

The Wealth of our Wild Plants

Welcome to a window into the wealth of our wild plants! I am honored to introduce you to some of our wonderful wild plants that contribute towards the regeneration of planet earth while at the same time support the optimal health of our own bodies. Although there are many plant species that do both of these important services, I am including thirteen plants that grow abundantly, are easy to find and often considered as weeds to society.

Please meet my marvelous green friends who many of you may already know, but perhaps have not made intimate connection with recently... mallow, purslane, plantain, amaranth, lambs quarters, dandelion, thistle, curly dock, clover, grass, knotweed, chickweed and mustard.

These special plants are found not only in and around Durango, Colorado but they are also found everywhere on the globe next to human civilizations. They follow our footsteps impeccably. As humans we create the perfect niche for them to grow well due to our expert skills of disturbing of land and compacting soils. Nature made these wild plants highly adapted to sow themselves in the wake of our activity.

Whether we are based at home or find ourselves traveling, these wild plants can help each of us maintain a state of optimal health with minimal cost and effort. Each one represents a sustainable food source as well as an extensive medical pharmacy and first aid kit. Here is a little peek into some of their values.

Purslane (*Portulaca*) seeds are one of the best sources of omega 3 fatty acids. The leaves and stems are juicy, succulent and taste lemony.

Thistle (*Carduus*) greens make a fantastic juice. Harvest the greens carefully from the back stem or use gloves. Place them in the blender with plenty of water, an apple and a lemon. Blend and strain the pulp out. Drink this delicious thistle lemonade and experience a good energy that comes from shifting your body towards an alkaline healing state.

Mallow (*Malva*) has a pleasant mellow flavor and delicious in salads and juices while gently drawing out congestion from the body. The whole plant blended and strained also makes a great base for homemade lotions and shampoos.

Plantain (*Plantago*) is not only a great food but also acts as the perfect first aid kit in a myriad of ways. The leaves chewed into a mash draw out snake venom, spider bites, infection and assist rapid healing of any injury.

Clovers (*Trifolium*) replenish the soil with nitrogen and re-mineralize our bodies with a full spectrum rainbow of trace minerals that support the integrity of long-term health.

Curly dock (*Rumex*) leaves are used for lettuce when young and the seeds ground fine make great flour for adding to breads. The root works as a fantastic natural antibiotic and immune builder.

Lambsquarter (*Chenopodium*) has far greater nutritional value than spinach and its seeds turn into the highly nutritious grain, quinoa.

Amaranth (*Amaranthus*) also known as pigweed is a wild food of choice. The greens are delicious raw and for making into green chips and the little black seeds and leaves are packed with protein.

Grass (Poaceae) grows everywhere and is a true blessing because all wild grasses are edible. It makes a fantastic survival food because it contains all 8 essential amino acids making it a complete protein. Chew the blades for the juice and spit out the pulp if it is too tough to break down.

Chickweed (*Stellaria*) is a delicate plant with five white flower petals that uses the support of other plants to grow higher. It tastes mild like fresh green springtime. It can be used in salads, green juices and salves. It supports our ability to let go of excess and increases our bodies efficiency.

Knotweed (*Polygonum*) grows low to the ground and is often overlooked. It is a wild buckwheat that is highly nutritious and delicious. It is a first succession pioneer species and helps regenerate the soil.

Dandelion (*Taraxacum*) reminds us how to survive in style. The whole plant is edible and highly beneficial for good living. The roots are eaten raw or prepared like a wild potato, the greens are delicious and their slightly bitter tones all of our internal organs, the flowers taste like honey and the stems make great musical flutes.

Wild mustards (*Brasica*) are spicy edibles and encourage good circulation in the body. They each have four flower petals that come in different colors of the rainbow. The greens make a flavorful addition to dishes and the yellow seeds create great condiments and add local variety to your spice rack.

These plants are our guides to connect more deeply with our sense of place. They are adapted perfectly to our local climate, altitude and terrain. When we ingest them, their wisdom and integrity become a part of us on a core level. They teach us how to maintain vitality, build interconnectivity and adapt to change. Integrating these wild plants into our daily practice provides a path of simple abundant living that can lead to a feeling of deep trust and a sense of belonging. As we utilize them, they continue to give back in countless ways to the health of our bodies and integrity of our home on earth.

While at the same time they are supporting our personal optimal health, they also are providing nectar and pollen for the honey bees and wild pollinators and helping regenerate disturbed and stressed lands. With their deep taproots, they aerate and break up compact soil, which increases earthworms and other microorganism activity underground. Their leaves compost each year, which builds topsoil and ultimately increases the fertility of the land. By simply appreciating what is growing under our feet, we have access to improving the quality of life for all beings on a local and global level.

These wild edible and medicinal plants have the potential to not only support our survival amidst rapid global changes occurring in our natural environment, but to even help us thrive in this unique modern time. Join us in the movement helping our local cities' and towns' transition into organic land stewardship practices and reduce the amount of synthetic chemicals used on public spaces. Together we can appreciate and celebrate these plant heroes of our time and support greater quality of life for all beings here on earth.