
NATURE'S GARDEN *for* VICTORY
AND PEACE

by

GEORGE W. CARVER, M. S. in Agr.

Director

AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND
EXPERIMENT STATION
TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE

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THE WEED'S PHILOSOPHY

Nay, but tell me, am I not unlucky indeed,
To arise from the earth and be only a weed?
Ever since I came out of my dark little seed,
I have tried to live rightly, but still am a—weed!

To be torn by the roots and destroyed, this my meed,
And despised by the gardener, for being—a weed.
Ah! but why was I born, when man longs to be freed
Of a thing so obnoxious and bad as a—weed?

Now, the cause of myself and my brothers I plead,
Say, can any good come of my being a—weed?
If a purpose divine is in all things decreed,
Then there must be some benefit from me, a—weed!

If of evil and suffering, the world still has need
In its path of development, then I, a weed,
Must form part of that plan which in nature I read,
Though I live but to die, just for being a—weed!

—*Martha Martin*

“And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”
—Genesis 1:29.

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TUSKEGEE INSTITUTE

G. W. Carver, *Director*
A. W. Curtis, Jr., *Assistant*

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February 14, 1942

Since the article appeared in the Alabama Journal, Tuesday, February 10, 1942, by Mr. W. T. Maynor, captioned "Don't Worry If War Causes Shortage of Green Vegetables, Weeds Are Good To Eat" the large number of letters that continue to come in asking for more information makes us feel that here is an opportunity to render a service much needed at the present time, and equally applicable to our coming rehabilitation program.

COMPOSITE FAMILY

In the group idea in arrangement it is hoped that it will assist the housewife in the preparation of these vegetables as every member of a group (with but few exceptions) have some food or medicinal properties in common with the entire group, therefore, their preparation would be similar in some respects.



(After Strasburger, Schenck, Schimper)
Taraxacum officinale—Dandelion

DANDELION (*Taraxacum officinale*). This is the ordinary dandelion of our dooryard, field and road sides, with which we are more or less familiar. It is very tender and delicious now (February 20), and may be served in a variety of appetizing ways. (Use leaves only).

1. Wash, prepare, and cook exactly the same as turnip or collard greens.
2. Prepare the same as spinach with hard boiled eggs.

3. A simple, plain and appetizing salad may be made thus:
- 1 pint of finely shredded young dandelion leaves
 - 1 medium sized onion, finely chopped
 - 2 small radishes, finely chopped
 - 1 tablespoon of minced parsley
 - 1 tablespoon of sugar (can be left out)
 - Salt and pepper to taste

Moisten thoroughly with weak vinegar or mayonnaise, mix, place in salad dish and garnish with slices of hard boiled egg and pickled beets. This is only one of the many delicious and appetizing salads that will readily suggest themselves to the resourceful housewife.

Aside from the dandelions' value for food, it is well known and highly prized for its many curative properties.

OX-EYE DAISY (*Chrysanthemum leucanthemum*). The young, tender leaves make a splendid addition to any green leafy salad. It is very appetizing when mixed with the dandelion and prepared in the same way.



Lactuca Scariola—Prickly Lettuce (After Fitch)

WILD LETTUCE (*Lactuca*, several varieties). These several interesting plants are all members of the lettuce family, have milky juice and when young and tender taste very much like our cultivated lettuce to which it bears some slight resemblance in appearance; others are prickly and resemble a thistle; all are good for food.

Cook the same as turnip greens. When very young and tender the

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smooth sorts make an excellent uncooked salad, if prepared the same as dandelions.

Its medicinal virtues are similar to the cultivated lettuce and the dandelion. It is excellent when prepared like spinach. When blanched they become very crisp and much richer in flavor than the cultivated sorts. Blanching is easily done by turning a box or any other form of shade over them.

CHICORY (*Cichorium intybus*). Prepared the same as wild lettuce, before it begins to stem. The roots are very often peeled, dried and roasted a coffee brown. Some prefer it to real coffee; others mix it in various proportions to suit their taste.

Dandelion roots are often used in the same way.

HAWK WEEDS, FLORA'S PAINT BRUSH, etc. (*Hieracium*, Sp.) There are a number of varieties in this group, reminding one of the dandelion or wild lettuce at first sight. All the species around here are edible. Cook the same as the dandelion.

GIANT THISTLE (*Elephantopus tomentosus*). Grows plentifully down here, is a winter annual, forming a round mat of leaves fully 15 or 20 inches in diameter, very spiny, leaves dark green on top and woolly beneath with long white hairs.

This plant is delicious when young cooked just like turnip greens or mixed in with other greens. Take only the young tender leaves. Nearly all the leaves can be used if the sharp spines are clipped off with a pair of scissors before cooking.

RABBIT TOBACCO (*Antennaria plantaginifolia*). The young leaves are delicious cooked like turnip greens or mixed with other greens. It has a mild medicinal value. The young, tender leaves and shoots are very appetizing when used in a mixed salad as recommended for the dandelion.

BUCKWHEAT FAMILY (*polygonaceae*)

Twenty-one varieties are found in the United States. The ones listed here are not only edible but contain well known medicinal values.

CURLED DOCK (*Rumex Crispus*). This is often called our native rhubarb; grows in abundance almost everywhere and is one of the very best of our wild greens; relished almost universally. Cook the same as turnip greens. Many like it prepared the same as spinach. The root of this plant is highly prized as a blood medicine.



Rumex Crispus—Curled Dock (U. S. Department of Agriculture)

WESTERN DOCK (*Rumex occidentalis*). An unusually fine vegetable. Prepare the same as the above. Many declare it is much richer than any of the docks.

FIELD or SHEEP SORREL (*Rumex acetosella*). This one is especially prized for salads, making cooling drinks, and pies similar to the Oxalis. Use when the stems are about $\frac{2}{3}$ grown.

I have eaten in one way or another, nearly all of the 21 varieties and found them delicious and appetizing. The young, tender leaves and stems of all are delicious in uncooked salads.

GOOSEFOOT FAMILY (Chenopodiaceae)

These vegetables must be eaten and their effects on the system noted to be appreciated. The name, Lamb's Quarters, indicates something of the esteem in which they were held centuries ago.

LAMB'S QUARTERS (*Chenopodium album*). A wild vegetable, familiar to almost everyone. Many claim that they like it much better than spinach, when prepared the same way. It is good boiled with meat the same as mustard, collards or turnip greens, and equally good when mixed with other greens.



Chenopodium album—Lamb's Quarter
(After C. M. King)

BEETROOT (*Beta vulgaris*). Our cultivated beets belong to this group. Many housewives, dietitians do not know the leaves and stems are quite as fine as spinach when prepared in the same way. They improve the flavor of other greens when mixed with them and cooked like turnip greens. They also make an appetizing salad when steamed or boiled until tender, drained and served with mayonnaise, French or any other dressing you wish. A little shredded onion, a spring of parsley, chow-chow or mixed pickle of any kind aid much in the preparation of this versatile food stuff.

I think you will like the many combinations better than spinach. The pickled leaf stems are especially fine when served with cold meats. The entire spinach family are especially rich in iron and other mineral salts.

THE MUSTARD FAMILY (*Brassicaceae*)

Just a few of this large and outstanding group of edible and medicinal plants will be mentioned here.

PEPPER-GRASS (*Lepidium* species). There are several varieties of this common dooryard and garden plant. It belongs to the mustard family and can be cooked in the same way. It is delicious when prepared as an uncooked salad, the same as recommended for dandelion.



Lepidium apetalum—Small Pepper-grass
(After C. M. King)

The three that are of special interest here can be easily recognized by their heart-shaped seed vessels and peppery order and taste of the leaves.

SHEPHERD'S PURSE (*Capsella bursa pastoris*), is a member of this great family and highly prized for its palatability and real dietetic value.

BLACK MUSTARD (*Brassica nigra*), originally was cultivated, but now in many sections of the United States has become weedy. It is highly prized for its seed and also as a vegetable, eaten raw, or cooked with other greens it is most highly prized.

WATER GRASS (*Nasturtium officinale*). This plant is too well known to need description here. As a pot herb, garnishing salads, etc. it has but few equals.

There are many different types growing in both swamps and upland.

CULTIVATED RADISH (*Raphanus sativus*). The young leaves and tender stems are quite an addition to mixed greens.

HORSE RADISH (*Cochleria armoracia*). The young tender leaves are very fine in uncooked salad, and equally desirable when cooked with other greens.

STOCK (*Matthiola incana*). The young tender leaves are appetizing mixed with an uncooked salad or boiled with mixed greens. Stock is cultivated both in the greenhouse and the outside for its beautiful flowers and attractive foliage.

PRIMROSE FAMILY (*Onagracea*)

EVENING PRIMROSE (*Enothera biennis*). There are several varieties of this splendid wild vegetable. All the winter annuals of this group that form a round mat of leaves during the fall and early spring are highly edible, piquant, and possess mild medicinal value.

WILD PRIMROSE (*Primula*). At this time of the year, these plants form round discs on the ground nearly as large as a saucer. They are often called pig or butter weeds. The leaves are light green in color, and the roots near the crown usually of a reddish



***Enothera biennis*—Evening Primrose**
(After Reed)

cast when cut. Cooked like turnip greens they are so rich in flavor that the name butter weed is given them. The medicinal virtue of the primrose is well known.



Amaranthus spinosus—Spiny Amaranth
(After Darlington)

AMARANTH FAMILY (Amaranthaceae)

In many localities both the smooth and spiny varieties are used as pot herbs; the roots of some are red similar to beets, and are prized for garnishing salads, pickling, etc.

CARELESS WEEDS (Amaranthus). These are often called pig weeds; the two most commonly used are the smooth and the thorny. When young and tender, both are very choice as a vegetable.

Cook leaves and stems, the same as turnip greens. Their medicinal value is said to be similar to that of beet leaves.

POKEWEED FAMILY (Phytolaccaceae)

Persons who are fond of spinach and find it hard to get will be glad to know that the leaves and stems of the poke weed when taken very young and prepared like spinach can hardly be detected from it.

POKEWEED (Phytolacca decandra). A plant with which we are all acquainted, and relish when cooked. The leaves and young, tender shoots are the choice parts. They should be boiled for two or three minutes in water that has been slightly salted. That water should



Phytolacca decandra—Pokeweed
(After C. M. King)

be drained off and thrown away, then proceed to cook the same as turnip greens. The tender stems are delicious when the leaves are removed, scalded in salt water, and afterwards creamed like asparagus. There is no better vegetable. Its medicinal virtues are many and varied.

WOOD SORREL FAMILY (Oxalidaceae)

SOUR GRASS (*Oxalis*, two kinds). This is the old-fashioned sheep sorrel with which most people are familiar. It makes a pie similar to apple or rhubarb, and is very appetizing.

Take the leaves and tender stems, wash clean and cook in a little water until tender; pass through a fine sieve to remove any hard stems. The after procedure is exactly the same as for stewed apple pie. Thicken, if necessary with a little flour or corn starch; bake with upper and lower crust. It makes a splendid salad when prepared the same as recommended for the dandelion. It is also excellent when served as a sauce when stewed the same as apple sauce. Many attractive combinations can be made with gelatine.

SOUP. We hope every person who likes something new, novel, delicious, nourishing and appetizing will try this soup. Thoroughly clean and wash about two quarts of the leaves, boil slowly until



Oxalis corniculata—Oxalis
(After Bailey)

tender (preferably in a porcelain or granite ware vessel); rub through a sieve, add your favorite seasoning and three cups of soup stock to it; thicken with one tablespoonful of butter and one of flour rubbed together, and stir this into a teacupful of boiling hot milk. Add to the soup stirring it vigorously to prevent curdling. Let boil up and serve at once with croutons or toasted crackers.

POTATO FAMILY (Solanaceae)

IRISH POTATO, WHITE POTATO, etc. (Solanum tuberosum). The tender shoots and leaves are a fine addition to add to a pot of mixed greens, greatly improving the flavor.

HORSE NETTLE, BULL NETTLE, SANDBRIER, TREAD SALVE, etc. (Solanum Carolinense). The young, tender tops add much to a pot of mixed greens.

MINT FAMILY (Menthaceae)

The following are pot herbs, used in the preparation of foods largely for their flavoring qualities:

PENNYROYAL (Hedeoma pulegioides)

LEMON BALM, GARDEN BALM, SWEET BALM, etc.
(*Melissa officinalis*)

PEPPERMINT (*Mentha piperita*)
SPEARMINT (*Mentha spicata*)
BEE BALM, OSWEGO TEA, etc. (*Monarda didyma*)
WILD BERGAMOT, HORSEMINT, etc. (*Monarda fistulosa*)
HORSEMINT (*Monarda punctata*)
CATNIP, CATMINT, etc. (*Nepeta cataria*)

PEA FAMILY (*Papilionaceae*)

PURPLE MEDIC, ALFALFA, LUCERNE, etc. (*Medicago sativa*).
The young, tender leaves and stems are especially good when mixed with other greens, and especially piquant and appetizing made into a salad, thus: Wash and prepare the alfalfa similar to that of lettuce, garnish the whole with shredded onion, radishes, pickled beets, carrots, etc. Serve with mayonnaise or French dressing.

This salad lends itself to an almost endless variety of artistic combinations in the way of ribbons, spots, layers, jellied, etc. The nutritional value of alfalfa is too well known to need further discussion here.

CLOVER

CLOVER FLOWERS

RED CLOVER (*Trifolium pratense*)
WHITE CLOVER (*Trifolium repens*)

The flower heads of these two varieties have held first place in delicate and fancy salads for many years. Serve in mixed salads or separately as fancy dictates. They lend themselves admirably to any type of mild dressing.

MILK WEED FAMILY (*Asclepiadaceae*)

SWAMP MILK WEED (*Asclepias incarnata*)
COMMON SILK WEED (*Asclepias syriaca*)

Have always held a high place as a delicious food; cut just before the leaves are half grown, prepare like asparagus tips. They improve all mixed greens. They are also choice boiled or steamed until tender and served with mayonnaise or French dressing; and they are equally fine in any mixed salad.

They are good also in a puree of vegetables, bouillon cubes or gelatinized vegetables.

LILY FAMILY (*Liliaceae*)

ONIONS. The following have been exceptionally palatable and appetizing when used in the ordinary way:

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WILD GARLIC (*Allium canadense*)

WILD ONION (*Allium mutabile*)

WILD ONION often called garlic (*Allium vineale*)

All of the above have been relished and found appetizing in the early spring when the tops are tender, prepared as follows: Take a few pieces of fat bacon, cut in small pieces, fry until nearly done, and while the grease is very hot stir in the finely cut onion tops, and let cook until done. Have ready two or three eggs that have been salted and peppered to taste; stir these quickly into the bacon and onions, being careful not to let the eggs get too hard, and serve at once.

Some like cheese grated over the eggs before frying.

The roots of these onions can be used if desired. They are equally fine in uncooked salads, garnishing, boiling with mixed greens, and in soups and purees of vegetables.

PINK FAMILY (*Caryophyllaceae*)

CHICK WEEDS (*Stellaria*).

CHICK WEED, STAR WORT (*Stellaris media*). This delicate little plant can be used in a number of ways. It gives to green salads a very mild and pleasing taste; is equally good when cooked the usual way with mixed greens.

One of its outstanding and almost uncanny values is the way it lends itself to garnishing vegetable, meat and salad dishes as well as other forms of table decoration.

Select only the fresh, tender ends. Keep in cold water or refrigerator until ready to use. If properly done it never fails to get much favorable comment on its unusual beauty.

LAUREL FAMILY (*Lauraceae*)

SASSAFRAS (*Sassafras officinale*). The medicinal value of this tree is almost as old as the beginning of time. Oil of sassafras has many uses in the arts and trades, aside from the delicious tea furnished by the roots, the young, tender stems and leaves are becoming a real article of commerce. They are cut, dried, and ground to a fine powder and used in soups, broths, and is growing in popularity for such purposes. It is especially useful in the preparation of gumbo of various kinds. It can be cooked with the soup, etc.; or put in a salt shaker and placed on the table to be used at will, like salt and pepper. It is most wholesome and appetizing.

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PLANTAIN FAMILY (Plantaginaceae)

DOORYARD PLANTAIN, etc. (*Plantago major*). The young, tender leaves of this plant is highly prized for food when cooked like turnip greens, or mixed with other greens.

The seeds are used in medicine.

Plantago cordata, *Plantago rugelii*, and *Plantago lanceolata* are all good when cooked like turnip greens or mixed with other greens.

VALERIAN FAMILY (Valerianaceae)

WILD LAMB SALAD, CORN SALAD, etc. (*Valerianella radiata*).

There are six varieties of this choice vegetable scattered throughout the United States. The one named above grows freely in Alabama and is so highly prized cooked like turnip greens alone or mixed with others. It is cultivated in some sections. It is equally desirable served like lettuce, with shredded onion, radishes, pickled beets, cucumber, etc.

GERANIUM FAMILY (Geraniaceae)

WILD GERANIUM, ALUM ROOT, etc. (*Geranium maculatum*).

The small plants are palatable when mixed with other greens and cooked with them.

PURSLANE FAMILY (Portulacaceae)

PURSLANE, PUSSLEY, etc. (*Portulaca oleracea*). This plant is familiar to almost everyone, and is highly prized when prepared like spinach, cooked with other greens, or it is equally acceptable as a raw salad.

MORNING GLORY FAMILY (Convolvulaceae)

SWEET POTATO (*Ipomea batatas*). The young, tender vines and leaves of the sweet potato are especially rich and palatable cooked like spinach. They are equally good mixed and boiled with other greens.

This bulletin is becoming so large that it seems wise to bring it to a close, realizing however, that we have only touched a few of the marvelous treasures in Nature's inexhaustible storehouse of food stuff, which if properly used will nourish, strengthen and help keep the physical body in perfect equilibrium.

When seasonal we hope to issue another bulletin on this same subject.

NOTE: The above are only a few of the many wild plants that

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may be used as food. These are the ones that may be had now, hence we stop with them. Take equal amounts of all the above greens, cook them together, and they produce a dish that the lover of the rare and delicious in vegetables will thoroughly enjoy.

We hope that everyone will get acquainted with the wonderful food and medicinal value of these wild vegetables, and make them a permanent part of the diet as long as seasonable.