia. However, today it has spread throughout most of the world and can be found in North America as well. It prefers ditches, fields, the wood's edge, and meadows but can be found in a variety of conditions due to its resilience.

Leaf: Leaves are covered in tiny hairs that can sting if they come into contact with your bare skin. They are somewhat heart-shaped, with pointed ends.

Leaves are also toothed around the edges. Coming into contact with the leaves may also cause allergic reactions for some people that result in hives. Use caution when you are around these plants. Wear long sleeves and gloves when you are harvesting them.

Flower: Tiny green flowers can emerge and hang in inflorescences at each leaf segment. Female flowers can be green to white in color and male flowers can be yellow or purple in color.



Harvest: The best time to harvest stinging nettle is in the spring and summer months. If you harvest it in the spring, the leaves will be mild and tender. If you harvest them in late summer, they may have a more bitter taste.

Edible Parts: The leaves of the stinging nettle plant are edible if prepared properly.

How to Eat: It is possible to eat the leaves of the stinging nettle plant if you diffuse the stinging hairs on them. This is really easy to do. Even harvesting the leaves and dehydrating them diffuses the hairs and renders the leaf safe. Cooking the leaves also diffuses the hairs, so you can add these to omelets, soups, stir fry, or steam them.

Recipe: A hearty and nutritious soup made with stinging nettle can help to nourish the body and mind while also providing additional energy and health!

Hearty Stinging Nettle Soup

You will need:

- 4 cups (960 g) of stinging nettle leaves, blanched, shocked, and drained
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 2 leeks, sliced and soaked to remove dirt and sand
- 2 large russet potatoes
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 1-quart (950 ml) chicken or vegetable stock
- ¼ tsp. fresh ground nutmeg
- Zest from one lemon
- Juice of one lemon

- 2 cups (500 ml) heavy whipping cream
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

→ Mince the garlic and set it aside. Slice the leeks and divide the rings. Soak the leeks in cold water and then drain. Peel and chop the potatoes.

→ In a stock pot, bring water to boil and place the nettle in for 30 seconds. Transfer the leaves to ice water and drain.

→ In a large stockpot over medium heat, add the leeks, butter, and garlic. Sauté this until it is soft.

→ Add the stock and potatoes and let this simmer until the potatoes are tender.

→ Add the nutmeg, nettle, lemon juice, and lemon zest to this and simmer.

→ Remove from heat and use an immersion blender (or regular blender in small batches) to puree the soup until it is smooth. Then stir in the heavy cream, salt, and pepper.

→ Ladle into bowls to serve.



Tip: an excellent way to garnish this flavorful and nutritious soup is by adding a dollop of sour cream, crème fraiche, or a freshly grated and aged cheese.

Serving Size:

This recipe makes five servings. One serving is around one cup (250 ml).

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	120
Fat	6 g
Carbohydrates	20 g
Protein	5 g
Dietary fiber	5 g
Vitamin C	35 mg
Calcium	180 mg
Iron	4 mg
Potassium	400 mg

Poisonous Lookalikes:

False nettle looks a lot like stinging nettle with one notable difference: false nettle does not have stinging hairs. Canadian wood nettle also looks like stinging nettle, but its leaves are bigger and broader. They do not have stinging hairs like stinging

nettle either. The stem has stinging hairs and they are visible if you look closely. Canadian wood nettle also has leaves that grow alternately unlike stinging nettle, which has leaves arranged opposite. While these plants may look like stinging nettle, they are not poisonous or harmful.

Thyme (Thymus vulgaris)

Thyme Info: Thyme is a popular culinary herb for a reason. This powerful herb packs a punch of flavor that can enliven any dish. Thyme contains strong compounds like thymol that give it such a strong, herbaceous taste. Thyme is native to the Mediterranean region, but its popularity as a culinary herb has spread around the world over the centuries. For this reason, it can be found on nearly every continent and is often grown in herb gardens. It is hearty and grows easily in most soils. It can be grown in containers easily as well.

Leaf: Thyme leaves are very small. They are ovate and clustered around the stem. Thyme leaves are also strongly aromatic and have a very herbaceous scent.

Flower: Flowers are very small, just like the leaves. They emerge from the top of the plant and are often white in color.

Harvest: You can harvest thyme from spring to fall, and even throughout the winter months in warmer climates. As long as the leaves are fresh and green, you can harvest them.

Edible Parts: The leaves of this plant are edible.

How to Eat: Thyme makes a lovely addition to a large variety of recipes. It is often used as a culinary herb.

It can be harvested, dried, and then added to dishes. You can also use fresh leaves if you wish.



Recipe: You can greatly enhance the flavor of your carrots by roasting them with thyme leaves. Below is a delicious recipe for thyme-roasted carrots.

Thyme-Roasted Carrots

You will need:

- 3 pounds (1.4 kg) of carrots, halved lengthwise
- 2 tbsp. fresh thyme or 2 tsp dried thyme
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. raw honey
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 400 degrees F (205°C)
- Divide the carrots between two greased 15x10x1 inch (38x26x3 cm) baking pans
- In a small bowl, blend the thyme, oil, honey, and salt. Brush this over the carrots.
- Roast in the oven for 20-25 minutes, or until the carrots are tender.



Serving Size:

This recipe makes 12 servings. One serving is two carrot halves.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	73
Fat	3 g
Sodium	275 mg
Carbohydrate	12 g
Protein	1 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

There are no clear poisonous lookalikes for thyme.

Most of the plants that somewhat resemble thyme are also culinary herbs that are safe to eat. For example, oregano looks like thyme a little, but its leaves are bigger. They both have a strongly herbaceous scent as well.

Violet (Viola sp.)

Violet Info: In early spring, violet flowers begin making their appearance throughout the northern hemisphere. Their inviting purple flowers make a welcome addition to a spring landscape and are considered a harbinger of spring in many regions. Violets have been revered for centuries for their beauty, as well as their edible and medicinal uses. They are abundant in yards, fields, and disturbed ground from spring to summer. During the summer months, they often lose their flowers, but the leaves still thrive until fall.



Leaf: Leaves are heart-shaped and medium to dark green. They are often slightly toothed around the edges. They range in size from one to five inches long.

Flower: Most viola species have purple flowers. However, there are a few species that are white or yellow. These species are not edible, as they likely contain high amounts of saponins. Violet flowers hang from a stem that bends at the top. They have five petals, with four upswept and one hanging on the bottom.

Harvest: Harvest violet flowers in the spring when they are blooming. You may get lucky enough to find a few violet flowers in early summer, depending on the region you live. Harvest violet leaves from spring to fall, as they still appear healthy and green.

Edible Parts: Both the flowers and leaves of the violet are edible. Both are good sources of vitamins A and C.

Do not eat the roots of violet plants, as they are not edible and may cause stomach upset.

How to Eat: The flowers make a beautiful garnish, or you can add them to stir fry, salad, etc. They look lovely atop pastries, pies, and cakes as well.

The leaves are helpful.

They have been used for centuries to thicken soups and stews thanks to their mucilage properties. You can also add the leaves and flowers to hot water to make a nourishing tea.

Recipe: Make a colorful and flavorful wild violet syrup that is sure to delight your friends with this traditional recipe below!

Wild Violet Syrup

You will need:

- 1 cup (240 g) of violet flowers
- 1 cup (250 ml) of water
- 1 cup (240 g) of sugar (organic cane sugar preferred)
- 1 to 3 tsp. lemon juice (optional)

Directions:

- In a small pot, bring the cup of water to a boil
- Pour the water over the violet petals (make sure they are sitting in a glass mason jar) and then cover the jar. Allow this to sit at room temperature for up to 24 hours. This will turn the water a lovely lavender color.
- Strain out the jar and heat the violet-infused water in a small pot.

→ Add the sugar and cook this until the sugar is dissolved and it takes on a thicker, syrupy consistency.

→ Remove from heat and add a small amount of lemon juice if you want. You will notice the color becomes more vibrant due to a chemical reaction. This is how people achieve a vibrant purple when making violet jelly or syrup. Stir this well.



→ Carefully transfer your violet syrup to glass jars. Label these and store them in the refrigerator for up to six months.

Serving Size:

This recipe makes around one to 1.5 cups (250ml-375ml) of syrup.

One serving size is one tablespoon.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	90
Fat	10 g
Carbohydrates	20 g
Sugar	18 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Do not confuse violet with monkshood flowers.

They are both purple. However, monkshood flowers look very different because they have a “hood” on top of the flower that gives the plant its name.

Monkshood is very toxic. Double-check the flowers, leaves, and stem of each plant you harvest and cross-reference your findings to make sure you are being safe and avoiding toxic plants.



Wild Ginger (*Asarum sp.*)

Wild Ginger Info: When people hear about wild ginger, they assume that it is related to common ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), but this is not the case. These two plants look nothing alike and are not related. Multiple species of wild ginger can be found throughout North America, Europe, and Asia. These plants love rich woodlands and can be found spreading rapidly and covering large areas from March to June. They spread fast due to rhizomes that can be found just below the surface of the soil.

Leaf: Leaves are distinctly heart-shaped and often have a smooth surface due to the presence of tiny hairs.

The stems are also hairy on most species. Some leaves have a translucent surface when the sun hits them right. They are vibrant green color and can grow up to five inches long and wide.



Flower: The three-petaled flowers of wild ginger plants are very distinctive. They have a unique, burgundy hue. Flowers are not obvious when looking at the plant, as the leaves are often hiding them. When you move the leaves aside and look at the base of the plant, you will see them.

Harvest: Harvest the roots when you find the plant, whether it is in spring or summer. By fall, the leaves may not be noticeable anymore, so the plant will be hard to find. Dig up as many rhizomes as you want. You are not likely to harm the plant's population in most areas.

Edible Parts: The rhizomes (runners that can be found just beneath the soil) are edible on wild ginger and have a taste very similar to common ginger. They are mildly spicy and strangely sweet. Early North American settlers used wild ginger in recipes that called for ginger.

How to Eat: The best way to enjoy wild ginger is as a spice. It has a strong and unique flavor that can be very interesting and enliven a dish. It would work great in Asian dishes or any dish that calls for common ginger. Eat wild ginger in moderation.

Recipe: Do you always seem to be out of ginger when you reach for it in your spice cabinet? The recipe below will walk you through how to make your own spice with wild ginger.

You can add this handy spice to any dish to give it a gentle kick.

Wild Ginger All-Purpose Seasoning

You will need:

- One cup (240 g) of wild ginger rhizomes, rinsed and chopped

Directions:

→ After washing and chopping your wild ginger rhizomes, place them in a dehydrator.

→ Dehydrate your rhizomes until they are crispy, but not overcooked. Do not let them get dark brown.

→ Place the dehydrated wild ginger parts in a food processor or good blender and allow this to chop them into very small pieces. The smaller you can get the pieces, the better.

- You can also use an old-fashioned mortar and pestle if you want to make your spice more of a powder consistency.
- Place your wild ginger spice in a jar with holes at the top to make it easier to add to dishes.
- Shake this on salads, into soups, or any dish to give it a spicy and sweet kick.



Serving Size:

This makes about ½ cup (120g) of spice total, but one serving is one teaspoon.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	10
Fat	0 g
Carbohydrates	0 g
Sugars	0 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Some people claim that wild ginger is toxic.

It actually is toxic, but the issue is that people are basing this off of a study done with rats. To achieve the toxicity the rats experienced in the study, you would need to consume over *four pounds* of wild ginger *every day for up to a year*. Obviously, this would be hard to do for just about anyone on earth, so just eat wild ginger as a spice in moderation and you will be just fine. As with many plants (and medicines), the poison is in the dose.

Wild Lettuce (Lactuca sp.)

Wild Lettuce Info: Wild lettuce is extremely common in many areas of North America and Europe, as well as Australia. It is considered a “weed” by many. It grows prolifically in many areas and spreads fast. It can be found growing in gravel, on driveways, roadsides, ditches, fields, and meadows.

It is certainly not picky about where it chooses to grow. It is a close relative to common lettuce. Some species of wild lettuce have a white sap that is used medicinally for pain. Claims of this plant being similar to opium are grossly overexaggerated at best.

Leaf: Leaves are slightly lobed and rounded at the tip. They are unevenly toothed around the edge. Some species can have prickles on the bottom of the leaves, but they are usually not sharp enough to cause injury.

Flower: Flowers emerge from the top of the plant when it has shot up to its full height. They are small and yellow.

Harvest: The best time to harvest wild lettuce for consumption is when it is young and tender, so spring is your best bet to find this plant and enjoy it.

Edible Parts: The young leaves are edible.

How to Eat: Young wild lettuce leaves can be eaten raw or cooked.

Recipe: Enjoy wild lettuce leaves in a spring salad medley with the recipe below. Feel free to add other wild greens and flowers to this salad to give it color and flavor. Some examples include violet flowers, redbud flowers, purple deadnettle greens,

chickweed, dandelion greens and flowers, lamb's quarters, and young curly dock greens.

Fresh Wild Lettuce Spring Salad

You will need:

- 1 cup (240 g) of young wild lettuce greens
- 1 cup (240 g) fresh greens (spinach or kale works perfectly, but you can use whatever you want)
- 1/3 cup (80 g) fresh sliced strawberries
- 2 tbsp. crumbled feta cheese
- 2 tbsp. crumbled pecans
- For the dressing, combine 1 Tbsp each of olive oil and vinegar
- Sea salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

- In a bowl, combine the wild lettuce greens with the other greens and blend them well.
- Blend the olive oil and vinegar in a small bottle and pour this on the greens. Toss the salad.
- Sprinkle with strawberries, feta, and pecans. Add sea salt and pepper to taste and enjoy.



Serving Size:

This recipe makes one serving of spring salad, which comes to around 2 cups (480g) of salad.

Nutrition Facts:

Nutrient	Amount
Calories	190
Protein	5 g
Fat	9 g
Carbohydrates	22 g
Vitamin C	10 mg
Vitamin A	5 mg
Potassium	5 mg
Iron	1 g

Poisonous Lookalikes:

Some species of wild lettuce have prickles, making them unsuitable for use in a raw salad like the one mentioned above. One example is *Lactuca virosa* and *Lactuca serriola*. The young leaves are edible if cooked. Use caution when harvesting wild lettuce if it has prickly spines on the bottom of the leaves. Avoid mistaking other prickly plants (such as thistles) for wild lettuce.



Lactuca virosa



Lactuca serriola