

Nutrition – Nature's Way

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Bunchberries

The berries are the edible part of this plant and the seeds are also edible. The best time to eat bunchberries is when the berries are bright red. They preserve well and can be eaten raw, used in jams, puddings, other baked treats and tea. An interesting fact is that the flower petals spring back the stamens which thrust outward and a hinged strap connecting the stamen to the anther quickly accelerates the pollen to 24,000 m/s² or about 800 times the force experienced by astronauts during launch. This serves to propel the pollen into the air an astonishing 10 times the height of the flower.

Special – Monthly Magazine

For those who haven't discovered Wild Edible of the Month this is a great opportunity for you! If you subscribe before the end of August not only will you get your one year's subscription but you'll receive an additional four issues – free! [Order now by clicking here!](#)

Organic Herbs Now Available

EdibleWildFood.com is now a proud affiliate of Mountain Rose Herbs! In order to cover our costs we decided to start selling various products that we can stand behind. Be sure to check out our [new organic herbs page](#) (extracts, oils, loose leaf, seeds, etc.).

*Edible of the Month
Bunchberries
(Cornus canadensis)*



Health Benefits

Vitamin C
Potassium
High in pectin
Mildly tonic
Astringent
High concentration of flavonoids



Stinging Nettle for great bone health!



Purslane for great bone health!



Sunshine and Your Bone Health

A little off topic from plants however worth talking about – the sun and how much do we need? There is no one answer for all of us. Our skin type, where we live, the time of year and the time of day are all factors that must be taken into consideration when determining the answer. Short daily periods of sun exposure without sunscreen during the summer months (April to October) are enough for most people to make enough vitamin D. Evidence suggests that the most effective time of day for vitamin D production is between 11am and 3pm.

A short period of time in the sun means just a few minutes – evidence suggests that about 15 minutes is enough for most lighter-skinned people. The larger the area of skin that is exposed to sunlight, the more chance there is of making enough vitamin D before you start to burn. People with darker skin will need to spend longer in the sun to produce the same amount of vitamin D.

The further north (or south) of the equator we live our skin isn't able to make vitamin D from winter sunlight (September to March/April) as the sunlight hasn't got enough UVB (ultraviolet B) radiation. During the winter, we get vitamin D from our body's stores and from food sources and this is not enough to keep our immune system strong. Taking supplements is critical starting in August if in the northern hemisphere.

The longer you stay in the sun, especially for prolonged periods without sun protection, the greater your risk of skin cancer. Covering up is the best protection. If you must resort to sunscreen either make your own or be sure to check out the [Environmental Working Group's](#) list of safe sunscreens – most on the market have chemicals in them that cause cancer. (Be sure to check out their Hall of Shame!)

Vitamin D is critical in the process of maintaining healthy bones as it is required with magnesium and potassium to facilitate calcium getting to the bones. Being a forager brings many opportunities to get the sunshine you need to help stay healthy!

Fungi Foraging - BEWARE

There is a huge increase of people wanting to forage for fungi and many are not doing it the smart way. Yes, there are foraging apps out there but make no mistake these apps should NEVER be the ONLY resource you use to identify plants or fungi! ALWAYS cross reference with minimum two other sources.

With technology making things so much easier there are people out there putting their faith in the app and as a result of either errors on the app or “user error” poisonings are happening. In May of this year a [news headline](#) claimed that an app misidentified mushrooms and a family was poisoned. It very well could have been the family misidentifying the mushroom; regardless, placing all your faith in one source will one day spell trouble for you.

Recently in Toronto, a 52 year old woman ended up needing a liver transplant after eating wild mushrooms she found in a park. She ate *Amanita bisporigera*. There are over 600 types of *Amanitas* and apparently they cause the most deaths from mushroom poisoning.

When poisoned, a person will encounter gastrointestinal pain, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea within the first six to 24 hours after ingestion. Then they go through what’s called a “false recovery” – the symptoms dissipate and the patient appears to improve. But it’s short-lived because about 48 hours after ingestion, the patient’s liver begins to fail leading to multi-organ failure and even death. The toxins in the mushroom can inhibit enzymes in the liver cells needed to make proteins and this leads to liver cell death.

There is no antidote for mushroom poisoning. Doctors need to provide aggressive care, and continuous liver function monitoring while consulting with poison control centres. Charcoal can absorb the toxin, but delayed symptoms could limit its efficacy because it needs to be taken immediately after ingesting – and medical attention is critical.

Here in Ontario, poison control centres on average field about 200 calls per year related to potential mushroom poisonings.

Do not put your trust in one app, one website, one book – always cross reference and never eat anything unless you know with 100 percent certainty it is edible. If in doubt, throw it out!

Reliable fungi resources:

[MycoMagnet](#)

[Rogers Mushrooms](#)

[Paul Stamets](#)



Shaggy Manes - Edible



Chanterelles – Edible

Be sure chanterelles you are identifying are not the false chanterelles!

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