

WILD EDIBLES

TREES: Inner bark of most trees is edible, and in emergencies has kept many people from starving.

Birch: Drink the sap as it comes from the tree in the Spring; tea made from the inner bark or the roots; “wintergreen flavoring” distilled from bark and twigs of the black birch.

Maple: Seeds, sugar rich young leaves, and the sap, which is boiled down for maple syrup

Pines: Inner bark, raw or cooked, dried and ground to mix with flour. New pine needles, raw; young cones can be ground and used to flavor meat sauces. Gum, or sugary sap, can be candied.

Poplar: Sweetish, starchy sap layer is edible both raw and cooked. Dried and powdered, it is a flour additive and substitute.

GREENS:

Burdock: 1st year root, peeled and sliced, simmered for 20 minutes in water with ¼ tsp. baking soda. Drain, recover with water and simmer until tender. Young leaves can be boiled in two waters and served as greens. Flower stalks, with bitter, green skin peeled away, sliced into discs and cooked like potatoes.

Cattail: Roots are delicious raw, baked, roasted or briefly boiled. Young shoots taste like cucumber. When stalk is older, peel, cut in chunks and boil in salted water until tender, or use in stir-fry. Greenish-yellow flower spikes can be husked like corn, dropped in boiling, salted water, and simmered until tender, or steamed and eat like corn. When flower spikes are golden with pollen, rub or shake the pollen into a container, and use as a flour or add to flour. (especially good in pancakes!)

Clover: Good both raw and cooked or steamed. Can be dried for storage. This includes blossoms, leaves, and stalks of all clovers. Blossoms make an excellent tea.

Dandelion: Roots—scrape and slice, then boil in salted water; roast in oven until nut-brown all the way through, then grind and use as coffee substitute or extender. Leaves—young, used raw in salads, or cooked as a green. Old—cooked in at least two changes of water, served with butter. Buds are delicious sauteed in butter; blossoms can be fried, especially after

Dock: (Curly Dock) Greens—boiled, steamed or just wilted, and served with butter, like spinach. Has a lemony flavor. Leaves can also be dried and used as a tea or tea-extender. Young stems, sectioned and eand boiled in salted water until tender, resembles asparagus.

Fiddlehead Ferns or Pasturebreak: While still in the curled stage, they are edible both raw and cooked. Do not eat too many raw, because of the enzyme thiaminase which attacks Vit. B-1 in the body when sufficient quantities are eaten. This is destroyed by cooking. Great steamed, sauteed in butter, or stir-fried.

Lamb’s Quarter: Entire young plant, or mature leaves, can be cooked as wild spinach. The seed can be ground into a dark meal and used with flour, or boiled until sot and eaten as a cereal.

Milkweed: Tender young sprouts, up to about 8”, are cooked like asparagus. Afterwards, young leaves can be boiled for greens. Flower **buds**, unopened, can be steamed and served with

butter, and the young pods, up to about 1 ½” long, are excellent sauteed in butter or steamed. To remove bitter taste, cover with boiling water, return to boiling, and strain. May have to do this more than once, depending on the bitterness.

Plantain: Rich in Vitamins A and C and in many of the minerals, it is eaten raw in salads, etc. when picked early enough. Cook it like spinach when more mature, or use as a tea (the tea can have a laxative effect).

Raspberry and Blackberry: Extremely rich in Vitamin C, the fruits are made into pies, jams and jellies, or made into fruit leather and syrups. The young peeled sprouts and twigs are also nutritious. The leaves are used for tea, but can have a laxative effect.

Salsify: Tops and leaves can be used in salads or cooked a greens. It’s the root that gives it the name “oyster root.” The roots need to be harvested when tender, scrubbed and scraped, keeping them in a little vinegar water until all are cleaned. Simmer until slightly soft, and serve with butter, etc.

Sheep Sorrel: Use raw alone or in salads, or brew as a tea. Rich in vitamin C.

Shepard’s Purse: The leaves can be used in a salad in the Spring, or cooked like spinach when older. The leaves can also be used as a tea, dried or fresh. The capsules can be dried and used in soups—adds a peppery flavor.

Strawberry: Use as you would the domestic varieties. The leaves make a tasty tea, the blossoms can be candied to decorate cakes, and the stems and stalks area also tasty.

Sumac: The berries make a delicious lemonade. Pick over 1-2 cups, mash slightly in a pan, and cover with boiling water. Steep over night. Strain through two thicknesses of cheese cloth, sweeten to taste, and serve hot or cold. Rich in vitamins A and C.

Sweet Fern: The dried, aromatic leaves make a delicious tea—1 tsp. per cup of boiling water.

Thimbleberry: These berries make delicious jams, jellies, and pies. The young, green stems can be peeled and eaten raw or cooked.

Thistle: Roots can be eaten raw or cooked, or pickled. Flowerless young stems can be peeled and eaten raw or cooked. Leaves can be cooked and eaten or made into a tea. Flowerbuds and flowerheads can be cooked and eaten like artichokes. The seed can be toasted and ground into meal, used as a cereal substitute, or used like sesame seeds when baking.

Wintergreen: Leaves, shredded, make a delicious tea. The berries are delicious and sustaining when eaten raw; they should be crushed when added to pies or for making sauces.

Wild Onions or Leeks: Don’t confuse with false hellabore or death camas! If it doesn’t smell like onion, don’t eat it! Can be eaten raw or cooked, as you would onions.

REMEMBER: The cardinal rule when foraging for wild edibles is if you *don’t know* what it is, **DON’T EAT IT!!!**