

# Nutrition – Nature's Way

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According to a Huffington Post article written by Brigitte Mars, Americans spend more than 30 billion dollars, and use millions of litres of gasoline (not to mention an inordinate amount of hours) to maintain 31 million acres of lawns. Adding to that, an estimated 67 million pounds of chemicals (herbicides, fungicides and insecticides) are applied around homes and gardens every year. Commercial areas which includes parks, schools, cemeteries, industrial, commercial and government landscapes, apply another 165 million pounds. (In Canada there is much less because many communities have laws banning the use of pesticides for cosmetic purposes.)

Lawn grasses are not native to the North American continent therefore the time spent 'fighting' nature to do something that it is not intended to be is futile. Not that long ago, (about 100 years) people pulled the grass out of their lawns to make room for useful wild plants (weeds) that were incorporated into their daily diet. British aristocracy in the late 1800's enjoyed showing off their affluence which encouraged the trend of weed-free lawns. Homeowners were encouraged to cultivate lawns to serve as examples for others.

In the U.S. from the 1880s straight through to the 1920s, front lawns ceased to produce food for families and animals and gardens were less cultivated because canned food was promoted as a 'wholesome' choice. Cars eventually replaced the family horse and chemical fertilizers replaced manure.

I thought I would share this information with you because it's important to share this with others. Eating wild plants is not radical; it used to be the norm.

**"What is a weed? A plant whose virtues have not yet been discovered." Ralph Waldo Emerson**

### Weed of the Month Henbit (*Lamium amplexicaule*)



- *Henbit is in the mint family.*
- *Stem, flowers and leaves are edible.*
- *The plant is anti-rheumatic, diaphoretic, excitant, febrifuge, laxative and a stimulant.*
- *Grows in many areas worldwide.*



### Purslane Smoothie and Popsicles



*Purslane Smoothie*

- 1 1/2 cups pureed purslane with lemon juice
- 1 or 2 bananas
- 1 cup organic applesauce
- ¼ cup 100% pure maple syrup

Blend all ingredients until smooth. Pour any leftover smoothie into popsicle molds and freeze. If you have hens and chicks (*Sempervivum tectorum*) these can be used instead of purslane.

Be sure to add wild edibles into your smoothies to maximize nutrition!



*Aloe Vera*

### Vitamin C Cream

Vitamin C helps to build elastin and collagen and having this in a skin cream is essential to healthy skin. In powder form, vitamin C can be used in many skin care recipes and this one is the easiest to make.

- 2 tbsp. aloe vera gel
- 1/2 tsp. vitamin C powder
- 2 tsp. distilled water

Thoroughly blend the vitamin C powder with the distilled water. Once the powder is thoroughly dissolved, and then add the aloe vera gel. If you have sensitive skin then use half the amount of vitamin C powder. Store in an airtight container in a cool, dark location and use within 7 days.

Vitamin C powder when made into a cream is unstable and begins to lose its efficacy. If using edible vitamin C powder you may find that it never completely dissolves. If this is the case then purchasing cosmetic vitamin C powder may be the only other option.



Aspen (male) catkins  
*Populus tremula*

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### Wild Leeks (Ramps)

There is no shortage of debates out there whether or not to forage for wild leeks. It really depends what area you are in and if there are plenty of wild leeks available. For example, in Quebec wild leeks have been over harvested to the point of being endangered. In fact, in 2010 the province banned the harvested of these plants. (I am not sure if this still stands today or not.) If there are plenty of wild leeks in your area be very careful to take only what you need!

Wild leeks are easily identifiable; they have 2 to 3 broad, smooth green leaves with an unmistakable onion scent. The leaves should come directly from the ground and are not connected to any sort of stem or trunk. They grow to about 6-8" tall. Wild leeks have a small maroon coloured stalk at the bottom.

### Harvesting Wild Leeks

Ideally the leaves should be around 6 inches long and 2 inches wide, for the mildest flavour. You should be very careful on the amount of leeks you intend on harvesting in one area because small patches of leeks can be over-harvested leaving nothing for next year. The entire plant is edible, including the bulb.

### Spring Salad

- 1 head of lettuce
- Bulbs and leaves from 10 wild leeks
- 1 cup violets, whole blossoms and leaves
- 2 cups whole watercress
- 1/2 cup garlic mustard leaves

Cut lettuce into bite-size pieces. Slice bulbs and tear leaves of wild leek into pieces. Toss with whole violets, garlic mustard and watercress. Serve with your favourite dressing.



*Wild leeks*



*Motherwort*

