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FAMILY WELLNESS FIRST: WELLNESS LIFESTYLE

Weeds in Your Garden? Bite Back!

Author // Susun S. Weed

I always say, “A gardener’s best revenge is to eat the weeds.” I’ve been doing it for 30 years, and can testify that my health and the health of my garden have never been better. Here are a few hints for gardeners who’d rather eat their weeds than hate them, and for non-gardeners who are adventurous enough to try out nature’s bounty.

View your weeds as cultivated plants. Give them the same care and you’ll reap a tremendous harvest. Harvest frequently, and do it when the weeds are young and tender.

Keep those annuals pinched back. You wouldn’t let your basil go straight up and go to flower; don’t let your lamb’s quarter, either. One cultivated lamb’s quarter plant in my garden grew 5 feet high and 4 feet across, providing greens for salads and cooking all summer long, and a generous harvest of seeds for winter use.

Here’s how to tend some of my favorite garden weeds:

Annuals

Lamb’s Quarter [wild spinach] (*Chenopodium alba*, *Chenopodium quinoa*, and related species): Put young leaves in salads. Cook older leaves and tender stalks. Dried leaves can be ground into flour, which can replace up to half the flour in any recipe. Dried seeds can be cooked in soups and porridge.



Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*): The fleshy leaves and stalks of this plant are incredibly delicious in salads and not bad at all preserved in vinegar for winter use.



Biennials

Burdock (*Arctium lappa*): Roots of non-flowering plants harvested after frost make vinegar that is deep and richly flavorful, as well as a worldrenowned tonic. Petioles of the leaves and the flowering stalk are also edible; for recipes see my book, *Healing Wise*.

Queen Anne’s Lace (*Daucus carota*): Chop the leaves finely and use in salads. Flowers are beautiful, edible decorations. Harvest and cook the roots of non-flowering plants in the fall.



Perennials

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*): The leaves can be eaten at any time, raw or cooked, but are especially tasty in the fall—not spring! Roots can be harvested any time; pickle them in apple cider vinegar for winter use. Dandelion flower wine is justly famous.

Continue reading Susun’s article here: <http://pathwaystofamilywellness.org/Sustainable-Community/weeds-in-your-garden-bite-back.html>

Purslane Potato Salad

Many potato salad recipes are simply potatoes and mayonnaise with maybe some herbs or celery thrown in. This recipe takes it up a notch by incorporating all kinds of vegetables and flavors for a more nutritional and enjoyable dish. One of the many ingredients is not too well known, but should be for it's amazing nutritional benefits.

Purslane is a powerhouse of a vegetable that likely grows wild in your yard. It has double the omega-3s and four times the vitamin E of any other leafy green known. It is packed with iron and antioxidants, and has a succulent, earthy flavor. We have heard and seen this delightful plant many times, thanks to John Kallas, PhD who wrote *Edible Wild Plants*, but was unsure how to incorporate it into our cooking. Well, with the help of Rachel Weaver, M.H. who wrote *Backyard Pharmacy: Weeds that Heal* we sought out to make a potato salad of our own, and let me say, it is nothing short of delicious.



Serves 15-20 people

What You'll Need:

- 3 lbs potatoes
- 3 stalks celery
- 2 carrots, grated
- ½ head broccoli, chopped into small florets
- Large handful of purslane, stems removed and roughly chopped

For the dressing:

- 1 c. yogurt
- 1-2 cups mayonnaise
- ½ lemon, juiced
- 1 T Dijon mustard
- Handful of fresh parsley and dill, chopped
- Celery salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- ½ red onion, minced
- 1 garlic scape, minced

What to Do:

1. Fill a large pot half way with water and bring to a boil. Chop potatoes into medium-small sized chunks and add to boiling water. Let cook for about 15 minutes or until tender. Drain and let cool.
2. Prepare your dressing by mixing all ingredients together in a measuring cup. Taste and add celery salt if needed. This should make about 3 cups of dressing.
3. Prepare your celery, carrots, broccoli, and purslane and combine in a large bowl. Once potatoes are cooled, add to bowl. Stir to mix.
4. Pour dressing over top veggies and mix well. Add more mayonnaise and/or yogurt if too dry, and salt if needed. Chill for 20 minutes and stir before serving.

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