



WILD GREENS

“As spring comes the wild greens bud out to nourish our minds, bodies and spirits.”

HARVEST & STORAGE

- ❖ Many types of wild greens are available throughout the year. Often called “*trail food*”, wild greens are harvested from nature and nourish the body!
- ❖ Common wild greens include **nettle**, **chickweed**, **miner’s lettuce**, **candy flower** and **violet**.
- ❖ Warning: When harvesting nettle, wear gloves and use scissors to avoid getting “*stung*”. Have you ever been stung? Do you know the plant that can help relieve the pain from the stings?
- ❖ Store wild greens the same way you store salad or lettuce in the fridge. To keep them fresh and crisp longer, you can layer washed leaves with paper towel or dish cloth in a container in the fridge.

PREPARATION

- ❖ Most wild greens are simply rinsed and eaten fresh or tossed in salads. Greens can also be eaten as other vegetables and added to casseroles, meat pies, egg scrambles, meat loaf, lasagna, etc.
- ❖ Stinging nettle needs to be cooked, steamed or dried to deactivate the stinging ability.
- ❖ For nettle, the entire young plant can be eaten, stems and all. Larger spring nettle stems will get fibrous and should be removed. Don’t eat nettle plant once it is flowering. Prepare nettle by:
 - ◆ **Boil** – Boil water. Add nettles into bubbling water for 1 minute then remove and dunk into cold water to stop the cooking. Eat them as is, added to dishes or frozen for later use. Drink the water nettles are boiled as tea.
 - ◆ **Freeze** – Boil nettles until just cooked, rinse in cold water, drain and put in bags.
 - ◆ **Cook** – Cook in a pan until they look fully cooked, usually about 5-8 minutes.
 - ◆ **Steam** – Place nettles in a pot or steamer with a bit of water and steam for 5-10 minutes.
- ❖ Use dried nettles as a seasoning. Add to fish, rice, chicken soup, clam chowder or tomato sauce.

NUTRITION

- ❖ Nettles and wild greens are an important spring food and medicine.
- ❖ After winter, when people traditionally ate more dried and less fresh food, nettles were a source of powerful nutrients and cleansing medicine (Bruce Miller, Skokomish Elder).
- ❖ Wild greens are nutrition superstars! They are called a “*super food*” because they are very high in vitamins and minerals and also contain some protein. They nourish the blood, organs and protect against diseases.



EAT WILD GREENS 3 WAYS

MEAL

NETTLE PESTO & CHICKEN PASTA

PESTO

1 small bag (about 6 cups) of young fresh nettles, rinsed
1/3 cup walnuts or pine nuts
1 large bunch basil, stems removed, washed and drained
1/2 cup Parmesan or Romano cheese, grated
1/3 cup olive oil
1 tsp lemon juice
1 clove garlic, chopped

Chicken pieces
Favourite pasta
Pinch of salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS: For pesto, boil water and cook nettles for 2 minutes to remove sting. Drain, cool and roughly chop. Place nettles and rest of pesto ingredients into food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Add salt and pepper to taste. Meanwhile barbeque or fry the chicken until well cooked. Cook your favourite pasta and toss with 1/2 cup of pesto. Serve and enjoy!

SNACK

WILD GREENS SALAD

1 cup violet leaf and flower
1 cup chopped chickweed greens (substitute lettuce if unavailable)
1 cup edible flowers (salmonberry, thimbleberry, strawberry, calendula or rose)
1 cup spring beauty leaves (substitute lettuce if unavailable)

DRESSING:

1/2 cup fresh or frozen and thawed huckleberries or blueberries
1/4 cup olive oil
2 Tbsp balsamic vinegar
1 tsp honey
Pinch of salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS: Wash flowers and greens, and toss in a bowl. Blend all dressing ingredients together. Just before serving, pour the dressing over and toss lightly. Enjoy!

Credit: *Growing 7 Generations: A Recipe Book* by Northwest Native Plants and Foods Collective

DRINK

WARM OR ICED NETTLE MINT TEA

Dried Nettles
Dried Mint leaves

DIRECTIONS:

For iced tea, steep 3 Tbsp of dried nettle leaves and 1 Tbsp of dried mint leaves in 1 litre of hot water. Let steep until cooled. Strain out the leaves and serve over ice.

For hot tea, steep 2 Tbsp of dried nettle leaves and 3/4 Tbsp of dried mint leaves in a pot of hot water. Let steep for about 5 minutes, strain into mugs. Enjoy!

NOTE: The longer the tea steeps the darker it will become as the plant gifts the water its rich vitamins and minerals. *You can buy dried nettle and mint teas at the grocery store in common tea bags or at health food stores.