

# Common Wild Medicinal Plants

Wild herbs grow everywhere!

Learn to find herbs in your yard, woods and wild places.

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Unusual allergic reactions to any plants normally eaten may occur.

The author and photographer is not a medical professional and she assumes no responsibility for what you put in or on your body.





# Wild Asparagus Edible Uses

- Wild Asparagus shoots can be harvested in early spring and cooked like garden Asparagus.
- For some people, eating Asparagus will make urine smell funny. However, others may not be able to detect the unique odor.
- To find Wild Asparagus, locate plants in the growing season. You will notice the tall plants with their fine, feathery foliage. Look for new shoots in the same area in Spring.





# Wild Asparagus Herbal Use

*Asparagus officinalis*

- Anticancer effects of *A. officinalis* have primarily been noted in hepatocellular carcinoma cell lines.
- A study on mice showed that a tea from the Asparagus plant may prevent cognitive impairments in age-related diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease
- Also used as a diuretic to cleanse the kidneys.
- Harvest Asparagus plant in summer, and roots when plant goes dormant in fall. Don't forget to leave some for new plants to grow.
- Dry leaves and roots in a cool, dark area away from excess humidity.





# Burdock Edible Uses

*Arctium Lappa, Arctium Minus*

- Burdock root is known as Gobo in Japan. Boil or stir-fry like any root vegetable.
- Peel roots and soak in bowl of water with a tablespoon of vinegar to prevent browning.
- The stem can be peeled and steamed like Asparagus.
- Fresh Burdock leaves were used in Russia as a wrap for fire roasted meat and fish without any other seasoning.





# Burdock Herbal Use

- Burdock Root is used as an infusion (tea), a tincture, and in capsules.
- Burdock is one of the foremost detoxifying herbs in both Chinese and Western herbal medicine.
- Supplementation with Burdock root has shown positive effects in the treatment of acne especially of inflammatory type.
- Burdock leaves can be used as a poultice or made into a salve for irritated skin. Also said to be helpful with fever when laid across the forehead.
- The oil from Burdock seeds has been shown to have anti-aging properties in skin care.





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- Harvest first year Burdock roots from late Fall to early Spring. Second year roots are large, tough and unpalatable.
- Harvest stems and leaves in Spring. Dry leaves for tea (infusion).

# Catnip Medicinal Uses

*Nepeta cataria*

- Catnip Essential Oil is said to be 10X as effective as Deet for repelling mosquitoes.
- Catnip is used as an herbal remedy for treating disorders of the digestive system and as it stimulates sweating, it is useful in reducing fevers.
- The fresh juice of Catnip Herb is used as an emmenagogue (to promote menstruation).
- Mild catnip tea is used to relieve colic in babies, restlessness and nervousness, and is very useful as a mild nervine for children.





# Cattail Herbal Uses

*Typha latifolia* - L.

- Cattail fluff was used to insulate footwear and hats, for stuffing pillows, or for a baby's cradleboard.
- The pollen is hemostatic and astringent. It was used for controlling external and internal bleeding, chest pains, and other forms of blood stagnation. The pollen is also mildly diuretic.
- Cattail roots were used to treat burns, insect bites, scrapes, and bruises. Fresh, ponded roots were used directly as a poultice for open blisters and infections.
- The ash of burnt Cattail plants was used for its antiseptic properties and is good for treating wounds and abrasions.





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# Cattail Edible Uses

*Typha latifolia* - L.

- Cattail roots can be boiled and eaten like potatoes or macerated and then boiled to yield a sweet syrup.
- The roots can also be dried and ground into a powder, this powder is rich in protein and can be mixed with wheat flour and then used for making bread, biscuits, muffins etc....
- Young shoots are edible in spring - raw or cooked as an asparagus substitute whose taste resembles cucumber.
- The Immature flowering spike can be eaten raw, cooked or made into a soup. It tastes like sweet corn.





# Chicory Herbal Use

*Cichorium intybus*

- Juice from the leaves and tea of the flowering plant promotes the production of bile, release of gallstones, and eliminates excessive internal mucus.
- The boiled leaves and flowers can be used in a poultice for external inflammations.
- Chicory has mild laxative and sedative properties.



# Chicory Edible Use

- Young leaves are blanched to reduce bitterness before being added to salads.
- The root can be chopped into small pieces and roasted, then used as a coffee replacement, or added to coffee to enhance its richness. Luzianne™ coffee is made with added chicory root.
- Dried Chicory leaves and flowers can be added to any herbal tea to enhance health benefits.





# Chickweed

*Stellaria media*



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- Chickweed begins to appear in yards in late Fall and can usually be found when the weather is mild for a week or two, until late spring. It will often cover large areas if given free reign to grow.
- This picture was taken on Thanksgiving Day 2012 in Southern Illinois. Note how the five petals are so deeply notched that they seem to grow in pairs.





# Chickweed Edible Use

- Chickweed can be eaten raw in salads or cooked as a green in soups.
- Cook young Chickweed as an early Spring pot green. It can be canned or frozen for future use.





# Chickweed Herbal Use

- The juice of Chickweed is a wonderful remedy for itching. It can stop bleeding from minor wounds. Chickweed can also be made into a salve for irritated skin.
- Chickweed is currently under early development as a potential anti-Hepatitis B virus drug candidate.
- Chickweed tea can be drunk with a meal to combat obesity and is considered an old wives remedy for such .
- A study concluded that an extract of Chickweed is beneficial in suppression of a hormone induced obesity in rats.





# Cinquefoil Herbal Uses

- Cinquefoil is a very astringent herb. It is said to be helpful for diarrhea and looseness of the bowels, and for other complaints for which astringents are usually prescribed. Use an infusion of 1 oz. of Cinquefoil herb to a pint of boiling water. Take in wineglassful doses.
- Cinquefoil is used externally as an astringent lotion and as a gargle for sore throat.
- A decoction of the root bark can be used for nosebleed.





# Cleavers Herbal Use

- Cleavers juice is said to be an effective cleanser for the lymphatic system.
- It is said that a balm made from Cleavers is used to heal irritated skin. However, some people get severe welts from harvesting Cleavers. Wear gloves and long sleeves when harvesting and handling this plant.
- Strain teas and tinctures made from Cleavers to remove hairs before ingesting, to avoid irritating the throat.





# Dandelion Edible Uses

- Early Spring leaf makes a tasty green cooked, or can be added to salad raw.
- Dried and roasted Dandelion root is used as a coffee substitute.
- Flowers can be dipped in batter and made into fritters.
- Unopened flower buds can be boiled and served with butter or pickled.
- Rich source of Vitamin A





# Dandelion Medicinal Uses

- Dandelion tea can be made from the leaves, flowers and roots.
- Dandelion has a long history of use for problems of the liver, gallbladder, and bile ducts.
- Dandelion is used as a dietary supplement for a cleansing blood “tonic,” as a diuretic, for minor digestive problems, and for other purposes.
- Laboratory studies have shown dandelion to have anticancer properties, but clinical studies have not shown this effect in humans.





# More Dandelion Uses

- A liquid plant food is made from Dandelion root and leaves.
- A dark red dye is obtained from Dandelion root.
- A cosmetic skin lotion made from the appendages at the base of the leaf blades distilled in water, is used to clear the skin and is effective in fading freckles.
- When placed in a paper bag with unripe fruit, the flowers and leaves of Dandelion release ethylene gas ripening the fruit quickly.



# Dock Edible Uses



- The young leaves can be cooked as a potherb by boiling for 5 – 10 minutes, but you might want to save that for a survival measure unless you like bitters.
- Dock is much more highly esteemed for its medicinal properties.
- The ripened seeds are brown in late Summer and Fall. They can be ground to make a flour.



# Dock Herbal Use

- Known as Curly Dock, Narrow Leaf Dock or Yellow Dock, the root is the part used most in herbal medicine.
- A review confirms that some Rumex species have emerged as good sources of traditional medicine for treatment of inflammation, cancer and different bacterial infections.
- A poultice of Dock leaves is used for ulcers, burns and skin diseases.
- Extract of the fruit has anti-oxidant properties.
- An active compound found in Dock, nepodin, has anti-malaria properties.







# Elderberry Uses

*Sambucus Canadensis*

- Elderberry is the main ingredient in Sambucol.
- A small study published over 10 years ago showed that 93% of flu patients given Sambucol were completely symptom-free within two days; those taking a placebo recovered in about six days.
- Herbalists use Elderberries in tinctures, syrups and jellies for flu and colds, and there seems to be a good demand for these products.
- Elderberries can also be used to make wine or pies. The berries should only be eaten after cooking.



# Elder Flower



- Elder Flower infusions are used as a skin wash and gargle for irritations. Elder Flower extract is a popular ingredient in skin care products.
- Elder Flower can be drunk as tea, and may lower blood sugar. The flower bundles can be battered and made into fritters.
- A specific combination product containing Elderflower, Gentian root, Verbena, Cowslip flower, and Sorrel (SinuComp, Sinupret) seems to help treat swollen sinuses.



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# Evening Primrose Herbal Uses

*Oenothera biennis*

- The oil from the seeds of Evening Primrose are sold in soft-gels as a supplement, used as an anti-inflammatory, for weight loss, and for treatment of PMS and Multiple Sclerosis. It is a good source of GLA, an essential fatty acid.
- Evening Primrose Seed Oil is also used in skin care for soothing rashes such as eczema and psoriasis.
- The leaves and flowers can be made into tea to soothe coughs and colds, and is said to be useful for senility and depression. It may have a stimulating effect on the liver, spleen and digestive apparatus.





(c) Karen Bergeron 2008

# Ground Ivy

## Medicinal Uses

*Glechoma hederacea*

- Ground Ivy has been used for sciatica, hip gout, arthritic hands and knees.
- Used externally, it is said to hasten early recovery of new wounds.
- Ground Ivy can be added to bath as an emollient to soften skin, to ease a backache, and has a sedative effect.
- Helpful for colds and lung ailments. Snuffing the fresh juice up the nose often helps nasal congestion and headache.

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# Hedge Apple Uses

*Maclura pomifera*



- Oil from the seeds of Hedge Apples is now being sold as a premium skin and hair care oil with prices as much as \$50.00 an ounce. It is very high in anti-oxidants.
- The wood is used to make bows. It is one of the hardest and most enduring of woods.
- Hedge apples are used as a folk remedy for cancer.
- Many people put hedgeapples around the foundation of their homes to repel spiders and cockroaches.
- Hedge Apples are used as fall décor in the home and many people sell them online for about two dollars a piece.

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# Trumpet Honeysuckle

## Herbal Uses

*Lonicera sempervirens*

- Japanese Honeysuckle is highly invasive and should not be planted. Trumpet Honeysuckle is a good replacement.
- Clinical studies have demonstrated that honeysuckle is effective in lowering body temperature and reducing inflammation in cases of acute tonsillitis, and in improving cases of pulmonary tuberculosis and pneumonia.
- In combination with Forsythia suspensa, honeysuckle has been shown to be effective against the common cold.

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# Japanese Honeysuckle

## Herbal Uses

*Lonicera japonica*

- In a clinical study with 22 patients with infectious hepatitis, 12 were cured and 6 others improved with honeysuckle vine treatment.
- In one study, Honeysuckle in combination with Astragalus membranaceus and Ophiopogon japonicus effectively treated viral myocarditis by removing heat and toxic materials and nourishing and supplementing vital energy.
- A tea or tincture can be made from the flowers. Stems, leaves and roots can be decocted but should be used in moderation.

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# Horsetail Herbal Uses

*Equisetum arvense*

- A clinical study concluded that horsetail mixture has remarkable curative effect on rheumatoid arthritis, and its clinical application is safe and reliable.
- Powerful flavonoid antioxidants in horsetail (such as isoquercetin) enhance cognitive function and reverse memory loss.
- An ointment made with 10% Horsetail improves wound healing and is helpful with wound pain.
- May help with hair loss, bone, nails and skin health.

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# Japanese Knotweed Uses

*Fallopia Japonica*

- DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CULTIVATE THIS PLANT! HIGHLY INVASIVE!
- Japanese Knotweed is a primary source for Resveratrol, a compound that is also found in grape skins.
- Resveratrol is thought to be helpful for Lyme's disease.
- Young shoots of Japanese Knotweed can be cooked like asparagus. Eat in moderation.
- A tincture can be made from the fresh roots for herbal use. The medicinal properties of Japanese Knotweed are poorly absorbed in water.

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# Jewelweed

*Impatiens capensis*

- The Jewelweed plant is best known for its skin soothing properties.
- The leaves and the juice from the stem of Jewelweed are used by herbalists as a treatment for poison ivy, oak and other plant induced rashes, as well as many other types of dermatitis.
- Jewelweed may work by counter-reacting with the chemicals in other plants that cause irritation.
- Poultices and salves from Jewelweed are folk remedies for bruises, burns, cuts, eczema, insect bites, sores, sprains, warts, and ringworm.

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# Kudzu Herbal Uses

*Pueraria lobata*

- Kudzu Root extracts may lower blood sugar and blood pressure.
- It is used in alcoholism because it causes the hangover to come on while one is still drinking.
- Puerarin, a chemical in kudzu, might improve signs and symptoms of chest pain when taken by mouth or injected intravenously (by IV).
- Early research has shown that Puerarin might also be helpful with many other conditions such as diabetes, kidney an heart failure, strokes, menopause and more. (WebMD)

# Magnolia Herbal Uses

*Magnolia Glauca*

- The flower buds of Magnolia used in steam open nasal obstructions by helping the body expel mucus.
- The bark has been used to break addiction to cigarettes.
- The Japanese use Magnolia to help control stress and anxiety.
- Magnolia Bark is the main ingredient in the anti-cortisol weight loss supplements Relora and Relacore.

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# Mugwort Herbal Uses

*Artemisia vulgaris*

- Mugwort is in the Wormwood family. It was one of the plants used to make beer before hops became widely available
- Very aromatic for herb pillows and sachets.
- Mugwort is used as incense for smudging, as well as an ingredient in herbal bath infusions. Some say it helps with lucid dreaming and recall.
- An infusion made with a teaspoon of Mugwort can be used to ease the digestive system and for female complaints.

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# Mullein Herbal Uses

*Verbascum thapsus*



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- Mullein leaf tea is used for a wide range of chest complaints and also to treat diarrhea and bleeding of the lungs and bowels.
- An infusion of the flowers in olive oil is used for earache drops, or as a local application in the treatment of piles and other mucous membrane inflammations.
- Flower and leaf tea is said to ease pain and help sleeplessness. Strain tea to eliminate the fine hairs.

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# Passionflower Herbal Use

*Passiflora incarnata*

Passionflower is the state wildflower of Tennessee. It is often found growing. The extract and tea of this weedy wonder-vine is used extensively in Europe as a mild sedative and sleep aid. As if just looking at it and inhaling its aroma is not stress relieving!



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# Plantain Herbal Uses

*Plantago spp.*

- Plantain is said to cause a natural aversion to tobacco and is used in smoking cessation preparations.
- Developing evidence suggests that taking great plantain might help treat chronic bronchitis.
- Plantain extracts have antibacterial activity, It is a safe and effective treatment for bleeding, It quickly stops blood flow and encourages the repair of damaged tissue.
- Poultices and salves are made with Plantain to treat wounds, burns, insect bites, stings and rashes.

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# Red Clover Herbal Uses

*Trifolium pratense*

- Red Clover has long been used as a “blood purifier,” specifically for the potential treatment of cancer.
- It is most often used as an herbal tea.
- Red Clover is a blood thinner due to the concentration of coumarin found in the blossoms.
- Red Clover is also used as an estrogenic for menopause complaints.
- Although Red Clover appears to be safe for short-term use, long-term or regular use may be linked to increased risk of cancer of the lining of the uterus.

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# Shepherd's Purse

## Herbal Uses

*Capsella-bursa-pastoris*

- Shepherd's Purse plant has hemostatic properties. It is used to stop bleeding from internal organs and control profuse menstruation. It may be useful as a remedy for endometriosis.
- As a decoction, it has been used to treat hemorrhoids, diarrhea, and bloody urine.
- Shepherd's Purse should be tinctured immediately after picking.
- May be sedating or toxic if overused or used with some prescription medications or anesthesia.

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# Yellow Leafcup, Bear's-Foot

*Polymnia uvedalia*

Bear's-Foot extracts have been used to treat malarial enlargements of the spleen, swollen glands and dyspepsia caused by the spleen, antirheumatic, burn ointment, kidney ailments, arthritis pain, pelvic congestion and skin ailments.





# Thank You!

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