

MIDWEST REGION INDIGENOUS AND WILD PLANTS

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Midwest Region includes:

Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin

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>> Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*)

- Dandelions are a herbaceous perennial plant with a rosette of dark green leaves that grow up to 12' long and one or more hollow, flowering stalks that grow up to 15" long. Leaf margins consist of large teeth. The bright yellow inflorescence is common in disturbed areas such as lawns and roadside ditches.
- Collect leaves all year but best in spring, flowers and stems in summer, and roots in fall. All parts of the plant may be harvested and dried or blanched and frozen for later use.
- Avoid places that have been recently sprayed by pesticides.
- Benefits
 - Excellent for liver health
 - Have been shown to destroy free radicals and may prevent cancer
 - Has been shown to lower blood sugar and improve function of the pancreas



» Stinging Nettles (*Urtica dioica*)

- Stinging nettles are a herbaceous perennial plant with an angular, almost-square stem and leaves arranged opposite on the stem. The dark green leaves grow up to 8" and all parts of the plant may be covered in sharp hairs that cause an irritating or stinging effect. Nettles get clusters of light green, feathery flowers that later become heavy clusters of seeds.
- Collect young leaves in early spring for in tea or various recipes, or harvest the younger, tender leaves at the top of mature plants. Collect whole plant later in the year for external use as a "stinging treatment."
- The young leaves may be blanched and frozen for later, dried for later use in teas and various recipes.
- Benefits
 - Anti-inflammatory properties
 - High in protein



» Cutleaf toothwort (*Cardamine concatenata*)

- Cutleaf toothwort is a herbaceous perennial that grows in moist, shady woodland soils. The tender green stems can reach up to 12" tall and grow from knobby, fleshy, peanut-sized tubers that taste and smell like horseradish. The leaves have deeply cut lobes with up to five long lobes. Flowers are white to light pink and have four petals, which is characteristic of the mustard family.
- Gather leaves in early spring for a tender spicy green vegetable and harvest the small tubers in early summer to make a delicious horseradish substitute.
- Puree leaves and tubers and freeze for later. You can also pickle the leaves and tubers.
- Benefits
 - Relieves lung and sinus congestion
 - Lowers blood pressure



»» Rose Hips (*Rosa* spp)

- Wild rose is a thorny shrub that forms dense thickets in full sun. Pinnately compound leaves with 5-9 leaflets growing alternately on the tough stem. Flowers are around 3" across and have pink petals, and the fruit (aka rose hips) turn bright red in the fall.
- Rose hips can be gathered all year long, even when snow is on the ground.
- The hips should be de-seeded and dried for later use.
- Rose petals may be gathered in early summer and dried for later.
- Benefits
 - Boost the immune system with high levels of Vitamin C
 - Great for healthy skin



»» Purslane (*Portulaca oleraceae*)

- Purslane is an annual plant that grows prostrate in disturbed areas. Stems are smooth and reddish, with leaves that grow opposite and sometimes alternately on the stem. Leaves are oval to tear drop shaped and are thick - almost succulent-like. Flowers are tiny with five, yellow petals.
- The whole plant is best harvested at the height of summer when the leaves are plump.
- Purslane can be frozen, dried, or pickled for later.
- Benefits
 - Rich in Omega-3 Fatty Acids
 - Supports healthy digestion
 - Boosts the immune system



» Goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*)

- Goldenrod is a herbaceous perennial plant reaching heights up to 5'. It prefers full sun and can be found on the edges of woodlands and in open prairie. Flowers are bright yellow, feathery clusters that appear in late summer.
- Harvest the young tips at the top of the plant in spring and early summer.
- Blanch these young leaves and serve as a green vegetable that is best when mixed with other greens. They have a flavor similar to cilantro. These tips may be blanched and frozen or dried for later.
- Flowers should be harvested when they are bright yellow and can be used for tea or in salads.
- Benefits
 - Excellent for kidney and liver health
 - Great for treating upper respiratory infections
 - Makes a good wash for treating wounds



» Mulberry (*Morus rubra*)

- Mulberry is a deciduous tree with smooth, dark green leaves that are ovate to cordate in shape and grow alternately on the stem. Mulberries form dark purple aggregate fruits that look similar to a blackberry.
- Gather the ripe berries in mid to late summer and gather the leaves all year long for use in teas or other recipes.
- The berries may be frozen, canned, or dried for later use. Harvest the leaves in midsummer and dry for tea.
- Benefits
 - High in antioxidants
 - The leaves are excellent for health



» Pawpaws (*Asimina triloba*)

- Pawpaw is a small tree with large green leaves that turn yellow in the fall. Flowers have six petals and are dark burgundy in color. Large, cylindrical green fruits appear in late summer and turn yellow later.
- Gather the ripe fruits in late summer.
- Fruits are best eaten raw as some people experience gastrointestinal upset from consuming the cooked fruit. Delicious flavor similar to a banana and a pineapple.
- Pawpaw fruits may be frozen for later.
- Benefits
 - Makes an excellent poultice to draw out infection



» Sochan (*Rudbeckia laciniata*)

- Sochan, also known as cutleaf coneflower, is a perennial sunflower with yellow flowers that have a cone-shaped center. Leaves are arranged alternately on the stem and have deeply cut, pinnately dissected lobes.
- Gather sochan leaves in early to late spring.
- Saute the leaves in fat for a delicious green vegetable.
- Leaves may be blanched and frozen or dried for later.
- Benefits
 - Antifungal
 - Helps support health of those with cancer





» Plantain (*Plantago rugelii*)

- Plantain is a perennial herbaceous plant that consists of a rosette of oval leaves with prominent, parallel veins. The leaf base is purple to dark red. Plantain has a tall unbranched stalk with tiny black seeds.
- Gather the leaves all year long, and you may also gather the seeds in late summer and fall. The leaves may be gathered and dried for later.
- The seeds should be roasted and dried for later consumption.
- Benefits
 - Makes an excellent poultice for burns, cuts, and scrapes.
 - High in fiber

