






Many delicious, nutrient-dense wild edibles grow abundantly in urban yards and woodlands. Frequent harvests can reduce your grocery budget, lessen the amount of space dedicated to gardening and increase your health.

Guidelines

- Only eat a plant if you are 100% certain of its identity.
- Harvest away from busy roads and polluted waters.
- Harvest only 10% of each patch and bypass small patches.

	Identification	Harvest Time and Edible Parts	Notes
<p>Serviceberry</p> 	<p>Multi-stemmed shrub, 8-20' tall with finely-toothed, oval leaves. Berries are slightly smaller than a blueberry and have a crown at the bottom.</p>	<p>Underripe berries are red, but still edible. Near the end of July they fully ripen to deep purple.</p>	<p>Seeds have an almond-like flavor.</p>
<p>Mulberry</p> 	<p>Tree, 25-35' tall with reddish brown bark. Bright green leaves are often mitten-shaped, but take on a variety of shapes.</p>	<p>Compound fruits ripen to dark purple at the end of June. They resemble an elongated blackberry.</p>	<p>Trees are often easy to find by looking for purple splotches on sidewalks.</p>
<p>Nettles</p> 	<p>Stinging nettle: Opposite, narrow leaves on a square stem that grows 5-8' tall. Wood nettle: Alternative, oval leaves on a round stem that grows 4' tall. Both plants have leaves with toothy edges and fine hairs that inflict a sting.</p>	<p>Extremely nutritious leaves toughen with age. Harvest young, tender leaves in spring and fall for soups and sautés. Use tougher leaves for tea throughout the season. Stems of young wood nettles are edible, but stinging nettle stems are too fibrous to eat.</p>	<p>Stinging hairs are eliminated by cooking. Stings can be avoided by wearing gloves or using only your tough fingertips. Hairs point upward so gathering with an upward motion may lessen stings.</p>
<p>Dandelion</p> 	<p>Shiny, yellow flowers grow 6-12" from a basal rosette of long leaves that have toothy edges.</p>	<p>Nutrient-dense leaves, flowers and roots can be harvested anytime. Young, wide leaves harvested before flowering are less bitter. Avoid thin, deeply lobed leaves that lie close to the ground. Discard the stem.</p>	<p>Be sure to harvest from areas that have not been applied with pesticides. To dilute bitterness, mix with other greens in salads, soups or sautés.</p>
<p>Lambs Quarters</p> 	<p>Annual herb growing 1-2' tall. The underside of the triangular leaves is covered with white powder and fine hairs. Leaves have rounded teeth and resemble a goosefoot.</p>	<p>Leaves can be harvested anytime. Stems are tender and edible when young, but toughen with age.</p>	<p>Harvest only from unpolluted soil as the plant readily absorbs toxins.</p>

Curly Dock



Identification

Paddle shaped leaves with lasagna-like curls grow 5-10" long. The central stock can grow up to 5' tall and will be covered with brown, triangular seeds in early fall.

Harvest Time and Edible Parts

Leaves can be harvested anytime for soups and sautés. The leaf is too tough and sour to be eaten in summer if is no longer stretchy or if the thick midrib turns reddish. Peeled shoots/stems are also edible.

Notes

Not all plants taste the same; continue sampling until yummy plants are found. Avoid eating huge, daily quantities especially if you have kidney problems.

Wood Sorrel



Clusters of 3 heart-shaped leaves bear cheery, 5-petaled yellow flowers. It grows 5-10" tall. Leaves fold closed at sunset.

Lemony leaves and seed pods can be eaten anytime, but are best before flowering. Stems and flowers are also edible. Their delightful flavor will perk up any smoothie or tea.

Avoid eating huge, daily quantities if you have kidney problems, rheumatoid arthritis or gout.

Purslane



Succulent groundcover of reddish-green, paddle-shaped leaves that are 1/2 - 1 1/2" long. Long stems are smooth and hairless.

Fleshy leaves taste best when harvested young or from the tip of the plant. The stem is also edible.

Can be used in soup as a thickener.

Violet



Heart-shaped, loosely-assembled leaves grow 4-6" tall and have lovely 5-petaled flowers. Flowers are typically purple, but can be blue, white, yellow or a mix of colors.

Leaves can be harvested anytime and eaten raw or cooked. Flowers can be eaten raw, but are often candied or infused in tea. Discard tough stems.

Roots are toxic.

Sweet Potato Berry Bake

- 2-3 large sweet potatoes, baked or steamed
- 1 tsp salt
- 3 tbsp coconut oil
- 3-5 cups serviceberries and rhubarb (or a mix of any berries)
- 4-6 medjool dates, finely chopped
- 2 tsp cinnamon divided

1. Blend salt, coconut oil and 1 tsp cinnamon into sweet potatoes. Spread on bottom of 8" square baking dish.
2. Cook berries and rhubarb in a saucepan until bubbling and tender. Add 1 tsp cinnamon and mash with a potato masher.
3. Spread berry mix on top of sweet potatoes.
4. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Refreshing Summer Greens Drink

- 1 cup chopped watermelon
- Juice of one small lime
- 3 strawberries (fresh or frozen)
- 1 cup of greens (wild or cultivated)
- 1/2 cup water or ice cubes
- Two mint leaves (optional)

Combine all ingredients and blend until smooth in a high-speed blender.

Enjoy immediately.

Plant Descriptions Adapted From

Abundantly Wild, by Teresa Marrone

The Forager's Harvest and *Nature's Garden*, by Samuel Thayer

