



**WILD
EDIBLES
OF
MISSOURI**



Jan Phillips

Wild Edibles of Missouri

Jan Phillips

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To my “wild” family
Abe, Sheli, & Janette
...who ate the weeds dutifully...

Second Edition

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introduction

In the many years of my teaching career I have been involved with an educational philosophy of teaching in which the curriculum is interdisciplinary and presented in an adventurous, experiential manner. This work has, indeed, been my adventure!

I was placed in a situation which impelled and required me to learn new skills. Those newly acquired skills of researching, recognizing, identifying and using edible plants were meaningful beyond my previous range of knowledge and required a great deal of planning and decision making. The feedback was immediate as my family either ate or rejected my edible dishes. The information needed to be organized into a book for my thesis which reflected upon the entire three years' experience and linked practice with theory. The additional challenge was to imagine that my book might be published.

The adventure could have ended on that note, yet, unimagined at the time, another total adventure was waiting. The editor strongly urged me to illustrate my work. In trying to portray the edibles, I have experienced the agony and ecstasy of painting. I am certainly not an artist and have no art class exposure, which will be evident in the paintings. Indeed, these have been a stress-challenge activity in which each painting will show the agony of trial and error and the ecstasy of having completed it. This *has* been an adventure!

Therefore, this book is a labor of love. The results were obtained by excitedly and painfully keying out plants, learning through mistakes, celebrating new finds. I wish I were a botanist, or even a person with a good background in plants; instead I am an avid lover of the out-of-doors whose hope it is to arouse some curiosity and interest in closer observation of nature's tremendous supply of plants.

This research was basically conducted on plants within Missouri, yet vacation travel has proved the availability of many of the same plants throughout much of the Midwest.

CAUTIONS for various plants have been included, not with the intention of scaring anyone away from trying the plant, but as a warning to always identify your plant carefully before you eat it. *It is essential that you know poisonous plants before collecting edible ones.* Some people may be sensitive to the chemicals contained in and on various plants while others show no effect. Incidentally, our domestic potato and rhubarb have poisonous parts. It would be a shame had we thrown the edible out with the inedible. I am intrigued and bewildered by the considerable discomfort which our forefathers must have experienced while identifying those plants which were not fit for consumption!

Many of the plants have fascinating life histories concerning personal uses, folklores or medicinal qualities. Such colorful back-ground information is included strictly as points of interest - NOT as a suggestion that you become your own herb doctor!

While knowledge and uses of the wild edible is exciting and certainly a conversation piece, abandonment of your local grocery is not in order.

An exorbitant amount of time is required to locate, pick, clean and prepare wild edibles. I have spent seven hours picking and cleaning a salad for a Wild Food Party for eight. If dreams exist in your mind of becoming self-sufficient and living off the land, know that the energy spent in securing the food is rarely replaced by the resulting meal.

But be assured also that you are in for some fascinating adventures, some moments of stress, minutes of insightful realizations, hours of awe, days of wonder and a lifelong appreciation of the beauty and miracles found in the world of plants.

Jan Phillips
March 1979

acknowledgments

Much love to my mother, Jewell Robinson, who “planted” my love and awareness for the out-of-doors and whose recipes and insights are absorbed within this book. A special thanks to Bill McConnel of Webster College who allowed and encouraged this work.

A grateful thanks for the outstanding work of Julian A. Steyermark, *Flora of Missouri*, from which I freely pulled and used information regarding habitat, location and length of flower bloom.

I am compelled to express an appreciation for Fernald and Kinsey's book, *Edible Wild Plants of Eastern North America*, which was invaluable.

Many thanks to the St. Louis County Parks and Recreation Department whose parklands were utilized for a good deal of my research.

Love and thanks to the Woods, Morleys, McIntires and Naus - who consented to be guinea pigs at my wild food parties and whose laughter aided me through this research.

My sincere appreciation to the Missouri Department of Conservation for publishing this book so that the contents may be shared with others.

A particular embrace to Michael McIntosh, publications editor, whose encouragement was instrumental in providing the necessary confidence for my paintings. His ideas, editing and joshing were appreciated.

preface

The purpose of this work was to locate and experiment with Missouri's wild edibles. This I have done.

The edibles are arranged by the plant's flowering color: 1) white; 2) yellow, cream and orange; 3) green; 4) brown; 5) red, also pink and lavender; 6) blue and purple.

Each plant has a botanical name attached. The length or season of the flower bloom is listed under "Flowers." "Habitat" refers to the areas where that particular plant prefers to grow, which gives a clue when trying to locate it. "Location" is a reference to where the plant is commonly found in Missouri. "Collection" tells when the plant is edible or ready to be picked, pinched or dug. My hope is that several of the "Uses" or suggested ways to prepare the wildings will be tried by others. "**CAUTION**" is a warning for possible poisonous or rash-producing plants or parts of plants.

Wild Edibles of Missouri may seem to be a contradiction on the conservation of plants. While most sources suggest that plants be protected from destruction, this book advocates that the plant be used.

Selected and careful use of wild edibles is imperative, both from the view of the plant as well as that of the user. Because of possible side effects, *all wild edibles should be eaten in moderation!* Because of fear of eradication, *all edibles should be picked in moderation!*

Fruits, nuts and berries may be gathered with little fear of any damage. However, additional attention should be given to plants that are either pulled or dug up. While good judgment must be exercised to assure the continued existence of any plant, danger does exist from the thoughtless collector who wipes out an entire colony. Pick specimens that will least affect that plant's continued reproduction.

Whenever possible, bits of roots and rhizomes should be replanted or the seeds scattered in the disturbed earth as some insurance for replacing any damage done.

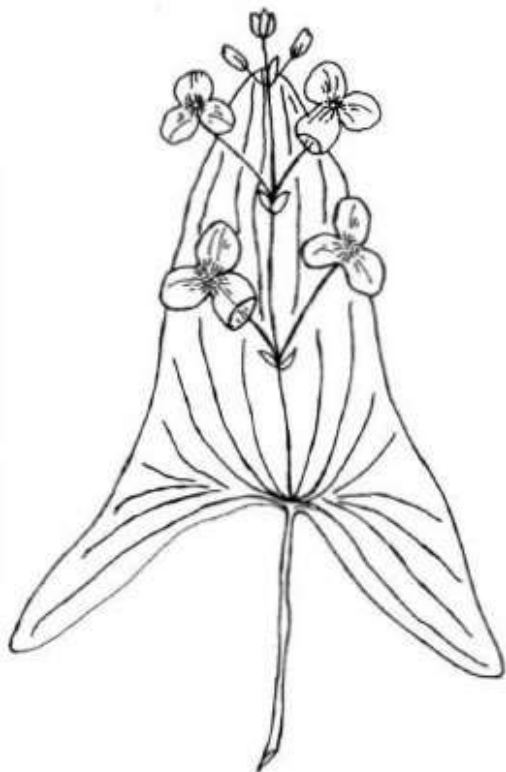
You *can* practice good conservation habits and reap the harvest, too.

"A seed has an awesome responsibility, but it's superbly designed to do its task." (from *Living Water*, Brown & Cavagnaro)

Enjoy the wonders it produces.

white-flowering edibles

Arrowhead



(*Sagittaria... various species*)

FLOWERS: May- October

DESCRIPTION: Water plant with erect, arrow-shaped leaves. Belongs to the Water Plantain Family.

HABITAT: Shallow water, edges of ponds

LOCATION: Scattered statewide

COLLECTION: August - November

USES: Vegetables

Arrowhead is an attractive plant growing on the border of one of the ponds at our farm. The arrowhead leaves are distinctive, as are the attractive flowers.

The food source from arrowhead is a potato-like tuber that produces in the autumn. One reading source indicated that the Indians harvested the arrowhead, or duck potato, by slushing around the pond with their bare feet. Once the foot felt a tuber, it was knocked loose and picked. The tubers, which can become an inch or two wide, are located several feet from the plant itself. While most of the tubers are smaller, they all contain a bad tasting, whitish-colored juice when eaten raw.

One way to prepare this potato substitute is to bake it in a 350° oven for 30 minutes. They may also be boiled or roasted around a campfire. Fernald reports that one Indian tribe used the tubers all winter by stringing them up to dry.

Yucca



(*Yucca smalliana*)

FLOWERS: May- July

DESCRIPTION: Long, narrow leaves are tough and sharp, growing 2' long from a basal rosette. Tall flower stalks bear cream or white flowers. Member of Lily Family.

HABITAT: Scattered from gardens along roadside, railroads, open banks, open woods

LOCATION: Scattered sparingly

COLLECTION: May- August

USES: Salad, fritter, vegetable

My side garden has a couple of yucca plants which have provided enough food for my experiments.

The flower petals are very acceptable in a salad and especially pretty when used with rose and violet petals. I use a sweetened mayonnaise

dressing thinned with a fruit juice on this salad.

The flowers make a reasonably good fritter when dipped in a batter of 1 cup flour, 1 t baking powder, ½ t salt, 1 cup milk, 1 egg, ¼ cup corn oil and fried.

The yucca pods of some species are edible and supposedly quite delicious. Our common yucca of Missouri is indeed not a delicacy, or, that is to say, I have not developed a taste for it. The roasted pods, while edible, are bitter. I also roasted the pods, scraped out the seeds into a batter and fried that. All attempts at boiling, roasting, camouflaging or frying were unsuccessful.

If I were hungry or lost and located some yucca, I would eat them again. Until then, however, they will remain on an emergency-food-only basis.

False Solomon's Seal



(Smilacina racemosa)

FLOWERS: May - June

DESCRIPTION: Bending stalk; alternate, parallel-veined leaves; flowers cluster on stem end. Member of Lily Family. early May.

Midsummer for berries

HABITAT: Rich woodland

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: late March - early May. Mid-summer for berries

USES: Vegetable, berry

CAUTION: The fresh berries act as a purgative.

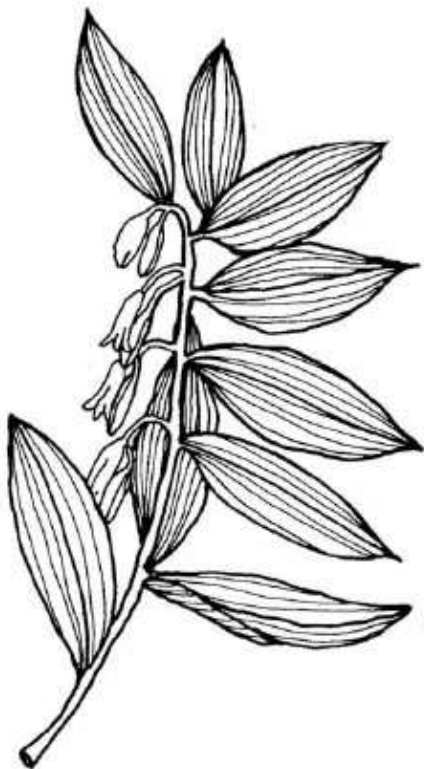
The young shoots of false Solomon's seal and true Solomon's seal are close as look-alikes, grow in the same areas and are interchangeable as an asparagus vegetable. Cut off the young shoots, cook for five minutes in boiling water and serve with butter. It may be fancied up by using in a casserole.

Indian tribes used the rootstalks as a potato after soaking them in lye water and boiling until tender.

False Solomon's seal has a flower cluster at the top of the stem while the true species has flowers at each spot where the leaf attaches to the stem. The young shoots are differentiated by the true Solomon's seal having more nerve veins in the leaves — a help when gathering plants prior to blooming.

The berries, which are white when unripe, turn a reddish-purple splotched when ripe. The berries may be eaten raw. Taken either with other fruit or honey, they aid in problems of constipation. If you are a camper who is affected by this situation, a mid-summer hike in pursuit of false Solomon's seal berries might be an effective remedy.

Solomon's Seal



(Polygonatum canaliculatum)

FLOWERS: May - June

DESCRIPTION: Arched stem bearing alternate, parallel-veined leaves. Leaf base clasps stem. 2-10 flowers dangle from attachment at leaf. Member of Lily Family.

HABITAT: Along stream, roadsides, railroads, rich shaded, rocky woods

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Spring

USES: Vegetable

Solomon's seal is a beautiful plant. Most of the plants I've seen are approximately 2½' tall. While camping with Cadet Scouts at Greensfelder Park I located a fat-stemmed stalk that was 5' tall and in bloom! The cute dangling flowers hang under the leaves.

The young shoots should be boiled in a small amount of water, steamed for three minutes and served with butter. While the plant

is good, I believe I prefer seeing it to eating it.

The rootstalk of Solomon's seal can be dried and made into a flour substitute. The rootstalk has large circular scars, which identify and distinguish it from the similar and poisonous root-stalk of the mayapple.

What an interesting history of uses follow this plant! It is reputed to correct all kinds of female problems, serve as a soothing bath for poison ivy itch and as a poultice for external infections and wounds.

Smartweed



fresh or dried as a substitute for pepper.

(Polygonum hydropiper)

FLOWERS: May - November

DESCRIPTION: Thickened joint at leaf attachment, surrounded with a wrap. Leaves are elliptical, alternate, smooth. Member of Buckwheat Family.

HABITAT: Fields, pastures, moist ground of stream

LOCATION: Scattered state- wide

COLLECTION: April - November

USES: Pepper substitute

CAUTION: See page 205

After reading that smartweed had peppery leaves, I collected the leaves of the pink-flowering varieties. I found them all but without a pepper taste. I later discovered the white flowering smartweed had a very peppery flavor. The leaves may be used

Pokeweed



(*Phytolacca americana*)

FLOWERS: May - October

DESCRIPTION: Leaves are large, pointed tip, alternate. Thick stems become purple with age. Flower cluster on stem opposite the leaf.

Member of
Pokeweed Family.

HABITAT: Waste ground, farm lots, thickets, around dwellings, roadsides, railroads, borders of woods

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: April - June for greens; berries only when ripe in August until frost.

USES: Potherb, vegetable,

pickle, coloring

CAUTION: See page 206

A friend of mine who lived in the South corrected me one day when I was telling him about pokeweed. "You mean poke salat" (pronounced sallat). I must agree, it is a better name.

Early spring finds many a forager out combing the hillsides for poke, dock, dandelions, mustard, peppergrass, lamb's quarters or whatever the favorite greens combination might be. Poke is generally the main bulk of the pot as it is tasty although not strong-flavored. It is good by itself or mixed with the others.

The large root, which is poisonous and not edible, works overtime keeping a supply of poke above ground. When you locate your poke patch, cut the shoots off near the ground, return a few days later for another batch. There are those who grow poke in a basement hotbed to provide this vegetable for year round use. I freeze the poke stems after blanching for my winter's use. However, I must admit I do not care for the frozen variety as those I've put up do not begin to approach the fresh source in taste.

The uses of poke are varied. As a green, it should be thoroughly cooked in two waters. Eaten raw, it will make you sick!

The shoots when young are an excellent vegetable served as asparagus or cut in small rounds, rolled in corn meal, and fried like okra. My family is enthusiastic about the poke stem okra. For another dish, peel off the outer, fibrous layer of the stem and cut in 3 or 4 -inch sections. Boil in salted water and serve with a pat of oleo. Presto! You have poke stems asparagus style.

The stems of the poke are a part of my dill crock. The stems must be peeled and rid of the outer rind which is bitter and tough. I layer the poke stems on dill, onion, garlic, hot peppers and wild grape leaves, separating this vegetable from the other pickling edibles. The brine is one part salt, ½ part vinegar and ten parts water. After allowing the mixture to set and ferment for a couple of weeks, pack into sterilized jars and seal.

I find one caution advisable to follow when preparing poke stems. Old timers say that when the stems begin to purple, the root's poison is going up the stem. Therefore, I use the stems that are green with very little purple coloring on them. An overdose of poke is a sure laxative. It is a good idea to cook poke in at least two waters to help rid the greens of any toxic substances.

A worthy meal can be made with poke and a cheese sauce to which green peppers and hard-boiled eggs have been added. Cook your poke in the two waters recommended earlier for five or ten minutes each. In a greased casserole put some poke, layer with sliced hard-boiled eggs and green pepper, poke layer, egg/green pepper layer and end with the poke. Make your cheese sauce by blending 6 T flour into 6 T melted oleo. Add 2 cups hot milk, add salt and pepper to taste. Stir in 1 cup grated cheddar cheese and pour over your layered casserole. Bake for 30 minutes at 350°. I expect this to be tried again and again!!

As a spinach-nutmeg vegetable, poke is delicious. Cook your poke in two waters. Melt a couple of tablespoons of butter and sauté some minced onion. Blend in 1½ T cornstarch in a cup of milk and add ¼ t nutmeg. Simmer with the poke and season with salt and pepper. This should take about five minutes. Add ¼ cup of cream, allow it to start to boil, remove from the heat and serve hot. I must say this is yummy, but I must also admit that two out of three times I had stomach cramps and bathroom problems following this dish. Could I have eaten too much? Consider yourself warned!

The ripe berries of poke were used by the Portuguese to give a darker color to their Red Port Wine. However, it also gave a disagreeable flavor to the wine. As a result, by order of the King, poke was cut before the berries formed. The green berries are reported poisonous. The ripe ones, therefore, I've used cautiously in jelly and as a food coloring for a cake icing. While I've had no ill effects, I suggest that one be aware that there is reason to be leery of this; there is a slightly bitter, disagreeable quality that lingers after the initial sweet taste disappears. Go sparingly of this fruit of the pokeweed... I mean, poke salad!



Spring Beauty



(*Claytonia virginica*)

FLOWERS: February - May

DESCRIPTION: Grass-like leaves, purplish cast and green. Terminal flower with seedpods left on stem, result of old blooms. Purslane Family.

HABITAT: Meadows, wooded areas, hillsides rocky ledges

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: February - May

USES: Vegetable, salad, potherb

One of the first spring wildflowers to show its five pale, pink-tinged petals is the spring beauty. This well-

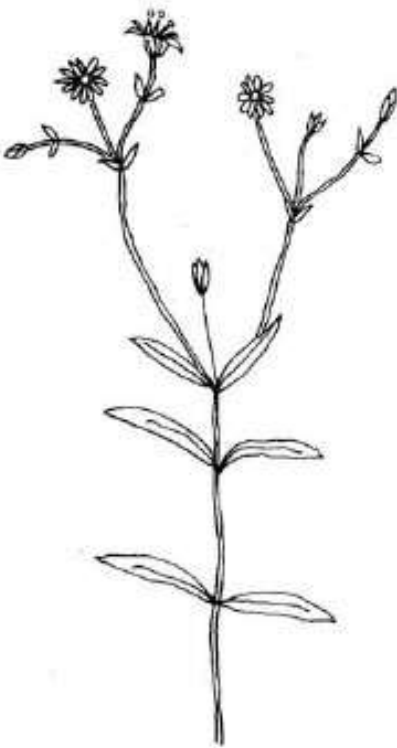
named plant provides a bounty of beauty in the woods as well as in open areas and yards. The early leaves are purplish and green and may be eaten raw in a tossed salad. Later, the leaves may be boiled in salted water and served with butter or lemon juice as a potherb.

The “fairy spud” is a tuber growing about three or four inches below ground. They range in size from 1¼ inch to two inches and grow in unusual shapes. They are enclosed in a jacket somewhat like our potato, only smaller. Hence the name “fairy spuds.”

These small potato-like tubers are prepared in a variety of ways, as you would any potato. My first experience was to boil the tubers for ten minutes, pop off the outer jacket and douse in butter. I was very disappointed in the musty taste and smell. My family really turned up their noses at this dish. Therefore, the rest of my efforts were geared to a single serving. Unless you find a rich, humus hillside, fairy spuds are difficult to gather in quantities, so small servings were to my liking. The small potato is good fried in oil with salt and pepper.

Since fields of spring beauty can be easily located, I've included this wilding in my spring camping menu. Students have eagerly dug up the underground treasure in a true spirit of pioneer adventure, but the amount *not* consumed would indicate that less active pioneer taste buds exist!

Personally, I have grown more fond of the tuber the more I've experimented with it. Nonetheless, it is a food source I will use as a camping novelty or in hunger emergencies, not as a vegetable choice.



Chickweed

(*Stellaria*)

FLOWERS: January - December flower. Each of the five petals deeply cut. Leaves in pairs, small, usually not stalked. Pink Family.

DESCRIPTION: Small flower. Each of the five petals deeply cut. Leaves in pairs, small, usually not stalked. Pink Family.

HABITAT: Lawns, gardens, around dwellings, waste ground, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: January - December

USES: Potherb, soup, casserole, salad

Chickweed is a remarkable plant. It has the ability to remain above ground all winter; it therefore yields an edible source year 'round. Chickweed is often a nuisance in the yard, but it pulls out very easily as the roots are shallow, thin and loose. Surprising that it survives all winter, isn't it?

The young tips of the stems are used raw in salad, boiled alone are a spinach substitute or added to a mess of spring greens. As a spinach, you may apply butter generously or season with bacon crumbs and vinegar after a short boiling period with only a small amount of water.

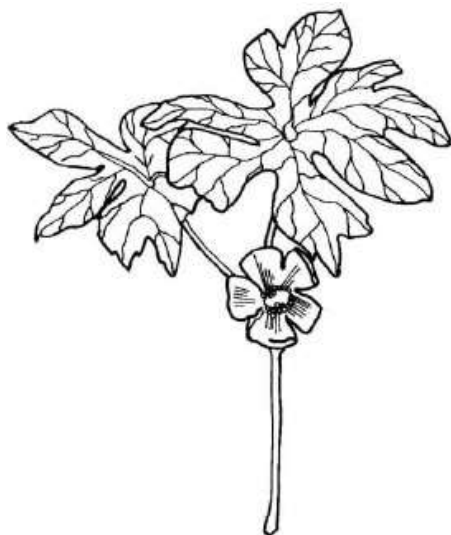
I've had very satisfactory results substituting chickweed in a spinach rice casserole. This is delicious and fancy enough for any dinner party. Add all of the following ingredients to a greased casserole: 1 cup bouillon, 1 cup water, 1½ t minced onion (wild, perhaps), ½ t salt, dash pepper, 1 cup fresh chickweed, ½ cup rice, ½ stick oleo, ¼ cup grated cheddar cheese. Bake at 325° for 45 minutes for a taste bud treat!

Chickweed also makes an interesting addition to a dish of scrambled eggs. Just add the chickweed to the egg batter along with 1½ T Durkee's dressing, salt and pepper. The result is scrambled eggs chickweed style.

One of the favorite ways to prepare chickweed for my family is to make a soup. Add a cup of chickweed to 4 cups of milk, 4 T chopped onion, 3 T cornstarch, 2 T butter, salt and pepper. It is delicious. Now, get the chickweed out of your yard and onto the table!!!



Mayapple



(*Podophyllum
peltatum*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Bare stem topped with large, palmate leaves. The one or two leaves look like umbrellas. Forked stem of the two-leaved plant produces a single flower. Barberry Family.

HABITAT: Low moist or dry open woods, thickets

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: July - August

USES: Fruit, pie, marmalade, jelly, drink

CAUTION: See page 207

Early spring finds the mayapple spiraling up to form a forest floor of umbrella plants. The plant has either one leaf or it forks midway on the stem producing two leaves. It is the double-leaf plant that flowers and produces the mayapple, or wild lemon as it is often called.

This is an easily acquired fruit. It gets about the size of a small lemon and falls to the ground. While the golden brown tones easily camouflage into the forest floor, once the plant is located, the fruits will be almost directly under it. The raw fruit has a thick flesh that surrounds the many seeds and is particularly sweet.

A chiffon pie made from the raw pulp was fairly good, but takers were not overly eager. The pie was greatly improved by first cooking the mayapple, putting the pulp through a colander and using the same recipe as follows: Cook 40-45 mayapples for 1½ cups of pulp. Add ¾ cup sugar to pulp and let stand 20 minutes. Soften 1 envelope unflavored gelatin in ¼ cup cold water then dissolve the mixture in ½ cup hot water. Cool and add the mayapple mixture, 1 T lemon juice, and a dash of salt. Chill until partially set. Fold in a package of whipped cream, pour into a graham cracker crust and chill thoroughly.

Mayapples make a very tasty greenish-yellow marmalade. Cut off both flowering and stem end of the mayapple and quarter into a large pan. Simmer for 15 minutes and use a colander to get the pulp. For two cups of thick pulp, add ½ package of Sure-Jell and 2¾ cups of sugar. When the mixture boils and thickens, pour it in to jars and seal.

A good jelly which is excellent to serve with venison or mutton is made by adding green food coloring and mint with the mayapple for a mint jelly.

A good drink may be had by peeling and chunking the mayapples into a large bowl. Add sugar and let the mixture set to draw out the juice. Mash the mixture and run it through the colander. Now, add a jigger of this liquid to a glass of lemonade for a pleasant iced beverage. Other friends prefer to add half of the juice to a half portion of grape wine and I must admit it's not bad that way at all!

The rest of this attractive plant is reported to be poisonous and best left alone. The Indians used the root, however, as a medicine.

It's a shame to see this fruit fall and rot. The animals seem to enjoy the mayapple, why not you and I?

Peppergrass



(*Lepidium virginicum*)

FLOWERS: February - November

DESCRIPTION: Branching stems with flowering tips that grow, leaving seedpods on stem. Leaves are toothed. Mustard Family.

HABITAT: Fields, pastures, prairies, yards, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Scattered statewide

COLLECTION: February - November

USES: Salad, potherb, soup

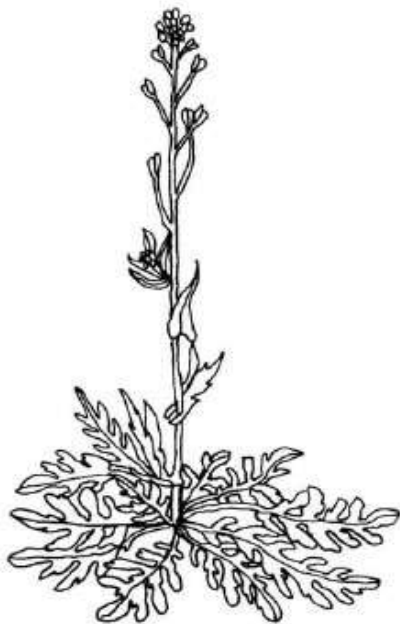
There is little reason to question the name of this plant after eating it. It has a hot, peppery twist I find appealing.

My front yard supports this plant and allows it to be a regular on our dinner table. I use the peppergrass leaves, stems, flowers, seedpods and

all in a green salad to be eaten raw, or wilted with a leaf lettuce. Although I prefer peppergrass uncooked, it may be added to the greens pot.

The seedpods are also good sprinkled on soups or used in a vinegar-oil salad dressing. In the fall, the dried peppergrass stems and pods can be easily gathered. (They enter the aesthetic area and make an attractive addition to a dried arrangement.) By running your fingers down the stem, both seeds and pods pop off into a box. These reddish seeds can be obtained by winnowing the pods out. Now, I have stated the dried peppergrass is easy to pick. Let me assure you that does not go for the winnowing process. This is a very slow, time-consuming process when done by hand. I spent two hours getting a little more than enough to fill the space of a quarter. Nonetheless, the seed is worthy of some effort. One gentleman suggested I check a mill about sorting out the seeds. I'll remember that. Only wish I'd thought of it earlier!

Shepherd's Purse



(*Capsella Bursa-pastoris*)

FLOWERS: January - December

DESCRIPTION: Rosette structure of leaves has a single stem, flowering at tip and leaving seed pods on stems as tip grows. Mustard Family.

HABITAT: Fields, pastures, lawns, roadside, railroads

Located: Statewide

COLLECTION: Leaves, February - April; Seeds, June - September

USES: Salad, potherb, vegetable, breadstuff

Shepherd's purse differs from peppergrass in the branching and pod structure. Shepherd's purse has heart-shaped or old-fashioned shepherd's purse pods while the peppergrass pod is more round. Peppergrass has several branches

off the central stem while shepherd's purse sends a single stem up from its rosette. The two are, however, interchangeable in preparations.

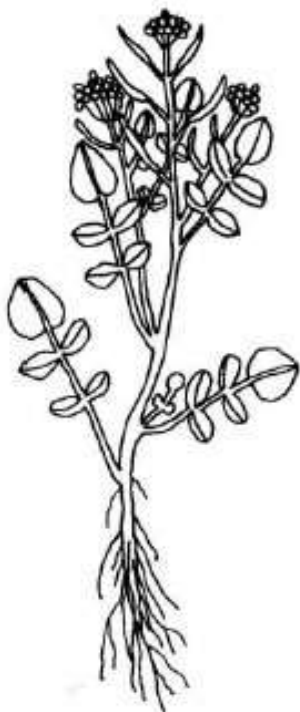
The young leaves, flowers, and seeds may be wilted, made into slaw or used in a tossed salad. The peppery twang of the green leaves has given it another name of "salt and pepper."

Shepherd's purse may be boiled as a potherb or tossed in a bacon grease, crumbs, vinegar and water solution and simmered.

The seeds of this plant were gathered by Indians and ground into a meal for breads.

It is reputed to be an excellent check against internal hemorrhaging and hemorrhoids. For this medicinal tea, stir a large teaspoon of leaves in a cup of boiling water for half an hour. Drink cold, two or more cups a day. Good? Oh, well, it's good for you!

Water Cress



(*Nasturtium*)

FLOWERS: April - October

DESCRIPTION: Branched, bushy. Thick, juicy stem, tiny white flower cluster (flat) on stem end. Leaves opposite and divided. Mustard Family.

HABITAT: Springs and spring-fed streams

LOCATION: Southern and central Missouri

COLLECTION: January - December

USES: Salad, soup

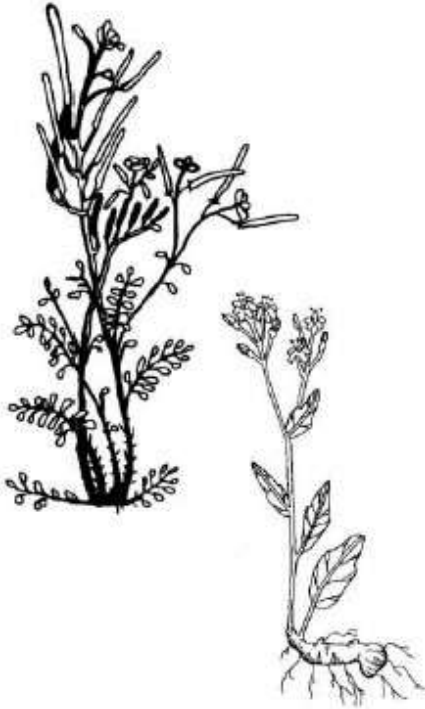
Watercress is a delicacy to be sure. Fond memories of wilted watercress, which came from a nearby spring, are part of my growing up. My mother would fry two strips of bacon, crumble them over the water cress and wilt the mess by bringing to a boil equal amounts of bacon grease, vinegar and water. She added 1 T sugar and a dash of salt to the boiling mixture and poured it immediately over the fresh greens.

These are fascinating stories of the effects of water cress ranging from the ability to expel worms, kill the unborn child, act as an aphrodisiac, or good for a deranged mind. I tend to agree with the last effect as I'm sure that anyone eating watercress has a more pleasant outlook just commenting on how good it is.

Some cautions are worth mentioning when picking watercress. If there is question that the water in which it grows might be contaminated, it is advisable to soak the cress in water with a water-purifying tablet. Also, be sure you can recognize poisonous water hemlock and avoid that plant in your picking.

As avid canoe floating enthusiasts, we often pick a small handful of watercress to have with our "camp salad" that evening. It adds a peppery zing to the meal.

Watercress can be used raw in salads or sandwiches, or it can be cooked as a potherb. I do not recommend the latter. Angier gives a great soup recipe for watercress. Add 1 cup chopped watercress to 3 cups milk which has been heated with 1½ t salt. Simmer for five minutes. Beat at last minute before you serve and add another cup of milk or cream which is allowed to heat. Top with a dash of paprika and a sprig of cress. Also good when ½ cup is added to your regular scrambled eggs.



Bitter Cress

(*Cardamine pennsylvanica*, *C. parvi flora*)

Spring Cress

(*Cardamine bulbosa*)

FLOWERS: March - June

DESCRIPTION: Basal leaves, alternate on smooth stem. Small, 4 petal flower. Mustard Family.

HABITAT: Wet woodland, wet meadows, around springs, moist ledges

LOCATION: Southern and central Missouri

COLLECTION: March - June

USES: Salad, horseradish substitute

These cress plants add another flavor tingle to your wild salad bowl. The spring cress has a hint of horseradish, but both are welcome

and interesting as edible wildings.

I generally use a vinegar-oil salad dressing for my wild salads, but any dressing of your choice is suitable.

The bulb-like base of the spring cress stem may be grated, mixed with vinegar and used as a substitute for horseradish.

Gooseberry



(*Ribes missouriense*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Simple, palmate leaf, irregular toothed. Woody stems with spines. Flowers dangle downward. Saxi-frage Family.

HABITAT: Rocky or open dry woods, thickets

LOCATION: Statewide, except southeast

COLLECTION: Leaves, March - May; Fruit, June - September

USES: Fruit, pie, cobbler, jelly, tea

Just mention gooseberries to me and the saliva begins to flow. This is due to the fact that I love the sour, tart berry and am enthusiastic about all of the products made from it. To enjoy a gooseberry while it is green,

one must hold the berry in the mouth, slowly breaking it open and allowing adequate saliva to accumulate and dilute the sour flavor.

The puckery berry, for my taste, is best when picked still green. The gooseberry hangs on a stem, which generally pulls off with the berry. A hairy beard or whiskers remains on the flowering end of the berry. Both stems and whiskers must be plucked off before using in pies or cobblers. One must truly work for his supper if gooseberry pie is on the menu. Although time consuming, the result is *par-excellence!* After stems and whiskers are removed, put washed berries in a pie shell. Add 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ T flour, 1 T oleo, and top with the upper crust. Bake at 400° for 45 minutes to an hour, or until golden brown.

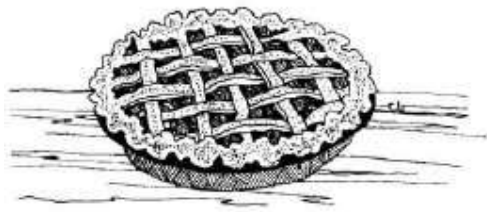
The ripe reddish or purple berry does not have the tangy tartness and is preferred by some in the pie. If ripe berries are used, add only $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of sugar.

The delicate, pink colored jelly made from the green gooseberry is ambrosial food on hot breads. Gooseberry jam is equally good. My mother kills two birds with one stone when making both jelly and jam. She covers the berries with water and cooks for ten minutes or so. Then she pours off most, but not all, of the juice liquid. This is made into jelly by returning it to the heat, adding a small amount of Sure-Jell and a cup of sugar per cup of liquid. The remainder of the juice and berries was run through a colander to get as much of the pulp as possible. Again measure cup for cup with sugar, but add no Sure-Jell in jam. When the liquid slithers off the spoon and begins to gel, pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Gooseberry leaves may be used raw in a tossed salad or slaw. The young dried leaves may be used for making tea. Pick the young leaves and allow three months to dry. A tea is made by adding 1 t crushed gooseberry leaves to one cup of hot water and allowing it to steep for several minutes.

Another name for this fruit is feverberry, so called because it is said to help break a fever by crushing 1 t of the berries and adding that to a cup of hot water.

Whatever the name – feverberry, current, or gooseberry – it's not great, it's FANTASTIC!!!!



Shadbush, Service Berry, Juneberry



(*Amelanchier arborea*)

FLOWERS: March - May

DESCRIPTION: Small tree, white blossoms appear before leaves. Leaf is oval and toothed. Rose Family.

HABITAT: Rocky, open woods, steep wooded slopes and bluffs

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: June - July

USES: Raw, jelly, pies

I include a page on this tree simply to point out a valuable lesson I learned the hard way. The first spring I photographed the beautiful flowers of the

March-blooming shadbush, I vowed to return for a sample of the promised fruits in June. I had read that the berries turn from a red to a purple wine-color when ripe. Although I thought I knew where the trees were located, I couldn't find any of them. In the spring, the shadbush blooms before any of its leaves are out and very few of the other trees have leafed out. The berries occur during peak foliage, which enables the tree to be easily hidden and causes confusion in locating. I missed a whole year because I had not carefully pinpointed my shadbush's location. Do so! The raw berries are rather bland, but make a good jelly. It takes a lot of berries to make a pie. I suggest a pie made in an old potpie pan.

Steyermark tells of preparing the fruits into a paste and drying it. Try the recipe for Persimmon Leather in this book (page 40). The Indians mixed the dried leather with corn meal for a bread.

Hawthorn



(*Crataegus... variousspecies*)

Family: Rose. Steyermark lists 50 species; see him for location, description.

COLLECTION: August - September

USES: Jelly, butter

The hard, small fruits of Missouri's state flower, the hawthorn, are very hard to cut open. They are $\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter and leave a golden stain on the fingers.

My first attempt to make jelly was unsuccessful. I eliminated the Sure-Jell, feeling that the hawthorn was like the apple with plenty of pectin. Whether it does or not, I know not, but the jelly

took a long boiling period to become akin to taffy candy. For my next batch I used pectin and got a beautiful golden-colored jelly.

I experimented with two Hawthorn Butter recipes. Although my preference is the second recipe, both are good. Cook the fruits and mash through a colander to get the pulp. To make Molasses Hawthorn Butter, put these ingredients in a large Dutch oven or saucepan: 2 cups of hawthorn pulp, 2 cups sugar, $\frac{3}{4}$ t cinnamon, $\frac{1}{4}$ t cloves, juice $\frac{1}{3}$ lemon, 2 T molasses. Boil slowly until the mixture bubbles and pops, as well as slithers off the spoon; pour into sterilized jars.

Wine Hawthorn Butter is made by the same procedure above using these measurements and ingredients: 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups hawthorn pulp, 3 cups sugar, 1 t cinnamon, $\frac{1}{4}$ t cloves, dash allspice, $\frac{1}{3}$ lemon, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Rhine wine. Serve with cattail or reindeer lichen biscuit.

Strawberry



(*Fragaria virginiana* and *F. vesca*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Three-part leaflets, sawtoothed. Rose Family.

HABITAT: Wooded slopes along streams, open slopes, prairie, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: May - June

USES: Berry, jam, shortcake topping, tea

A hiker's delight is to walk into a wild strawberry patch! A field nibble is both thirst quenching and tastebud arousing. Sometimes sweet,

sometimes tart, the wild strawberry is always good. An even greater thrill is to locate a patch big enough to provide a wild strawberry shortcake or tarts and still have enough to make jam!!!

The wild strawberry ranges from the size of a pea to thumb-size. With both size and quantity often small, I frequently make the small quarter-sized tarts out of my favorite piecrust recipe and place a tablespoon of berries which have been stemmed and sugared in the tart. This I call Again Strawberry Tart. You'll want it again and again.

In August when the leaves begin to dry, pick them for a tea. The leaves may also be picked in the spring and dried. The leaves are a high source of vitamin C and were welcomed in the spring by the settlers. The dried leaves require 1 t per cup for a tea, and a fresh cup requires 4-5 fresh leaves. Let them steep for 3-5 minutes.

A good recipe for jam is to place equal amounts of crushed berries and sugar in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently, until the sugar melts. Boil rapidly for 10 to 15 minutes or until mixture begins to thicken. It is not recommended to fix quantities larger than four cups in one batch. Success will be more likely by making two batches of three or four cup quantities.

All in all, this wilding goes the same places her larger domestic cousin goes.

For an even greater tart or shortcake, top with whipped cream or ice cream - from a wild cow, of course!!

Raspberry



(*Rubus occidentalis*)

FLOWERS: April -June

DESCRIPTION: Three coarsely toothed leaflets, bottom whitish. Stems whitish (rubs off), purple canes, stickers.

HABITAT: Edge of woods, fields, roadsides, thickets

LOCATION: Statewide except lower southeast Missouri

COLLECTION: June -July

USES: Jam, jelly, berry, pie, syrup, tea

The purplish-white canes of the raspberry are an instantly recognizable friend in the spring. As the young shoots are forming, the peeled sprouts make a field nibble for a hungry hiker.

The berry ripens in June and is much the same color as the blackberry, as this is the black raspberry. The fruits turn from green to white to red to a purple-black.

It is tough to find a better berry to enjoy fresh with cream and sugar or as a topping with your cereal. It makes a superb pie by adding fresh berries to a piecrust, cover with sugar, add a dash of salt, 2 T flour and a dab of butter. Top with another crust and bake at 400° with a tantalizing aroma as an accompaniment.

The jelly and jam made from the raspberry are praised highly. Cover the berries with water, simmer 10-15 minutes, drain off most of the liquid for jelly. Use a cup of sugar per cup of raspberry juice. Again, it is best to cook no more than three or four cups in any one batch. For each batch, use a package of Sure-Jell (or any pectin additive). Boil this in a large pan as it foams high and can easily spill over. The remaining juice and berries should be run through the colander for jam. Add equal amounts of sugar but add no pectin in jams. When the mixture has boiled until it slithers off the spoon, pour into sterilized jars and seal.

A delicious syrup can be made as if you were preparing to make jelly. You do not add pectin nor do you cook as long as jelly. The syrup is heavenly on a batch of cattail pollen pancakes, or just plain ones for that matter!

The young leaves of raspberry, when dried, make a tea substitute that is especially good when mixed with dried orange peel or lemon peel. Fernald and Kinsey did state that one might be cautious of the fresh tea as the tea

made from fresh leaves might be harmful. I decided not to try it! Dried leaves are good. Add 1 t crushed leaves to a cup of water that is boiling and steep for 3-5 minutes.

A wine may be made by crushing the berries and straining into a crock. Add a pound of powdered sugar per quart and stir occasionally for the next three days. The settled liquid is siphoned off and added to two parts sherry. It is ready in about two weeks, the *New England Farmer* claims. However it doesn't taste bad immediately, and a year later it is even better!

A tasty liqueur is made by filling a bottle half full of raspberries. Add one cup sugar dissolved with a small amount of water. Fill with a good whiskey and allow this to be forgotten for 3-6 months. Strain off the liquid and bottle.

The young raspberry shoots can be cut and eaten, making a good field nibble.

Blackberry



(Rubus pensil vanicus and several other species)

FLOWERS: April - June

DESCRIPTION: Star-shaped, ridged stems erect from ground. Leaves in threes, stem thorny, berries white, red, then blackish when ripe. Rose Family.

HABITAT: Fencerows, roadsides, hillsides, thickets, meadows, pastures, prairies **LOCATION:** Scattered statewide

COLLECTION: Leaves, April - May; Berries, July - August

USES: Pies, berry, cobbler, jelly, jam, drink, liqueur, tea

I look forward to blackberry picking every year despite the fact that one must conquer briars and chiggers in exchange for the delicious berries entwined. I try to locate ripe berries after July 4th and can sometimes pick as late as August. When picking blackberries, long sleeves and blue jeans are *musts* to ward off the briars. My husband is convinced that chiggers and blackberries are interchangeable words. Consequently, a good dusting of bug spray is recommended before you begin to pick. Our two daughters are good berry pickers and provide several pies for us each year.

Before raving over the cooked wonders of these berries, let me assure you that the raw fruit is scrumptious. A perfect way to start the day is to serve blackberries on a morning cereal, or plain with cream and sugar. They are equally delicious when served with ice cream, in a milkshake or in a fruit salad.

I believe it is impossible to serve blackberries in a way that I would not like. Our favorite, however, is a hot and bubbling blackberry pie served with a scoop of ice cream. For a pie, fix your pastry in the pie pan. Wash the berries and fill the crust almost to the top. Cover the berries with sugar, then sprinkle a tablespoon of flour over the top along with a small amount of salt. Drop several butter pats on the top and cover with another crust. I recommend baking the pie on a cookie sheet to protect the oven, because the pie often bubbles over. Bake at 350° for almost an hour. The first bite is delicious and every bite thereafter improves!!!

Blackberry jelly is another must on the wild list. To make jelly, cover the bottom of a Dutch oven or large saucepan with an inch of berries and put water over them. Let this simmer at a slow boil for ten minutes or so and pour off the liquid. A good rule of thumb when making jelly is to cook no more than four cups of jelly at a time since the mixture boils and foams up during the cooking process. Measure the liquid and add a package of pectin per four cups of liquid. When the juice begins to show signs of boiling, add equal cups of sugar per cups of juice. This will boil and start to thicken. One jelly test is to let a spoonful of jelly flow off your spoon back into the pot. When the last drops begin to collect before falling off and sort of slither off the spoon, the jelly is ready to pour into sterilized jars. Another test is to drop a dab onto a saucer. If it hardens and doesn't run, the jelly is ready. I usually let the jelly set for a while and spoon the whitish scum off the top before putting into the jars.

When making jelly, save some of the juice for syrup. Boil equal parts of blackberry juice and sugar. Do not add the pectin when syrup is your goal. When the juice and sugar begins to thicken, pour into a jar for pancakes.

Jam made from these blessed berries is fit for gods. I often use my Mother's double trick. Fix the berries for jelly, pour off most of the liquid, but leave some of the juice. To make jam, put all of the berries and the small amount of juice in the colander to get out as much pulp as possible. Return the pulp and juice to the stove with equal amounts of sugar. Pectin is never used in jam. It takes a little longer for the mixture to thicken, but when it does you have a treat.

A blackberry liqueur worth fussing over is easily fixed. Put blackberries in the bottom half of a bottle and add raw or granulated sugar that has been mixed with a small amount of water. Cover all of this, filling the remainder of the bottle with a good whiskey. Allow it to set for at least three months. Strain out all liquid and pour into a dark bottle.

In early spring before and during the flowering stage, the young leaves may be picked and made into a tea. I prefer to dry the leaves thoroughly and save for winter. To serve, put a scant teaspoon of crushed leaves in a cup of boiling water and allow it to steep for three or four minutes before straining out the leaves. Sweeten with honey or sugar.

I've been toying with drying the fruits to use in muffins, pancakes, cakes, etc. This would make a neat treat to take backpacking. My experiments have been successful, although they are very seedy. I've dried the berries both on a screen and in my oven. I left them in the attic on an old window screen for a couple of months. To dry in the oven, place the berries one layer deep on a cookie sheet and leave in a slow oven, 200°, for two days and nights. The dried berries are not very tasty, as is the raisin, but if I were to have to survive on my own means for a long period of time, it would be worthwhile.

There are many recipes for the use of blackberries in puddings, cakes, cobblers and the like. Any good cookbook will offer you a variety of ways in

which you might prepare these small yummys. I've managed to try several of these varieties, but find the pie so much more to my family's liking that other baked goods seem to be a waste of the blackberry.

Part of the fun in picking blackberries is that you eat one raw berry for every two or three that makes its way into your bucket. Blackberry stains the fingers rather badly and makes tattletale evidence on the mouth as well. I have often used old, soft socks on my hands when picking. These are a bit like a mitten, but large enough to allow the fingers to move and pick easily.

Regardless of the hardships in picking, the pies from these berries are like the gold medal for the marathon... the endurance and physical tearing are forgotten with the victory and the prize!!!

Dewberry



(*Rubus flagellaris*)

FLOWERS: April - June

DESCRIPTION: As blackberry except stems trail or sprawl, tips root. Rose Family.

HABITAT: Rocky open woods, thickets, prairies, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: June - August

USES: Same as blackberry

The main difference between the dewberry and blackberry is the stem. Dewberries have a trailing or sprawling stem whose tips take root. The blackberry stem is erect, often arching, but the ends do not root. Some people seem to think the dewberry is larger and juicier than the blackberry. I won't dispute this. The fruits are used in exactly the same way as the blackberry which makes it a food from the heavens!

Black Cherry



(*Prunus serotina*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Leaves with rounded teeth, fruit in grape-like bunches, dark when ripe. Rose Family.

HABITAT: Woods, along streams

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: July - August

USES: Jelly, syrup, liqueur

CAUTION: See page 208

The wild black cherry, or rum cherry, obtained the name because of its color and the fact that the juice was an excellent additive to rum in making a cherry drink. To make a cherry liqueur, four parts of cherries to one part water is simmered for 15 minutes. Strain the mixture and for every cup of liquid, add equal amounts of sugar, bring to a boil, pour into sterilized jars and seal for future use. One part of juice may then be added to two parts of rum, whiskey or brandy

Another method used in making a liqueur is a recipe called cherry bounce. A friend of mine makes this with any wild fruit and the results are superb! Fill a bottle half full of cherries, add raw or melted sugar and fill with whiskey. About 1 or 1 ½ cups of sugar seems to be the right touch of sweetness for us. This mixture should be allowed to set for at least two months and a year of aging is much better. Strain in a plastic strainer, rather than a metal one, to avoid discoloration and serve after your next dinner!

These cherries also make a delicious dark red jelly. Cover the cherries with water and simmer for 10 minutes or more. Strain off the juice and measure it. For each cup of liquid add 1¼ cups of sugar and a package of pectin per every four cups. A trick when making jelly is to measure the liquid and add pectin before returning to the stove. Just as the liquid begins to boil, add the sugar and stir almost continuously until the mixture thickens and the last couple of drops off the spoon slither together and drop like thin jelly. Allow the mixture to cool slightly, spoon off the scum created by the pectin and your jelly is ready to bottle and seal or cover with paraffin.

An excellent syrup can be made from wild cherries. I have even used a batch of "already used for jelly making" cherries for my syrup. Cook the cherries as directed for jelly. When you have poured off the juice for jelly, place fresh water over the same cherries and boil gently for 15 minutes. This second water makes a syrup that is a pleasant surprise for pancakes. To make syrup, add equal amounts of sugar and a dab of butter to your juice, return to the stove and boil for just long enough to notice a thickening of the liquid. Serve hot over pancakes and bottle the extra syrup for another day's treat.



The cherries, which hang down much like a cluster of wild grapes, turn from white or greenish to red before reaching the dark purple or blackish color when ripe. They are about the size of a pea and rather sour to eat raw. They are not difficult to pick and the results are certainly worth the effort.

Kentucky Coffeetree



(*Gymnocladus dioica*)

FLOWERS: May - June

DESCRIPTION: leaves alternate, doubly compound, 8-12 leaflets. Egg-shaped, entire, sharptip, darkgreen above and below. Pea Family.

HABITAT: low or rich woods, base of bluffs, along streams

LOCATION: Scattered

COLLECTION: Winter - Spring

USES: Coffee, nut

The pod of the Kentucky coffeetree is a large, attractive case housing 6 to 9 oval brown seeds. The shell around the seed is hard, making them difficult to crack open. The first time I obtained some of the pods, I

pried the pod open, took out the seed and attempted to bite it, almost ruining a tooth. Realizing that there was a shell around the seed, I got a hammer and proceeded to the cement steps for pounding. The slightly rounded seed squirted out from under the hammer as though it had been greased! Retrieving it from across the driveway and noticing that the bean was still intact, I attempted to hammer at it again with an instant replay of the above proceedings. Next I took careful aim and held onto the bean. It took several HARD whacks to finally break it open. The raw bean somewhat resembles the taste of raw peanuts.

I did know that was certainly a lot of work, so I set out to find an easier way to get the bean out of its shell. I tried soaking in water, freezing and roasting. Bonanza! Roasting at 350° was the answer. The shells pop open slightly and can then be opened easily with a nutcracker. The roasted beans are a reasonably good nut, especially when salted or soaked in salted water solution and rebaked. When coffee is the goal, bake an additional two hours at 200°. This should produce a dark brown bean that, when ground, makes a decent cup of caffeine-free coffee. My biggest problem was not to let the grounds become too fine as it clogged up the coffeepot strainer and produced nothing but a mess.

The tree holds onto the pods,
dropping them in early spring.
Prior to that time, you need to
be part squirrel to climb out on
the limb or have access to a
cherry picker!



Black Locust



(*Robinia pseudo-acacia*)

FLOWERS: May - June

DESCRIPTION: Medium tree, compound leaf with 7-19 alternate leaflets. Spines on branches at base of leaf stalk. Pea Family.

HABITAT: Dry or rocky up land woods, along streams, pastures, thickets, wastelands

LOCATION: Statewide, probably every county

COLLECTION: May - June, flowers; Fall - pods

USES: Fritter, tea, vegetable

CAUTION: See page 208

The black locust is a tree to use with caution. Many parts of the tree are poisonous, including the seeds and bark, but the flowers are reputed to be edible.

The blossoms make a dandy fritter for breakfasts, luncheons or with dinner. Prepare a medium thick pancake batter and dip the flower cluster into it. Fry this in hot fat until golden. Absorb as much of the grease as possible on a paper towel, squeeze with either lemon or orange juice and roll in powdered or granulated sugar.

A tea is made by pouring boiling water over the flowers and allowing it to steep. It wasn't because the taste was bad that my intake was a small dose, but rather the fact that one authority questioned the poisonous qualities of such a tea. I'm still here!

New Jersey Tea



(*Ceanothus americanus*)

FLOWERS: May - November

DESCRIPTION: Low shrub, oval and alternate leaves, dark green above, pale below with three ribs. Flowers on long stalk, airy pom-poms. Buckthorn Family

HABITAT: Upland rocky prairies, glades, open woods, thickets, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Summer

USES: Tea

New Jersey tea has played an interesting role in our American history. It was one of the unsung heroes of the Boston Tea Party. This protest move by the colonists over a tax on imported teas resulted in a boycott of those teas and local substitutes were found. One of these was the New Jersey tea.

The freshly picked leaves make a fair tea. To brew a cup of fresh New Jersey tea, pick 4 - 5 leaves and wash thoroughly. Pour one cup of boiling water over them and allow them to steep for 3-5 minutes. Most tea drinkers prefer to gather the leaves while the plant is still in bloom and allow them to dry.

Leaves may be dried in a variety of ways. Lay them out on a cookie sheet and leave on an unused kitchen counter (are there such creatures?). Or, place the leaves in a bag and tie up near the ceiling for a few months. They may be placed on newspapers and stored in the attic. After a long, thorough drying period, put the leaves into a jar to store until needed. As I'm writing this I'm drinking a cup of New Jersey tea I gathered last summer after a float trip on the North Fork River. To make the tea with dried leaves, put a healthy teaspoon of crushed leaves in a tea strainer and pour one cup of boiling water over it allowing this to steep for the 3 - 5 minutes recommended by most tea sources. It has an amber color and is not at all unpleasant when aided by honey or sugar. I can, however, understand the pioneers' desire for an occasional cup of the imported stuff!!

American Basswood



(Tilia americana)

FLOWERS: May-July

DESCRIPTION: Lopsided, heart-shaped leaves. Alternate. Dark green above, light green below. Flowers dangle from a stalk, which has narrow, leaflike wing. Linden Family.

HABITAT: River and stream banks, rich woods, slopes

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: May-July

USES: Tea, chocolate substitute, vegetable

The flowers of basswood have such a sweet fragrance it's no wonder the tea is so flavorful. There is a large basswood in the corner of the school playground where I teach, so my supply is large. The flowers may be used fresh or dried for tea.

Indians were supposed to have eaten the buds in spring, both as a thirst quencher and cooked as a vegetable.

The fruits grind up to make a chocolate substitute. The problem is in preserving it. Make only enough for your present needs, as the chocolate won't keep.

Honewort



(Cryptotaenia canadensis)

FLOWERS: May - August

Descriptions: Tall stem, leaves 3-parted, toothed. Tiny white flowers. Seed pods about $\frac{1}{3}$ inch long. Parsley Family.

HABITAT: Rich, rocky woods, ravines, low ground in wood valley, streams.

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: March - June

USES: Potherb, salad

The early leaves and stems are a fine addition to your wild salad. The stems may also be cooked as an asparagus-like vegetable by boiling for 4 - 5 minutes in salted water and dousing with butter.

It is reputed to have an edible root. Although I have not tried the root as yet, several sources indicate that when boiled the root is eaten with oil (perhaps butter?).

Queen Anne's Lace

(*Daucus carota*)



FLOWERS: May - October

DESCRIPTION: Lacy flat flower clusters. Leaves finely cut, fern-like. Hairy stems. 3 bracts, forked, below flowerhead. Parsley Family.

HABITAT: Fields, waste grounds, roadsides, railroads, thickets

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: March - June, leaves; November - March, roots

USES: Vegetable, seeds, salad

CAUTION: See page 212

This lacy flower with fern-like foliage is the mother of our present carrot. It is suggested in some books that the plant may be poisonous; other readings point out the similarity of wild carrots and the poisonous water hemlock. In checking the two plants, I've a clue for identification. Wild carrot has many small hairs on the stem, while the stems of the water hemlock are smooth and hairless.

The roots dug in spring are fair; later in the summer they become woody and inedible, although they give a hint of flavor to a stew. Just remember to dip out the carrot root before serving.

The seeds have a strong carrot taste and may be dried, stored in a spice jar, and used as a caraway seed replacement on rolls and breads, or as a seasoning in your favorite soup or stew. To dry the seeds, clip off the flowering umbels after they have dried on the stalk and already formed the "bird nest" shape, which gives the plant one of its common names. Allow the seeds to continue drying inside and then rub out the seeds.

The young leaves may be added to a tossed salad or used in vegetable soups.

Another interesting meal is Wild Carrot Fritters. Dip the flowerheads in a thin pancake batter and fry until golden.

Deerberry, Squaw Huckleberry



(Vaccinium vacillans)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Branching shrub, small oval, alternate leaves. Small bell-shaped flowers, dangle downwards. Heath

Family.

HABITAT: Acid soils of sandstone, chert, open rocky woods, ridges, glades

LOCATION: Central and southern Missouri

COLLECTION: June -August

USES: Jelly, fruit

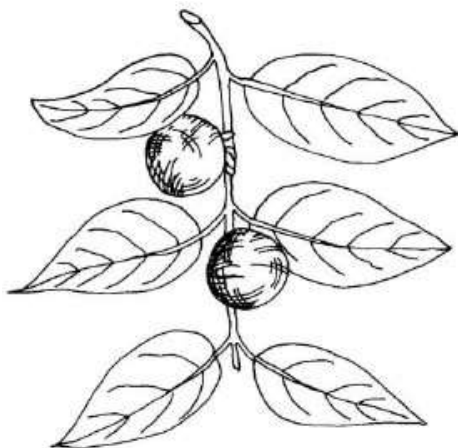
The deerberry is so called because the white-tail deer enjoy the twigs and buds of this shrub. Another name is Squaw Huckleberry. Suppose it is an Indian dish?

This tiny berry requires time to find and gather. It is a sour fruit when eaten raw, with very little pulp inside the thick skin. Consequently, time seems to pass more slowly since you don't pick three and eat one as with other berries. It has been suggested that the deerberry has a taste of gooseberry-cranberry-grapefruit combination of sour, tart and bitter.

I personally find the fruit distinctive and unique. I, too, fail to appreciate the warm fruit, but when chilled and served cold it becomes passable. I prefer, however, the jelly.

The yellow-green jelly is made by boiling the fruit for about 10 minutes in just enough water to cover it. Pour off the liquid and measure. For each cup of juice, add equal amounts of sugar and 1 box Sure-Jell per four cups. Boil until the mixture slithers off the spoon. Remove from the heat, skim off the white foam on top and pour into your jelly jars. This is a real dinner party treat!

Persimmons



(Diospyros virginiana)

FLOWERS: May - June

DESCRIPTION: Alternate, oval leaves on short stalks. Top dark green, pale on bottom. Bark like alligator hide. Cream flowers, bell shape. Ebony Family.

HABITAT: Rocky or dry open woods, borders of woods, prairies, fallow and abandoned fields.

LOCATION: Scattered but not in far northern counties

USES: Fruit, breads, pies, candy, jelly, butter

A thoroughly ripe persimmon is very high on my favorite wild fruit list. While it has a taste unlike anything I can describe, it is a fruit fit for the gods!

Persimmon trees have a habit of multiplying rapidly and ultimately becoming a grove. While I'm all for more of these groves, trees and locations do vary considerably in the quality of fruit produced. I have a "favorite" tree that consistently produces large, sweet fruits.

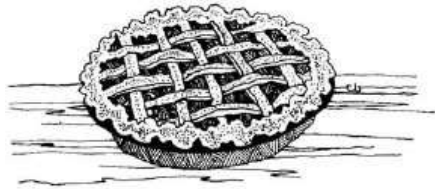
I enjoy eating the fruits as I pick it, but it must be soft and mushy to be good. The green persimmons have the same effect as alum, making your mouth shrivel and pucker. The time of ripening is a variable. Sometimes the fruits are sweet with no hint of the bitter quality long before the first frost, while others retain the bitterness even after frost and long into the fall.

To pick persimmons, I take my family along. My husband shakes the tree and the girls and I gather up the fallen orange goodies from the ground. Talk about manna from heaven!!!!

Persimmon pulp — raw fruit run through a colander — can be used in a variety of ways: cakes, breads, cookies, puddings, tortes and pies, to mention a few. A very good pie for Thanksgiving is to use your favorite pumpkin pie recipe and substitute persimmon pulp for the pumpkin. It is delicious and very similar to the pumpkin.

Another excellent use of this "sugar plum" is as a torte which is a recipe from Missouri College of Agriculture. Mix 1 cup bread crumbs, 1 t baking powder, 1 t salt, 1½ cups persimmon pulp and ½ cup nuts. Beat 2 egg yolks with ½ cup sugar. Add 4 egg whites which have been beaten stiff. Fold in a teaspoon of vanilla and pour into a greased shallow pan. Bake 30 minutes in a 325° oven. This may be served hot or cold.

Euell Gibbons' recipe is outstanding for Persimmon Nut Bread. Sift together 2 cups flour, 1 t soda. Cream 1 cup sugar, 1½ sticks oleo and mix in 2 well-beaten eggs. Add the creamed



mixture to the dry ingredients, add 1 cup persimmon pulp, ½ cup of nuts and bake in 2 small loaf pans for an hour at 325°. Heavenly!!!

I often freeze the pulp for later use. A unique way to use the pulp, however, is to spread it out very thinly on a cookie sheet and dry it in a 250° open-door oven for an hour or slightly longer. The leather, as it is called, must be allowed to dry completely. I learned from experience that it molds when stored in a sealed jar prior to being completely dried. It may then be cut into small squares and used as a fruit "jerky" for backpack trips. This also becomes a delicious addition to cookies as a raisin substitute or to candy as a date substitute. A favorite at Christmas time is Persimmon-Nut Candy Log. Boil 2 cups of sugar, 1 cup evaporated milk and a dab of butter to form a soft ball. Add 1 cup Persimmon Leather. Boil to hard ball stage, remove from heat, cool, add 1 cup hickory nuts or black walnuts and 1 t vanilla. Beat and roll in waxed paper. Cut off slices as desired.

A good Persimmon Butter is made by using the recipe which follows: Combine 2½ cups persimmon pulp, 3 cups sugar, 1 t cinnamon, 2 small cinnamon sticks, ¼ t cloves, dash of allspice, juice of ⅓ lemon and ⅓ cup Rhine wine. Boil until thick.

While persimmon jelly is good, Persimmon Butter is so much better, I rarely make the jelly. The whole fruits may be preserved by packing tightly in a fruit jar and surrounding each layer of persimmons with a layer of sugar until the jar is full. Seal this jar and save for special people. My first batch of persimmon preserves were a failure; they brandied! I did add a small amount of water to the layers of sugar. They were delicious on ice cream, but the gnats were so bad around the jar that they were saved only by placing in the refrigerator. Would that more of my failures were like that!!

The green leaves gathered through mid-summer make a passable tea, while the dried leaves make an even better one. Both fresh and dried, the tea is an excellent source of vitamin C. Another beverage obtained from this plant is a coffee-substitute made from the seeds. Roast the seeds for 4 hours in a low oven, 225°, or overnight at 200°. Grind the seeds for caffeine-free coffee which I find quite good.

Because I love the persimmon bread and torte too well, I need to freeze lots of pulp. Consequently, you can bet that this fall I'll be competing with the opossums and raccoons!!!

Plantain



(*Plantago rugelii* and *P. lanceolata*)

FLOWERS: April - October

DESCRIPTION: Basal leaves, parallel-appearing veins. Flower stalk holds terminal spikes. Plantain Family.

HABITAT: Dry soils, pastures, lawns, fields, gardens, waste grounds, roadsides

LOCATION: Scattered statewide

COLLECTION: April - August

USES: Potherb, salad, tea

Plantain is a common plant which makes a nuisance of itself in yards and gardens. There are two most common varieties. One has a narrow, long leaf while the other has a rounder, wider leaf. The narrow leaf, or English plantain, has a white flower cluster while the

common plantain sends up green flower spikes. Missouri has eleven different plantain species listed.

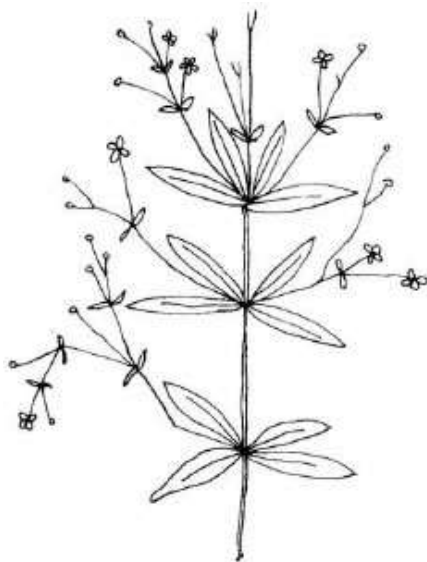
The leaves, when young, give another wild lettuce addition to a wild salad. Since the plant multiplies easily, new growth may be found over long periods of time. The young leaves are also a welcome addition to your greens mess. However, since plantain doesn't need much cooking, nor much water when fixing, it is best when fixed alone. The best method is to "Chinese it" — to boil it quickly in very little water until tender yet still a bit crunchy.

A tea may be made from steeping several leaves in a cup of boiling water for 3-4 minutes. The taste is pretty bad, but it is high in vitamins A and C. As a matter of fact, I've read that a strong tea made from plantain leaves is soothing, was considered helpful for diarrhea, bedwetting and ridding the body of worms. Applied externally as a poultice, plantain tea was used to aid healing of insect bites, snakes bites, boils and the like.

Kirk states that the seeds may be eaten parched or ground into a meal. I've found the raw seed not unlike wheat germ in taste, which I assume may be the reason behind one of the nicknames, Indian Wheat.

Rid your yard of plantain by eating heartily in the early spring! I rather imagine it would not thrive so if the leaves remained tender longer.

Bedstraw



(*Galium species*)

FLOWERS: May - July

DESCRIPTION: See Steyermark for species variation. Madder Family.

HABITAT: Valleys, rich or moist woodland, thickets, waste ground, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: March - July

USES: Potherb, salad, coffee substitute

Some interesting facts can be dug up concerning bedstraw. Some sources indicate it was the sweet smelling hay used in the manger at Bethlehem. An herb doctor of days gone by recommended that stout women include bedstraw in their

diet to encourage a lanky, thin figure. It was once used as a spring tonic to purify the blood and the root was used as a hair dye.

Whatever its past, bedstraw makes a potherb worthy of dieting. With that as a main course, I feel certain I'd lose weight, too!

On the other hand, gathered quite young and added to a tossed salad, bedstraw is an asset.

While I haven't tried the coffee, a substitute beverage is reportedly made from the roasted seeds of cleavers or goosegrass variety. This species makes a tangled jungle in moist woods, sprawling all over. The "hitch-hiker" seed clings easily to man or beast. Coffee made from this seed is said to have an aroma much like that of regular coffee. Perhaps this isn't so strange as bedstraw belongs to the same botanical family as coffee.

The species I've enjoyed most in a fresh tossed salad is the small, delicate species that is found thick on the woodland floor - *Galium concinnum*. This is an ornamental plant that is attractive when dried and used in winter arrangements.

Black Haw Berries



(*Viburnum prunifolium*, *V. rufidulum*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Large shrubs or small trees with opposite leaves which are entire or finely toothed, oval or oblong shaped. Flowers form large clusters on ends of branches. Fruits are usually elongate, some-times spherical.

HABITAT: Rocky stream banks, base and edge of bluffs, thickets, rocky or dry woods

LOCATION: *V. prunifolium* - statewide; *V. rufidulum* - Ozark region of southern and central

Missouri

COLLECTION: August - September

USES: field nibble, sauce possibility

The only use I have made of this edible is as a field nibble. The seeds are large with a sweet, dry pulp. This berry when ripe has a bluish or blackish coloring.

Fernald and Kinsey indicate that the cooked pulp has little appeal, but experiments are in order for adding a tart fruit to it. Apple-black haw berry sauce, anyone?

Elderberry



(*Sambucus canadensis*)

FLOWERS: May- July

DESCRIPTION: **Shrub**, lacy white flower umbels. Leaves, 2-5 pairs of toothed, opposite leaflets, single leaf at stalk tip. Honeysuckle Family.

HABITAT: Open woods, thickets, streams, fencerows, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: June - July, flowers; July, green berries; August - September, berries

USES: Fritters, muffins, wine, pickle, pie, fruit, jelly syrup, tea

CAUTION: See page 215

I tend to associate elderberry with *Arsenic and Old Lace* and therefore consider it a plant to approach with CAUTION. That, coupled with stories of the stems being poisonous to some, gave even more reason to proceed cautiously.

I now am an avid elderberry supporter. The flower heads, which form large umbels, are easily gathered. The first year of my wild foraging, I was out picking elderberry flowers when my daughter exclaimed, "I tell you what, this family's DOOMED!!!" That quote is a family favorite and somewhat akin to the "CHARGE!" at a football game!

The entire flowering umbel can be dipped in a batter and fried for a tasty fritter. To fix the fritter, make a batter of 1 cup flour, 1 t baking powder, ½ t salt, 1 cup milk, 1 egg, ¼ cup corn oil. Dip the washed and dried flowers in the batter and place in a hot skillet. I snip off the heavy stems after I've put it in the skillet. Fry on both sides, drain on a paper towel, squeeze orange or lemon juice over the fritter and roll in powdered sugar.

The flowerlets can be rubbed off and used in pancakes, waffles or muffin batters, which adds an enticing flavor to the end result. Use any batter recipe and add the flowerettes from 6 clusters to it. Regardless of whether you use the entire flowering head or the individual flowerettes, I'm sure you'll like all recipes. The flowers also make a tea which is prepared by drying the flowers and boiling them in a cup of hot water for 3-5 minutes.

A wine, called Elderberry Blow Wine, also made from flower heads, is an interesting endeavor. Place $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon elderberry flowers in a 3-gallon crock. Add 10 cups of sugar and fill the crock with water to within 1 inch of the top. Float a cake of yeast on top. Let this set for nine days. Add one pound of raisins to each of three-gallon jugs. White raisins give a golden wine, dark raisins a darker wine. Fill the jugs with the liquid from the crock. Cap with cotton wads and let settle for six months. Strain off the clear liquid and place in dark bottles.

As the flowers die, the little green berries begin forming. These may be pickled in your dill crock with other wild pickling goodies such as redbud pods, cattail shoots, poke stems, greenbrier, purslane, live-forever. Check page 7 for dill crock.

The berries become purple and ripe in August and September. Again, these are easily picked by breaking off the entire umbel. The fresh berry has an unpleasant taste, which seems to be remedied by adding lemon juice or vinegar when baking in a pie. A good pie recipe: Make a crust and put in a pint of elderberries that have been stemmed and washed. Sprinkle in 1 cup sugar, 1 t salt, 1 t flour, 1 t lemon or vinegar juice, 1 T water and place several dabs of butter on top. Cover with a top crust and bake at 400° for 45 minutes or until browned.



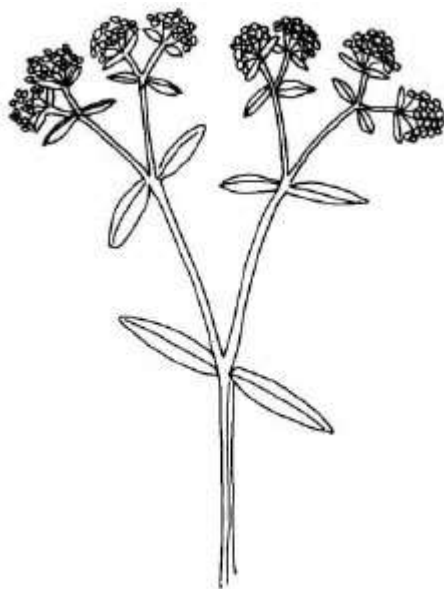
Drying takes out the disagreeable flavor. The berries dried on an old screen frame and turned occasionally produce a supply for the entire winter with no problem. They are delicious as a blueberry substitute in a muffin, pancake or waffle. Elderberry muffins are something else! Cream 1 cup sugar and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oleo. Add 1 cup milk, 1 egg, 1 t nutmeg, $1\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour, $\frac{1}{8}$ t salt, 2 t baking powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ t cinnamon, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup wheat germ, 3 T molasses, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried elderberries. Stir only until blended, bake at 425° for 20-25 minutes in muffin pan.

The dried berries may be added in a cake batter, used in chutney, or in a pie.

The jelly is delicious either straight or with sumac or wild grapes with it. To make the jelly, cover the berries with water and boil gently for 10 minutes. Pour off the liquid and add equal amounts of sugar and one package of pectin per four cups. A syrup is made if the pectin is omitted and the liquid allowed to thicken slightly.

The most famous of elderberry wines is made from the ripe berries.

Corn Salad



(*Valerianella radiata*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Branching stalk, small terminal flowers. Base of opposite leaves attach directly to stem. Basal leaves in spring. Valerian Family.

HABITAT: Waste ground, field borders, roadsides

LOCATION: South and central Missouri

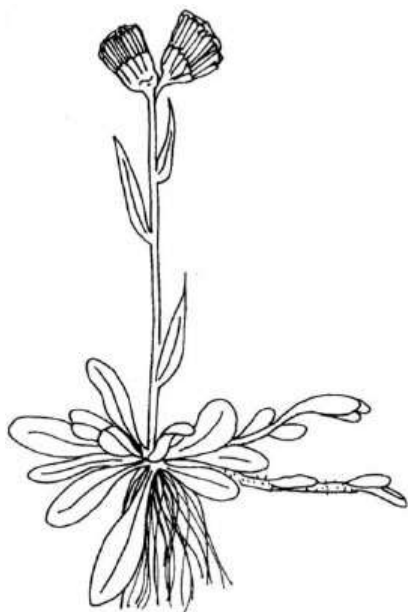
COLLECTION: April - June

USES: Salad, vegetable

Corn salad comes at a time when the earth is ripe with wild salad material and, therefore, is often passed over during the selections. It is mild and a fitting addition to the salad bowl. It is an easy addition, but small and doesn't add fast bulk - so what else is new? A wild salad might as well have a large source of ingredients. Don't overlook this the next time. I often try to see how many different plants I can find to go into the salad.

I have tried corn salad boiled as a vegetable and can recommend its continued use in the tossed salads!

Pussy Toes



(Antennaria neglecta)

FLOWERS: April - June

DESCRIPTION: Basal leaves, whitish and parallel-like veins, plantain-like. Flowerheads have antennae. Composite Family.

LOCATION: Statewide

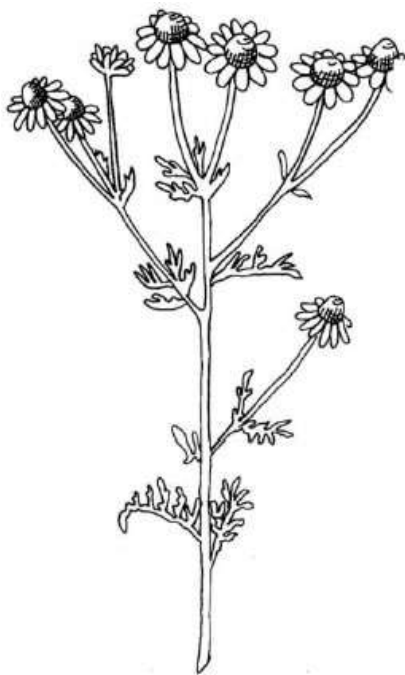
COLLECTION: April - June

USES: gum

The young stems and stalks of this ground cover may be chewed to get a nourishing gum substance. While I cannot get "gum," the juice is agreeable to suck and chew.

Two nicknames, Ladies' Tobacco and Indian Tobacco, gives reason to think that the plant might well have been a tobacco substitute. As a non-smoker, I'll not try.

Chamomile



(*Matricaria chamomilla*)

FLOWERS: May - October

DESCRIPTION: Fernlike, short leaves, daisy-like flower. Composite Family.

HABITAT: Wastelands, roadsides, railroads

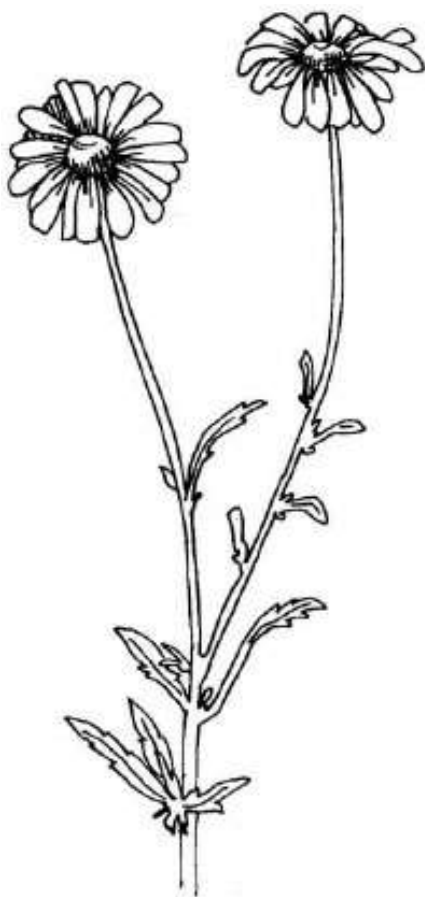
LOCATION: St. Louis area

COLLECTION: May–October

USES: Tea

This plant resembles a small daisy with its flower, but the leaves are more fernlike and airy. A tea made from it may be used to treat an upset stomach or a fever. Dried leaves and flower heads make a medicinal-tasting tea. It is intended to aid digestion and act as a “calming” influence on the body.

Ox-Eye Daisy



(*Chrysanthemum*

leucanthemum)

FLOWERS: May- August

DESCRIPTION: Stalked, lobed basal leaves, stem leaves alternate, thin, toothed. Flower has white rays radiating from the yellow center disc. Composite Family.

HABITAT: Fields, meadows, pastures, prairies, roadsides, waste ground

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: May- August

USES: Salad

The daisy is one of my favorite flowers. The beauty of it alone would be reason enough to justify its existence. The white petals are pretty additions to a salad, and the leaves in the salad are attractive with their deeply cut lobes.

Fernald and Kinsey reports the odor of the plant is such that the taste for the leaves must be an acquired one. I found them very passable in the early summer as a single taste and most acceptable in a mixed wild salad.

yellow-flowering edibles

Bellwort



(*Uvularia grandiflora*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Plant flowers, pushes up stem, which appears to be "sewed" through leaf base. Leaf bright green above, downy below. Lily Family.

HABITAT: Low woods and along streams

Located: Most counties except far southwest and tip of southeast

COLLECTION: March - April, shoots; Fall - Spring, roots

Bellwort is a beautiful plant whose leaves encircle the stem at the leaf base. The yellow flower forms a seedpod much resembling a bell-

shaped wort.

I've fixed the young shoots as an asparagus-type vegetable in early spring. The shoots should be picked early as they get tough and stringy later. I find most vegetables are best when cooked in boiling salted water for several minutes and doused with butter. I realized how religiously I do this when one of my daughters said, "Mom, all vegetables taste a lot like butter, don't they?"

I have used these plants sparingly so as not to endanger their propagation.

The roots look like long bean sprouts joined at the top with a few new growth shoots which seem to be present for the following year's growth. The real job is to wash and clean the tightly packed roots in preparation for cooking. The roots have an edible center, with a string-like cord that makes a most unattractive appearing dish. The nutty-flavored roots must be nibbled off this core, making one work for his supper. I place this in my emergency-food-only category.

Fernald and Kinsey state that a diet drink is extracted from the roots. My experiments proved the liquid from the roots to be very bitter, unhelped with sugar, honey or syrup. While it is not to my liking, I am confident that with this as my "diet drink" I would indeed lose weight!

Day Lily



(*Heemerocallis lilioasphodelus*)

FLOWERS: May - August

DESCRIPTION: Long, grass like leaves from root-stalk. Flowers form on tip of naked stem. Lily Family.

HABITAT: Escaped to fields, roadsides, railroads, moist wooded banks

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Shoots, April - May; Buds, June - July; Tubers, all year

USES: Salad, vegetable, soup, pickle, fritter

The daylily is another of Mother Nature's grocery stores. It has a variety of uses and all are excellent food sources. I grow day lilies both for their aesthetic beauty as well as for my eating enjoyment.

The inner young sprout, as it is coming up, may be used in a tossed salad or cooked as asparagus. Pull up the new growth by separating the leaves and cutting down deep with a knife. These tender inner leaves may be cut up in a tossed salad to add a tasty, unidentified morsel. On the other hand, the lower 3 or 4 inches may be placed in boiling water for no longer than two minutes and served with butter for a delightful and mild vegetable.

My favorite meal is the unopened flower buds. These, picked while still in tight bud and boiled for a couple of minutes, give a delicious vegetable that resembles the mildness of green beans with the slightly fibrous texture of asparagus. Of course, I coat them with butter before serving.

The opened flower makes a tasty fritter. There are several fritter recipes which are good. One calls for 1 cup flour, 1 cup champagne or beer, $\frac{1}{4}$ t salt, 1 T corn oil. The mixture should be stirred together and allowed to set 30 minutes before using. Fry in hot grease, drain on a paper towel and dust with sugar. Another fritter suggestion: 1 cup whole wheat flour, 1 t salt, 2 T soybean or vegetable oil, 2 eggs, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk. Dip the blossoms into the batter, then into hot oil. Drain and sugar.

The drooping, wilted flower of yesterday is an addition to be used in soups, stews or Chinese foods. It becomes somewhat like a gelatin mass and aids thickening.

Because these products are so good, it is wise to try to freeze or dry some for winter. In drying the buds, place them on an old window screen

and leave them in the attic until they become thoroughly dried. Later, seal the dried buds in a jar. I have a supply I've been using for three years now, so they do keep. When this vegetable is desired during off-seasons, let them soak for a few minutes in water before preparing as you would the fresh variety.

If you are wanting to try something different, place some of the unopened buds in your pickle crock along with poke stems which have been peeled, redbud pods, cattail shoots, daylily shoots, purslane stems and any other item worthy of pickling. To prepare this crock, layer each vegetable over a layer of dill, garlic, onions and red peppers. Place grape leaves (wild ones, of course, but either work) between each different vegetable layer. Cover the entire thing with a brine solution of 1 part salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ part vinegar and 10 parts water. Weight down the vegetables with a saucer to keep everything below the liquid. Leave for two weeks and put the finished product in a jar and seal.

Underground, the daylily produces small tubers, which can be dug up at any time of the year when the ground is not frozen. These tubers are good raw in a salad, giving a hint of radish. Cook the tubers for a few minutes and serve with butter for a very passable vegetable, although I prefer the raw uses. The cooked tubers may also be made into a potato salad as a potato substitute.

It is my understanding that daylily buds, crayfish, a few sassafras leaves and a bit of wild onion make a tantalizing wild gumbo. You can bet I'll try it.



I am much in awe of this remarkable garden escapee, the daylily! It is my family's favorite vegetable, wild or domesticated. With anything so good, I'm always amazed more use is not made from this storage pantry of Mother Nature's!

Purslane



(*Portulaca oleracea*)

FLOWERS: June - November

DESCRIPTION: Low growing, succulent stems, green or purple. Leaves nearly opposite, green and reddish. Flowers form in forked stems. Purslane Family.

HABITAT: Cultivated and wasteground, rocky areas, open places

LOCATION: Scattered statewide

COLLECTION: June - November

USES: Salad, potherb, pickle, breadstuff

Purslane enjoys gardens, flowerbeds, fields, waste areas. I have a large patch of purslane I'm encouraging in my backyard. This creeping plant is rarely taller than the lawnmower blade, although

it may branch out 6" or a foot. It is a thick-stemmed, fleshy plant whose tiny yellow flower blooms on sunny mornings.

The plant is gritty and needs to be thoroughly washed before cooking or using. Unlike spinach, purslane doesn't cook away. I have used purslane in a variety of ways and like it in all of them. More important, and possibly a more accurate indicator, my family also enjoys this vegetable.

Place the end tips of purslane in a tossed salad for a new taste and texture. Or, for a real treat, wilt the purslane. Fry a couple pieces of bacon and crumble them over the purslane. In a saucepan add equal amounts of the bacon grease, water and vinegar with 1 T sugar and 1 t salt. Bring this to a boil and pour over the purslane, causing it to wilt.

Purslane makes an excellent rice casserole. In a greased casserole, add ½ cup uncooked rice, 1 cup beef or chicken bouillon, 1 cup water, 1 T onion, ½ stick oleo, ½ cup grated cheddar cheese, 1 cup purslane, salt and pepper. Stir slightly and bake at 350° for about 45 minutes. This is elegant enough for the most delightful of dinner parties. The *piece de*

resistance, however, is what I call Party Purslane Casserole. Boil the purslane tips for 10 minutes, sauté 1 large onion in 6 T bacon drippings. Drain purslane and add the onion, 1 t salt, ½ t pepper, ³/₄ cup cracker crumbs. Beat in 2 eggs, one at a time. Pour into your greased casserole and top with ¼ cup cracker crumbs. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes. I'm hungry just thinking about it!

For another yummy dish, try a cheese casserole. Hard-boil 4 eggs. Parboil the purslane for a few minutes, then layer purslane and sliced eggs as many times as possible, ending with the purslane. Pour the following mixture over the layered vegetable: ½ stick melted oleo blended with 4 T flour and 2 cups of hot milk. Add a teaspoon each of salt, pepper, mace. Dump in a cup of grated cheese. Cook this until the mixture begins to thicken. After pouring this cheese sauce into the layered casserole, bake at 250° for 30 minutes. It is positively superb!

Purslane may also be fixed in an egg batter and fried. Roll the stems and leaves in flour, dip into an egg batter, then reroll in cracker crumbs and fry in a hot fat. This is delicious and could be used as a main course as you would morel mushrooms. My entire family accepts this wilding as a natural, domestic vegetable, thus giving it one of the highest ratings possible on my wild edibles scale.

The fleshy stems make a pickle, which I've added to my dill crock with other wild pickleables. I suppose you could use any pickle recipes, but I tend to make a dill variety with the wildings.

The small seeds form in a capsule that pops off its lid and scatters easily. These tiny seeds can be used by collecting the plants on a fine meshed screen, allowing the seeds to shake through into a collection box. The results are hardly worth the effort and energy applied, but it could be eaten if needed.

I feel very smug with my patch of purslane growing. I just hope it reproduces as easily as literature indicates; may it forever thrive in my backyard!!!!

American Lotus



(*Nelumbo lutea*)

FLOWERS: June - September

DESCRIPTION: Species vary, but roots enjoy water, leaf on top of water or submerged. See Steyermark for various species. Water Lily Family.

HABITAT: Oxbow lakes, ponds, river flood plains, artificial lakes and ponds

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Seeds, July - November; Roots, autumn - spring

USES: Rootstocks as vegetable; seeds for salad, breads, nibble

The lotus is another of those plants that singly provides a sufficient food supply. While I have done some experimenting with this plant, I still leave a great deal untried.

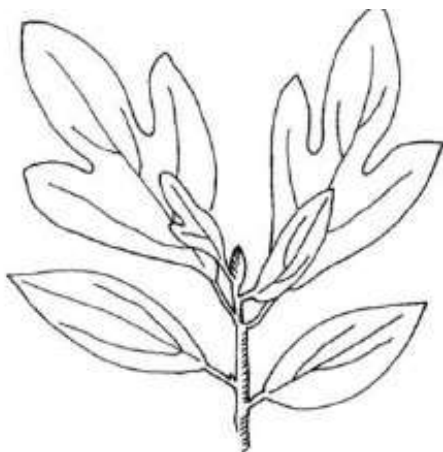
If you get the stalk and leaf as it is still unfolding, it makes a good vegetable when boiled in two waters for a short period of time.

The seedpods are easy to gather as they are above water. The immature seeds may be added to a salad. They are somewhat marshy or musty, but nonetheless acceptable. They may be eaten raw or cooked. After the seedpod dries, the seeds may be removed from the shell by roasting in a 350° oven. The seeds may then be cooked and ground as a flour substitute. The seeds may be popped like popcorn. It doesn't pop, but swells and looks more like the unpopped kernels. These kernels may either be eaten or ground and used to make bread.

If you are really ambitious, and enjoy scuba or skin diving, get the rootstock tubers in the autumn or spring. They may be baked as you would a potato.

The lotus, or water-chinquapin as it is also called, has long been used by many Indian tribes as a fresh vegetable in season or dried to be used out of season.

Sassafras



(*Sassafras albidum*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Green twigs. leaves are alternate and of three shapes: mitten, one-thumb mitten, two-thumb mitten. Laurel Family.

HABITAT: Border of woods, prairies, roadsides, railroads, fencerows, fallow fields

LOCATION: Central and southern Missouri

COLLECTION: Roots, all year, best in February or March; leaves, May - June

USES: Tea, jelly, soups, salad

CAUTION: The F.D.A. has banned the sale of sassafras tea. Saffrole has produced liver cancer in rats.

The sassafras is an important tree in America and is used for a variety of medicinal, nutritional and commercial uses.

The most popular use is sassafras tea made from the roots. The roots, when cut, create an unmistakable odor of root beer. It may be washed, boiled in water and served hot or cold, sweetened or unsweetened. I have yet to be disappointed in any of the aforementioned ways. A really neat feature of these roots is their ability to be reused several times for tea. Merely save them and put in the water to reboil. Or, you can simply leave the roots in a saucepan on the stove if you indulge in the tea daily. One word of caution: I discovered that when left on the kitchen counter in a plastic bag, they mold. How about placing the roots in the refrigerator until the next use?

Another word of caution here: I have recently read that herbal teas containing saffrole (from the sassafras root) have been banned by the F.D.A. Saffrole has apparently caused liver cancer in laboratory rats. Perhaps sassafras root tea should be eliminated from your list of outdoor edibles.

A sassafras jelly can be made by brewing a strong tea. Each cup of tea gets a cup of sugar and the liquid is boiled. I generally use half a package of Sure-Jell when



making wild jellies. This jelly is good as an accompaniment to wild meats and pork.

The young leaves, buds and twigs are used in soups and for making teas. Also, the young raw leaves add a spicy touch to a tossed salad. When dried, they are used in soups and creole dishes. Sassafras bark is used in making mulberry tea. The tender young leaves also make a tea, which I don't feel can compare well enough with the root tea to bother with. It was used as a spring tonic to thin the blood.

Spice Bush



(*Lindera benzoin*)

FLOWERS: March - May

DESCRIPTION: Shrub tree. Flowers before leafing. leaves, erect, pointed, thinner at base. Laurel Family.

HABITAT: Low or moist woodland, thickets, along streams, valleys, ravine bottoms, base of bluffs, wooded slopes

LOCATION: Southern and east-central counties

COLLECTION: March - May

USES: Tea, spice

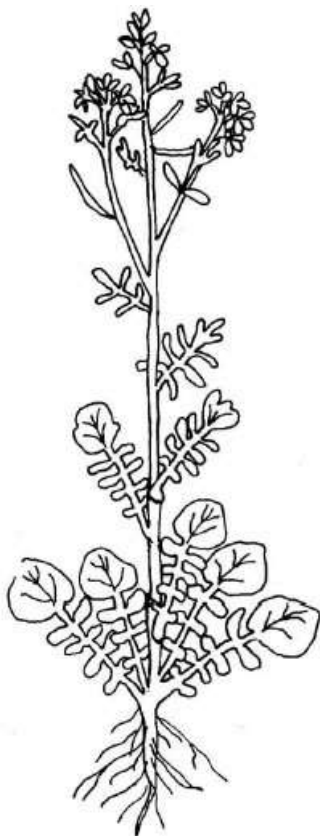
Early spring brings a beautiful but tiny yellow blossom which is closely attached to the twig of a spice bush. The noticeable lentiles on the trunk and branches, and the

spicy aroma when the bark is scraped, aid in making positive identification of this small shrub tree.

The early flowers, tips of twigs, leaves or bark may be chopped up and used for making a tea. Add 1 teaspoon of the spicebush mixture to 1 cup boiling water and steep for 3 - 5 minutes. This dark grayish tea is spicy and appealing to drink. Later, the berries may be used for making tea or dried and powdered as a substitute for allspice.

If your woodland hike has given you cotton mouth, chewing on a twig of spicebush will relieve the situation and let your mouth become moist again. If you don't believe me, try it yourself!

Winter Cress



(*Barbarea vulgaris*)

FLOWERS: April - June

DESCRIPTION: Leaves dark green, start as rosette, rounded lobe at the end of the leaf stem, 2 - 8 pairs small lateral leaves down stem. Mustard Family.

HABITAT: Fallow ground, cultivated fields, wet meadows, pastures, railroads and roadsides

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Greens, January - March; Flowers, April - July
USES: Salad, potherb, vegetable

Literature states that winter cress was the only green plant that could be picked to eat on Ste. Barbara's Day, December 4, thus giving its botanical identity.

This member of the mustard family is found all winter. The young plant's leaves may be picked in early spring or before for use in a tossed salad. Later the leaves become bitter and may need to be boiled in at least two waters when using as a spinach. The buds or flowers can be picked over several weeks until the flowers are fully opened. These are gathered and prepared as broccoli, boiling for a short period of time in two boiling water baths. I hardly know

whether to be glad or sad that most people do not use this food source. However, there is more than enough to share, the price is right, and for an afternoon of your time, you have an unusual vegetable for dinner. My favorite way to serve this vegetable is to cook and coat with butter. There I go with the butter-tasting vegetable routine again!!

I also found it good in a variety of other ways. Cook the flowers and serve with a cheese sauce, like broccoli. A great menu dish is to sauté 2 T onion in 3 T butter. Blend 3 T flour in 1 cup milk and add nutmeg, salt and pepper to taste. Simmer with the flowers for about 5 minutes and add ¼ cup cream. Bring to a bubble and serve hot. This second recipe is great with the leaves instead of the flowers. The young leaves are excellent in a rice casserole as a spinach substitute. Try the same recipe as listed for chickweed.

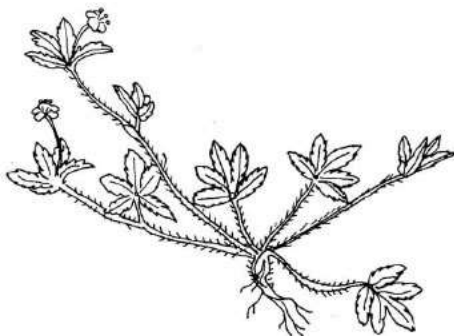
I sometimes think my children try everything I fix just for the novelty of telling teachers and friends the next day, "You should have seen what I had to eat last night!" At any rate, it brings in a variety of different vegetables to the table.

The seedpods may be used in making a hot mustard sauce, which can be served with Chinese food or wild game. Raw, the pods have a hot tang resembling the hot sauce of many Chinese dips.

I froze several packages of the greens to be used in any recipe as a frozen spinach substitute. The packages that I blanched were good, but those I fresh froze were bitter in cooking.

These leaves soften themselves in the pot with a mess of spring greens as they are an excellent potherb. The difference between salad and potherb is that salad may be eaten raw and potherb needs to be cooked.

Cinquefoil



(Potentilla simplex)

FLOWERS: April - June

DESCRIPTION: Leaves divided, 5 leaflets, sharply toothed. Stems trail on ground. Flowers 5 petals. Rose Family.

HABITAT: Open woods, prairies, fields, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Throughout

COLLECTION: March - June

USES: Tea

This common species, also known as five-finger, has a five-parted leaf and is a dense carpet as a ground cover. The flowers are yellow and the entire plant slightly resembles a wild strawberry plant whose leaves are 5- rather than 3-parted.

The early leaves may be dried and used as a tea substitute which is rich in calcium. The Shrubby Cinquefoil leaves are reported to be best.

Schaeffer states that cinquefoil is a drug source used to treat muscle spasms, while Hatfield gives it powers in witchcraft, love potions, as a mouth wash and gargle for sore throats, pimples and sunburn.

Already it is taking on qualities of the old herb medicine bottle that was good for whatever ails you.

As a tea, the taste is good and the color a golden tone. Just drinking it makes me feel protected from evil spirits and witches, cleared of sore throat and bad breath. Not only that, but the drop that slid down my chin might clear up the complexion!!!

Smooth Sumac



[*Rhus glabra*, *R. typhina*, *R.*

copallina, *R. aromatica*)

FLOWERS: May-July

DESCRIPTION: Shrub, leaves alternate and compound with leaflets of 9 - 27, toothed, pointed. Flower is upright cluster, greenish-yellow. Cashew Family.

HABITAT: Prairies, thickets, abandoned fields, borders of and woods openings, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Every county

COLLECTION: Summer, fall dried all winter

USES: Drink, jelly

Indian lemonade is made from the bright red berries of the sumac. To make this delicious drink, mash or bruise some berries in water, then stir or mash them for several minutes. Strain the liquid through cheesecloth several times to remove the fine hairs. These same hairs gave the drink its tangy flavor originally. Because this pink drink has a sour flavor resembling lemonade and was prepared by the Indians, it has been called Indian lemonade. Gibbons very cleverly called this cold, sweetened drink "Rhus jhus." Once I collected the berries too early in the summer and the drink, while somewhat bitter, tasted like a dry, unfermented wine. The juice from the sumac berries makes a jelly worthy of a meat compliment. This jelly is made by covering the entire heads with water and steaming for 10 minutes. Pour off the liquid, strain, add matching amounts of sugar, 1 box pectin per 4 cups of juice and cook until it slithers off the spoon. Remove from the stove, skim off the white, foamy top and seal in sterilized jars or cover with paraffin. One might note that boiling the berries renders a rather disagreeable flavor which is and was used for sore throats.



The heads of sumac berries may be picked and dried for winter use. A hot drink is produced by putting the berries in the top of a coffee pot and letting

them perk.

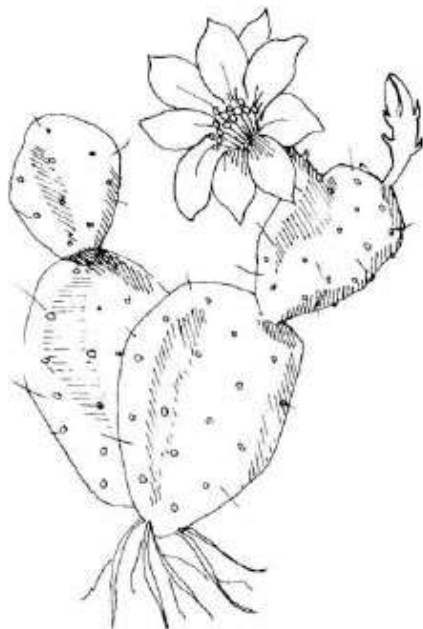
It might be wise to include the fact that only the red berries of sumac are edible; the sumac which bears white berries is said to be poisonous.

Fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*) is often confused with poison ivy. While there are leaves of three, the fragrant sumac leaf is more rounded and does not have the sharp leaf tip of poison ivy. The leaf, when crushed, is very fragrant and aromatic.

Berries of fragrant sumac are hairy in appearance, round and in tight clusters. They contain a high acidity, which makes them choice fruits for pink lemonade. They may be used in any of the above recipes.

Drive along any country road, and look along the superhighways. My guess is you can't miss finding this wild edible.

Prickly Pear



(*Opuntia compressa*)

FLOWERS: May - July

DESCRIPTION: Thick, flat, pad-like stems, spines. Cactus Family.

HABITAT: Rocky open glades, rocky prairies, fields, open woods, railroads

LOCATION: Southern and central Missouri

COLLECTION: Fruit, October - December

USES: Vegetable

One November when I was visiting my folks' cabin at Lake Wappapello, I ran across a large, fruit-bearing prickly pear. The fruit was a reddish brown and about the size of my thumb. I suppose the shape gives it a nickname of Indian Fig. I slit the end off, cut down the length of it and ate the pulp. It was

palatable, in no way disagreeable and not like a fig in flavor.

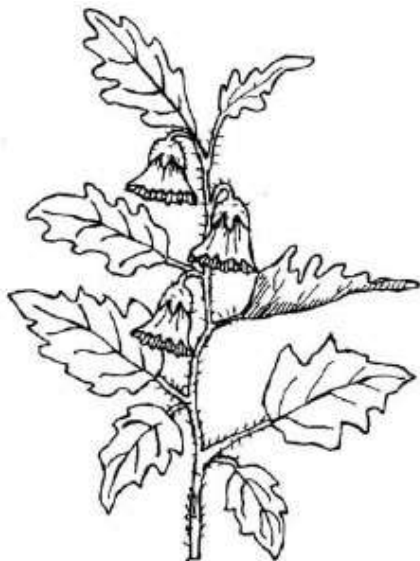
Fernald and Kinsey suggest that the thick leaflike stems of this cactus can be roasted in a campfire, peeled and eaten. It's slimy, but edible.

A word of warning about picking or handling the prickly pear. The thick stems appear to have a smooth surface around the obvious prickly points. Do not let the smooth appearance fool you! If you try to pick them by carefully placing thumb and forefinger in the clear areas, tiny, almost invisible prickles will plant themselves in your skin.

I have spent an hour removing these fine spines from the hand of someone who attempted such a feat. Once they're in your skin, everything you touch only serves to embed them deeper.

This plant is well named!!!

Ground Cherry



(*Physalis . various species*)

FLOWERS: May - August

DESCRIPTION: Bell-shaped flower in leaf axils. Leaf variety great in different species, but triangular in shape, usually alternate. Nightshade Family.

HABITAT: railroads, fields, waste ground, sandy soils, gravel bars

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: July - October

USES: Preserves, jelly, pie, fresh

The ground cherry has a sprawling ability, and while remaining 6" to 12" tall, can cover several feet on the ground. The yellow bell or funnel flower is replaced with a papery, shell-like

Chinese lantern. The shell becomes a tan color while the cherry inside is a greenish color, which turns to yellow then orange. The pod falls to the ground and continues to ripen. To use these "cherries," which are tomato relatives and no real kin to the cherry, husk them out of their inch-size shell.

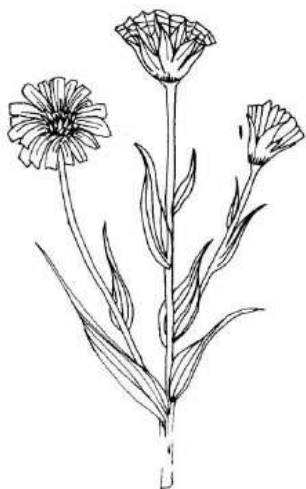
A jam or jelly, using 3 cups liquid to 3 cups sugar and Sure-Jell, can be made from the fruits. If you are making jam, remember you do not add the Sure-Jell, but you do need the pulp from the fruit. To get the pulp, run the fruits through a colander. The addition of lemon juice and peel makes an improved jelly. Preserves are made by boiling 3 cups sugar, 1 cup water, 1 lemon thinly sliced and 1 cinnamon stick for 10 minutes. Add a quart of ground cherries and boil until clear and the juice is thick. Let it set overnight, bring to a boil the next day and pour into jars. In Hawaii, Gibbons says, this is called Poha Preserves.

Gibbons uses the fruits for a pie, which he says combines the taste of apples and apricots. Make your crust for a 9" pie pan. Fill with 3 cups husked, washed cherries. Pour over a sauce of 1½ cup flour, 1 cup sugar, 1¼ t salt, 1¼ t cinnamon and juice of a lemon. Put on a top crust and bake for 45 minutes in a 350° oven.

The paper Chinese lantern
shell makes such a cute home
for the cherry tomato inside!



Goatsbeard



(*Tragopogon dubius*)

FLOWERS: May-July

DESCRIPTION: Leaves long, thin, both basal and alternate on stem. Flower and seed head dandelion-like. Composite Family.

HABITAT: Roadsides, fields, meadows, railroads, waste ground

LOCATION: Scattered in north, central and eastern Missouri

COLLECTION: Greens, early spring; Roots, autumn - spring

USES: Potherb, vegetable

My first experience with the yellow flowering goatsbeard, also called salsify, was along a highway (when we used to drive 70 mph) and I thought it to be the largest variety of dandelion I'd ever seen! A search through the wildflower books proved it to be the goatsbeard.

My first experience at fixing it to eat was not a successful one, either. I located the pretty flowering plant and dug up the root, which was about the size of a good dandelion taproot. I took my roots home, washed them, scraped and boiled them. They were extremely woody and inedible. I sucked out the juices and spit out the fibers. Further reading gave me insight into my problem. The roots are to be collected before the flowering bloom stalk shoots up or after the plant has faded out. This period is while the starch is still in the roots. One needs to stake out the spots for winter digging.

The roots may be fixed in a variety of ways. One way is to peel, cut the root into small chunks and simmer in water until a fork will stick into them easily, just as you would check on potatoes. Pour off the water, salt, pepper and serve with butter or cover with a white sauce. Angier suggests French-frying the root. To do this, cut the root lengthwise, coat with flour, salt and pepper mixture, dip into an egg and cream batter and roll in breadcrumbs. Melt oleo in a pan (about ½ stick per person to be served) and fry each root piece so that it is separated from the rest.

The early leaves go into the greens pot and the shoots may be boiled and buttered.

Dandelion

(Taraxacum officinale)



FLOWERS: January - December

DESCRIPTION: Rosette, leaves long, narrow, lobed. Yellow flower quickly followed with seed stalk. Composite Family.

HABITAT: Lawns, gardens, around dwellings, fields, meadows, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Leaves, March - April; Flowers, April - July; Roots, September - Spring

USES: Salad, potherb, coffee, wine, pancake, vegetable

Dandelions are praised by most wild edible authors as being king of the potherb set. Its availability and rich vitamin and mineral value make it a healthful, sought-after member for a spring greens mess. I have tried the dandelion in a number of ways and simply cannot find many ways I'm very enthusiastic about.

The bitter taste becomes more pronounced if boiled first in water that begins cold. As with milkweed, the bitterness is reduced by starting in boiling water and boiling in three separate waters for one minute each. Your yard variety, or any close-cropped dandelion, tends to be extremely bitter and tough. The best species are obtained from fields or roadsides where they have been "let go."

When gathered, as the first leaves are unfolding in the early spring, the raw leaf may be added sparingly to a tossed salad or tried in scrambled eggs.

Dandelion pancakes are made by adding the yellow flowers to a pancake batter. Gather the flower heads in the morning and carefully remove the bitter green calyx. The flower is made up of many small, thin individual flowers, which are stirred into the batter. If you have finicky eaters in your house, sprinkle the flowers over the individual pancakes. This way you may fix plain or dandelion pancakes at the same time. Waffles can be made the same way. I do like this method of using the dandelion.

Another use for the flowers is in making dandelion wine. Pick the flowers early in a morning with little or no dew. Again, exclude the bitter calyx and press the flowers into a crock and pour boiling water over them. For two gallons of flower heads, use one gallon hot water. Let the mixture set for three days. Strain, add rind and pulp of three oranges and three lemons,

three pounds of sugar and 1 ounce yeast. Cover this and leave for three weeks. After three weeks, strain, bottle and cap.

Underground, the root may be scrubbed, pared, sliced thin and cooked. I have found this not worth the trouble unless I were perhaps depending on survival foods. Another use for the roots is as a coffee substitute. Bake the scrubbed roots in a 275° oven for four hours, or until the roots snap and are dark brown inside. They make a hot, coffee-like drink when ground. This isn't good, but it isn't bad, either. The greatest problem is to grind the roots once they are baked.

If none of these ideas grab you, pick the seed head and blow three times. The remaining seeds are reported to tell time, future children, marriages, money in the bank and life expectancy. All it tells me is that the chances are good for a heavier dandelion population in that immediate area!!!

Sunflower



(Helianthus... various species)

FLOWERS: May - November

DESCRIPTION: Species vary, often rough stem, alternate, toothed leaves. Composite Family.

HABITAT: Waste and cultivated ground, low meadows, prairies, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide, especially northern and central Missouri

COLLECTION: Fall

USES: Breadstuff, coffee substitute

The Indians used this wild food to full advantage. Having a bit of Indian blood in me, the lure of the past was paramount in my using

the sunflower.

I found it best to cut the seed heads and allow them to dry indoors. Otherwise, if left on the stalk to dry, I lost most of the seeds to the birds.

My daughters are fond of the packages of commercial sunflower seeds. Soaking the dried seeds in salt water and roasting in a 300° oven gives a rather good nibble. The shelled portion is eaten and the outside shell discarded.

The shelled seed may be ground and used as a meal. To shell, use a rolling pin to crack open the nuts and drop them in a bowl of water. The seeds will sink while the shells float. Dry and roast the seeds for coffee or nuts. Angier suggests trying this Sunflower Cake recipe. Use 2 cups hulled sunflower seeds, 2 cups water, 1½ t salt. Put in a pan, cover and simmer for an hour, stirring occasionally. Place in a blender and puree. Cool the mixture, add 4 T cornmeal Mold into 2" cakes. Heat $\frac{2}{3}$ cup of oil in skillet and fry cakes on both sides.

Although the roasted, crushed, boiled shells alone may be used for coffee, the roasted seeds steeped in boiling water yield a better coffee.

Jerusalem Artichoke

(*Helianthus tuberosus*)



FLOWERS: August - October

DESCRIPTION: Tall plant, 5' - 10'; leaves oblong, rough, pointed tip, thick near stalk. Flowerheads 2" - 3", several on plant. Composite Family.

HABITAT: Moist thickets, border of streams, ponds, moist and dry woods, prairie wet spots, wasteland, railroads, roadsides

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: October - January

USES: Salad, vegetable, pickle

In *The Treasury of Botany*, W.B. Booth tells the story of the Jerusalem Artichoke. "Before the potato became plentiful... they were used in this country [England]... They were so common in London that even the vulgar began to despise them. They were baked in pies, along with marrow, dates, ginger, etc. and, being so plentiful and cheap, rather bred a loathing than a liking for them. Hence it appears that, as the culture of the potato extended, it gradually displaced the Jerusalem Artichoke..."

Our favorite canoe float is the North Fork River. The owner of the privately owned campgrounds at Athelia Springs has an 80-year-old man who helps him. This gentleman is an organic gardener who cultivates beautiful Jerusalem artichokes. He collects the irregular-shaped tubers in the fall and freezes them. He says to cook them as a potato - fried, mashed, or baked. They aren't at all bad in any of the ways mentioned if not cooked too long or too fast.

My choice for the tuber is in a salad. The Jerusalem artichoke may be grated raw along with a variety of other raw vegetables and mixed with mayonnaise for a delicious raw salad. The tuber is crisp, white in color and very good.

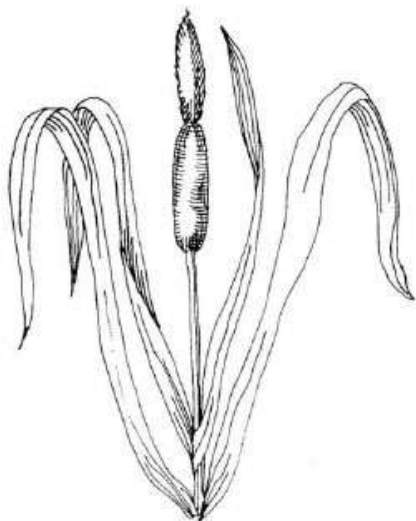
The tuber makes a good addition to your dill crock. Cut the peeled tubers into pickle-sized chunks. Follow the recipe for Dill Crock on page 8. After pickling, pack into sterilized jars tightly, cover with brine solution and boil in hot water for 20 minutes after sealing jars.

Who says ANYTHING
these days can be too
cheap or plentiful for our
liking?????



green-flowering edibles

Cattail



(*Typha latifolia*)

FLOWERS: May - July

DESCRIPTION: Long, thin, parallel-veined leaves. Green bloom spikes turn brown in midsummer. Cattail Family.

HABITAT: Swamps, muddy margins of ponds and streams, wet places

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Shoots, April - June; Spikes, June - July; Pollen, June - July; Roots, November - March

USES: Salad, vegetable, flour, jelly, pickle

The cattail is a remarkable wild food pantry all by itself. This tall, stately reservoir of food is a constant source of supply the entire year. Around March the cattail begins sending up new shoots from the roots. These whitish protuberances make a good pickle substitute. Later March finds the cattail shoots pushing above ground. These new shoots, preferably under 2' tall, have a central core that is white and an excellent, versatile vegetable. By spreading the outer leaves and reaching down the stalk, the core breaks apart from the root and pulls out easily. Eaten raw, it gives a hint of cucumber to a tossed salad. Boiled for a few minutes in salted water and doused with butter you have asparagus ambrosia! The Russians enjoy this vegetable, giving it the nickname of Cossack Asparagus. I also blanch and freeze some for winter's use because it is so good. The same part of the young shoots may be pickled and an entirely new taste is introduced.

As the shoots develop, green bloom spikes begin peeking out of a thin husk. The first year I began my cattail hunt I missed this stage entirely. This is surprising since the plants develop at different stages, giving it a six- or seven-week season. All stages, therefore, may very well be gathered the same day. Now that I've located what I'm looking for, I break off the top spike and prepare as I would corn on the cob. Place the spikes in boiling water and boil for about 5 minutes, drain and coat with butter. This vegetable, like most wilds, has a taste and texture uniquely its own. It resembles corn on the cob only because of the long plastic-like darning needle core that remains when the "tails" or "heads" are nibbled off.

I'm extremely fond of this vegetable, although wild food party friends

have had mixed opinions. The buds may be scraped off and used in a casserole as Scalloped Cattails. Scrape off 2 cups cattail flowers and put in a bowl with 2 beaten eggs, ½ cup melted butter, ½ t sugar and nutmeg, a ½ t also of black pepper. Blend well and scald 1 cup milk which is added slowly to the cattail mixture and blended. Pour the mixture into a greased casserole and top with ½ cup grated Swiss cheese and a dab of butter. Bake at 275° for 30 minutes. I've tried cattail in a variety of casseroles and like this recipe the most.

Cattail pollen biscuits are a big favorite with everybody who has ever tried them. The green bloom spikes turn a bright yellow as they become covered with pollen. I put a large plastic bag over the entire head (or tail?) and shake. The pollen is very fine, resembling a curry-colored talc powder. Pancakes, muffins and cookies are excellent by substituting pollen for wheat flour in any recipe. Try these Cattail Pollen Biscuits. Mix ¼ cup cattail pollen, 1³/₄ cups flour, 3 t baking powder, 1 t salt, 4 T shortening, ³/₄ cup milk. Bake, after cutting out biscuits, in 425° oven for 20 minutes. For an even more golden tone, you may add an additional ¼ cup of pollen. While experimenting with the pollen in various recipes, I made some Cattail Pollen Pancakes which my husband said were the best pancakes he's ever had. Mix ½ cup pollen, ¼ cup flour, 2 T baking powder, 1 t salt, 1 egg, 1 scant cup milk, 3 T bacon drippings. Pour into a hot skillet or griddle in dollar, 4-inch or super-size pancake amounts. They are better yet when topped with an elderberry syrup or when a few dried elderberries are added.

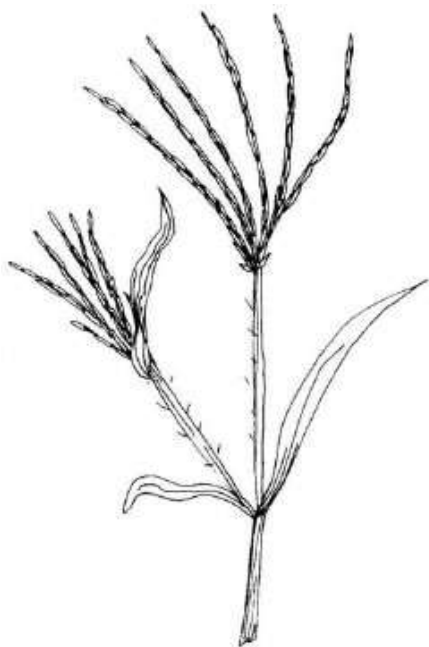
The roots offer the next course after the pollen. I found that it was foolish to refine the flour in the summer, because an all-day effort yielded only about ¼ cup flour. However, another root dig, this time in the early spring, was very successful. The rope-like roots are 6-8" deep and very plentiful. By peeling the outside layer and spongy layers away, the central core is left. This edible core is very fibrous and filled with a starchy material. By cutting the section into 4" pieces and allowing it to dry for a day, you can rub out enough flour for biscuits, pancakes, whatever is your choice. The taste is nutty or marshy, but it is good and acquired in a short period of time.

The remaining fiber sections of the roots can be placed in water so that the flour which is left may also be refined. Allow the slimy and white particles to settle, pour off the water and replace with fresh water. Repeat this process every hour or so for four or five cycles. This flour may be used wet, if used immediately in drop biscuits or cookies. I was unable to pour off all of the water without losing my wet-stage cattail flour. To this moist, somewhat slimy starch I added an equal amount of flour, 3 t baking powder, 1 t salt, 4 T shortening, generous ½ cup milk. Drop the biscuit onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in a 425° oven until brown. Chocolate chip cookies made with the same moist flour were equally good. Again there is a marshy taste. I merely used my favorite chocolate chip cookie recipe and halved the cattail and white flour, putting it into a 350° oven to bake.

I've also used the roots, after the first flour has been rubbed out, to make jelly. The jelly is made by boiling the roots for 10 minutes in enough water to cover them. For every cup of liquid, add equal amounts of sugar and a package of pectin per every four cups of juice. The jelly is delicious, somewhat resembling honey in both color and taste.

I'm truly surprised more use isn't made of this fantastic natural pantry!!!!

Grasses



(Cramimeae)

Foxtail Grass (*Setaria glauca*), Crab Grass (*Digitaria sanguinalis*), Goose Grass (*Eleusine indica*)

FLOWERS: June - November

DESCRIPTION: See Steyermark

HABITAT: Waste ground, lawns, gardens, pastures, railroads, roadsides

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: June - November

USES: Cereals, breadstuff

While the collection of these small seeds from the grasses is tedious, they are, nonetheless, edible sources.

The foxtail seeds have stiff husks, on the order of wheat except stiffer. Roasting helps to dry and crack open the husks. One of the best uses of this grass comes from a

tribe in Africa. They place the stalks of foxtail grasses over the opening in the grain storage shelter. The rats and mice get their fur so miserably tangled with the stiff husks that they leave the grain protected by these grasses alone!

Crab grass is used as a rice substitute and goose grass seeds make a flour substitute when mixed with white flour in a biscuit or muffin. Knotweed seeds are also a cereal substitute. This is a backyard and sidewalk crack pest.

Fresh and dried grass that has been ground very fine is said to be nutritious and healthful. It may be used in soups, stews, casseroles, on pizza, or on any food preparations where herbs are added.

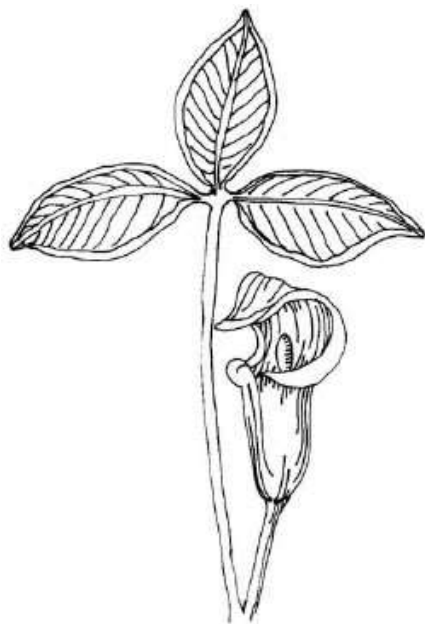
I can remember a small boy who had been lost for several days said he stayed alive by drinking water out of the stream and eating grass. Not only does it give us an abundance of scenic color, it can also be a lifesaver.

Jack in the Pulpit, Indian Turnip

(*Arisaema atrorubens*)

Green Dragon

(*Arisaema dracontium*)



FLOWERS: April - June

DESCRIPTION: Three leaflets on single stalk. Flower folds over spadix, jack. Tiny flowers attach to jack. Arum Family.

HABITAT: Rich wooded areas, low bottom thickets

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Early spring and late autumn

USES: Breadstuff, chip

CAUTION: See page 201

What a unique plant is this Jack in the Pulpit! The tiny flowers are attached to the spadix, or Jack, which is surrounded by his canopied pulpit. The plant is recognized in the fall (one of the times for collecting the underground, round root or corm) by clusters of berries, which are green and turn to a bright red.

The plant's leaves and roots could cause poisoning if eaten in large quantities. However, according to the American Botanist, it would be most unlikely that large amount would be consumed raw. "When a small piece of the fresh corm is chewed the mouth feels as if being pinched with countless needles, especially at the base of the tongue... The sensation ceases... [if the] tongue is held perfectly still, but the least movement renews the prickly sensations that tingles like shocks of electricity. In the course of 20 minutes most of the tingling passes off, but one may feel faint twinges for an hour or longer."

Being somewhat of the adventuresome nature, I felt a tiny scrape would give me the idea without the lasting effects. I took a corm that I had been drying for 2 weeks and scraped a TINSY, WEENSY, MINUTE bite off. Sure enough, it does feel like countless needles are hammering away at the

tongue, but at the tip of mine. The article certainly knew what it was talking about. It goes without saying that the corm is VERY peppery.

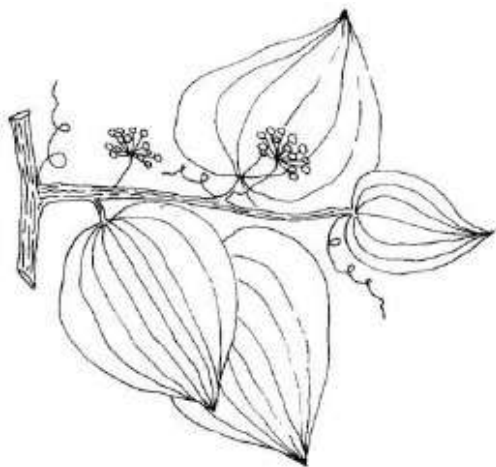
It is amazing to me, with that experience as a starter, how anyone ever persevered the trials of elimination to discover that the corm, when dried but not when boiled, could prove to be edible!!!

Roasting in a slow oven for three days and nights will do it. Cutting the corm into thin slices, putting aside for several months (3-5) will also do it. When dried, the thin crisp may be eaten as is or ground and used as a flour. Angier's cookie recipe is good. The recipe for Jack in the Pulpit cookies is as follows: beat two egg yolks, until thick. Add 1 cup brown sugar and beat into yolk. Mix in $\frac{1}{4}$ t salt and 1 cup nuts (hazelnuts are awfully good). Beat two egg whites until they form stiff peaks and fold into the above mixture. Sift 3 T Jack in the Pulpit flour and 3 T all purpose flour and stir in-to batter. Drop onto cookie sheet in 350° oven for about 7 minutes.

One source suggested using the dried chips with a dip as you would potato chips. Biscuits, pancakes, etc., may be made from the flour, which Fernald states has a hint of cocoa flavoring.

I feel so smug because I discovered a valley of Jack in the Pulpits at our farm. Not only do they add a page to my edible sampling, I think they are downright cute!

Cat Brier or Greenbrier



(*Smilax tamnoides*)

FLOWERS: May- June

DESCRIPTION: Green stems, usually thorny. Tendrils for climbing.

HABITAT: Low woods in valleys and thickets, along streams, rich wooded slopes

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: May- August, tendrils; October -April, roots

USES: Vegetable, raw, pickle, flour. soup, jelly

Bristly greenbrier is indeed exactly that - a green-stemmed plant literally covered with bristly brier-like protrusions. Judging from outward appearances, I would very likely leave this growth alone. However, like many thorny bushes and plants, it has a product worth testing. In this case, a vegetable superb! This is a climbing plant, the base of which is seen all year as it doesn't die all the way back in the winter. Starting in May, and continuing through August, the climbing ends of tendrils form a fat, fleshy stem, which snaps off easily. This is truly an outstanding asparagus-like vegetable served raw, boiled, or in a casserole. It has very few competitors equal in elegance.

My favorite way to serve greenbrier shoots is to boil them for a few minutes, drain, and coat with melted butter. However, Greenbrier Casserole is a delicious dish. To fix, dip the greenbrier shoots in hot water for 10 -15 minutes. Place a layer of greenbrier shoots in a greased casserole, then a layer of sliced hard-boiled eggs, another greenbrier layer, egg layer, ending with greenbrier.

Make a sauce by melting 6 T butter, blending in 6 T flour and 2 cups bubbling hot milk, $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt, $\frac{1}{2}$ t pepper, and $\frac{1}{8}$ t mace. Melt 1 cup grated cheddar cheese in the sauce and pour over the layers. Bake at 350° for about 30 minutes. This is elegant and a delightful dinner party dish.

The roots may be dug in late fall and throughout the winter when the food source is stored in the large rootstock and heavy feeder roots. To obtain a flour, dry the cleaned roots thoroughly, cut them up, pound on the roots, and sift or strain out the fine talc. This flour may then be used for baking, making jelly, or concocting a drink. The drink is made by adding water, honey or sugar to sweeten, and a small amount of greenbrier flour. It's not very good, and I haven't been able to find out if it's healthful or not! Surely it is good for something!!

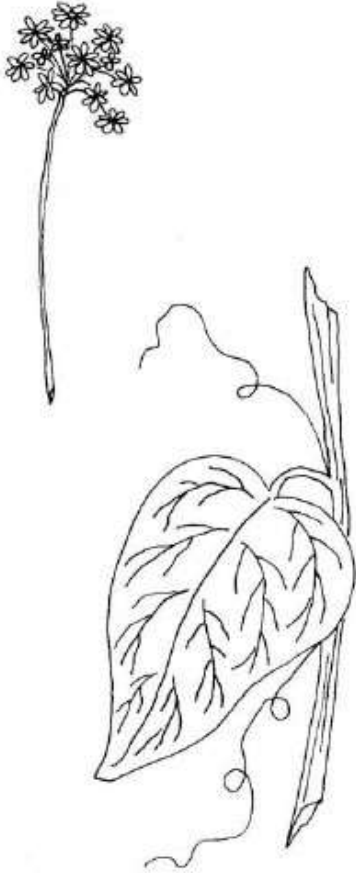


When making jelly, only half the usual amount of sugar is needed. Full amounts produce a thick gel. The water turns a dark brown when boiled with the root. A simpler way to make jelly is to add honey, hot water and greenbrier flour, mix. When it cools it forms a jelly.

The greenbrier shoots may be placed in the dill crock. Check page 7.

It just goes to prove the old saying, "You can't judge a book by its cover." Judge this plant for yourself. It's worth taking the time to become acquainted.

Carrion Flower



(Smilax .. species)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Climbing vine, thornless, non-woody, tendrils. Star-shaped flowers smell of carrion. Lily Family.

HABITAT: Rich woods, base of bluffs, along streams northern Missouri, common. Scattered and absent in southern counties

COLLECTION: April - July

USES: Vegetable

The carrion flower, with its smooth stem and many tendrils, is a high climbing vine. This common name is no doubt due to the foul-smelling flowers.

If the smell doesn't prevent you from trying the plant, you are in for a pleasant surprise. The young end shoots snap off easily when gathered in spring or early summer. Boil the shoots in two waters for two minutes each. Salt and butter.

The roots are reputed to have qualities similar to the greenbrier.

Willows



(*Salix*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Long, narrow, toothed leaves. Pointed tip, round or pointed base. Green twigs turn reddish brown. Male and female flowers separate on same tree. Willow Family.

HABITAT: Along streams, swamps, wet woods

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: March - May

USES: Salad, vegetable, aspirin

The inner bark (cambium) of the willow contains a nutritional food to be used in emergency survival. The flowering buds may be eaten raw or put in a salad. The taste is not strong or disagreeable in any way and is a high source of Vitamin C. These small buds may be boiled as a vegetable and buttered. While the taste of the cooked bud is

not really bad, it is hardly worth the effort of collection. It would, however, make a tasty dish if I were VERY hungry or surviving in the wilds.

The young willow leaves are also edible raw in a salad, with a reported vitamin C bonus that surpasses an orange ten times.

Another use for the willow twig was a cure for headaches. The substance found in the twig is the same thing we call aspirin. "Go chew on a willow twig" might be a medical solution for a pain in the head rather than a put-down insult from a pain in the neck!!!

Black Walnut



(Juglans nigra)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Leaves alternate, compound. 13 - 25 leaflets, top smooth, bottom downy. Male catkins droop, female flowers on spikes. Walnut Family.

HABITAT: Rich woods, base of slopes, valleys, streams, open woods, old fields

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: October - December

USES: Nuts, pie, bread,

Anything that can stain as fiercely as walnut hulls must be protecting something precious or valuable inside. And, indeed, that is the case.

Black walnuts have a strong taste not pleasing to everyone. Personally, I find the nut positively delicious. I enjoy them fresh or used in baking.

Fudge candy, using black walnuts, is luscious. Remarkable Black Walnut Fudge is made by cooking 4 cups sugar, a 14½ oz. can evaporated milk, and ½ cup oleo to a softball stage. Add 12 oz. chocolate chips, 1 pint marshmallow cream, 1 t vanilla, and 1 cup black walnuts. Beat until the chips and marshmallow cream are blended into the sugar mixture. Pour onto greased 13x9x2 pan. Cool and cut into squares.

Another tasty change is to use your favorite cookie recipe with blackwalnuts added.

I remember my folks would dump a couple bushels of black walnuts on the ground and drive back and forth with the car to mash the hulls. Then the nuts were left for a few days to dry out before collecting. Whether you try that method, or squash each nut individually with your foot and peel the hull off, be sure to wear gloves. The stain is indelible and wears off only in time. I understand that women used the hulls to dye their hair. I wonder how they kept the dye off their scalp, forehead and neck?

The nut is hard and difficult to crack. Using a hammer on a cement step or brick, give the nut a good crack and place shell and nut in a pie tin. Then, by using a nut picker, sort and pick out the meats.

A delicious walnut soup (enough for four small servings) is made by

bringing 2 cups of chicken stock and 2 cups of Chardonnay or other dry white wine to a boil. Add 1 diced shallot, 1 tablespoon whipping cream, 2 teaspoons tarragon, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon thyme, and a dash of any or part of the following spices: salt, celery salt, cayenne pepper, white pepper, onion powder, dry mustard, fennel seeds, paprika, oregano, sage, and coriander. Boil for 4-6 minutes. Whisk in chilled butter ($\frac{1}{2}$ stick), a tablespoon at a time. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup toasted black walnut meats, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon each of garlic powder and parsley. This soup is good either hot or cold.

For pecan pie fans, substitute black walnuts for the pecans. It is different but still tantalizingly good. I prefer small pastry tarts filled with the black walnut pie filling. Heat your oven to 375°. Beat 3 eggs, $\frac{2}{3}$ cup sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup melted butter, and 1 cup corn syrup with a mixer. Add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup black walnuts. Pour into pie shell or pastry tarts and bake for 40-50 minutes. A variation called Spicy Walnut Raisin Pie calls for the above recipe with these additions: $\frac{1}{2}$ t cinnamon, $\frac{1}{2}$ t nutmeg, $\frac{1}{2}$ t cloves and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins.

Indians extracted oil by boiling the walnuts in large kettles and skimming off the oil from the top. They made butter from this oil.

Nut bread, be it banana, pumpkin, persimmon, etc., is enhanced with black walnuts. I have a pan waiting to be picked. I like these strong-tasting elegant morsels!!

Hickory



Shagbark (*Carya ovata*),

Shellbark, (*Carya laciniosa*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Alternate, compound leaves. Gray bark, strips curve away. Hairy male catkins, female flower on short spike.

SHAGBARK, 5 leaflets, 8 - 14";
SHELLBARK, 7 - 9 leaflets, 1 - 2".

Walnut Family.

HABITAT: Shellbark: river banks. Shagbark in low-land or upland woods, slopes, dry upland areas

LOCATION: Shagbark, statewide; Shellbark, absent in Ozark region

COLLECTION: Fall

USES: Nuts

Missouri is the home of the world's largest shellbark hickory. Big Oak Tree State Park boasts of one with a circumference of 12' 9" and a height of 122'!

I feel the nuts of these two trees are bettered only by the pecan. They must be collected in the fall and if you beat the squirrels to these delectable goodies you've performed no small feat!! One year I had my shagbark staked out, watched the abundant fruit crop grow, only to be outwitted by the squirrels who stripped both the tree and the ground of all good nuts. An ultimate blow to my ego is the fact that this saga has been sung more than once!

The nuts may be used in nut breads, pies, cookies or any recipe calling for nuts. They are particularly good in a cookie recipe called Sandies. Cream 1 cup butter, ¼ cup powdered sugar. Add 2 t vanilla, 1 T water and 2 cups flour. Mix well and add 1 cup hickory nuts. Shape into small balls and bake on an ungreased cookie sheet for 20 minutes in a 300° oven. Roll in powdered sugar while hot.

Another yum yum is Hickory Nut Pie. Merely use your favorite pecan pie recipe, or the one for walnuts on page 92, and substitute hickory nuts.

A friend of mine is convinced that all foods are improved with the addition of either mushrooms or nuts. With this in mind I tried Angier's recipe for Hickory Nuts Corn. Whip two eggs, add 1 t salt, 1 T flour, 1 cup hickory nuts, 1 cup milk, 2 cups corn (fresh, frozen, or canned). Bake in a greased casserole at 350° until mixture is firm. By



golly, nuts do improve corn!!! Next I'm going to try Hickory Nut Meatballs, Hickory Nut Dumplings, Hickory Nut Broccoli, Hickory nut... NUTS! I ran out of hickory nuts!!

White Oak, Acorns



(*Quercus.. species*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Leaves of White Oaks, rounded lobes, fruits on newest shoots, sweet. Black Oak leaves, bristle edge, sharp points; fruits on last year's twigs, bitter. Beech Family.

HABITAT: Dry slopes, ridges, low ground of valleys, ravine bottoms

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Fall

USES: Nuts, breadstuff

Acorns are a Missouri commodity one is not likely to have trouble locating. Knowing it would be a ready source of supply, I tackled the fruit of the oak trees.

I gathered the acorns from the white oak, which I had read were sweet kernels. One small raw taste was extremely discouraging. If this is sweet, my taste buds had just been fooled!!! Another bite, this time even smaller, made me decide I had the fruit of a bitter black oak. Closer checking in the Missouri Department of Conservation book, *Trees of Missouri*, let me know I indeed had the sweet white oak acorn.

Gibbons suggested that I boil the shelled acorns for two hours and change the water every time it looked tea-colored. This I did, along with keeping a pot boiling for instant boiling water baths. There is less likelihood of "setting" the bitter quality when the nuts do not get plopped in cold water and brought back to a boil. Therefore, boiling water is added to the meats as the old is poured off. Gibbons also says that the meats turn a chocolate brown and have no trace of bitterness. Anxious to see if all the unpleasant taste had been removed, I plopped an acorn in my mouth. By the time I finished spitting out the nut, I was ready to leave the edible for the squirrels! Considering the time I had spent picking, shelling, and boiling, I knew I had to continue. I boiled a bit longer and followed Fernald and Kinsey's advice and soaked them in changes of cold water for 2 - 3 days. Some of the nuts I roasted in a 250° oven for an hour. By this time, my taste buds were becoming gun shy. However, it's getting better!! A glaze is made from 1cup sugar, ½ cup water, and a dash of cream of tarter and salt that comes to a boil. Dip the whole acorns in the liquid with tongs or tweezers and cool on wax paper.

The raw acorn kernels, when ground and mixed with boiling water, make a meal to be used in bread, muffins, or pancakes. The mixture is put in a jelly

bag and the water squeezed out. This must be repeated several times to take out the bitterness. Put the thinly-spread meal on a cake pan or cookie sheet and bake in a slow oven until thoroughly dried. Regrind and try in your own recipe. Your regular cornbread recipe should be fine. My usual recipe is $1\frac{3}{4}$ cup white flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup acorn meal, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar, 4 t baking powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt, 1 egg, 1 cup milk, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup shortening. Bake in a greased pan at 425° for 20 - 25 minutes.

My appreciation for our early colonizers has heightened considerably!!

Hackberry



(*Celtis occidentalis*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Elm-like leaves, long pointed tips. Trunk gray, warty in appearance. Elm Family.

HABITAT: Low woods, rich bottom lands

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: After frost

USES: Fruit

My experience has been a failure. I have located several hackberry trees, one quite large. I consistently checked the large tree for fruits. I never found any. Fernald and Kinsey tell me that the

fruits remain on the tree all winter and were used by the Dakota Indians. They are reported as having the flavor of dates.

Ah, well, perhaps next year!!!!

Next year I found them abundantly! They are small with a thick hide, large seed (for their size), and a small amount of sweet pulp.

Since my initial probe into wild edibles, I have found the hackberry often. The purplish-black berries do dangle on the tree all winter and provide a welcome nibble to passing hikers. The sweet taste of the fruit reminds us that the tree is also known as sugarberry.

The Dakota Indians were said to make a seasoning from the dried stones of the fruit.

Mulberry, Red



(*Morus rubra*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: A small tree; heart-shaped leaves, coarsely toothed; bark of older trees elm-like. Mulberry Family.

HABITAT: Rich woods, open rocky places, roadsides, fields, pastures

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: May - July

USES: Jelly, pie, fruit, drink, wine, vegetable

Fruit-laden mulberry trees are all over Missouri and very few people care about picking

them. The red fruit is still green while the ripe berries are a purplish color. The mulberry, to my taste, is a very mild or bland flavor, but the berries are good for jellies. A straight mulberry pie is improved by adding lemon peel, finely grated, or substituting half of the berries with either blackberries or raspberries. This may be obtained by freezing either or both supplies as the berries do not often ripen at the same times. The results are quite good, however. Fill the piecrust with a layer of mulberries, a layer of either blackberries or raspberries, and repeat. Over the fruit sprinkle 1 cup sugar, 2 T flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt, and top with several pats of butter. Put on a top crust and bake for 45 minutes, or until brown, in a 375° oven.

The dried berry may be substituted for raisins or figs. To dry the berries, place them on a screen in a warm attic, or put them in an oven on "warm" with the door ajar for 15 hours or more. They may then be used in cakes, pies or muffins. My favorite use of the dried mulberry is in Mulberry Muffins. Blend the following: 2 cups flour (or substitute 1 cup for reindeer lichen, cattail pollen, etc.), $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar, 4 t baking soda, $1\frac{1}{2}$ t salt, 2 eggs, 1 cup milk, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup liquid shortening, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dried mulberries, nuts if desired. Bake at 425° for 20 - 25 minutes.

A surprisingly good drink is made from mulberry juice, lemon juice, sugar, Seven-Up and ice. The trick is in acquiring the mulberry juice while keeping the stain off your hands. I use the blender, a colander and a tea strainer and do a fair job.

Ben Harris has suggested a recipe worth trying if you are interested in making a mulberry wine. Gather berries and allow to dry for a day. Squeeze

out the juice and to each gallon of juice, add a gallon of hot water, lemon peels to taste, and a small amount of cinnamon and sassafras bark. Over low heat, bring to a boil and continue for thirty minutes. For each gallon of liquid, add $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar and a pint of yellow wine. Let this set for a week, strain and cap.

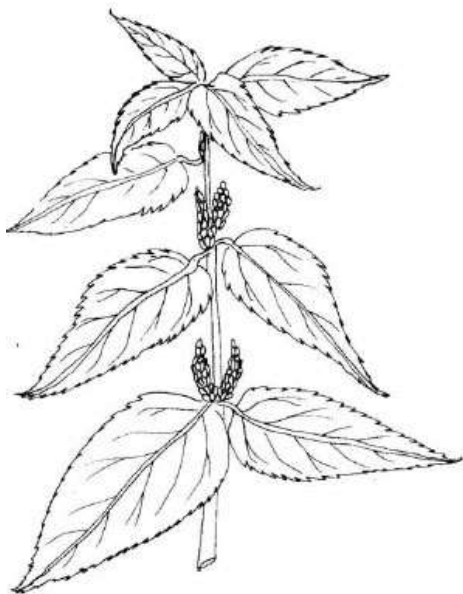
A liqueur made from mulberries may be had by half filling a bottle with cleaned mulberries. Add either raw sugar or a cup of dissolved granulated sugar. Fill the remaining portion of the bottle with rum or bourbon and stash the bottle away for several months, at least three but the longer the better. Strain the contents and cap.

The young, tender shoots and twigs make a passable vegetable when boiled for 20 minutes in salted water and doused with butter - there I go again on the butter dousing!!

An attractive luncheon salad combines mulberries, bananas, peaches, sour cream and cottage cheese. Not only is it tasty, it is easily digested for those who have to watch their food intake.

With all of the uses noted thus far, we can surely do better than to curse the mulberry for its stain on sidewalks and clothes deposited there by the birds. Who says mulberries are for the birds, anyway?

Nettles



(*Urticaceae*)

Stinging Nettle, False Nettle,
(*Boehmeria cylindrica*), Wood
Nettle (*Laportea canadensis*),
Tall Nettle (*Urtica dioica*),
Clearweed (*Pilea*

pumila)

FLOWERS: May - September

DESCRIPTION: Varies in species.
Steyermark.

HABITAT: Rich thickets,
roadsides, rubbish heaps

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: April - May

USES: Potherb

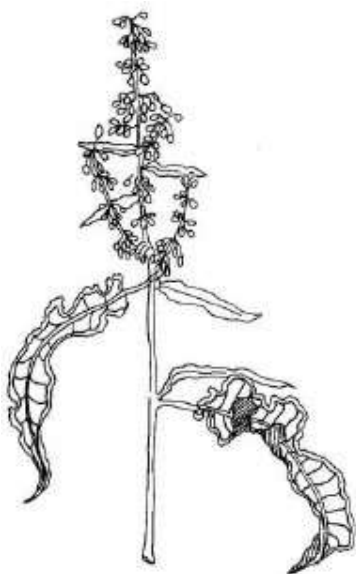
CAUTION: Handling this plant
can cause dermatitis. See page
203, 214.

This might well win the title of "the most unlikely plant to be eaten." It is a hairy plant that causes a stinging sensation when it rubs against exposed ankles, legs, or any skin. To look at the attacked area shows several welt-like, insect bites. Who would ever suspect this nuisance not to be hazardous to one's innards!!!!?

Although care must be taken in picking the nettles by using gloves and snippers, once this is washed and cooked or steamed it loses its defense and becomes a mild-mannered potherb. You should pick the shoots when they are not more than 6" to 8" tall. Cook for a few minutes and add butter.

The fibers of this plant are suggested to be the equal of flax for linen and the roots produce a yellow dye.

Dock



(*Rumex* .. various species)

Sour or Yellow Dock (*Rumex crispus*), Pale Dock (*Rumex altissimus*), Swamp Dock (*Rumex verticillatus*), Patience Dock (*Rumex patientia*),

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Large 6" - 12" leaves, most basal. Leaves on stem have paper sheath surrounding stem at attachment. Tall inflorescence of tiny flowers. Buckwheat Family.

HABITAT: Fields, gardens, waste ground, railroads, streams, ponds

LOCATION: Common species statewide

COLLECTION: March - April, shoots; July - Winter, seed

USES: Potherb

CAUTION: Handling this plant causes

dermatitis in some people. See page 205.

Steyermark lists some 13 species of dock found in Missouri. To save my being confused I have discovered that all of the young leaves are edible as a spinach substitute. Dock is used with poke, lamb's quarters, wild lettuce and dandelion to make a mess of spring greens. Unlike many of the greens that cook away, most dock holds its bulk. Most potherbs are cooked in two hot water baths and seasoned with salt, pepper, butter and vinegar.

Although I have not tried to make a meal from the dock seeds, I have read that western Indian tribes used the seeds in such a manner.

Field Sorrel, Sheep Sorrel



(*Rumex acetosella*)

FLOWERS: May - September

DESCRIPTION: Basal, arrowhead leaves, sour taste.

HABITAT: Sour soils of fallow fields, waste ground, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: April - November

USES: Salad, potherb, soup, seasoning

I love the shape of this arrow-like leaf as well as the sour taste. It, like the wood sorrel, enhances a tossed salad. While this is not a member of the wood sorrel family, like that family it contains potassium oxalate which could be poisonous if eaten in large quantities. The small amounts eaten fresh in salad-or as a field nibble are of little concern. It loses its poison potential after being boiled, therefore making it a safe, tasty addition to the greens pot. Another excellent use is to chop it up and add it to coleslaw.

A soup made from field sorrel is great! Cook the sorrel for 30 minutes. Add 4 cups milk, chopped onion, 2 t butter, 2 T flour. I serve this soup with onion breads.

On a recent weekend outing my menu called for bacon-lettuce-tomato sandwiches. I forgot the lettuce. A short hike produced a large supply of field sorrel and the needed lettuce. Anyone for a Bacon-Sorrel-Tomato? You'll try this again, I'm sure.

Old-timers used this plant in a variety of ways. The leaves were used to cleanse the blood, expel worms and warm the heart, while the roots aided menstruation and expelled kidney stones. You've got to admit, that's quite a plant!

Lamb's Quarters



(*Chenopodium album*)

FLOWERS: May - October

DESCRIPTION: Branching stems, red streaked. Leaves green above, whitish under, toothed. Goosefoot Family.

HABITAT: Waste and cultivated ground, railroads, barnyards

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: April - November

USES: Potherb, vegetable, salad, flour

Lamb's quarters, or pigweed as it is sometimes called, is another plant I half-heartedly allow to stay in a portion of my flower garden. It is mild as a vegetable and a worthy substitute for lettuce in a tossed salad. The tops are a tender source of edibles from spring until frost kills it in the fall. When lettuce prices soared, lamb's quarters got a workout at our house.

We have a farm, making us dude farmers, that has a garden of sorts planted. We were not able to get the land plowed last fall, so the dirt clods are huge and the area rough. We had cleaned out an old outbuilding and spread all the well-seasoned fertilizer over the garden site. Two weeks of rain and no attention produced the largest supply of lamb's quarters one could ever want! The problem was that we really wanted the tomatoes, corn, cucumbers, squash, watermelons, beans, beets, etc. that were literally lost under the canopy of lamb's quarters!!! What's this about you can't have your cake...?

Like most greens, lamb's quarters shrinks in cooking so you need to gather about three times the amount needed when cooked. It is good alone or goes into the pot with poke and dock. Cook these greens for about an hour in a small amount of water. Season with salt, pepper, butter and vinegar or lemon juice.

I freely substitute lamb's quarters for spinach in any recipe and have good results. Baked lamb's quarters is fixed in the following manner. Pick 6 cups of lamb's quarters. (Hopefully you'll have 2 cups after cooking.) Melt 1 T butter and add 1 T flour, $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt and a dash of pepper, and add 1 cup hot milk. Cook until the sauce thickens, then add the lamb's quarters. Pour into a greased

casserole and sprinkle the top with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of grated cheese. Bake 350° for 30 minutes.

This green may be wilted for excellent results. Fry a couple of strips of bacon and crumble over a bowl of washed lamb's quarters and a small amount of wild onion. Using the bacon grease, add equal amounts of vinegar and water and 1 T sugar along with 1 t salt. Bring this to a boil and pour over your salad. The hot mixture causes the greens to droop or wilt. This is even better when leaf lettuce and Cossack asparagus slices are added to the lamb's quarters.

I'm particularly fond of the rice casserole listed for purslane on page 60, using lamb's quarters as the spinach substitute. Another delectable use is to include lamb's quarters in your omelet.

An appetizer may be made by cooking a cup of lamb's quarters. The cooked greens will boil down to about one-third cup. Add the third-cup of cooked greens to a 3 oz. package of cream cheese and blend. Spread the mixture on Melba toast or crackers. A dab of wild jelly may be added on top for variety.

In the fall the seeds can be gathered by cutting off the seed spikes, pouring back and forth to winnow away the chaff, and getting the seeds for cereal. The seeds can be ground raw, roasted for 2 hours in a 350° oven and mashed. This mashed product should later be ground. This is a substitute for wheat flour in pancakes, muffins, and biscuits. It gives a dark coloration to the food and a taste that makes it hardly worth the effort.

However, for the leaves alone, it is a plant well worth getting to know.

Green Amaranth



(*Amaranthus spinosus* A.
hybridus)

FLOWERS: June - October

DESCRIPTION: Varies, see
Steyermark

HABITAT: Waste and cultivated
ground, barnyards, pastures,
along railroads

LOCATION: Statewide, especially
central and southern Missouri

COLLECTION: May - October

USES: Potherb, vegetable,
breadstuff

Green amaranth is also called
pigweed because pigs find it a
palatable meal. Another name is
wild beet. This helps in
identifying the plant because the
roots are bright red.

I'm partial to this spinach
substitute because of its mild taste. It's also a good green to add to the greens
pot to tone down stronger tastes.

We have horses and with horses go the barnlot weeds, which is where I
find green amaranth growing rampant. They are another unlikely choice for
food, with green flowerspikes and a thorny appearance. Nonetheless, when
they are 6" to 8" tall they make a very passable spinach substitute. I've fixed
this plant in an egg-cheese casserole for a wild food dinner party. The
comments were very favorable. To fix Green Amaranth Casserole, cook
enough greens to yield two cups of cooked greens. Place a layer of amaranth
in a greased casserole, a layer of sliced hard-boiled eggs, another layer of
amaranth and cover with a cheese sauce of 2 cups milk, 6 T oleo melted and
blended with 6 T flour, salt and pepper to taste, and 1 cup cheddar cheese.
Bake at 350° for half an hour.

I've also fixed this plant as a rice-spinach casserole. Tossed in oil and
sprinkled with vinegar, amaranth makes a very passable dish, and it can also
be eaten raw in salad. Every way has proven to be an agreeable dinner dish.
You gotta admit – it's not the run-of-the-mill dinner vegetable, and variety is
added to your vegetable list!

In the fall the flower spikes produce an abundance of small, shiny black seeds, which provide a flour substitute when ground and mixed with either white or wheat flour. The taste leaves something to be desired. Euell Gibbons felt the flavor was improved by roasting the seeds



prior to grinding them. Seeds roasted 1-1½ hours in a 350° oven, stirred occasionally, seem to lose some of the disagreeable flavor.

Wild Grapes



(*Vitis species*)

FLOWERS: May - July

DESCRIPTION: large, heart-shaped leaves, toothed. Climbing tendrils, small green flowers hang on the cluster stem.

HABITAT: Woods, thickets, stream banks, fencerows

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: September - November

USES: Jelly, pies, salads, wine, juice, wrap for small game birds

CAUTION: Moonseed is a poisonous look-alike. The berries of moonseed have a moon-shaped seed inside while wild grapes have the teardrop seed. The vine of wild grape is woody with bark that shreds. Moonseed vines are neither woody nor easily shredded. The leaf of moonseed is generally smooth and lobed but not toothed as are the grape's. See page 207.

There are eight or more varieties of wild grapes in Missouri, some larger, some sweeter, yet all that I've tried make a decent jelly.

There is one tidbit of information worth knowing before picking wild grapes. A similar plant, bearing fruits much like the grape, is the poisonous moonseed, so named because of a crescent shaped moon seed inside. Look up this plant, then proceed.

Early in the spring and summer, the tender wild grape leaves are a nice addition to a tossed salad. They are somewhat hard to chew, but so is fresh spinach in a salad!

Grape leaves impart a great flavor in a dill crock, when a few are added between layers of wild picklings. In fact, the young tendrils are acceptable in a pickling solution for later use as a nibble or to be used in slaw.

As a main dish, try stuffed grape leaves. I make a rice-venison (or -hamburger), onion, tomato mixture. Place a large spoonful on the leaf, roll it toward the leaf point, tucking in the ends as you go, and steam in a covered dish for an hour. I find the leaf is generally not eaten in full, but the rice stuffing is moist and delicious.

Grape leaves do good things for dove. Wrap each dove, after marinating it, in two grape leaves and put all of them in a covered casserole. Euell Gibbons uses a sauce of ½ stick butter, 1 T flour, salt and pepper. This adds the proper final touches. Quail or any game may be fixed this way also. I so love broiled quail with a strip of bacon wrapped around it that I have only used the grape

leaves once. However, others prefer quail in a stuffing or steamed, so try it.

To preserve the leaves for winter use, sprinkle salt on each leaf, stacking one on top of the other. I put these in a piece of Tupperware and seal. Before using, wash the salt off thoroughly.

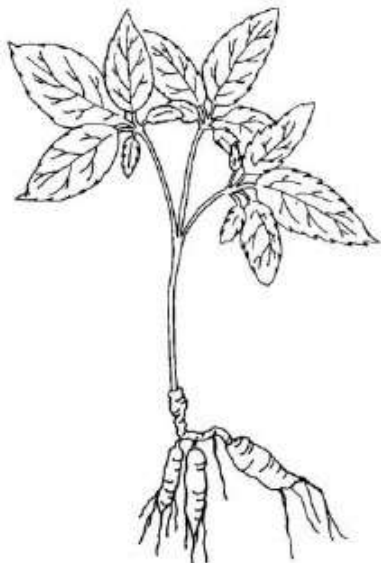
The grapes are great for jelly. To make grape jelly, cover the grapes with water and cook 10 minutes or so. Pour off the liquid and add 1 cup of sugar per cup of juice and a box of Sure-Jell per four cups of liquid. Cook the mixture until the jelly drops together at the end and slithers off your spoon. Set off the stove, skim off the white foam topping, and pour into jars. Grape juice is another good way to save the grapes. Wash, stem, and mash grapes in a kettle. Barely cover them with water and simmer 30 minutes. Strain, add sugar to taste (approximately 1 or 1½ cups per quart). Simmer again for 15 minutes and pour into sterilized jars and seal. If canned unsweetened, the juice may be used in making jelly during the winter.

A yummy sherbet can be made from this juice in an ice tray. Combine 2 cups juice, 3 cups half and half, 1-4 cup crushed pineapple, 1 T lemon juice and 1 cup sugar. Freeze until firm, then beat with a mixer and return to the freezer.

A wine connoisseur would not let the thought of using the fruits of the wild grape for this cause go by unmentioned. For those individuals, here is a simple wine recipe. Place 2 cups washed, stemmed grapes in a crock, add 1 cup sugar and continue this layering process until you run out of grapes or crock. Cover and allow the crock to set in a cool, dark basement for a couple of months. Carefully put the liquid into bottles and cap.

A grape pie is yours by running the cooked berries through the colander to get 2 cups pulp. Add 1 cup sugar, 3 T flour, 1 t lemon juice, 1 T butter, salt. Put in a pie crust and bake at 425° for an hour.

Ginseng



(*Panax quinquefolius*)

FLOWERS: June - July

DESCRIPTION: Three compound leaves; 5 leaflets per leaf, all attached at the same point on the leaf stalk. The flower is one simple umbel.

HABITAT: North-facing rich, wooded slopes, steep limestone bluffs and outcrops

LOCATION: Throughout the Ozarks and in eastern Missouri

COLLECTION: Leaves, May - June; Roots, October - March

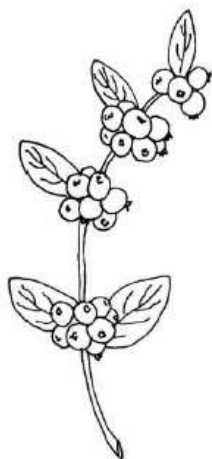
USES: Tea, emergency food

Ginseng, according to the Chinese, is an aphrodisiac, heart stimulant and cure-all for most diseases. Perhaps the enticement of an aphrodisiac, maybe the market value of the roots, but regardless of the reason, ginseng's existence has been threatened in many parts of Missouri. The roots are the part of the plant most sought. These long, fleshy roots are aromatic and parsnip-like, found deep under the low-growing plant. The roots are shaped much like a man, which gives the plant its name. In Chinese, Ginseng means "likeness of a man," and roots most shaped like a man are considered priceless.

The roots may be used as an emergency food by boiling and seasoning with salt, pepper and butter. The young leaves of ginseng, either fresh or dried, may be used for a tea.

Buck Brush, Indian Currant, Coral-Berry

(*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*)



FLOWERS: July- August

DESCRIPTION: Small woody plant; simple leaves, opposite. Arching branches. Flowers and fruits in leaf axils. Honeysuckle Family.

HABITAT: Pastures, dry or rocky woodland, old fields, thickets, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Fall and winter

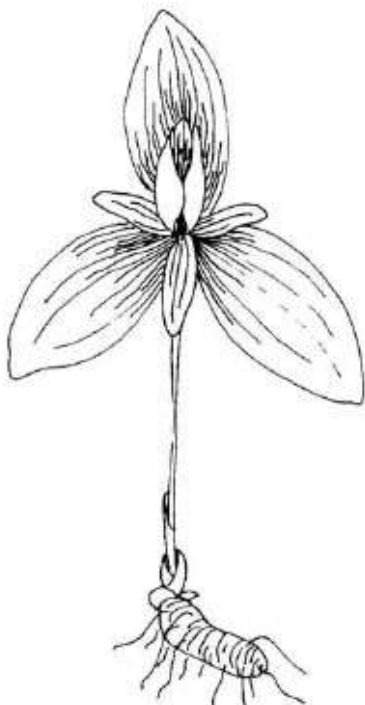
USES: Survival

I collected some of the red berries of the buck brush or Indian currants. They are very distasteful, although I was not ill nor did I show any signs of ill effects from eating them. I dried a cup of these berries by placing them on a screen in my attic and forgetting them for a few months. My collecting had been spurred on by *The Good Earth Almanac*, which reported that the berries of this plant were used by Indians as a pemmican, or dried jerky-like food source. This has apparently been used with venison and other dried fruits pounded into a flat, thin layer and dried. I pounded the cupful of fresh berries into a thin leather to dry, and later pounded the dried berries into the thin strips, but found the taste was such that I would use it strictly as a survival need!!!

Steyermark mentions that the birds do not eat the fruits. Another source indicated that they did. Following Steyermark's advice, fellows, will make you a wise bird!!

brown- and red-flowering edibles

Wake Robin



(*Trillium sessile*)

FLOWERS: April - June

DESCRIPTION: 3 broad, often mottled leaves. 3 petaled flower directly over leaves. Otherwise, bare stem. Lily Family.

HABITAT: low, rich bottom woods of valleys and wooded slopes

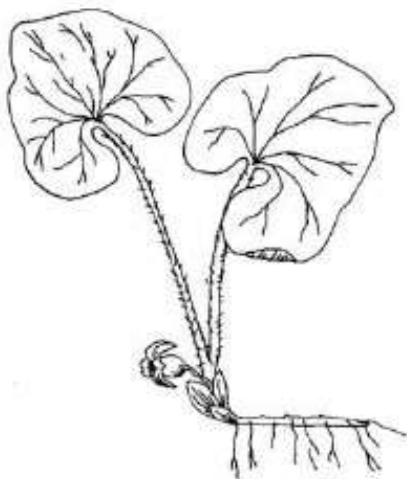
LOCATION: Southern and central Missouri

COLLECTION: March - April

USES: Potherb

The young shoots of wake robin may be picked as the leaves are unfolding and cooked as a green vegetable. Fernald and Kinsey report that in Maine the plant is called "Much Hunger." I personally find it more effective for its aesthetic virtues than for its culinary value. Translation: this isn't very good in flavor. Consequently, I, too, would use this plant only during times of "much hunger" as an emergency food source.

Wild Ginger



(*Asarum canadense*)

FLOWERS: April -May

DESCRIPTION: Large, heart- shaped leaves, 6" tall, flowers near ground. Birthwort Family.

HABITAT: Rich wooded slopes, valleys, ravine bottoms, base of bluffs

LOCATION: Scattered, but absent in extreme western and southeastern counties

COLLECTION: Spring

USES: Spice, candy, syrup

CAUTION: See page 204

These large heart-shaped leaves, which slightly resemble large violet leaves, have a beautiful and unusual flower. The flower is a brownish-mauve color and grows next to the ground. To discover the flower, pull back the leaves then hunt around at the base of the stem.

The edible portion of wild ginger is the root, which is used for candy, spice and medicinal purposes.

Digging up the root is generally not a difficult job because the plant likes rich soil. After washing the roots, cut into small discs and simmer in enough water to cover. It takes about an hour for the roots to become tender. For every cup of root, add a cup of sugar and boil until a syrup is formed. This will take about 30 minutes. Drain off the liquid and bottle. The syrup may be used as a topping for ice cream or banana splits. It may also be used as a tea by adding 1 T of the syrup to a cup of hot water. This tea is reported to be effective as a means of combating gas on the stomach.

The candied roots, which were cooked, are left to dry on waxed paper and rolled in sugar. I've had some which have kept well for two years. It still retains its strong woodsy flavor, which is improved when accompanied with cream cheese.

The roots may also be grated and dried for use as a substitute for ginger. It is good and may be used in any recipe calling for ginger.

Pawpaw



(*Asimina triloba*)

FLOWERS: March - May

DESCRIPTION: Tree; very large (6"-12" long, 3"-5" wide), entire leaves. Leaves among the largest in U.S. Custard Apple Family.

HABITAT: Low bottom woods and wooded slopes, along streams, ravines, base of bluffs

LOCATION: Absent only from extreme northern Missouri

COLLECTION: September **USES:** Pie, pudding, jelly, marmalade, bread

CAUTION: See page 206

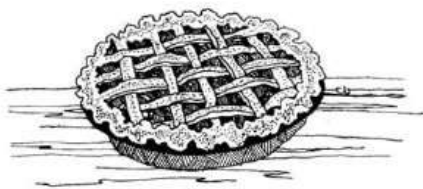
Pawpaws are Missouri's answer to the banana. They are short, soft fruits about three to five inches long. The skin, unlike a banana, more nearly resembles a soft pear both in feel and appearance.

Once the pawpaws fall to the ground, long before frost, they are easy to gather... "pickin' up pawpaws, puttin' 'em in a basket." The fruits, which turn from a yellow green to a brownish color, remind me of a cross between a persimmon and an overripe banana, but not as good as either.

Pawpaws may be baked by placing one in foil, skin and all, and leaving for 10 minutes or so in a 350° oven. If you relish the campfire dessert called Banana Boats, you just might find this appealing. It is not one of my favorite dishes, however.

My daughter is a banana pudding fan. Substituting pawpaws for the bananas produces another very passable dessert. The following recipe is a tempting Pawpaw Chiffon Pie. Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar, $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt, 1 package of Knox gelatin in a pan. Add $\frac{2}{3}$ cup milk and 3 egg yolks. Cook this mixture until it comes to a boil, then stir in 1 cup pawpaw pulp and place the mixture in the refrigerator until it is chilled. This should be around 20 - 30 minutes. Beat 3 egg whites, gradually adding $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of sugar, and mix until stiff peaks are made. Fold egg whites into the pawpaw blend and serve as a pie or pudding.

One of my favorite ways to use the pawpaw is to use a colander and get the pulp. Substituting the



pawpaw pulp for bananas in nut bread makes a Pawpaw-Nut bread. Mash 3 pawpaws and add to the creamed cup of sugar and stick of oleo. Mix well and add 2 eggs, 2 cups flour, 1 t soda, and 1½ cup hickory nuts or black walnuts. Bake in greased pan for 50 - 60 minutes.

The pawpaw may be used in ice cream or sherbets, jelly or marmalade. All are edible; none cater to my particular tastes. Like many things, a taste must be acquired to appreciate this custard apple.

I do plan to continue using this fruit. Do you suppose I'll also cultivate a taste for this wild Missouri banana?

Wild Coffee



(*Triosteum perfoliatum*)

FLOWERS: May - July

DESCRIPTION: Coarse plant; opposite, entire leaves join around stem. Fruits and flowers in leaf-axils, 2-8 at each node. Honeysuckle Family.

HABITAT: Dry, open woods

LOCATION: Statewide, except southeast lowlands

COLLECTION: August - October

USES: Coffee substitute

CAUTION: The bitter roots of this plant can induce vomiting and diarrhea.

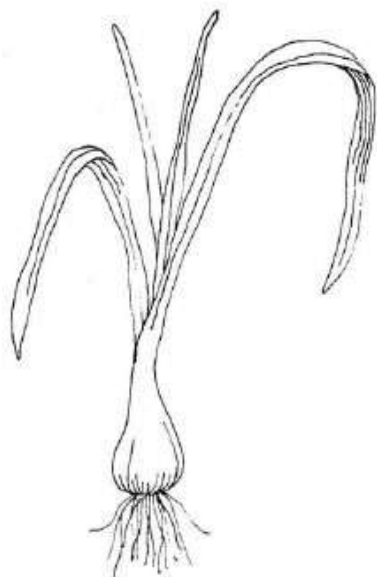
This upright, coarse plant has little orange fruits tight in the leaf axils. The fruits, which are about the size of a pea, may be dried or roasted and used as a coffee substitute.

I've never collected enough to be a judge of its desirability. I have roasted a few berries and made a weak coffee that was more than passable.

Another common name, feverwort, indicates a medicinal use for the plant's roots which were used by Indians as a cure for fevers.

Wild Onions, Wild Garlic

(*Allium species*)



FLOWERS: May - July: white, pink, lavender

DESCRIPTION: Field garlic has single spathe, found below umbel. Hollow leaves. Wild garlic leaves flattened, not hollow, 3-parted spathe at base of umbel. Wild onion, no spathe. Lily Family.

HABITAT: Varies with species

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: April - July

USES: Vegetable, seasoning, pickle

CAUTION: Be sure the onion odor is present. Some extremely poisonous bulbs resemble the *Allium* species, but lack the onion oil smell.

I can remember when my father would come in for the evening meal, after milking the cows, and insist that my brother and I eat a couple of green onions before dinner. This was no small feat, as I did not care for onions at that age! Nonetheless, it was a sure clue that the cows had been eating fresh wild onion and field garlic and the milk tasted. Surprisingly, the green onions helped, and we would drink our milk with only a few "YUCKS!"

When using wild onions and garlic, be certain the familiar onion odor is present as some onion-looking plants are poisonous, but they do not have an onion smell.

Two of the extremely poisonous lily bulbs are Fly Poison (*Amianthium muscaetoxicum*) which is located in a few counties in the southern part of the state and Death Camas (*Zigadenus Nut-talii*) which is found in Oregon County. Other poisonous bulbs include White Camas (*Zigadenus elegans*) reported by Steyermark in three counties of the southern part of Missouri, False Hellebore (*Veratrum Woodii*) found in the central and eastern counties, and Star of Bethlehem (*Ornithogalum umbellatum*) located in scattered sections of southern and central Missouri.



All of the *Allium* species (onion, garlic, leeks) have their flowers in an umbel while the poisonous flowers are arranged differently.

While all wild onion and garlic plants are edible, the wild field garlic, which has the single spathe below the umbel, is extremely strong in flavor, not to mention the lasting effects on the breath! The tops of the leaves may be used sparingly in salads or stews. Both the wild onion and wild garlic bulbs may be soaked in water overnight and eaten like a green onion.

The wild onion may be used in any way you would serve green onions: wilted lettuce, soups, stews, casseroles, with sour cream on baked potatoes, raw or pickled.

To pickle the onion, put it in the dill crock as explained on page 7.

Live Forever



(Sedum telephium)

FLOWERS: July - October

DESCRIPTION: Thick-stemmed, thick leaves. Flower cluster at the top of stem. Stonecrop Family.

HABITAT: Wet roadsides

LOCATION: Scattered

COLLECTION: April - July

USES: Salad, pickles, vegetable

Live forever is also called frog plant because a leaf may be carefully rubbed together, separating the insides. By blowing into the open end, the leaf puffs up resembling the throat of a frog. It's a game to keep young children fascinated for at least five minutes. And speaking as a teacher, that's no small feat!!

The early leaves and stem may be added to a tossed salad. I find it a bit slimy, but edible. The same parts gathered in mid-summer makes a tasty, passable green vegetable when boiled and coated with butter.

Both the early leaves and the fleshy roots may be pickled and used as a relish or inslaw or salad.

Crab Apples



(*Pyrus*)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Tree with alternate, irregular toothed leaves. Leaves attach at a thornlike protrusion. Rose Family.

HABITAT: Escaped into fencerows, stream banks, farm lots

LOCATION: Scattered

COLLECTION: August - December

USES: Jelly, applesauce, pickle

One fall I had a "tasting bee" of breads and jellies made from wild edibles for my teaching colleagues. I felt compelled to forage the schoolyard for one entry and

picked the large red crab apples from an ornamental crab tree. This jelly was a beautiful red color and delicious to eat. Further experiments proved a red applesauce made from the crab to be outstanding. It is simple to make. Cook the apples, put them through a colander and add sugar to taste. End! Would that all of my experiments were so fast, quick and good!

Spiced Crab Apple was equally successful. Heat 1 quart vinegar, 6 cups sugar, 1 T cinnamon, 1 T cloves, 1 t mace, 1 t allspice. Add crab apples and heat slowly. Leave the crab apples overnight in this syrup and pack in jars. Fill to within $\frac{1}{2}$ " of the top with syrup. Boil jars in water bath for 20 minutes.

The small crab apple is sour, tart and virtually inedible raw. However, it is excellent for jellies, butter and marmalade. To make jelly, place the washed apples in enough water to cover. Boil gently for 10 minutes. Pour off the liquid and measure it. For each cup of liquid, add a cup of sugar. Because of the pectin in apples, no Sure-Jell is added. Bring to a boil until the candy thermometer registers jelly or until mixture slithers off your spoon.

Crab Apple Butter is another good way to use your crab apples. Cook the crab apples and mash the fruits through a colander. Use $2\frac{1}{2}$ cups crab apple pulp, 3 cups sugar, 1 t cinnamon, 2 cinnamon sticks ($1\frac{1}{2}$ " long each), $\frac{1}{4}$ t cloves, dash allspice, juice of $\frac{1}{3}$ lemon, $\frac{1}{3}$ cup Rhine wine. Cook this together until it thickens.

Pour into sterilized jars and seal.

The small wild crab apple is not so good in the spiced recipe nor is it the best for applesauce; however, the jelly and butter are quite good. The wild crab apple mixed with mint for a jelly may be used later with venison or leg of lamb. A smashing mint sauce

to serve with lamb and rice: 1 jar mint jelly, 1 jar currant jelly, 1 small bottle chili sauce, and 1 stick oleo. Melt all of the ingredients in a saucepan, but do not boil. When hot, remove from the stove and spoon over your lamb and rice for a heavenly taste!



Wild Rose



(Rosa... various species)

FLOWERS: May - July

DESCRIPTION: 5 showy petals, leaves toothed, leaves on old stems are 3 divided and new shoots have some 5 divided leaves. Rose Family

HABITAT: Open woods, glades, prairies, thickets, clearings, railroads, roadsides

LOCATION: Statewide except southeastern lowlands

COLLECTION: May - July, petals; Fall - Spring, hips

USES: Salad, confection, jelly, tea, jam, soup, dried fruit

This wilding is a gold mine of vitamin C. It has been tested by food analysts to have 60 times as much vitamin C as a lemon and 3 rose hips have as much as a whole orange. There are several varieties of these wild species around Missouri to offer aesthetic beauty as well as healthful nibbles.

The petals make a good nibble in the field while foraging or hiking. I've collected the petals and used them in a tossed salad with leaf lettuce. The delicate pink gave both color and taste appeal to the salad. The petals may also be used as a dainty decoration on a luncheon plate with violet leaves or the leaves of lamb's quarters under the rose petals and a scoop of chicken, shrimp, tuna or crab salad on top. An equally artistic flair is obtained with a gelatin salad. Try it! Your luncheon will be assured of a conversation topic!

Candied petals are beautiful decorations. Gather the petals when dry and collect 2 cups. In a saucepan melt 1 1/4 cups sugar in 3/4 cup hot water, add 1 T corn syrup. Bring to a boil and cook until a candy thermometer reads 230°. Remove from heat and chill immediately in a pan of ice or in the refrigerator until syrup begins to crystallize. Dip rose petals in syrup, spread coated petals on some waxed paper. Before the petals dry, sprinkle both sides with powdered sugar. After the petals are completely dry, they may be stored in Tupperware and kept for as long as two months.

A worthy jelly is made by collecting the petals, allowing them to steep in boiling water overnight; strain off the liquid and continue as any jelly. My standard is one cup sugar per cup liquid, and for every four cups of liquid, add one package of Sure-Jell.

A passable tea is made from the dried petals as well as from the dried young leaves and the rose hips. This tea should be steeped for several

minutes, using a teaspoon per cup or mixing with mint leaves or lemon peel. This herb tea is reputed to aid in dissolving gallstones.

The rose hips, or seedpods, are gathered from the time they turn red in the fall until late winter. To process the hip, remove the stems and beards (or hairs of the flower), then cover with water to cook slowly for 20 minutes or so. Some sources suggest cooking the seeds separately in water and straining, using this liquid in place of water called for in syrup, jelly or jam recipes. The jelly is golden and delicious. The hip seems to be more useful for jam after the first frost.

Rose hips may be used in making jellies, jams, rose hip butter and syrup, or dried and baked in cakes, cookies or breads. A healthful soup is made by cooking mashed rose hips for 10 minutes. To this strained mixture a paste of cornstarch or wheat flour and water is added, thickening the soup. The soup may then be eaten, hot or cold.

Dried rose hips are used in soups, hot or cold drinks, sprinkled over cereals, or eaten raw as you would a raisin. I personally do not find the dried hip very tasty, but I'll eat a few knowing the high vitamin count!

One plant can provide all of this and be beautiful, too! A rose by any other name...!!!

Redbud



(Cercis canadensis)

FLOWERS: March - May

DESCRIPTION: Heart-shaped leaves, early blooming pink buds clustered around twig.

HABITAT: Open woodland, border of woods, rocky streams and bluffs

LOCATION: Statewide

USES: Salad, vegetable, pickle

The redbud and dogwood combine to be nature's beautiful announcers of spring. The pinkish flowers can be seen scattered through the edges of timber on any spring drive.

The flowers are not only tasty but also very pretty when used in a tossed salad of violets, tulip

petals and young plantain and violet leaves. A thin dressing of oil and vinegar may be used, or the green leaves omitted and a thin dressing of any fruit juice, mayonnaise and sugar gives a just-right touch to the flower petals.

The buds make an interesting relish or pickle mixture using the following recipe: in each quart jar add 1 clove garlic, 1 stalk celery, 1 hot green pepper and 1 head of dill or 1 T dill seed, along with the washed redbuds. In a saucepan combine 1 pint water, 1 cup cider vinegar, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt, and cook for 5 minutes. Pour liquid over the redbuds in the jar to within $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of top and seal. Try this in salads or slaw next time.

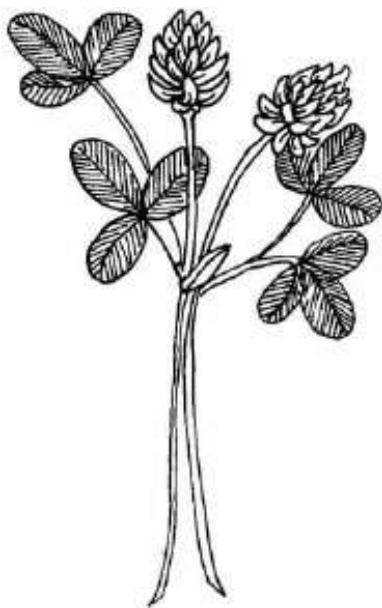
The flowers and buds are a welcome addition to a pancake batter or as a fritter. The slightly nutty flavor of the buds is appealing to my tastes and, therefore, is an asset in quick breads. Simply use your favorite pancake mix or recipe. Prepare as directed and pour a spoonful of batter in a hot skillet. Scatter a few buds on the top of each pancake. These are a real treat, especially if topped with blackberry syrup. Take your own biscuit or muffin recipe and add a handful of redbud flowers into the batter. A tasty fritter is made by preparing a batter of 1 cup flour, 1 t baking powder, $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt, 1 cup milk, 1 egg, and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup corn oil. Spoon in as many redbuds as desired and cook as a pancake. The fritter is even better, when fried and drained of excess oil, if lemon or orange juice is squeezed over the fritter and it is rolled in powdered sugar.

The flowers, as well as the pods, which form later, may be fried in butter as a vegetable. The pods may be boiled before buttering or frying, or they may be pickled in the same recipe used for the flowers as well as the dill crock recipe on page 7.



I'm certainly not advocating doing away with this lovely spring colorama; however, if you have two or three of these trees in your yard as I do, try it for a change in your menu.

Clover



(*Trifolium pratense* - Red Clover)

(*Trifolium repens* - White Dutch

Clover)

FLOWERS: May - September: red, white, yellow

DESCRIPTION: Foliage is the familiar three leaflets which occasionally contains a fourth. Pea Family.

HABITAT: Fields, meadows, waste and cultivated ground, roadsides, railroads, lawns

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: March - June, leaves; Summer, blossoms

USES: Salad, tea, potherb, breadstuff

Clover once reminded me of bare feet, summertime and bees. Now it brings to mind a wild salad, a cup of hot tea and a biscuit! It's funny how an

image is formed and changes only as new interest or new knowledge provides the change.

I've just steeped a cup of red clover tea, which I picked last summer and dried. I picked the red flowers while they were in full bloom but before they started turning brown. The flower heads dried on my kitchen counter in a cookie sheet for several months. It makes a light yellow tea that is quite good. To make the tea, add 1 t of the dried, crushed flowerheads to 1 cup of boiling water and steep or let set for 3 - 5 minutes. The white clover heads may be substituted here.

In early spring I usually make a wild salad using as many wildings as I can locate. Of course, I add some clover leaves. Ben Harris, who wrote *Eat the Weeds*, tells a tale of an old custom of the Chinese people. When they saw the first green clover in the spring, they would declare a clover feast. The people would eat large quantities and gather the greens by the baskets. Because the greens were eaten quickly and in huge amounts, it was not uncommon for the people to bloat like horses or cattle who over-eat clover in the spring. Therefore, the lesson learned is not to eat a basketful! However, the idea of the Chinese was to cleanse the intestines and body system.

A good way to use the clover as a potherb is to pick three cups of leaves and blossoms. Melt 3 T oleo in a skillet and add the clover along with 3 T

water. Cook covered for several minutes, salt and eat. This recipe is enough for one person or a sampling for two.

Biscuits made by substituting dried red or white clover blossoms for part of the flour are delicious. I use the following recipe: 1¾ cup flour, ¼ cup crushed and dried red clover blossoms, 3 t baking powder, ½ t salt, 4 T shortening, ¾ cup milk. Cut the shortening into the dry ingredients and add milk, mixing well. Roll out and cut with a biscuit cutter or a glass turned upside down. Bake in a 450° oven for 12 or 15 minutes. This makes it worth the collecting, drying and crushing!!

Jethro Kloss, in his book *Back to Eden*, says: "Red clover is one of God's blessings to man... it is excellent for cancer of the stomach, whooping cough and various spasms. The warm tea is very soothing to the nerves."

Soothing to the nerves, you say? How about gathering me some more blossoms!!!

Groundnut



(*Apios americana*)

FLOWERS: June-September

DESCRIPTION: A twining vine with hairy stems and leaves. Leaves alternate with 5 -9 leaflets. Flower clusters are dense, chocolate-brown and fragrant.

HABITAT: Wet meadows, low thickets, along streams or ponds

LOCATION: Scattered statewide

COLLECTION: September - March

USES: Potato substitute, bean

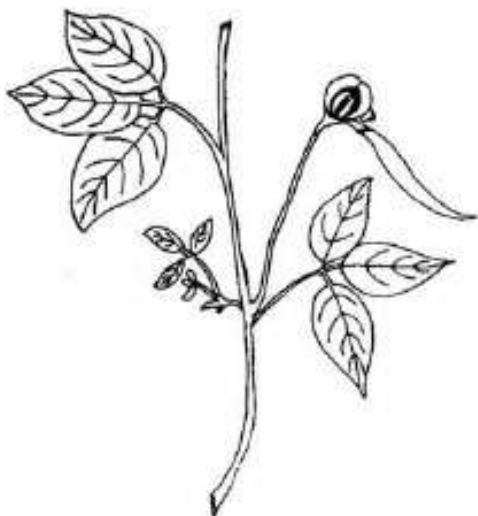
This plant produces a string of tubers not three inches underground. It takes two or three years for the tuber to grow to a usable size.

Some interesting things occur with this plant. While it can be eaten raw, it is tough and contains a sticky juice that adheres to teeth and lips. Roasting or boiling in water and

then roasting alleviates the adhesive quality. Another way to prepare the underground vegetable is to slice and fry it in oil as you would a potato. Eat immediately because the fibers reconstruct and toughen as it cools.

Indians used the seeds as a vegetable similar to beans, both green beans and shellies.

Trailing Wild Bean



(Strophostyles helvola)

FLOWERS: June - October

DESCRIPTION: Twining plant with 3 bluntly-lobed leaflets. Flower stalk produces pink flowers and has fruit at the same time. Pea Family.

HABITAT: Moist ground, sand or gravel bars, disturbed areas, rich rocky woods, thickets

LOCATION: Scattered

COLLECTION: July - October

USES: Vegetable, salad

On one of my foraging trips I ran across the pods of the trailing wild bean. I was as excited as if I had uncovered a

hidden treasure, for it was a treasure of sorts to be able to experiment with this bean's edibility.

The longest bean was about 3" long with most being smaller than my little finger in length and as big around as a 16-penny nail or less. The pink flowers and bean pods are both active on the plant during the same period.

I collected as many as possible, which gave me a small handful with which to experiment. I cooked the beans with a small amount of wild onion, salt and bacon dripping in water, just as I have domestic green beans. This proved to be somewhat tasteless with the larger ones being stringy.

The smallest pods, when used sparingly in a raw tossed salad, added an interesting texture and flavor.

The beans may be frozen after blanching, although it does not improve the tastelessness of the bean. It would certainly be a survival dish and is still a conversational item at the meal, but it receives a low rating in the wild edible rating board of the Phillips family!

Wood Sorrel

(*Oxalis violacea* - Violet Wood Sorrel) (*Oxalis stricta* - Yellow Wood Sorrel)



FLOWERS: April - November:
yellow and violet

DESCRIPTION: Low growing
with shamrock-like foliage. The
violet flowering variety also has
purple colorations on the
leaves and stems. Wood Sorrel
Family.

HABITAT: Fields, rocky and
open woods, roadsides,
gardens

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: March -
November

USES: Nibble, salad, tea, wafer,
soup

CAUTION: The quantity of

oxalic acid in this plant makes it unwise to eat in large amounts. Some individuals are sensitive to small amounts.

This tart plant has three clover-like leaves, each with a fold in the center, which forms heart-shaped leaflets.

The plant is readily eaten by all boys and girls familiar with the taste. Since it contains a great deal of oxalic acid, it is unwise to eat large quantities of this "sourgrass." It is a delicious nibble on hikes and an asset to a green salad.

The green leaves make a tea as well as a tasty hot or cold soup. To make a tea, steep the green leaves in hot water until the desired strength is acquired. In making the soup, boil the sorrel for a few minutes, drain off water and combine a generous cup of sorrel, four cups of milk, two teaspoons of grated onion, two tablespoons of flour and two teaspoons of butter. Allow the milk to get hot but not come to a boil. Serve immediately or set aside and refrigerate it for a cold soup meal.

Another idea for you campers and scout leaders is to make a sorrel wafer to be used with a wild woodland tea. Dip the leaf in stiff egg white mixture, roll in sugar and allow the wafer to dry on waxed paper or a rack.

I take a lot of groups into the woods on hikes or into the wilderness with packs. With all groups, I have felt free to introduce them to this sour field find. However, on one all-day outing with kindergarteners, I picked enough wood sorrel for each person to have one leaf with stem or one flower with stem. Within an hour, our kindergarten teacher had a swollen upper lip. The

lip was feverish and pulsed with a smarting sensation for about 24 hours before returning to normal size.

This was with a single leaf! As with all cautionary plants, some individuals can be super-sensitive.

This plant makes a good fish sauce, much as a tartar sauce. Use mayonnaise as your base, add grated onions and wood sorrel which has been doused in hot water for several seconds and chopped. It may also be chopped and added raw - which is my favorite.

A delicious, as well as attractive, way to serve sorrel is to place several leaflets on a plate as a base, top with cottage cheese, and sprinkle a few open leaflets on top.

In *Eat the Weeds*, Ben Harris credits sorrel as an aid to heart problems. The heart is indirectly helped as a result of the direct benefit to kidney and blood disorders. Personally, I thoroughly enjoy sorrel for its individual, distinctive, sour taste. Any medicinal help is strictly a bonus!

Hollyhock



(*Althaea rosea*)

FLOWERS: May- September: white, pink, red

DESCRIPTION: Tall, thick-stalked plant with large leaves, coarse and heavily veined. Mallow Family.

HABITAT: Rich rocky areas, waste areas, gardens, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Scattered

COLLECTION: April - August

USES: Salad, soup

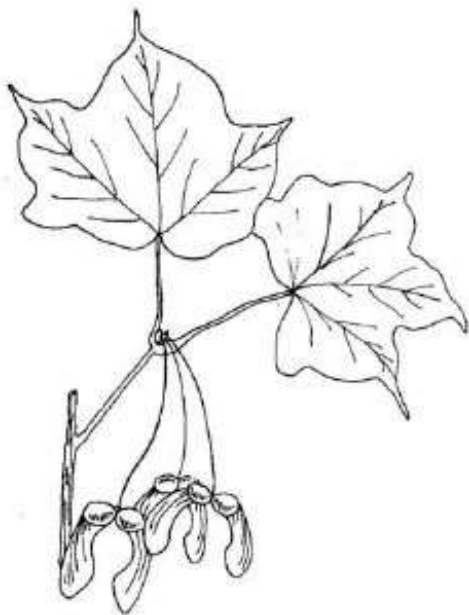
The hollyhock is a garden escapee becoming wild along road-sides, railroads or in rich waste fields.

As a child I loved to make hollyhock dolls. With a toothpick, punch a fully opened hollyhock in the center of the flower and slide it midway down the toothpick. This resembles a full-skirted gown. The bud on the tip of the toothpick made the face and hair-do, completing the flower doll to be used in a moss-carpeted dollhouse.

The early leaves of this plant may be used raw in a tossed salad or cooked in soups. It produces a rather thick sap when eaten raw but is not terribly disagreeable in taste. It is not, however, a plant I would go out of my way to find while searching for salad materials.

The wild cousin of the hollyhock, the rose mallow, is a friend I've located on the bank of a pond I haunt. It's edible, but it's not tasty.

Maple



(*Acer*, all species)

FLOWERS: April - May

DESCRIPTION: Leaves of the maple trees are opposite, borne simply on stalks (the exception is box elder which is compound) usually with three or five (rarely seven) lobes. Species vary in leaf and flower color as well as lobe spaces and shape.

HABITAT: Wooded slopes, along streams, base of bluffs, borders of limestone upland glades, low wet woods.

LOCATION: Silver Maple (*Acer saccharinum*) is statewide; other species are scattered.

COLLECTION: Fruits, April - June; Sap, February; Inner bark, April - May

USES: Syrup, vegetable. breadstuff

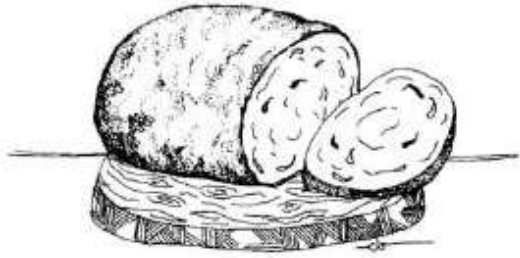
Several years ago I did a unit on Maple Sugaring with Liz Matheny at Camp Wyman. Using a $\frac{3}{8}$ " bit in our brace, we drilled a 4" hole for the spile. Number 10 tin cans were attached to the spile and covered with a plastic bag to keep out the dust and insects. As the sap began to flow, the buckets were collected and stored until some 150 gallons were accumulated. Liz kept a hot fire going all night and boiled the sap until we had four gallons of syrup.

It takes between 40 and 80 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup, depending upon the sugar content of the tree. Sugar maples have a high yield of syrup while the silver maple requires a larger amount of sap to produce a whiter and, some say, sweeter syrup.

Regardless of the tree, it is a special treat to have the maple syrup you have just made covering pancakes for breakfast!

My classroom at school encourages a great deal of experiential education. The class did a unit on Pioneers in which we collected sap and made syrup. One year February was 70° and beautiful. I was late in getting started and the syrup was not good; however, each year I now include Maple Sugaring as a part of my winter curriculum. Interest is always high in checking out the sap cans we put up on trees around the schoolyard.

Another interesting edible from this tree is the fruit. As a child I loved pinching the seed pod and expelling the wet center at a person within my aim and squirting range. These same weapons became a source of wonderment as I watched the



“helicopters” spiral to the ground. Little did I realize then that they encased a vegetable.

This vegetable, not unlike green peas, should be collected while the fruit is green. Shell off the wings and boil in water for several minutes. Drain off the water and add butter and salt.

Various Indian tribes gathered the inner bark of maple trees, dried the strips, then pounded it into a flour to be used in making bread. I personally have not tried this experiment. It is a puzzle to me how one could shave off the inner bark without defacing, or worse, killing the tree.

Common Milkweed



(*Asclepias syriaca*)

FLOWERS: May- August

DESCRIPTION: Stout stems, unbranching with entire leaves which are opposite. The leaf has a broad midrib which is reddish in color and downy on the under side. Milkweed Family.

HABITAT: Rocky woods, glades, prairies, stream banks, wet meadows, dry ridge tops

LOCATION: Scattered except in lowlands of southeast, south-central, and southwest Missouri

COLLECTION: May- August

USES: Potherb, vegetable, chewing gum, salad

CAUTION: The young shoots of

milkweed and the young shoots of the poisonous plant dogbane (*Apocynum androsaemifolium*) might be confused when the plant is just coming up. See CAUTIONS for both milkweed and dogbane on pages 212 and 213.

The milkweed has a special memory in my foraging attempts. When I was looking for milkweed one spring, I thought I had discovered the 6" shoots poking above the ground and immediately cut enough for dinner. After three one-minute cooking sessions in boiling water, ten minutes of more boiling and cooking, and seasoning, I tasted one of the vilest, most repulsive vegetables it has ever been my misfortune to stick into my mouth! More reading and a mature plant later proved my "milkweed" to be the poisonous Indian hemp or dogbane! It would be a good idea to check these out before hunting milkweed because they look surprisingly alike when coming up. The leaves of the common milkweed have a reddish vein on top of the leaf with a smooth surface on the bottom. As they get older, they do not remotely resemble each other; it is only as they are coming up that they play twins.

After that experience, it is a wonder I ever regained the trust of my family to sample my edibles. I got several books on poison plants in the United States and did some research in that field before continuing my search for the edibles. Fernald and Kinsey include a section on poisonous plants in their book, *Edible Wild Plants of Eastern North America*. Not only that, but they point out similarities between look alike poisonous and edible plants.

I'm still not fond of milkweed shoots although it may be linked to my miserable mistake. You can believe that it took some fancy backpaddling to make my family comfortable about eating some of my culinary wilds for the next couple of weeks.

Milkweed has a very bitter quality and care must be taken to boil this out before eating. Three or four short (1-2 minute) waters, using boiling water to cover each time, helps to disperse the undesired taste. The fourth time, cook for 10-12 minutes, drain and douse with butter.

The buds are my favorite vegetable from this plant. They may be picked while in tight buds and served as you would broccoli. Cook in two short boiling water baths and then in salted water for another minute. Douse with butter and eat. They are a good substitute for broccoli in a casserole. Combine 2 cups cooked spaghetti, 1 can mushroom soup, $\frac{1}{2}$ can water, 1 cup diced ham, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milkweed buds, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated cheese. Mix and bake at 350° for 30 or 40 minutes.

The buds are excellent raw in a salad of wildings.

Following the buds, the pods are the next edible product. When picked very young and small, and cooked as directed for milkweed shoots, they are passable to add to a roast or serve as a vegetable.

The Indians are said to have used milkweed a great deal in their diet and perhaps cultivated the plant. They supposedly obtained a gum by allowing the milky juice to ooze out, harden slightly, set overnight by a fire, collect together, and then it was ready to chew. My daughters and I have never been successful in making gum. Our specialty seems to be messy messes! Regardless, it is a fascinating experiment and, who knows, one of these times we may just come up with competition for Wrigley's!

Swamp Milkweed



(*Asclepias incarnata*)

FLOWERS: June - August

DESCRIPTION: Flower structure typical with the forward and swept-back petal arrangement, small umbels. Leaves narrow, pointed tips, smooth. Milkweed

Family.

HABITAT: Wet meadows, river bottom areas, pond borders, railroads

LOCATION: Scattered

COLLECTION: June - September

USES: Vegetable

CAUTION: See page 213

Swamp milkweed is used in the same manner as the common milkweed. One of the reasons for starting each cooking bath in hot rather than cold water is that the bitterness seems to leave the milkweed when hot water is used. Milkweed cooked by using cold water and brought to a boil seems to have the bitter quality "set in."

My favorite part is the flower umbel in tight bud stage. Cook the buds in three boiling water changes for a couple of minutes each. The buds are excellent.

Two good casseroles for these attractive buds are listed below. Check the casserole under Common Milkweed as the swamp milkweed buds are interchangeable in that recipe also.

Swamp Milkweed Casserole is prepared by sautéing $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped onion, 1 cup chopped celery, 1 T parsley in $\frac{1}{2}$ stick of oleo. Add 1 can mushroom soup and $\frac{2}{3}$ stick garlic or plain cheese and cook until the cheese melts. Layer swamp milkweed, 2 cups cheese mixture in greased casserole and bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Scalloped Swamp Milkweed is also very good. Sauté $\frac{1}{4}$ cup diced onion, using 6 T butter. Add 2 T flour and $\frac{1}{4}$ cup water. Mix salt, 2 beaten eggs, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. processed cheese, and 2 cups drained, cooked swamp milkweed. Bake in a greased casserole at 325° for 30 minutes.

The pods of swamp milkweed are thinner, smoother and longer than those of the common milkweed. They are, in my opinion, also better to eat. They resemble the daylily buds, which is a compliment supreme! I've used them in a pot roast along with potatoes and carrots; I've boiled them and

served with butter. Both ways are good.

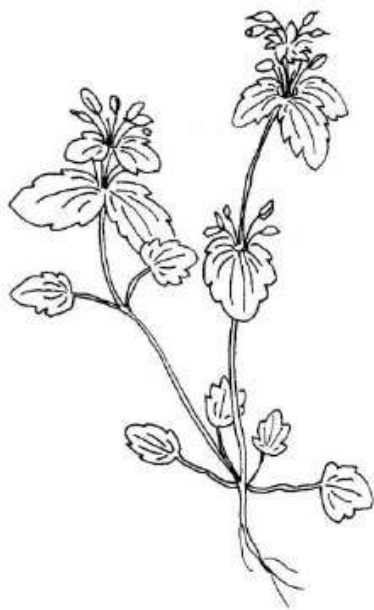
I froze several packages of the pods in a fresh-freeze state. I have not fixed the frozen variety in a way that is as palatable as the fresh product.

I also dried some of the blossom buds and find that they revive relatively well when soaked in water and cooked as directed above.

The fibers of the swamp milkweed stalk make a thread-like string used for cordage and stitchery.

Maybe I like the swamp milkweed because of the water nearby, or perhaps I enjoy the cute raccoon tracks I usually find. Whatever the reason, swamp milkweed is a wild edible I like very much.

Henbit



(Lamium amplexicaule)

FLOWERS: February - November

DESCRIPTION: Square-stemmed plant, lipped flowers, scalloped, rounded leaves. Upper leaves clasp stem, lower ones on stalk. Mint Family.

HABITAT: Lawns, meadows, pastures, cultivated and fallow fields, waste ground, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Scattered

COLLECTION: February - November

USES: Potherb, salad

Henbit is a small flowering member of the mint family often found in yards. Next time you see this little fellow, pick him and wash the tips. Cook them slowly in no more water than is necessary, then add a dab of butter and season. Spring onions will give a neat touch.

This specimen of early spring adds a slightly minty flavor to a tossed wild salad.

There's more than one way to clear your yard of unwanted greenery. EAT THOSE WEEDS!!

Mint



(*Labiatae*)

Horsement (*Monarda russeliana*)... south, central and eastern Missouri

Bee Balm or Oswego Tea (*Monarda didyma*)... sparsely reported

Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)... scattered statewide

Ohio Horsemint (*Blephilia ciliata*)... southern and eastern Missouri

Wood Mint (*Blephilia hirsuta*)... most common in counties bordering the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, as well as other rivers

Pennyroyal (*Hedeoma pufegoides*)... statewide

Slender Mountain Mint (*Pycnanthemum tenuifolium*)... statewide

Dittany (*Cunila origanoides*)... throughout the Ozark region

Spearmint (*Mentha spicata*)... scattered in

southern and central Missouri

Peppermint (*Mentha piperita*)... scattered in central and southern Missouri

Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*)... lightly scattered statewide

FLOWERS: Varying, April - October

DESCRIPTION: Square stem, opposite leaves. Mint as a family covers many edibles and range in colors of red, purple, pink, lavender, white. Mint Family.

HABITAT: Woods, fields, rocky soil, good soil, abandoned areas, inhabited areas

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: March - October

USES: Tea, seasoning, jelly, mint sauce, wafer

A great many edibles occur in this grouping of mints — wild bergamot or horsemint, bee balm, spearmint, peppermint, pennyroyal, catnip, skullcap, wood mint and others. The minty smell from a crushed leaf and the square stem, characteristic of all mints makes these plants easy to identify.

I dry the leaves of any of the mints and use them for teas. The leaves may be dried by placing them on waxed paper in the kitchen or attic, turning occasionally, and leaving until thoroughly dried. This may be several weeks. Another method of drying the leaves is to place them in a cheese cloth and

hang it near the ceiling of your kitchen or attic. When they are thoroughly dried, place in a jar and cap until ready for use. To make tea, crush the dried leaf and allow a teaspoon per one or two cups of hot water, depending upon the desired strength. To make tea from fresh leaves, add 4-5 leaves per cup of hot water and allow it to steep for 3-5 minutes.

Peppermint and spearmint are used as a seasoning spice in any recipe calling for mint. Another pleasant use is to stick a fresh sprig of mint in a glass of iced tea or lemonade. Better yet, freeze the fresh leaf in an ice cube for your drink.

Your next cocktail might be a “spirited” affair in which you serve mint juleps. There are many recipes and opinions on fixing mint juleps. Some crush the leaves, pour bourbon over them and allow the liquid to permeate for several hours, strain and serve over crushed ice with a mint sprig. Others add a mint syrup, made from boiling mint and sugar in water, to the bourbon. Still others merely add the sprig of mint to rum, brandy or bourbon. Whatever your fancy, my suggestion is not to try all varieties the same day!

Mint jelly is delicious served with lamb or venison in a sauce. To make a mint jelly, it is best to use apples, mayapples or crab apples as the jelly base and source of pectin. Cover the quartered or sliced apples and cook for 10 to 15 minutes. Drain off the liquid and add one-half cup of fresh mint leaves, two tablespoons of lemon juice and a couple drops of green food coloring to the apple liquid. Stir and add a cup of sugar for each cup of liquid. When the mixture is ready, strain off the mint leaves and pour into sterilized jars.



A fresh mint sauce which may be served with lamb is as follows: marinate a good-sized handful of leaves, approximately one-half cup, with sugar, water and vinegar. Use 4 or 5 tablespoons of sugar, half a cup of distilled vinegar, and 4 tablespoons of water for the mint and marinate at least two hours in the refrigerator.

I serve a mint sauce with leg of lamb that is super! Use one jar mint jelly, one jar red currant jelly, 1 jar chili sauce, and 1 stick of butter. Melt slowly and serve hot over lamb and rice.

Mint vinegar is simple to make. Cut several sprigs of mint and arrange them loosely in a jar. Cover this with cider vinegar, cap and place the jar in a sunny window for about three weeks. At the end of this period, strain off the mint, rebottle, and seal. Mint vinegar is a nice addition to a tossed salad.

A woodland tea party, using wild mint tea, can be topped off with a mint

wafer. Just dip the washed and dried leaf in a stiff egg white, roll in either granulated or powdered sugar and place on waxed paper for the wafer to dry. This is more successful on a sunny, dry day.

Each plant has various degrees of minty qualities and flavor. Experiment with several and find your preference.

Thistle



(Cirsium vulgare)

FLOWERS: June - September

DESCRIPTION: Tall, heavily branching plant. Leaves sharp-pointed edges, bristles on top. Stickers all the way up the stem. Composite Family.

HABITAT: Pastures, fields, waste ground, road-sides, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: May - June

USES: Potherb, vegetable

This formidable pest an edible? "Never!" I thought. Sources on wild edibles indicated I was wrong and since I am game to tackle any new edible, I went in search of the thistle.

The early leaves may be cooked as a potherb along with poke and mustard. While this is tasty and not disagreeable, I was still anxious to try the bloom shoots. The first problem you encounter is collecting it. Collection **MUSTS** for thistle

picking include clippers and gloves. Cut the thistle stalk when young. Field strip it of all leaves and thornystickers with the help of scissors. I find that the outer rind of the stem peels off rather easily, taking the stickers off with it, leaving the remains as organic vegetation.

This I call field-stripping. In the field-stripped condition, I put the stalk in a plastic bag to bring home. Peel all of the outer rind off the stem and cut into 3" or 4" sections. Boil these stalks for a few minutes in salted water and douse with butter. The taste is quite good. Stems gathered as late as July have been fibrous and tough, although tasty. We ate them like artichokes, pulling the stems through the teeth and discarding the stringy part.

Good, bad or indifferent, I dare say not many dinner parties could offer such an unusual fare. Who knows, it may even catch on??!!

blue-flowering edibles

Spiderwort



(*Tradescantia virginiana*, *T.*

ohiensis, *T. bracteata*)

FLOWERS: April - June

DESCRIPTION: Parallel veined, long leaves. Thick stem producing purple flowers at stem tips. Spiderwort Family.

HABITAT: Open wood slopes, valleys

LOCATION: *T. virginiana*... eastern Missouri; *T. ohiensis*... statewide; *T. bracteata*... scattered in southern Missouri

COLLECTION: March - June

USES: Salad, potherb

This beautiful, deep purple wildflower is a tasty addition to a wild salad. The leaves and stems may both be cut up and used. It

also is a good potherb fixed alone or with other greens. This does not need to be cooked long, just boiled in salted water for a few minutes and coated with butter.

Dayflower



(*Commelina communis*,

C. caroliniana, *C. diffusa*, *C. erecta*)

FLOWERS: May - October

DESCRIPTION: Flower has 2 blue upper petals larger than the white lower petal. Leaves are wide, but parallel-veined. Plant reclines somewhat. Spiderwort Family.

HABITAT: Cultivated and waste ground, moist soil, low woods, thickets

LOCATION: *C. communis*... lightly scattered state-wide; *C. caroliniana*... Jackson County only (Steyermark); *C. diffusa*... southern and central Missouri; *C. erecta*... southern and central Missouri

COLLECTION: May - October

USES: Potherb

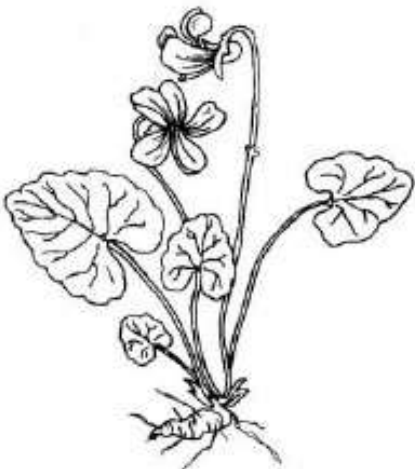
The dayflower is a reputedly questionable edible. While most edible sources do not even list it, Fernald and Kinsey suggest that the group is not considered poisonous and experiments are in order.

My experiments indicated the potherb to be mild, rather bland, and therefore certainly not disagreeable.

I boiled dayflowers in salt water for a short period and seasoned in the following ways: added bacon drippings; doused in butter; mixed with vinegar.

All three ways were appealing. More experiments are in order. The fleshy roots of *C. erecta* varieties can also be cooked as a vegetable.

Violets



(Viola species)

FLOWERS: March - June

DESCRIPTION: Flowers are irregular, 2 large petals above with 3 smaller ones below. Leaves vary with species. Violet Family.

HABITAT: Widely varied

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: March - June

USES: Salad, confection, soup, jelly

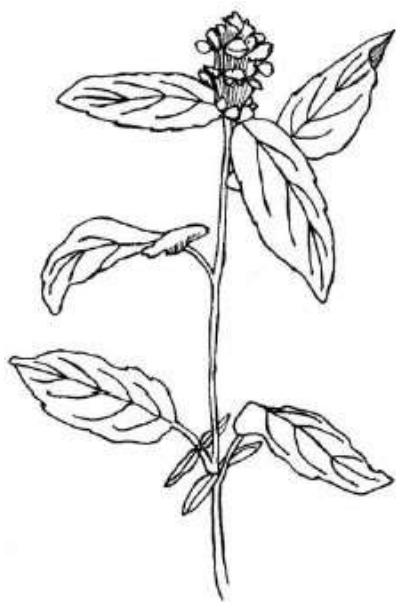
This pretty, blue spring flower has several wild edible uses. The leaves and petals may be added to a salad and eaten raw. The leaves are very mucilaginous and therefore a good thickener in

soup. It may be used in a vegetable soup as you would okra. Because of this thickening ability, it is often called wild okra.

For a wild sweet tooth, the petals may be dipped in stiff egg whites, rolled in sugar and allowed to dry. Another use for the flowers is in making jelly. Place the flowers in a jar, packing rather firmly. Pour boiling water over the flowers in the jar, cap and allow this to stand for 24 hours. Pour off the liquid and proceed as with regular jelly. Measure the liquid poured off the petals. Put the liquid in a large saucepan and add a package of Sure-Jell per four cups. When the mixture comes almost to a boil, add a cup of sugar for every cup of liquid measured earlier. Cook until the jelly slithers off the spoon.

It's an interesting side dish for a dinner party. After all, how many times have you been served violet jelly?

Self-Heal



(Prunella vulgaris)

FLOWERS: May- September

DESCRIPTION: Square stem, tight flowering head. Opposite leaves, often with a purple cast on bottom.

HABITAT: Low woodlands, borders, banks and gravel bars of streams, ponds, ditches, pastures, prairies, fields, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: May - September

USES: Tea

The common names of self-heal and heal-all were used because some Indians believed it to heal or cure most illnesses. Self-heal must be found the world over, because an old Italian proverb says: "He that hath self-heal and sanicle [black snakeroot] needs no other physician."

A tea is made by soaking the broken leaves in cold water. The leaves may also be dried, powdered and soaked in cold water. This is a bit unusual in that most herb teas are to be drunk warm or hot for the greatest benefit.

Bellflower

(Campanula species)

FLOWERS: May- October

DESCRIPTION: Tall, upright plant. Leaves alternate, toothed, smaller toward top of stem. Bell-shaped, purple flowers blooming up the stalk. Bellflower Family.

HABITAT: Rich, moist woodland, woods borders, thickets

LOCATION: Statewide

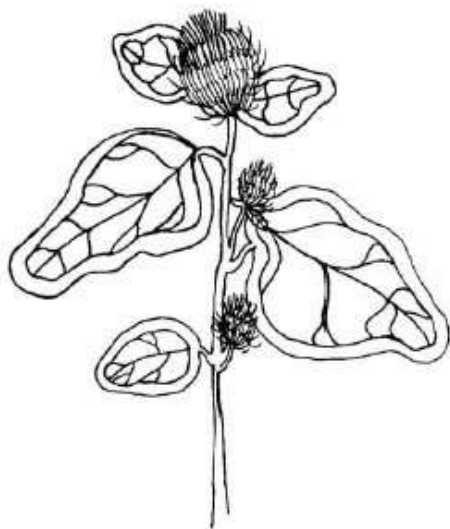
COLLECTION: May- June

USES: Salad, vegetable

The tall bellflower is eaten as a green or vegetable while young. The creeping bellflower puts on an edible root in September. These branches from the rootstalk are edible raw in a salad. When cooked they are said to be not unlike parsnips.



Burdock



(*Arctium minus*)

FLOWERS: July - October

DESCRIPTION: Large elephant-ear leaves, rough and purplish on long stems. Flowers are thistle-like and form burs.

HABITAT: Waste ground, barnyards and dwellings, woodland, thickets, railroads

LOCATION: Scattered

COLLECTION: May - June

USES: Salad, cooked vegetable, potherb, soup, confection, pie, coffee substitute

CAUTION: See page 216

There are some interesting tales associated with burdock and its powers of strength and

endurance. Personally, I believe those powers are already given to any forager willing to scout, pull, dig and clip this plant for eating.

Burdock is a biennial plant. The first year it forms large elephant-ear leaves on long green stems with purple on the upper portion which resembles wild rhubarb. The second year it sends up a bloom stalk with purple flowers. These flowers form burs that stick to clothing in the fall.

The first-year plants provide an edible root, much acclaimed by the Japanese, and the leaf stalks are used as a rhubarb. If you fancy rhubarb pie, try burdock "Wild Rhubarb" Pie. Cut 3 cups of the first-year burdock petioles into 1" pieces. Place in a piecrust and cover with 1 cup sugar, 3 T flour, ½ t grated orange peel, a dash of salt and a lump of oleo. Cover with a top crust and bake at 400° for 45 minutes or until brown. It is stringy in texture.

I made a burdock dessert dumpling that used red hots, but I was not very pleased with the results. The pith may be eaten raw in a salad, or candied. Burdock Candy is made by boiling the burdock stems in ¼ soda and then again in plain water for 15-20 minutes each time. Cut the stems into 1" chunks. Add as much sugar as you have burdock

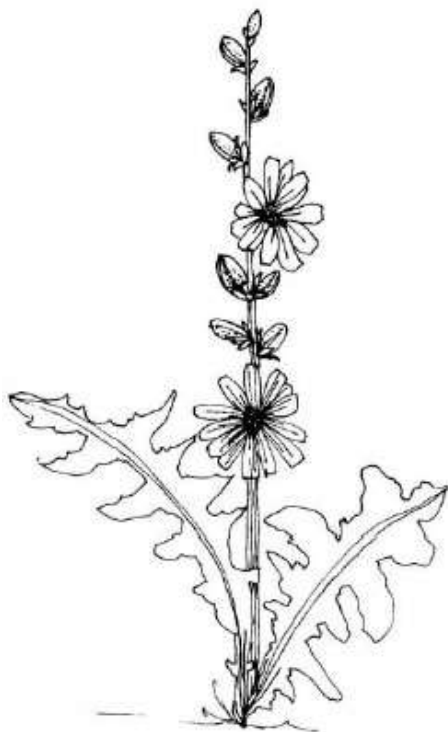


stems, enough water to dissolve the sugar and the juice of either an orange or a lemon. Cook the stems in this syrup until the syrup nearly evaporates. Drain and roll in sugar. This reminds me ever so slightly of candied orange peel or lemon peel. While I prefer the lemon flavoring, it is not something I'd go out of my way to fix. However, I think it might be neat to do out-of-doors on a campout sometime.

The second-year plant has the edible bloom stalk and the young tops may be used as a potherb. In my first attempts to cook this vegetable, I found the stems fibrous. They do improve if cooked in two waters, the first with a pinch of soda which helps to soften them. Also, the stalks must be gathered early enough in the growth process. They taste a bit like parsnips. Boil for 20 minutes with $\frac{1}{4}$ soda, then cook in plain water.

The bloom stalk may be fried, boiled or baked in or out of meat as well as made into candy as the leaf stalk was used. Ready, Set, now Go eat up those pesky weeds!!

Chicory



(Cichorium intybus)

FLOWERS: May- October

DESCRIPTION: Basal, dandelion-like leaves. Blue flowers directly attached to stem. Rays of flowers are blunt and fringed or notched. Composite Family.

HABITAT: Fields, pastures, waste ground, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide except in southeastern and mid-western counties

COLLECTION: March - April, leaves, root-vegetable; June - August, root for coffee

USES: Salad, potherb, vegetable, jelly, coffee

The sources I've read indicate that chicory has powers powerful enough to make a lover faithful, keep coffee from affecting the heart, make an accurate time telling clock and a meal fit for a king.

In days gone by, when witchcraft and love potions were fashionable, a chicory drink was reportedly served to one's lover and the powers therein kept the lover true.

The chicory flower was served as a sweetmeat during the reign of King Charles II of England, and the flowers in Sweden open at 5:00 a.m. and close up at 10:00 a.m., telling time of sorts.

Today chicory is still used as a coffee substitute. While it does not contain caffeine, it is best when mixed with regular coffee grounds and perked.

In early spring, the rosette not only resembles the dandelion but has that same bitter taste for which the dandelion is famous. I personally prefer to cook these friends in several waters to tone down the flavor. Although I realize some of the vitamins are lost, the final source is still much richer than most prepared vegetables.

The chicory leaves are good potherb material to be added to the more mild tastes of lamb's quarters, stinging nettle or poke. The leaves do need to

be gathered before the bloomstalk appears, as they are VERY bitter afterwards.

The flowers can be used raw in a salad, as can the very young leaves and chicory crowns. The pretty blue flowers make a good jelly. To make the jelly, collect the flowers and remove the sepals. Allow the petals to steep in boiling water for 24 hours. Strain off the liquid and measure. For every cup of liquid, add a cup of sugar along with a teaspoon of orange juice and a small piece of peel. Add a package of Sure-Jell for every four cups of liquid. As with all jellies, the pectin is added to the liquid and brought to a boil. As the mixture begins to boil, add the sugar, juice and peeling. Cook this until it slithers off the spoon.

While I have not read of such, I would not be surprised if the flowers make a wine, just as the dandelion flowers are known to do. With that in mind, I spent a day picking chicory flowers. It took several hours of picking to collect a tight pint. Then for each hour spent gathering flowers, one and one-half times that was spent separating the sepals from the petals as the sepals are quite bitter. Unless you have loads of time on your hands, I suggest you wait on this project. Nonetheless, the taste is not bad. The recipe I followed was originally geared for a gallon, but lacking that amount I altered it for a pint. Pour 1 pint boiling water over petals and allow to steep for three days. Add a heaping $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar, juice of a small orange half, with the peel grated, 1 tablespoon lemon juice and a small piece of fresh wild ginger root. Return all of the mixed ingredients to the crock and place a small section of a yeast cake on a small piece of toasted rye bread. Cover the crock and leave in a warm room for 6 days. Strain the mixture, put in bottles and cap loosely, perhaps with a wad of cotton. Keep in a dark place three weeks, decant, cap and the longer you leave it alone the better!



The taproots, again resembling our look-alike twin the dandelion, are dug up by using a dandelion fork. The roots of chicory are a bit bigger than those of the dandelion, and must be thoroughly scrubbed and roasted in 250° or 300° oven for four or more hours until they break or snap easily and are dark brown inside. These sections are ground and used a bit more sparingly than regular coffee. The roots may be dug in midsummer for coffee use.

These same roots, dug early in the spring, make a vegetable similar to parsnips. The edible portion, a small white central core, must be peeled out. A flour may be ground from the dried small core, again gathered before the bloomstalk appears, to be used in hot breads. As in so many wild preparations, there is LOADS of work for small amounts. Nonetheless, it has earned its place as a wild edible.

Let's show more respect for the blue, roadside wildflower!

non-flowering edible

Reindeer Lichen



(*Cladonia rangiferina*)

FLOWERS: No flowers

DESCRIPTION: Airy carpet of antler-looking tips. Soft and pliable when wet, but wiry and brittle when dry.

HABITAT: Open ground, shaded woods

LOCATION: Statewide

COLLECTION: Year-round

USES: Soup, flour, jelly

CAUTION: Most lichens are purgative; they contain an acid that breaks down rocks. While I find no indicator from any edible- or poisonous-plant book that a CAUTION is necessary, consider yourself warned, at least.

CONSIDERATION: Reindeer lichen can be picked easily. There is, therefore, the possibility and danger of eradicating an entire area, upsetting the balance to which it contributes. AVOID OVER-COLLECTING!!!

Reindeer lichen has been one of the more intriguing sources of food I've tried. The soft, thick, spongy carpet in wet weather becomes wiry and brittle in dry weather.

It is easy to gather a large supply in a short time, which in itself is a rarity when gathering wild edibles! Another plus for this food is the knowledge that it may be gathered the year around.

The lichen lifts off the ground easily, leaving a dirty bottom, which should be cut off. Place the lichen in an attic near the ceiling or on the kitchen counter to dry. When dried, package the lichen in a container or plastic bag and roll it or crunch it into small pieces. I freely substitute it for half the flour required in biscuits and muffins. There is a noticeable green "thing" in your hot bread, but the taste is very good. Reindeer Lichen Biscuits are worth your time and trouble. Cut 4 T shortening into 1¾ cup flour, 1¼ cup dried, crushed reindeer lichen, 3 t baking powder, ½ t salt. Add ¾ cup milk and mix. Roll or pat out and cut for round biscuits or into 3-inch finger strips. Bake at 450° for 12-15 minutes. Another hot bread worth your kitchen time is Reindeer Lichen Muffins. Put 1¾ cup flour, ¼ cup reindeer lichen, ½ cup brown sugar, 4 t baking soda and ½ t salt in a bowl. Stir in 2 eggs, 1 cup milk, and 1/3 cup liquid shortening. Bake in muffin tins at 400° for 20-25 minutes.

Chocolate Chip Cookies do not seem to suffer from using the lichen flour. Just follow your favorite chocolate chip recipe and substitute ¼ cup of lichen for flour.

My attempts at making a jelly by soaking the lichen in water overnight,

boiling with milk, and adding wine and honey were not worth recommending.

The lichen, when soft and gelatin-like from simmering in milk, may be thickened with cornstarch, seasoned and served as a passable soup... for anyone extremely hungry!

At any rate, it is a different, conversational meal you'll serve when experimenting with this wilding.

This reminds me of shades of *My Side of the Mountain*!

***Color Plates - Paintings by
Jan Phillips***







gooseberry



hawthorn



shadbush



*wild
strawberry*







black locust



dewberry



black cherry



Kentucky coffeetree









elderberry



ox-eye daisy



persimmon

bedstraw



corn salad



bellwort



day lily





winter cress



cinquefoil



ground cherry



Jerusalem artichoke













Jack in the Pulpit



black walnut









wood nettle







wake robin



wild ginger







crab apple



live forever



wild rose



groundnut



rose mallow





swamp milkweed



violets



Dead Nettle
Peppermint

Savory Wood Mint

Ground Ivy
Mint

Horsemint











back-of-the-book-stuff

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***beware!!! poisonous!!! dangerous!!!
caution!!!***

The following is a list of poisonous plants that are either look-alikes of an edible plant or an edible plant which has some poisonous parts.

Nightshade

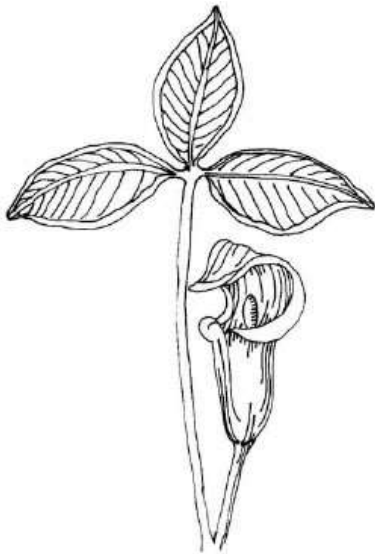
(*Solanum dulcamara*)

FLOWERS: May - November

HABITAT: Low woods, thickets, roadsides, fencerows

LOCATION: Scattered

CAUTION: Seeds of this plant are that are either look-alikes of an edible plant or an edible plant, which has some poisonous parts.



Jack in the Pulpit

(*Arisaema atrorubens*)

FLOWERS: April - June

HABITAT: Wooded areas or low bottom thickets

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: The corm could be harmful if eaten raw. It contains calcium oxalate. Some individuals with sensitive skins can develop a rash from touching the leaves or corm.

Fly Poison



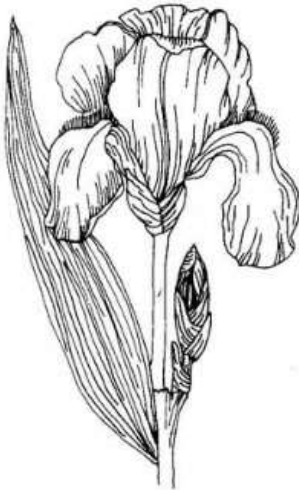
(*Amianthium*)

FLOWERS: May-July

HABITAT: Acid soils or sandy or cherty ground of low wooded slopes

LOCATION: Southern Missouri

CAUTION: Might be mistaken for wild onion. A clue is not to pick onion or garlic substitutes in the wild if there is no familiar onion odor associated with the plant.



Blue Flag

(*Iris germanica*)

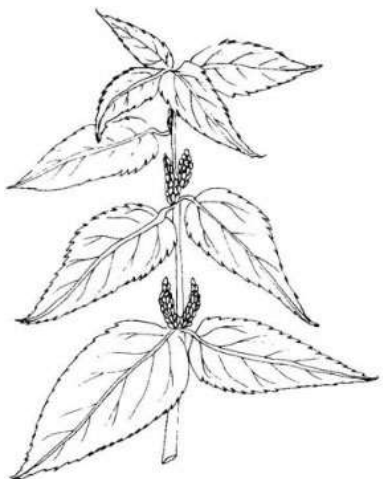
FLOWERS: March - April

HABITAT: Rock and other gardens, escapee

LOCATION: Statewide in gardens, rare in the wild

CAUTION: The rootstalk could prove fatal if eaten. Care should be taken not to confuse it with Sweet Flag or Calamus.

Wood Nettle



(Laportea canadensis)

FLOWERS: Late May - August

HABITAT: Rich low woodland, valleys, along streams

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: Plant has stinging hairs on the leaves and stems which cause itching.



Hops

(Humulus lupulus)

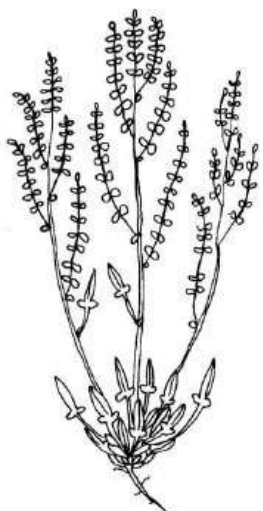
FLOWERS: July - August

HABITAT: Waste ground, open, fertile areas, fencerows, shaded thickets, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide except low southeastern Missouri

CAUTION: Leaves cause dermatitis in some people.

Field Sorrel



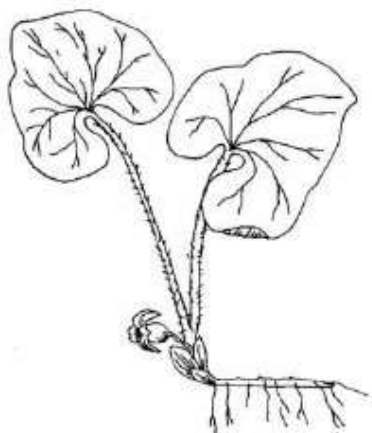
(*Rumex acetosella*)

FLOWERS: May - September

HABITAT: Sour soils of fallow fields, open wasteland, railroads

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: Leaves are cause of dermatitis for sensitive skins. Overdose of the raw plant can cause upset stomach and poisoning.



Wild Ginger

(*Asarum canadense*)

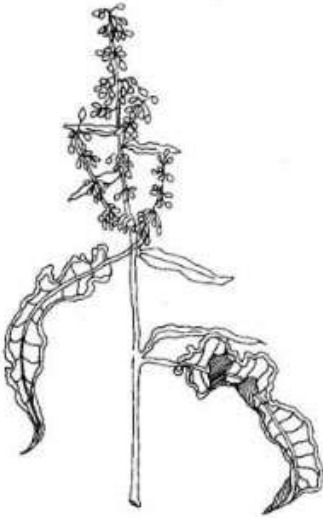
FLOWERS: April - May

HABITAT: Rich wooded slopes, valleys, ravine bottoms

LOCATION: Statewide except extreme west and southeast

CAUTION: Leaves have been known to cause a rash on some individuals. Wild ginger's reputed "medicinal properties" suggest moderation in its use.

Sour Dock



(Rumex crispus)

FLOWERS: April - May

HABITAT: Fields, gardens, railroads, wasteground

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: Leaves can cause a rash on some people.

Smartweed



(Polygonum species)

FLOWERS: May - November

HABITAT: Fields, pastures, moist ground

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: Leaves have been known to cause a rash on some individuals. Also the juice or sap can cause an unpleasant “smarting” sensation if it comes in contact with the eyes or nostrils.

Pokeweed



(Phytolacca americana)

FLOWERS: May - October

HABITAT: Rich soils in waste ground, farm lots, around dwellings, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: Roots are poisonous and narcotic, causing vomiting, diarrhea and in some instances death. Green berries and seeds are questionable. Raw greens are toxic.



Pawpaw

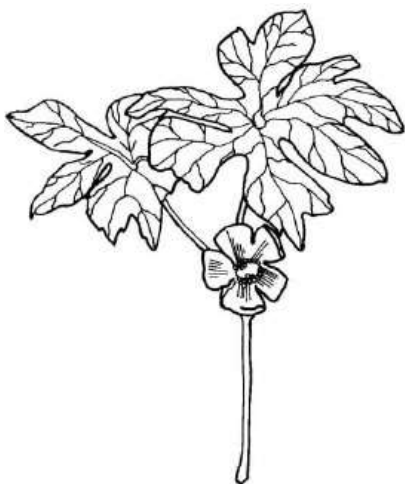
(Asimina triloba)

FLOWERS: March - May

HABITAT: Low bottom woods, wooded slopes along streams, ravines, base of bluffs **LOCATION:** Statewide

CAUTION: The fruits are a source of allergic reactions to certain individuals as a result of either eating or touching them.

May Apple



(Podophyllum peltatum)

FLOWERS: March - May

HABITAT: Low moist or dry open woods or thickets

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: All parts of this plant are considered poisonous except the ripe fruits. The rootstock has been known to be a cause of dermatitis from touching and a fatal prostration from eating.



Moon Seed

(Menispermum canadense)

FLOWERS: May-July

HABITAT: Low moist woods and thickets, ravines, along streams, valleys, fencerows

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: Clusters of grape-like fruits can be mistaken for wild grape. Seeds are toxic. The seeds of moonseed are flat and moon-shaped.

Black Locust



(Robinia pseudo-acacia)

FLOWERS: May-June

HABITAT: Dry or rocky upland woods, streams, pastures, thickets, waste ground

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: The seeds and bark are poisonous. Flowers are used in fritters.

Cherry, Plum, Peach



(Prunus)

FLOWERS: April - May

HABITAT: Woodland, thickets, along streams, fencerows, cultivated

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: Leaves should not be used in a tea. The wilted leaves develop an acid which has killed animals.

Jewel Weed, Touch Me Not



(*Impatiens*)

FLOWERS: May - October

HABITAT: Rich or damp low woods, swampy ground, along streams

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: This is an acknowledged edible by some, a cautioned poison by others. They have proved poisonous to livestock. A wise man is a cautious, live

one.



Buckthorn

(*Rhamnus species*)

FLOWERS: April - June

HABITAT: Cultivation, escaped in woods, roadsides, waste ground

LOCATION: Scattered statewide

CAUTION: Buckthorn leaves are similar to those of the

cherry tree and they also bear clusters of black berries. These berries, as well as the bark and leaves, are poisonous, acting as a violent laxative.

Buckeye, Horse Chestnut



(Aesculus)

FLOWERS: April - May

HABITAT: Rich, rocky woods, valleys, ravines, slopes, base of bluffs, thickets

LOCATION: Statewide except extreme southeast Missouri

CAUTION: Seeds are poisonous and can cause a coma. They

seem to be safe after boiling or roasting.



Pimpernel

(Anagallis arvensis)

FLOWERS: May - September

HABITAT: Fields, pastures, rocky glades, edge of bluffs, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: South and central Missouri

CAUTION: Some sources declare this a salad and potherb material, others insist it to be poisonous. Best to use care here.

Poison Hemlock



(Conium maculatum)

FLOWERS: May - August

HABITAT: Waste ground, fields, pastures, fencerows, thickets, low ground, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Scattered

CAUTION: The seeds, leaves and roots cause paralysis, then death. The victim has a clear mind to the end. This is famous as the drink that did Socrates in. It looks a great deal like Queen Anne's Lace except the stem of Poison Hemlock is smooth and without hairs.

Water Hemlock



(Cicuta)

FLOWERS: May - September

HABITAT: Borders of ponds, sloughs, ditches, spring branches, wet depressions of prairies, low and upland meadows

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: All parts of the plant, but especially the roots, are deadly. The roots smell and taste like parsnips. They produce violent convulsions.

Queen Anne's Lace



(Daucus carota)

FLOWERS: May - October

HABITAT: Fields, waste ground, roadsides, railroads, thickets, gravel bars, woodland

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: The leaves have caused some individuals to develop dermatitis. Do not confuse with poisonous hemlock.



Dogbane, Indian Hemp

(Apocynum)

FLOWERS: May - August

HABITAT: Prairies, glades, rocky open woods, thickets, waste ground, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: Can be mistaken for milkweed as it is coming up. Dogbane leaf is smooth and mature plant forks. When eaten, dogbane can produce vomiting and diarrhea.

Bittersweet Nightshade



(Solanum dulcamara)

FLOWERS: May - November

HABITAT: Low woods, thickets, roadsides, fencerows

LOCATION: Scattered statewide

CAUTION: Seeds of this plant are poisonous.

Milkweeds



(Asclepias)

FLOWERS: May - August

HABITAT: Varies with species

LOCATION: Some species statewide

CAUTION: Raw plants of all milkweed are poisonous if eaten. Cattle have been

poisoned from grazing on butterfly weed leaves and stems. Milkweed and dogbane can be confused in the early growing stages.

Black Nightshade



(Solanum nigrum)

FLOWERS: May - November

HABITAT: Open woodland, streams, around dwellings, fallow fields, pastures, roadsides

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: Although this plant has been experimented as an edible, the berries are poisonous to some people and **CAUTION** should be exercised when using.



Horse Nettle

(Solanum carolinense)

FLOWERS: May - October

HABITAT: Waste ground, fallow and cultivated fields, prairies, road-sides, railroads

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: Seeds are poisonous. Sometimes called wild tomato. Suggested perhaps ripe fruits and subterranean

tubers are edible.

Jimson Weed



(Datura stramonium)

FLOWERS: May - October

HABITAT: Pastures, barnlots, fields, waste areas, roadsides, railroads, rocky open areas

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: Seeds, leaves, flowers and stems highly poisonous. Causes abnormal thirst, distorted sight, delirium, incoherence and coma. Can be fatal. Resembles the night-flowering vine of morning glory as well as the flower of the wild petunia.

Elderberry

(Sambucus)

FLOWERS: May - July



HABITAT: Open woods, thickets, along streams, fencerows, roadsides, railroads

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: The bark and twigs are poisonous. Children who have used the pithy stems as a blow gun or chewed on the bark are believed to have been poisoned. Cattle and sheep who ate the leaves, young shoots and buds are known to have been fatally poisoned.

Apple of Peru



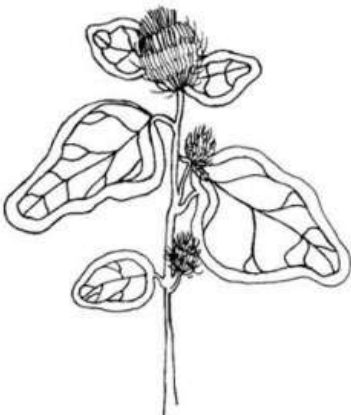
(Nicandra physalodes)

FLOWERS: July - September

HABITAT: Cultivated and fallow fields, waste ground

LOCATION: Scattered in south and central Missouri

CAUTION: This plant is sometimes used as a fly poison. Very poisonous. Bladder husk fruits not to be confused with ground cherries.



Great Burdock

(Arctium)

FLOWERS: July - October

HABITAT: Waste ground, around dwellings, woodlands, thickets, railroads

LOCATION: Statewide

CAUTION: Leaves have caused a rash on some people.

A plant one should recognize when looking for edibles, picking berries, hiking or just enjoying the outdoors is poison ivy.

Poison Ivy



(Rhus radicans)

FLOWERS: May - July

HABITAT: Fencerows, roadsides, railroads, waste ground, low and upland dry or wet woods, along streams, valleys, wooded slopes, thickets

LOCATION: Every county

CAUTION: Any part of the plant, due to the oil therein, can produce a rash. Gibbons

reports of Kentucky people who eat the young leaves in an effort to build up an immunity.

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Wild Edible Meal

I have used wild edibles in my classroom at school, with my Girl Scout troop and as a workshop theme. The following menu can be acquired rather easily and prepared with satisfactory results.

- **Soup:** Watercress, Sorrel or Lamb's Quarters
- **Fritters:** Elderberry, Queen Anne's Lace or Purslane
- **Game Fondue:** Duck, Dove, Crayfish
- **Vegetables:** Cattail shoots and heads, Catbrier tendrils, Fairy Spuds
- **Salad:** Greens combinations
- **Bread:** Reindeer lichen, clover or dandelion
- **Tea:** Indian lemonade
- **Dessert:** Mint wafer, berries in season

Serves 12

CAUTION: This menu should not be attempted unless you are acquainted with the edibles and recognize poisonous plants that resemble edible ones. Also be aware that the energy required to forage is immense.

Soup a la Weed

- 12 cups milk
- 1½ T salt
- 3 cups chopped watercress, sorrel or lamb's quarters
- 2 T onion (if wild use 1 T)
- ½ cup flour
- 3 T butter
- Boil the wild edible for a couple of minutes and drain. Heat the milk, onion, butter, salt and greens, adding the flour to thicken. Heat but do not allow mixture to come to a boil. Serve with a dab of butter and a fresh sprig of greenery on top.
- Foraged Fritters
- 2 cups complete pancake mix
- 1½ cups water

12 sprigs of elderberry flower heads, Queen Anne's Lace or Purslane

Dip the sprig in the pancake batter and fry. Roll the flower heads in lemon or orange juice and powdered sugar. Add butter, salt and pepper to the purslane.

Game Fondue

Duck a la Mac Johnson

- 4 ducks (6 if you're hearty eaters)
- 3 packages of brown and wild rice combined
- 8 T butter
- Mushrooms, 1 quart fresh or 2 cans
- 3 Bottle Worcestershire sauce

Cut meat into pieces the size of the first joint of your little finger. Sauté in margarine. When browned, add an equal amount of cut-up mushrooms and Worcestershire sauce equal to the amount of margarine. Put a lid over the meat and mushrooms to simmer and steam.

Prepare the rice. It takes about 25 minutes for the rice to cook, so get it started before preparing your duck. This way, when the meat is done the rice will be, too. Mac suggests that you "raise the lid occasionally and sniff the duck-mushroom mix to prep your innards. When the half hour is up, drain the rice and serve. Contrary to gourmet instructions, a little Rhine wine goes well. Don't dawdle; it's best hot."

- Crayfish Fondue
- 12 crawdads
- 1 quart water
- Butter or shrimp sauce

First locate a stream, identify and catch crawdads behind the pincers. Note that they swim backwards very quickly! Prepare the catch as you would lobster by placing crawdad live in boiling water for 5 minutes. Shell out tail meat and dip in butter or shrimp sauce. You'll be looking for more!

Dove, Rainwater and Joel Vance Spice

To fully appreciate this recipe, see *Missouri Conservationist*, September, 1978.

- Dove breasts (emergency substitute: quail, chicken, turkey)
- 10 cups rainwater
- 2 T butter
- 8 chicken bouillon cubes
- 2 cups hot rainwater
- 4 t salt
- ¼ t pepper
- 8 T chopped onion
- 1 t thyme
- 1 t rosemary

Gather rainwater on the day you go duck hunting! Brown dove breasts in butter for 10 minutes. Add all the ingredients from bouillon cubes down through rosemary and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove doves and add the following ingredients:

- 4 cups sour cream
- 2 cups white wine
- 1 cup flour to thicken

Heat, add doves and serve with either wild rice and mushrooms or noodles and mushrooms (cooked in the remaining cups of rainwater, of course!)

Wild Vegetables

- Cattails
- Cattail shoots (early spring)
- Cattail heads (early summer)
- 24 shoots or heads
- Salted water
- Butter

Boil three minutes in water, remove and eat heads like corn on the cob; shoots are an asparagus-like vegetable. Save some of the shoots to be eaten raw in a salad.

Catbrier Shoots

- 24 tendrils
- Salted water to cover

- Butter
- Boil for three minutes, drain and season with butter
- Fairy Spuds
- 36 fairyspuds (early spring - early summer)
- Salted water
- Butter, salt, pepper

Spring beauties grow in abundance. About four inches below the edible flower and leaf structure grows a tiny potato-like tuber called fairy spuds. A group can generally locate several patches from which to dig. The taste is rather musty but the excitement of locating a wild potato is remembered even if the item isn't well eaten.

Wild Salad

Collect any of the following:

- Cattail shoots
- Chickweed
- Clover, small amount
- Dandelion leaves, young
- Lamb's quarters, large amount
- Peppergrass
- Plantain, young leaves
- Sorrel, small amount
- Spring beauty, leaves and flowers
- Watercress
- Wild grape leaves and tendrils
- Wild onion
- Violet leaves and flowers

Be prepared for a lengthy time washing the salad. I find an oil-vinegar dressing goes well with the wildings.

Wild Drink

- Indian Lemonade
- 6 large heads of sumac
- 1 gallon water

- Sugar to taste

Collect the heads of the upright, red-berried sumac. Mash berries in water and continue stirring and bruising the berries for several minutes. Strain off the berries and you have a pinkish, sour drink reportedly made by Indians. This is also good served as a hot beverage.

Wild Edible Biscuits

- 2 cups biscuit mix
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup dried reindeer lichen or ½ cup dried red clover blossoms
- ½ cup dandelion blossoms, all green removed

The reindeer lichen or red clover could be collected at school and dried for the trip. Dandelion blossoms might be gathered on site. Prepare biscuit mix, add wild edible, pat into biscuit shapes and bake.

Mint Wafer Dessert

- 36-48 mint leaves
- 2 egg whites stiffly beaten with 1.4 t cream of tartar
- ½ cup sugar

Dip leaves in egg white batter. Roll in sugar and allow to dry on a tray, table or flat rock - in sunshine if possible.

Reap your harvest and enjoy!

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