



NATURAL SOLUTIONS

Clinical Kinesiology, Acupuncture, & (w)Holistic Healthcare

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Edible Wild “Weeds”

Did you know that your garden is hiding all sorts of nutritional and medicinal gems?

From treating heartburn, cystitis and coughs to providing free protein, vitamins and minerals, common weeds have some truly amazing benefits. Sadly, most people simply dig them up, mow them down or kill them in various ways.

Embrace the wild and eat your garden weeds. While some foraged weeds can be an acquired taste, you may be surprised at how tasty the wild plants in your backyard really are. They also have a surprising amount of nutritional and health benefits, and the best part is that they're totally free!



<https://www.ediblemanhattan.com/>

Part of the resistance to eating plants that we believe to be weeds, in my opinion, is that we are conditioned to only consider the items we find in the grocery store as food, and not things that the rest of the neighborhood sees as unwelcome invaders in lawns and gardens. And unless we've been exposed to eating plants that are seen as common garden weeds, and had them prepared for us, we're probably not likely to try to eat them on our own. Once in a while, we might come across dandelion greens or purslane for sale in the produce section of the grocery store, or the farmers market, but for the most part, many common edible garden weeds aren't available anywhere else except for our lawns or garden beds. And that's a shame.

A caution before you start eating the weeds from your garden:

MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE EATING.

Not all weeds are edible, and some weeds (flowers and plants as well, for that matter) are highly toxic. Never eat any plant from your garden without first knowing that it is edible and whether it is toxic or not. Also note that, just like fruit and vegetable plants, not all parts of edible weeds are edible. Only eat the parts of edible weeds that you are certain to be safe to eat.

Here, then, are two-dozen edible, wild, delicious, healthy, and sometimes surprising, plants hiding in plain sight – maybe even in your own back yard.



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1. Burdock Root



What if I told you that a certain plant's roots could detoxify your blood, [lymphatic system](#) and skin? Would you be interested? Then you should know about burdock root.

Burdock root has been valued across continents for thousands of years for its ability to purify blood and cool internal heat. Internally and externally, it has potent anti-inflammatory and antibacterial effects on the human body. Recent studies also show that burdock contains phenolic acids, [quercetin](#) and luteolin, which are all powerful, health-promoting antioxidants and potent inhibitory effects on the growth of tumors. (1)

Similar to [dandelion tea](#), you can make burdock root tea, and it can also be found in supplement form or be eaten as a vegetable. What does it taste like? Burdock has a pleasantly crunchy texture and an earthy, sweet flavor that's similar to [lotus root](#) or [celeriac](#).

Burdock promotes blood circulation to the skin surface, improving the skin quality/texture and curing skin diseases like eczema. In the leaf extract, the active compounds isolated can inhibit the growth of micro-organisms in the oral cavity. The medicinal uses of burdock in treating chronic diseases such as cancers, diabetes and AIDS have been reported. (2)



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2. Chickweed (*Stellaria media*)



This garden weed is a [great source](#) of vitamins A, D and C, as well as iron, calcium, potassium, phosphorus and zinc! Chickweed has a delicate flavor, much like spinach, and works well when freshly picked and added to sandwiches and salads. If you don't like the taste, you can still reap the benefits by hiding it in soups and stews.

Medicinally, chickweed [can be used](#) as a topical treatment for minor cuts, burns, eczema and rashes. Dried chickweed is a useful herbal tea. It is also a mild diuretic and is said to relieve cystitis and irritable bladder symptoms.

Why Not Try: these delicious looking [Chickweed Pakoras](#)?



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3. Chicory (*Cichorium intybus*)



<https://www.growingupherbal.com/forage-for-chicory/>

This light blue flower lives as a wild roadside plant. Despite its somewhat bitter taste, chicory leaves are commonly consumed in certain parts of Europe, including Italy and Greece.

Try boiling the leaves first before sautéing or adding to dishes as that will remove some of the bitterness. Roots can be baked, ground, and added to coffee or even used on their own as a coffee substitute.

Chicory is well known for its toxicity to internal parasites and can also be [used as a tonic](#) to stimulate appetite, act as a diuretic, cure an upset stomach and help with constipation. It's believed to protect the liver and help with gallbladder disorders.

Why Not Try: this authentic Italian side dish, [White Beans with Chicory](#)?



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4. Clover



<http://www.eattheweeds.com/clover-available-around-the-world-2/>

How many times have you spotted clover and thought that if you looked hard and long enough you would find one with four leaves? Clover is a common weed we encounter almost every day. While you may be searching for the lucky clover, those three leafed ones are more than luck, they're edible.

In reference to the blossoms, don't select brown ones. You want young and fresh whether white or pink or red though white clover is the better tasting of them all. Besides a tea you can pan roast the blossoms until nice and crispy. The leaves are another matter. Only the young ones are digestible raw in small amounts, half a cup or so.

It is high in protein, has beta carotene, vitamin C, most of the B vitamins, biotin, choline, inositol, and bioflavonoids.

Clover does come with some words of warning, however: One is that quite a few people are allergic to it and don't know it, so go easy at first until you know one way or the other. Secondly, NEVER did you see that word? NEVER ferment and then eat any part of it. You want your clover either completely fresh or completely dried, never in-between.



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5. Creeping Charlie



<http://www.ediblewildfood.com/creeping-charlie.aspx>

Also called Ground Ivy, Creeping Charlie is easily identified by its growth habit. This plant grows close to the ground and usually forms a mat-like ground cover. The long stems have nodes where the leaves grow and these nodes will form roots if they come in contact with the soil. The kidney-shaped leaves tend to be shiny green and have scalloped edges. Creeping Charlie is well-noted for its rapid growth after the plant stops flowering. Being in the mint family the stem is square.

Young leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. The leaves have a mild mint-like flavor and can be tossed into salads to add a slight aromatic tang. Creeping Charlie leaves can also be cooked like spinach, added to soups, stews, or omelets. Tea is made from the fresh or dried leaves. It is often used mixed with verbena leaves or lovage. This wild edible has been added to beer in much the same way as hops in order to clear it and also to improve its flavor.



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6. Curly Dock



<http://foragedfoodie.blogspot.com/2017/02/identifying-curly-dock.html>

Curly Dock root is used to tonify the gall bladder and the liver. It is a bitter tonic, astringent, gentle laxative, and alterative. Also called yellow dock, the yellow root helps to increase bile production which is also yellow in color. Increasing bile production helps the body in the detoxification of the entire system, the blood, and is also important for processing, rather than storing fat and other wastes. In TCM (traditional Chinese Medicine) yellow is associated with the stomach and spleen and this shows connection to yellow dock being indicated for strengthening digestive power.

The nutritional value of these plants is quite high. Docks are high in vitamin C, vitamin A, protein, and iron. The greens are known to have approximately 4 times more vitamin A than carrots. The human body converts carotene into vitamin A, this actually increases night vision.

A common way of working with the medicinal aspects of curly dock root is to make a simple infused wine. You can take the fresh root and put it inside one of your favorite bottles of wine. Re-cork it and allow it to stay for a few days, then you have a curly dock root infused wine which increases the medicinal capacity of your wine. If you want a stronger medicine you can use your favorite organic alcohol and let it steep for a month.



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7. Daisies



<http://www.edenproject.com/learn/for-everyone/edible-wild-food-ox-eye-daisies>

Known commonly as ox eye daisy or dog daisy, this tall grassland flower native to Europe has edible flowers and flower buds. Its botanical name, *Leucanthemum vulgare*, derives from the ancient Greek words *leucos* – meaning white – and *anthos*, meaning flower. It thrives on verges, hedgerows and in meadows, and blooms from late spring through to autumn.

Not just for making daisy chains, the greens and petals of this common garden flower can be eaten either raw or cooked. The flowers are tasty eaten raw and added to salads or desserts. The flower buds can be pickled like capers and the flowers can be tempura battered. These taste a bit like pineapple sweets!

Daisies have been brewed into a tea and used in [traditional Austrian medicine](#) for gastrointestinal and respiratory tract disorders. They also have anti-inflammatory properties.

Impress dinner guests with tempura battered ox eye daisies or add an exciting ingredient to your fridge by pickling the flowers.

Why Not Try: [Sautéed Daisy Greens](#) With Roasted Baby Beetroots?



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8. Dandelion (Taraxacum)



Probably the most well-known of all weeds, the humble dandelion is actually [bursting with vitamins](#) A, B, C, and D, as well as minerals such as iron, potassium, and zinc. The great news is that there's probably a ton of this nutritious weed in your backyard.

Dandelion has been used throughout history [to treat](#) everything from liver problems and kidney disease to heartburn and appendicitis. Today, it is mainly used as a diuretic, appetite stimulant and for cleansing the liver and the gallbladder.

Every part of this common weed is edible, from the roots to the blossoms. Use the leaves in sandwiches and stir fries – they boast [more beta carotene](#) than carrots, meaning they are great for [healthy eyes](#)! Roots can be made into a herbal tea, or roasted and ground as a coffee substitute. The sweet flower heads will add color to salads and can be used to make wines.

As a part of your spring cleanse, use fresh dandelion greens in your salad, or steam them with kale or Swiss chard as a side dish.

Why Not Try: this [Creamy Quesadilla Recipe](#) with your Dandelion Greens?



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9. Elderflowers (*Sambucus nigra*)



The truly versatile Elder is not exactly a weed but is quite a common wild bush, especially around rivers and lakes. The flowers can be collected in spring to make elderflower cordial, soda or [champagne](#). With a refreshing, mild taste, they're great when paired with apple or pear. Dry the flowers in bunches to make a tea.

Once the flowers on the tree die off, the green berries can be picked (before they ripen) and pickled to make elderberry capers. Make sure to leave some, as the ripened berries make a delicious [balsamic vinegar](#). They are tasty alone or mixed with blueberries or raspberries.

The leaves, flowers, fruits, and root extracts [are used](#) by herbalists to treat bronchitis, cough, colds, flu and fever. Studies have [shown](#) that the wild plant is effective in treating influenza.

Why Not Try: a classic [Elderflower Cordial](#)?



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10. Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)



<http://foragedfoodie.blogspot.com/2013/05/why-you-should-forage-eat-garlic.html>

Part of the mustard family, this particular plant brings with it a lot of great health benefits: aside from being a [good source](#) of vitamin A and C, Garlic Mustard is popular as a diuretic, helps with weight maintenance, improves heart health, lowers cholesterol and strengthens the immune system. It is used to flavor salt fish, but it's also really flavorsome when mixed with mashed potatoes, soups or salads.

The leaves of the first year plants are low to the ground, darker green, and have a distinctive outline: a deeply scalloped fan or kidney-shape. Though they are more bitter than the leaves of flowering plants, they have the advantage of being available year-round (under the snow in most parts of the US).

The root, which can also be eaten all 4 seasons, if the ground isn't frozen, has a pungent, horseradish-y flavor, especially when mixed with apple cider vinegar (similar to commercial horseradish).

The stems of the second-year plant can be eaten in early to mid-spring, before the plant flowers, and while the stem is still pliable. Professional forager Sam Thayer says it is the best part of the plant, and can be used as you would asparagus (though of course, the flavor is different).

The leaves of the flowering, second-year plants are my favorite part, despite being downplayed in the foraging world. Again, where the plants are harvested makes a huge difference: get your garlic mustard from the shade, unless you're a big fan of very bitter tastes. These leaves can be quite large (up to 5-6" across at the end of summer), making them easy to gather.

Why Not Try: [a Garlic Mustard Pesto or Mayonnaise?](#)



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11. Japanese Knotweed



<https://www.gardenista.com/posts/weeds-you-can-eat-japanese-knotweed-hummus/>

Curse of governments, homeowners, gardeners, farmers, developers, railway companies, airports, and Olympic planning committees. It is a crime to plant it in England. You may not sell your property there if Japanese knotweed grows on it. Stateside, Japanese knotweed is on many states' noxious weeds list. It promotes soil erosion. It chokes stream- and riverbanks. Japanese knotweed shoots can crack asphalt and concrete. So do yourself and everyone around you a favor; dig 'em up and eat 'em!

Japanese knotweed tastes good, if you like tart flavors such as lemon, sorrel, and rhubarb. The choice edible part of Japanese knotweed is its young shoot, which resembles an asparagus spear. The stoutest shoots are the most tender and juicy. Skinny ones tend to be fibrous. These tart stems are stuffed with resveratrol, the antioxidant polyphenol touted for its anti-inflammatory effect.

Cooked, the stalks are mellow and soft, and reminiscent of sorrel. They work well with anything creamily bland, from dairy cream to coconut milk and eggs. Japanese knotweed is delicious in curries, in a cream-and-mustard sauce for various dishes, in risotto, slow-cooked in stews with the last of the winter root vegetables, whipped into mashed potatoes, roasted with baby whole potatoes, and puréed into leek and potato soups.



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12. Lamb's Quarters (*Chenopodium album*)



<http://livetheoldway.com/lambs-quarters-foraging-for-spring-greens/>

This rapidly growing summer weed produces black seeds which [are related](#) to the protein-rich superfood quinoa. Much like their cousin, the seeds of lamb's quarters are a great source of protein, along with providing vitamin A, calcium, phosphorus, and potassium. Harvesting these seeds does take a little dedication though!

The usual recommendation for harvesting and eating Lamb's Quarter is to do it before it starts to put out its clustered spikes of flowers in early summer. Taste and tenderness is at its best when it's young. Look for the unmistakable "goosefoot" shape of its leaves that also gives the plant that nickname, and the powdery coating on the back of the young, new leaves.

You can usually find Lamb's Quarters sprouting up where you've previously planted flowers or vegetables, and in any other place where the ground has been disturbed. They have a lovely mild taste and can be prepared just like you would any other leafy green; cooked in soup and stews, sautéed or steamed or even used in place of spinach in a dip. If you find yourself with a ton of them, consider canning some. They preserve very well that way.

If that seems like too much work, don't worry – you can also enjoy the young shoots and leaves of the plant. Whether raw or sautéed, they make a great replacement for spinach and are [just as nutritious](#).

Medicinally, a tea made from the leaves is [said to help with](#) digestion issues and stomach aches.

Why Not Try: waking up to a [Lamb's Quarters Breakfast Ramekin](#)? (Even tastier when using [eggs from your own backyard!](#))



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13. Little Bittercress or Shotweed



<http://the3foragers.blogspot.com/2012/03/hairy-bittercress.html>

Bittercress is known by other common names like pepperweed, snapweed, and land cress. It is in the mustard family, and has the same peppery, bitter flavor as other mustards.

It is best to gather the greens very early in the spring, or in the late fall when the leaves are tender. The many leaf stalks grow from a basal rosette, can reach about 4" long, and are sparsely hairy. Each leaf stalk has 5-9 paired leaflets, and the largest unpaired leaflet is at the tip of the stalk. The seed capsules are small, about 1/2"-1" long, and olive green. While the flowers and flower stalks are edible, they may seem a bit tough compared to the more tender leaf stalks and leaflets.

The Iroquois used it as food, raw, with salt or cooked. It was also used as a medicine. They mashed the roots and used them to treat headaches, colds, to encourage the appetite, for heart problems and injuries.

Wash the greens and pick through them, discarding the yellow leaves and pinching off some of the larger stems and flower stalks. They add a peppery bite to raw salads, and can be cooked with soups. Try some potatoes cooked with bittercress and field onions into a breakfast hash. Or grind up the roots and mix with vinegar and salt to make a horseradish kind of sauce.



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14. Mallow (Common Malva)



<http://www.ediblewildfood.com/mallow.aspx>

The common mallow is part of the large family of Malvaceae plants that include cotton, okra and hibiscus. It is an anti-inflammatory, diuretic, demulcent, emollient, laxative and an expectorant.

Unlike its name suggests, the flavor of this plant is nothing like marshmallow. Tea made from common mallow root forms a gelatinous mixture, which is [soothing](#) for the digestive and genitourinary tracts.

All parts of this plant are edible. The leaves can be added to a salad, the fruit can be a substitute for capers and the flowers can be tossed into a salad. When cooked, the leaves create a mucus very similar to okra and can be used as a thickener to soups and stews. The flavor of the leaves is mild.

Dried leaves can be used for tea. Mallow roots release thick sap when boiled in water. The thick liquid that is created can be beaten to make a meringue-like substitute for egg whites. Common mallow leaves are rich in vitamins A and C as well as calcium, magnesium, potassium, iron and selenium.

Like many of the other weeds listed, the leaves are better tasting when eaten young and can be cooked in place of other greens. The seed pods are also edible and [contain](#) an impressive 21% protein.

Why Not Try: a [Wild Celery & Common Mallow Soup?](#)



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15. Nettles – young leaves (must be cooked thoroughly)



<https://www.growforagecookferment.com/foraging-for-nettles/>

Stinging nettles are fairly easy to identify, but if you're unsure you can always give them a little touch to find out for sure. Keep in mind that the stinging hairs cover the plant, but are the densest on the stem. Wear garden or leather gloves to collect or work with nettles.

They must be steamed or blanched in boiling water first to dispel the sting, but after that you can eat them like any green. They are wonderful sautéed in butter, or you can even turn them into nettle pesto! It's best to use the tender tips of the plant for cooking. When used medicinally, nettles are often dried and made into a tea, or even better, an infusion. The leaves can be easily dried on a drying screen or in a dehydrator, which also inactivates the sting!

Nettles are an awesome superfood, and they have a large amount of many vitamins and minerals. Nettles are [rich in](#) vitamins A, B2, C, D, and K and have important nutrients like antioxidants, amino acids and chlorophyll. They're also a good source of calcium, potassium, iodine, manganese, and especially iron.

They are commonly used for kidney and bladder problems, including urinary tract infections. They are also known as an all-around tonic for women's reproductive system, and are often used when trying to conceive, as well as throughout pregnancy (check with your doctor or midwife before using it during pregnancy). Because of its high concentration of minerals, nettles are also commonly used for bone ailments such as joint ailments, arthritis, and osteoporosis. The leaves are also said to help fight allergies and hay fever.

Why Not Try: something a little different with this [Wild Nettle Beer](#)?



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16. Plantain (*Plantago major*)



Image Credit: [Harry Rose @ Flickr](#)

Not to be confused with the banana-like Caribbean fruit, this common weed can be [used topically](#) to treat burns, stings, mild abscesses, and other wounds.

While the young leaves are tasty either raw or cooked, the older leaves are a bit tough and unpleasant tasting (but there's nothing to stop you eating them if you wish). 100 grams of plantain contains the [same amount of vitamin A](#) as a large carrot, and is [very rich](#) in vitamin B1 and riboflavin.

Research [shows](#) plantain is beneficial in treating bronchitis, sore throats and cold symptoms.

Why Not Try: whipping up some homemade dough for a [Broadleaf Plantain Pizza](#)?



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17. Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*)



<http://foragedfoodie.blogspot.com/2015/11/purslane.html>

A nutritional powerhouse, Purslane contains more [omega-3 fatty acids](#) than any other leafy vegetable. It's rich in vitamins A, C, E as well as magnesium, calcium, potassium and iron. In [traditional Chinese medicine](#), purslane leaves are used for insect bites and bee stings, sores, diarrhea and hemorrhoids.

Purslane has excellent flavor and texture, and can be prepared raw or cooked. The leaves, flowers and stems are all edible, and work great in soups and stews. Raw, they have a juicy, crunchy texture, closest to celery, but without the stringiness. The flavor is somewhat sour, but with a tartness. Unlike lemony sorrel knotweed, some would call it a "green apple" flavor, but with a mellow grassy note. Try breading and frying the leaves for a tempura style side dish.

Even though this weed happily grows in sidewalk cracks, try looking for some that's a little less trampled – you'll probably find some in your garden. Purslane does have one dangerous look-a-like: the potentially deadly spurges (*Euphorbia varieties*). Spurge leaves grow parallel to each other on the stem in pairs (2s), and there is one tried and true way to tell them apart- if you break the stem of a spurge, it will ooze a sticky white liquid, called latex. Do NOT Eat Spurge! But definitely give Purslane a try.

Why Not Try: a [Turkish Borak with a Purslane twist?](#)



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18. Red Clover (*Trifolium pretense*)



You might have noticed that this pretty pinky-red flower [attracts all the bees to your garden](#). It's not just a great source of food for them, but also for you!

Traditionally used in India for its anti-inflammatory properties, Red Clover has also been claimed as a remedy for cancer. Red clover is a high [a source](#) of calcium, chromium, magnesium, niacin, phosphorus, potassium, thiamine, and vitamin C.

Because it's also a [rich in isoflavones](#), chemicals that act like estrogens in the body, go easy on your intake. Small amounts of raw clover leaves or the flowers can be added to salads, sautéed or pan roasted. ALWAYS avoid "spent", or brown-tinged, blossoms.

Why Not Try: this pretty and delicious [Red Clover Lemonade](#)?



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19. Sheep Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*)



<https://www.motherearthnews.com/real-food/foraging-and-cooking-with-wild-sorrel-zbcz1308>

A close relative of curled dock and wood sorrel, the sheep sorrel plant is often found in overgrown backyards. Often mistaken for clover, this diminutive plant has leaves with three heart-shaped leaflets, small yellow flowers and seed pods that look like very tiny okra.

A [good source](#) of vitamin C and E, historically sheep sorrel has been used to treat inflammation, diarrhea and even scurvy. It's also used to treat urinary tract infections, to maintain blood sugar levels and to support the liver.

When harvesting sheep sorrel, gently strip the upper leaves, immature, green seedpods and flowers off the stems. All of these are edible, tender and delicious, but the lower stems are too tough and stringy for some people to enjoy.

Their pleasantly sour, fruity flavor is wonderful with steamed vegetables or in soup. Because of the potassium oxalate levels, this weed shouldn't be eaten in excess (though that would take some doing), but small amounts liven up salads and stir-fries with their lemony and tart taste.

Why Not Try: this simple [French Sheep Sorrel sauce](#)?



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20. Watercress



<https://www.wildedible.com/wild-food-guide/watercress>

Watercress grows in shallow running water where it normally forms dense mats. Its stems with 3 to 9 small oval leaves grow 4 to 10 inches high. It flowers from April to October. Watercress flowers are small and white and occur in long clusters like many other types of mustard.

As one of our most nutritious wild foods, watercress is rich in calcium, beta carotene and iron. It also contains a variety of vitamins and minerals including vitamins C, B1, B2 and E. Watercress was traditionally used to treat coughs, gout and arthritis. It's an expectorant and also a diuretic, so it helps to relieve fluid retention.

Watercress is best used fresh but can be kept indefinitely in water if the water is changed daily. Watercress is good raw in salads or as a cooked green. It can be used any way cultivated mustard is used.



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21. Wild Amaranth (Pigweed) – Leaves and Seeds



<http://www.survivallandusa.com/Amaranthus-Hybridus-Green-Pigweed-Amaranth-Edible.html>

Amaranthus Hybridus, or "Pigweed", is a common name for several closely related summer annual "weeds" used in treating dysentery, ulcers and hemorrhage of the bowel due to its astringent property. Amaranth leaves possess antibacterial effect, cleansing effect and also help to reduce tissue swelling. Preliminary studies suggest analgesic properties.

The Amaranth plant family has a high level of very complete protein; its protein contains lysine, an amino acid missing or negligible in many grains. Cooked amaranth contains vitamin A, vitamin C, and folate; with lesser amounts of thiamine, niacin, and riboflavin, and some minerals such as calcium, iron, potassium, zinc, copper, and manganese. And the grains [are comparable](#) to wheat germ and oats in terms of nutritional value – an all-round great weed to have in the garden!

Good raw in a salad. Leaves can be used fresh or dried. Since boiling can cause significant losses of compounds in the water, it's recommended to avoid cooking methods that include a boiling step with discard of the water. As a potherb, boil or steam Pigweed alone or with other greens such as Mustard or Dandelion for 10 to 20 minutes until tender, and season with vinegar, grated cheese, seasonings and/or butter (save the water for soup stock!). Add dried leaves to soup.

Seeds are edible whole or ground. Pick seed clusters as plants mature but before seeds begin to drop. Dry, and then thresh by shaking or trampling, winnow (separate chaff from seeds) by tossing in a basket in the breeze. Dry on a tray in 375 degree oven for 40 to 50 minutes, stirring occasionally. Store in a paper bag in a dry place. Seeds are good mixed with quinoa. Pigweed meal can be used in place of or in addition to flour in baking recipes and for pancakes.

Why Not Try: a [Spiced Chickpea and Wild Amaranth](#) side dish?



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22. Wild Garlic (*Allium ursinum*)



<https://www.hedgerow-harvest.com/2016/03/02/go-wild-for-the-wild-garlic/>

Something all foragers hope to come across, wild garlic is a great find. With delicate white flowers and thin shoots, this useful ‘weed’ is delicious when used in a homemade pesto. It can also be used in place of chives or green onion, and added to salads, sandwiches and soups.

Do not dig up Wild Garlic bulbs. Unless you have landowner’s consent it is illegal and the bulbs are disappointingly small. Harvest leaves, stems, flowers and seed pods using scissors. Pick a little here and there rather than too much in one place and watch where you are putting your feet. As you pick, it is easy to bruise the leaves so put them gently into a basket or bag without packing them in. Like many wild leaves, they will wilt after picking so use quickly or refrigerate (in a sealed glass jar or bag!).

Just like the garlic we’re used to buying in the store, the wild variety also boasts antibacterial, antibiotic, antiseptic and antifungal properties. Of all the garlics, wild garlic [has been found](#) to have the greatest ability to lower blood pressure.

Why Not Try: this quick and easy [Pasta with Wild Garlic Sauce?](#)



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23. Wild Violets (Viola)



While you may know this as the flower you purposely planted in your garden, it also grows in the wild and is considered a weed by some – although a very eye-catching one. Wild violets are a low growing plant that prefers a shady, wooded area with rich soil. They have a basal rosette of toothed, heart shaped leaves, and drooping purple flowers with five petals that do not produce seeds. Interestingly enough, tiny round black seeds are produced from non-edible brown flowers at ground level. Wild violets are not the same as African violets, which are not edible at all.

Both the leaves and blossoms are edible, either raw or cooked, and are extremely high in vitamin C. The flowers are a wonderful late winter or early spring treat, and are often made into violet jelly or violet syrup. The mild tasting leaves and stems [can be eaten](#) either raw in a lovely wild greens salad, sauteed or steamed. The leaves can be dried for a tea which has mild laxative qualities and the flowers can be added to vinegar for a homemade dressing, or simply sprinkled on salads.

Why Not Try: [Crystalizing the Blossoms](#) for an easy way to jazz-up homemade cakes and pastries?



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24. Wood Sorrel (*Oxalis montana*)



<https://www.wildedible.com/wild-food-guide/wood-sorrel>

Often spotted in the shade alongside houses and fences, the heart-shaped leaves of the wood sorrel are reminiscent of a shamrock. These leaves are high in vitamin C and have diuretic and cooling properties meaning they are [useful to treat](#) urinary tract infections and fevers. Wood sorrel is also used for indigestion or as an appetite stimulant.

As the stems are difficult to chew, it's best to just enjoy the leaves, flowers and seedpods – which have a mild lemony taste (sorrel meaning sour!). Wood sorrel pairs well with raw or cooked wild greens, wild game and other meats, or fish. High in oxalic salts, this particular weed should be avoided by those with kidney disorders.

Why Not Try: this impressive [Wood Sorrel and Onion Tart with Gruyere Cheese?](#)



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Before you rush out to pick plants for your dinner, make sure you know what's what. This article is intended only as a guide to share with you all the wonderful weeds lurking in your lawn. Because so many plants can look alike, and some can have poisonous properties, it's always best to thoroughly read up on the subject, take a guided foraging trip, or consult an expert.

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