

Wild Foods Cookbook

by
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Dandelions

Dandelions are one of the world's most nutritious foods. The leaves contain twice as much calcium as kale or spinach. As little as 3.5 ounces of raw dandelion leaves gives you a fifth of the recommended daily allowance. Dandelion leaves are also loaded with vitamins A & C, phosphorous, potassium, and magnesium.

There are a few other plants out there who resemble dandelion. To make sure you have the right plant be sure the leaves are completely smooth without any hairs and that each flower is attached to one stalk (as opposed to many flowers coming from one stalk.)

Dandelion Pesto

2-4 crushed cloves of garlic
1/2 cup cold pressed olive oil
2-3 cups freshly picked young dandelion leaves
1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
Dash of sea salt
Squirt of lemon juice (optional)
1/4 cup of ground nuts (walnuts, pine nuts)

Place oil, garlic, and salt in the blender along with half of the dandelion leaves. Blend well, and then add the other half of the leaves. When finished blending it should be of a good consistency and a little runny still. Pour into a bowl and add desired amount of parmesan cheese, ground nuts and lemon juice. We love this pesto as a dip, on bread, pasta, salmon, or even a couple tablespoons with our scrambled eggs.

Dandelion Greens (Thank you to Paul Chhabra for teaching me this treat.)

One onion
Pinch of sea salt
2 T of olive oil or butter
2 cloves of garlic
Bunch of dandelion greens
Squirt of lemon

Begin by sautéing the onion and salt in olive oil or butter until it has turned to a rich brown color (caramelized). Add the garlic and sauté for a minute more. Add the dandelion greens and sauté until wilted and then add a squirt of lemon juice.

We use this base recipe in quiche, tacos, or simply rolled up in a large kale, chard or lettuce leaf. Delicious!

Dandelion or Red Clover Fritters

1/3 cup flour
1/3 cup milk
One t baking powder
1/3 cup corn meal
1 egg
Dash of sea salt

Sweet:

One T honey (or to taste)
Cinnamon, cloves, cardamom nutmeg to taste OR

Savory:

Thyme, rosemary, oregano or other savory herbs to taste

Mix the dry ingredients together and then add eggs and mix well. Add sweet or savory ingredients. Dip the flower blossoms into the mix and fry in hot oil until golden.

Dandelions cont.

Pickled Dandelion Flower Buds

Harvest the flower buds when they are still tightly closed—before they have ever opened.

1/2 Cup Onions
Three tablespoons fresh minced ginger
4-5 garlic cloves
1 Cup Dandelion Flower Buds
Apple Cider Vinegar
Tamari Sauce

Rinse the flower buds well and place into a pint jar with the onions, garlic, and ginger. Fill halfway with the apple cider vinegar and then halfway with the tamari. Cover with a plastic lid or a metal lid with a plastic buffer. (Vinegar will corrode the metal lid.) Let sit for three weeks in the fridge and then enjoy on salads, as a snack, or on tuna fish sandwiches.

Dandelion Flower Wine

- 3 qts dandelion flowers
- 1 lb white raisins chopped
- 1 gallon water
- 3 lbs granulated sugar
- 2 lemons
- 1 orange
- yeast and nutrient

Pick the flowers just before starting, so they're fresh. You can pinch the bottom bracts off of the flower head to discourage any bitterness. I've done it with and without, both with good results. Put the flowers in a large bowl. Set aside 1 pint of water and bring the remainder to a boil. Pour the boiling water over the dandelion flowers and cover tightly with cloth or plastic wrap. Leave for two days, stirring twice daily. Do not exceed this time. Pour flowers and water in large pot and bring to a low boil. Add the sugar and the peels (peel thinly and avoid any of the white pith) of the lemons and orange. Boil for one hour, then pour into a crock or plastic pail. Add the juice and pulp of the lemons and orange. Allow to stand until cool (70-75 degrees F.). Add yeast and yeast nutrient, cover, and put in a warm place for three days. Strain and pour into a secondary fermentation vessel (bottle or jug). Add the raisins and fit a fermentation trap to the vessel. Leave until fermentation ceases completely, then rack and add the reserved pint of water and whatever else is required to top up. Refit the airlock and set aside until clear. Rack and bottle. This wine must age six months in the bottle before tasting, but will improve remarkably if allowed a year. [Adapted recipe from C.J.J. Berry's *First Steps in Winemaking*]

Dandelion Coffee

Collect dandelion roots after they have gone to seed or before they flower. Wash well, and cut into small pieces. At this point you can dry them well and store them for later roasting or you can roast them in a cast iron until they turn brown and have a pleasant odor. Once roasted I place a couple of tablespoon of roasted root in 8 oz of water, boil for seven minutes, add cream and enjoy.

Dandelions cont.

Dandelion Flower Cookies (from herbmentor.com)

One stick of butter
1/2 Cup honey
2 eggs
1 tsp. Vanilla
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour
1 cup regular oats
1/2 Cup dandelion flowers

Preheat oven to 375. Melt butter and oil on low heat. Set aside to cool slightly. Remove all of the green stems and bracts from the dandelion flowers, set aside. Mix together the dry ingredients in a medium bowl, set aside. Mix the dandelion flower petals into the honey and butter mixture. Add the eggs and vanilla and stir well. Add the wet mixture to the dry mixture and stir well. Place by the tablespoon full onto greased cookie sheets. Bake for 12 minutes or until golden brown on the edges.

Herbal Vinegar

Herbal vinegars are packed with minerals and essential nutrients.

To make an herbal vinegar I fill a quart jar with lightly packed herbs, then fill it with organic apple cider vinegar and cap with a plastic lid or a plastic lined metal lid. I label it, let it sit for six weeks—shaking daily.

After six weeks I strain off the material and use this vinegar in our homemade dressing.
Favorite plants to make vinegar from:

Nettle leaves	Chickweed Leaves	Lamb's Quarters
Dandelion Roots	Dandelion Leaves	Burdock Roots
Hawthorn Berries	Yellow Dock Root	Cleavers

de la Forêt Salad Dressing

Three T olive oil
One T apple cider vinegar
One tsp. mustard
One tsp. miso
One clove of garlic crushed
1 tsp of Herbs such as thyme, oregano, parsley, etc.

Mix all the ingredients together stirring until blended.

Chickweed

Chickweed has a bright spring taste and I look forward to my first spring chickweed salad each year. Chickweed is high in calcium, minerals, potassium and magnesium. Besides being a tasty plant chickweed can be used as a poultice on hot conditions like sunburns or insect bites to cool things down.

Chickweed Grilled Cheese Sandwiches

Two pieces of bread
Cheese slices
Chickweed
Butter

Butter one side of each bread piece and place one piece on a skillet. Turn the stove to low to medium heat. Cover the slice of bread with cheese, then chickweed, and place the other slice of bread on top with butter facing up. Grill until the bread has turned golden brown and the cheese is slightly melted. Flip the sandwich and grill until done.

Chickweed Pesto

2-4 crushed cloves of garlic
1/2 cup cold pressed olive oil
2-3 cups freshly picked young chickweed leaves
1/4 cup freshly grated parmesan cheese
Dash of sea salt

Place oil, garlic, and salt in the blender along with half of the chickweed leaves. Blend well, and then add the other half of the leaves. When finished blending it should be of a good consistency and a little runny still. Pour into a bowl and add desired amount of parmesan cheese.

Steamed Chickweed

10 cups of chickweed
Olive oil
Roasted walnuts or pecans

Sauce:

2 T balsamic vinegar
1 T Sesame Oil
2 garlic cloves minced
1 T Sesame Seeds
1/2 T honey

Mix the sauce together. Stir fry the chickweed in olive oil briefly. Add the sauce and roasted nuts if desired et voila!

Yellow Dock

The young tender leaves of yellow dock are a wonderful spring green that can be eaten as a salad or cooked as a potherb. I love chopping up these leaves and mixing them with other salad greens. Besides being high in iron the leaves also contain significant levels of calcium, potassium, beta carotene. They have a slight lemony twang to them, which indicates the presence of oxalic acid. (Which is also found in beets, spinach, and rhubarb leaves.) *Because of the oxalic acid found in dock leaves it's not recommended to eat large amounts of raw greens.*

Dock Seed Flour:

Harvest yellow dock seeds in the late summer and fall when they have turned a rusty brown color. Place them in a brown paper bag and leave this on its side for a couple hours or overnight. (This lets any bugs that may have been living in the seeds crawl out.) Go through the seeds picking out any leaves or other debris. Once it looks good to you place in a blender or food processor until it is ground into flour. This is one of my favorite recipes that I learned from Karen Sherwood. You can add this hearty flour to your pie crusts, breads, or the cracker recipe below. Store this flour in a glass jar.

Dock Seed Crackers

Mix together :

One cup of dock seed flour

One teaspoon of salt

One cup flour of your choice. (My favorites are whole-wheat pastry flour and rye flour.)

Mix in enough water to make a pliable, but not sticky dough.

On a well-floured surface, roll dough as thin as possible. Cut into desired shapes or transfer it whole to a well-oiled cookie sheet.

Bake for 10 -12 minutes at 375° or until crisp. I love these hearty crackers with Brie or goat cheese.

Yellow Dock Frittata

This breakfast dish can be made with any wild greens, but Yellow Dock gives it a nice lemony taste.

1 cup Yellow Dock leaves, cooked and well-drained

6 eggs

2 Tbsp raw cream

½ tsp salt, dash of pepper

1 medium potato

¼ cup minced onion or leek

2 Tbsp butter

1 cup grated goat cheese

1 tsp dried basil

1 T mustard

Peel and finely chop potato. Sauté onion in butter until tender in a 10-inch broiler-proof skillet (cast iron is perfect). Add potato and sauté for about 5 minutes.

Whisk eggs, cream, basil, cheese, mustard, salt, and pepper together in a bowl.

Add Yellow Dock leaves. Preheat broiler on your oven.

Add egg mixture to potatoes and onions.

Cook on low heat for about 10 minutes until bottom of frittata is set but top is still runny.

Put skillet in broiler and cook about 5 minutes until top is set. Be careful not to let it get too brown!

Elderberry

Elderberries are a delicious treat that offer us medicinal benefits as well. Long touted as a remedy for colds I thoroughly enjoy sipping my elderberry cordial to ease coughs and a sore throat. Remember to always use heat when preparing any part of the elderberry

Elderberry Cordial

4 big bunches of elderberries
Honey
Brandy

Place berries in the freezer overnight. Once frozen they are much easier to remove from the stems. Use a fork to graze the berries from the stems into a medium sized cooking pot.

Place on low to medium heat and use a spoon to crush the berries and squeeze out the juice. Bring to a boil and then simmer for 20 minutes. Pour through a fine sieve strainer lined with cheesecloth. Squeeze the cheesecloth to get every drop you can from the berries (you'll be glad you did).

Return the juice to the stove and add enough honey to taste. You can keep this in the fridge for about a month—or you can add an equal part brandy which will preserve it for months to come.

Sip when sick, or when craving this delicious beverage.

Elderflower Amish Oatmeal

1 and 1/2 cups oats
2 bunches of elder flowers
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 cup milk
1/4 cup melted butter
1 egg
1 teaspoon baking powder
3/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
Warm milk to serve
fresh fruit -- brown sugar -- or other preferred topping

Remove the flowers from the stems. Combine the oats, flowers, sugar, baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. In a separate bowl combine the melted butter, milk, vanilla, and egg. Mix the two together. Spread evenly in a greased 9 x 13 inch pan.
Bake at 350 F. for 25-30 minutes or until edges get golden brown.

Immediately spoon into bowls, add milk. Top with fruit and brown sugar, if desired.

Stinging Nettle

Stinging Nettle Eggplant Parmesan

One diced onion
4 cloves of garlic minced
Olive oil
2 16 ounce cans of crushed tomatoes
1 lb of ground meat cooked
2 large eggplants
One bunch of fresh basil
One lb of fresh stinging nettle
2 cups grated mozzarella cheese

Pre-heat oven to 325. Slice eggplants lengthwise and lightly cover both sides with olive oil. Place them on a cookie sheet so they don't overlap. Bake them in the oven for 12 minutes and then flip over. Bake for ten minutes more or until they are translucent in the middle. Once done raise the oven temperature to 350.

Fill a large pot with water, bring to a boil, and add the fresh stinging nettle leaves. Boil for about ten minutes and then strain. Reserve the nettle water for drinking or for a rich fertilizer.

Meanwhile, in a large skillet or sauce pan, sauté onion in the olive oil until translucent. Add the garlic and sauté for two minutes more (being careful not to overcook the garlic). Add the cans of crushed tomatoes, the cooked ground meat, basil, and boiled stinging nettle. Let simmer for fifteen minutes.

In a large casserole place a layer of the eggplant, followed by a thick layer of the tomato mixture and a sprinkling of cheese. Continue this until ingredients are used up or there is no more room. Bake in the oven for 45 minutes

Stinging Nettle Pizza

One homemade pizza dough (try adding some dock seed flour)
One can of pizza sauce
Three cups of boiled stinging nettle (see above recipe)
Any additional toppings
2 Cups of grated mozzarella

Prepare pizza dough according to directions. Cover with a layer of pizza sauce, followed by the stinging nettle and any other additional toppings. Coat with a layer of cheese. Bake in the oven at 350 for 10—15 minutes or until the cheese is browned and the sauce is bubbly.

Burdock Root

Burdock root is high in iron, minerals, and B vitamins. Called a "blood purifier" it supports our liver function and can help a variety of skin conditions including eczema, psoriasis, acne, or dry skin. It's a wonderful stir fry vegetable and can also be added to soups or chili. To harvest gather this plant in the fall of the first year—before there is a stalk with flowers and burrs.

Marinated Burdock Root

(This recipe comes from Eaglesong at Ravencroft Gardens)

6—8 first year burdock roots

2 cups of water

2 cups of tamari or soy sauce

2 cups balsamic vinegar

4 cloves of garlic sliced

One piece of ginger

Wash and thinly slice burdock root, slice garlic and cut ginger into matchstick size pieces. Add to medium skillet with water. Sauté until burdock is just tender. Add tamari and vinegar and reheat. Pack into sterile canning jars to seal or store in refrigerator.

Nourishing Bone Broth

Using the left over bones from poultry or beef is a great way to nourish our bodies as well as save money by using all that we can.

Several bones from poultry or beef (preferably bones that have marrow)

1 T apple cider vinegar (helps to draw out the calcium)

1 onion coarsely chopped

2 Carrots coarsely chopped

2 big pieces of burdock coarsely chopped

Several dandelion roots coarsely chopped

2 celery ribs coarsely chopped

Handful of herbs such as rosemary, thyme, or oregano

Place everything in a large pot except for the handful of herbs. Fill the pot with water and bring to a boil slowly. Once it is boiling reduce to a simmer. After awhile you will see some foam forming at the top. Gently skim this off every five minutes until the broth runs clear. Add the handful of herbs and simmer for 8—12 hours. When ready, strain off all materials and discard. Store the broth in the fridge or freezer until ready to use for soups, roasts, chilis, etc.

Roses

Roses hold a certain mystical history. Their exotic beauty and alluring smell combined with prickly thorns have enthralled humans for thousands of years.

Roses have been found entombed with the ancient Egyptian pharaohs, and were highly prized by the Greeks and Romans. Josephine, Napoleon's wife, adored them and is responsible for many of the hybrids we have today.

Today most roses are grown primarily for their beauty, but historically roses have been an important food source and medicinal qualities. The Okanogan ate the flower buds, but not the hips and used the thorns for fish hooks. (Parish, 64) The Athabaskan reportedly placed the thorns in the center of warts, which were said to disappear within a few days. All interior Salish used the baldhip rose species widely for medicinal and spiritual purposes.

Besides being beautiful and delicious rose hips are high in vitamin C. It is said that three rose hips have more Vitamin C than a whole orange. They are also high in potassium, B Carotene, and Niacin.

Harvest the rose hips after they are bright red and have gone through at least one frost. Be sure to leave some hips behind on each bush you gather from to ensure plenty for birds and other animals that graze the hips. Be cautious of harvesting along roadsides to avoid areas that have been sprayed with harmful pesticides. Roses grown for commercial uses should be highly suspect.



Rose Petals and Hips

Rose Hip Honey

Gather and then freeze rose hips. Once frozen remove all seeds from the pulp and fill a glass jar with the pulp. (Discard seeds.) Fill the jar with honey and let sit on the counter for about three days. I turn my jar upside down every day. For long term storage keep in the fridge. Enjoy on toast, pancakes, or in teas.

Rose Petal Honey

Gather Rose petals when they are in full bloom and look vibrant. Fill a glass jar with the petals and then cover with honey. Stir well, and refill if necessary. Turn it upside down a couple times a day and it should taste heavenly by about the third day. Spread on toast, pancakes, or use in tea.

Rose Hip Syrup

Gather and rinse rose hips well. Remove any stems or flower remnants. Bring two cups of water to a boil and add two cups of rose hips. Simmer for 20 minutes or until the water has been reduced by half. Lately I've been adding different spices to the boiling mixture—my favorites have been whole cloves, whole allspice, and cinnamon sticks. Allow to cook slightly and then strain through a jelly bag. Add one cup of honey (or to taste) to the liquid. Stir until combined and place in a glass jar to be stored in the fridge. Enjoy this special treat as you would maple syrup.

Variations:

Using the Rose Hip Syrup as a base you can create all sort of yummy concoctions.

Rose Hip Sorbet:

After making the syrup place the liquid in a glass container and allow to cool. You can add a couple tablespoons of alcohol to the mixture to keep it from freezing too hard. This can be as simple as vodka or a special liqueur. After the mixture is cool, cover and place in the freezer for several hours.

Rose Hip Cordial

After making the syrup add a half part brandy to the mixture. Allow to cool and then bottle. This gets better with age.

Seaweed (Kelp)

Seaweed is a nutritional powerhouse that nourishes us by supplying practically every needed nutrient for our body's functions. According to the authors of *Vegetables from the Sea*, "All of the mineral required for human beings, including calcium, sodium, magnesium, potassium, iodine, iron and zinc are present in sufficient amounts. In addition there are many trace elements in seaweeds." Kelp, a brown seaweed, also has significant amounts of vitamins A and C, as well as B1, B2, B6, Niacin and B12—of which is rarely found in land plants.

Taken daily seaweed can improve the health of your hair, support joint health, and help to rid the body of heavy metals. For those wanting to lose or maintain their weight, kelp is high in iodine supporting the thyroid and metabolic function.

I think of adding seaweed to my diet akin to taking a multi-vitamin.

Seaweed Energy Bars (These are a favorite at our house!)

1/2 oz. of kelp (*Nereocystis*) fronds
2 cups of almonds, hazelnuts, or sesame seeds
1/2 cup of maple syrup
Oats (optional)
Coconut Oil (optional)

Powder the kelp fronds by placing them in a blender or using a mortar and pestle. Do the same with the almonds or hazelnuts. If using sesame seeds leave whole. Add a 1/2 cup of maple syrup and mix well. Melt some coconut oil onto the cookie sheet (optional). Use a rolling pin to spread onto a cookie sheet leaving them about a 1/4" thick. Use the oats to keep the dough from sticking to the rolling pin. Bake at 350 for about 17 minutes or until golden brown. Use a pizza cutter to cut into bars while still warm and enjoy!

Gomasio

1/2 oz of kelp (*Nereocystis* fronds)
1/2 oz of dried stinging nettle leaf
1 cup of roasted sesame seeds

Grind toasted sesame seeds in a blender or by hand. Combine with the kelp and stinging nettle. Use this seasoning on soups, salads, sandwiches, or whatever suits your fancy.

Bee Pollen

Bee pollen is a powder-like material that is produced by the anthers of flowering plants and gathered by bees. It has been called the world's only perfect food because it contains every nutrient the human body requires. In other words you could survive on nothing but water and bee pollen.

Contains:

8 - 40% Protein
B-Complex Vitamins
Vitamin C
Amino Acids
Essential Fatty Acids
Enzymes

Calcium
Copper
Iron
Magnesium
Potassium
Manganese

Carotene
Sodium
Plant Sterols
Simple Sugar

Like other bee products, bee pollen has anti-microbial properties as well as anti-biotic, anti-viral, antiseptic, and anti-fungal properties.

Useful for combating fatigue, depression, cancer, stimulating the reproductive system for males and females and eases digestive and colon disorders. It also helps people with allergies because it strengthens the immune system.

Choosing bee pollen:

Bee pollen should not form clumps and should be stored in a tightly sealed container and refrigerated. Like other bee products you should only choose locally produced bee pollen, this is especially important for anti-allergenic properties.

Heat destroys bee pollen's vital enzyme activity and lowers the nutrient value so it is not recommended for teas or cooking. Instead try adding granules to yogurt or cereal, or mix with cinnamon and add to applesauce.

Bee Pollen Candy:

½ Cup Bee Pollen
2 Tablespoons Cocoa
2 Tablespoons Water
3 Tablespoons Raw Honey
½ Cup Rolled Oats
1 Tablespoon Vanilla
½ Cup Crunchy Peanut Butter
½ Cup Tahini
Coconut for rolling
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon cardamon

Dissolve the cocoa in the water and mix with bee pollen in a medium size bowl. Add the raw honey and mix well, and then add the peanut butter, tahini, Bee Pollen, Rolled Oats, Vanilla, nutmeg and cardamon and mix thoroughly. Using your hand or melon baller to form into small balls, roll in the coconut and store in the refrigerator or freezer.

CAUTION !

An estimated .05% of the population is said to be allergic to bee pollen. So it is wise to start with just a few granules, wait for a reaction before increasing the dosage.

Harvesting Pre-cautions:

1. Be entirely certain you know the plant you are harvesting. If necessary use several different field guides, consult a knowledgeable person, and if still uncertain watch it through the seasons to confirm your ID.
2. Be entirely certain the area you are harvesting from has not been sprayed with pesticides or has been subjected to other harmful chemicals that are not conducive to human health. Areas to be careful of are: lawns that have been treated, roadsides, golf courses, and along power lines.
3. Tread lightly and never pick too many plants for an area. The general rule is to only pick 1/3 of the plants in an area. Less for endangered plants, maybe more for prolific plants like dandelion or yellow dock.
4. Remember this is a book of recipes not a field guide. The user takes full responsibility for correctly identifying, harvesting, and using these plants.
5. Say thanks. Bring a gift, spread some seeds.

Enjoy

About the author:

Rosalee de la Forêt recently moved to the Methow Valley with her husband from Duvall, WA where she had the privilege of apprenticing with Karen Sherwood of Earthwalk Northwest for several years. She now teaches garden herbals and native plants in the Methow Valley, sells handcrafted herbal salves and gifts at the Twisp Farmer's Market, and is also an herbal consultant for www.herbmentor.com an online educational community. Besides being passionate about plants and nutrition, Rosalee is a nationally certified massage therapist and Structural Medicine Specialist – a type of hands-on bodywork that re-establishes postural alignment through myofascial release to relieve chronic or acute pain and create more freedom of movement.

You can read more about Rosalee's herbal adventures at:

www.methowvalleyherbs.blogspot.com