

Edible Weeds

Many people want to get rid of weeds! They can grow and spread quickly. Weeds can rob other plants of water and nutrients from the soil. But weeds can also provide benefits to humans and the environment. There are some weeds we can eat or use as medicine. Many weeds bloom flowers that are a source of nectar for pollinators.

This guide includes common weeds that you can look for right in your own neighbourhood. Look for these weeds around pathways, garden beds, and other areas where the soil is often moved and disturbed. If you are going to pick some, here are some foraging reminders:

How to Forage

- Only harvest food plants you are 100% certain you can identify!
 - Not all plants are edible, and some plants have lookalikes that may not be edible.
- Get to know your environment!
 - Is the edible plant you're harvesting somewhere people are spraying chemicals, close to lots of traffic, or where dogs like to pee? Find a different spot!
- Ask first.
 - If you want to forage from someone's yard, ask them first! And ask the plants if you can pick from them, too. It's only polite.
- If there's a lot, you can take a little.
 - Foragers know that if you take all of something, there won't be any left for other people or animals, and the plant may not grow back. A few good guidelines are:
 - Don't harvest from the first plant you see
 - Only take 1 out of every 10 of what you're harvesting
 - Don't harvest if you can tell other people have been harvesting there.
- Show your gratitude.
 - Most foraging traditions include giving a gift to the land before foraging in recognition that we live in a relationship with the plants we forage. Your gift should be something that is meaningful to you. It might be
 - physical, like tobacco, grain, or another natural offering that will decompose easily
 - a prayer or statement of thanks
 - an act of service like cleaning up litter or removing invasive species
 - or a combination of all of those!



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Broad-Leaved Plantain ("Frog Leaf")

Plantago major

All parts of this plant are useful. The egg-shaped leaves and seeds can be eaten raw or cooked. When chewed, the leaves can be used as a healing 'bandaid' for wounds, burns, and insect bites.

Narrow-Leaved Plantain

Plantago lanceolata

This plantain has long, thin leaves like a sword. It can be used as a food and medicine in the same ways as broad-leaved plantain. Dried leaves can be made into herbal tea, which has calcium and vitamin C.

Dandelion

Taraxacum officinale

This plant was brought to Turtle Island by European settlers for their gardens. Every part of the dandelion is edible. See how many different ways you can use these leaves, flowers, and roots!

Guasca

Galinsoga parviflora

This tall plant is great in soups! Add the teardrop leaves into the Colombian soup ajiaco for a rich, herby flavor. Look for guasca's tiny white flowers with a yellow center.

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Purslane

Portulaca oleracea

This plant spreads out and grow close to the ground. Purslane has red stems and yellow flowers. This succulent has crunchy, juicy leaves. All parts of the plant can be eaten raw on salads or as a garnish.



White Clover

Trifolium repens

Look in lawns for a small plant with three symmetrical leaves and a white pompom flower in summer. The leaves can be eaten as cooked greens or in a salad, and the flowers brewed into a tea.



Sheep Sorrel

Rumex acetosella

This plant is sometimes called "lemon leaves" by kids. This plant's leaves taste like a sour candy. But don't eat more than a couple of leaves at once! Too much sour oxalic acid can be bad for our bodies.



Lamb's Quarters

Chenopodium album

This weed is also known as "wild spinach". Look for its jaggedy diamond-shaped leaves and whitish-gray coating. Pinch off the leaves and prepare them just like you would spinach. Try it in soups, omelets or lasagna!



EDIBLE WEEDS

NEIGHBOURHOOD BINGO

			
White Clover	A weed with a flower	A weed larger than your hand	Broad-Leaved Plantain
			
A weed with a bug on it	Dandelion	Lamb's Quarter	A weed in a surprising spot
			
A weed with a strong smell	Purslane	A weed that is soft to touch	Guasca
			
Narrow-Leaved Plantain	A weed not in this field guide	A weed that's been walked on	Sheep Sorrel