



sault  
naturalists

# *Edible Plants Outing Report*

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## **Sampling the wild harvest**

Okay, are you tired of the double cheese Big Mac diet or the endless escargot au beurre? On Saturday we were shown the way to add excitement and added nutrition to our traditional mundane meals.

Michelle Jarvie of Michigan State University Extension office lead the group to a cornucopia of edible treats right in our back yards. Your back yard being a friendly forest with open areas for a multitude of plants to spend their days in the sun festooned with leaves and shining red and purple berries scrumptious for us to eat.

But be cautious that a forested feast is not for those who think that if it looks good to eat, it is. Yes, perhaps some of these plants can be used to treat your irregularity once and awhile but not as a steady diet. Michelle shared her expertise with us and the list of edibles we found, is below.



*Chaga on White birch tree*



*Michelle enlightens*



*Wood sorrel for salads*

Caution, you need to know your edible treat with assuredness which includes knowing the species and genus of the edible plant to make sure you are not partaking of a poisonous imposter.

Just walking around Sherman Park Sault Michigan, we discovered a plethora of plants that could easily sustain our life style. Finishing up with the ever-popular Cattail we learned the male part tastes the best, like a cob of corn when cooked. Not chicken but good fare none the less. And the root another delight.

Only harvest with sustainability in mind. Remember the tale of the tragedy of the commons. In order for future generations to share in our edible wild delights we must not over harvest. Take a sample not a bushel.

For more images of this outing go to:

[Renee's Photos](#)



*Beaked hazel nut*



*Queen Anne's Lace (wild carrot) root*



*Sniff test for wild carrot*



There are many benefits from eating seasonally available wild foods foraged on public lands (where permitted).

A. Chances are they are free of pollutants when collected away from built-up areas and road allowances

B. They are far more nutritious than similar horticultural varieties as they are picked at the height of freshness and ripeness

C. They can be a low cost way to supplement your diet and save money

Common Name	Scientific Name	Use	Notes
<b>CHAGA</b>	<i>Inonotus obliquus</i>	Dry and grind. Make tea	Good source of fiber, no nutritional value. Research as cancer cure. Takes 5 years to grow back after removal
<b>WINTERGREEN</b>	<i>Gaultheria procumbens</i>	Add leaves to salad	Use sparingly
<b>BLUE-BEAD LILY</b>	<i>Clintonia borealis</i>	Add leaves to salad	Use sparingly
<b>ACORNS</b>	<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Peel, leach tannins by soaking/boiling in water, grind into flour (nutmeal)	Good source of healthy fats, vitamins, minerals, fiber, vitamins A and E.
<b>PLANTAIN</b>	<i>Plantago spp.</i>	Add young leaves to salad Make Kimchee (fermentation removes bitterness)	All parts can be eaten but tedious to prepare. Blanching makes leaves and stems tender & less bitter. Good source of iron, important vitamins & minerals; fiber
<b>LAMB'S QUARTERS</b>	<i>Chenopodium spp.</i>	Add young leaves to salad. Seeds are edible grain. Make Kimchee	Be wary of harvest location as this plant absorbs pollutants in soil/water
<b>PIGWEEED</b>	<i>Amaranthus spp</i>	Leaves can be eaten raw or cooked. Seeds can be cooked like quinoa or ground into flour	Eaten as a vegetable / ancient "grain" all over the world for centuries. A good source of fiber, protein, manganese, magnesium, phosphorus and iron, important micronutrients. Caution: There are several plants called "pigweed" that may not be edible
<b>DANDELION</b>	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Add young leaves to salad	Good source of iron, important vitamins & minerals; fiber
<b>WOOD SORREL</b>	<i>Oxalis stricta</i>	Add leaves to salad. Roots can be boiled and eaten. Make soup	Lemony flavour. Good source of vitamin C
<b>VIOLET</b>	<i>Viola spp.</i>	Add leaves to salad	
<b>DEWBERRY</b>	<i>Rubus pubescens</i>	Use fruit to make jam, jelly. Eat raw	Similar nutritionally to blackberries
<b>WILD STRAWBERRY</b>	<i>Fragaria spp.</i>	Use fruit to make jam, jelly, wine. Eat raw	High antioxidants and plant compounds, which may have benefits for heart health and blood sugar control
<b>WILD BLUEBERRY</b>	<i>Vaccinium angustifolium</i>	Use fruit to make jam, jelly. Eat raw	Packed with antioxidants; can lower risk of heart disease and cancer and are anti-inflammatory.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Use	Notes
<b>CHOKECHERRY</b>	<i>Prunus virginiana</i>	Use fruit to make jam, jelly, wine.	Berries too tart to eat raw. Seeds of the fruit contain cyanide, but cooking the fruit will remove cyanide.
<b>SERVICEBERRY</b>	<i>Amelanchier spp.</i>	Use fruit to make jam, jelly. Eat raw	Also called Juneberry. Benefits similar to wild blueberry
<b>BUNCHBERRY</b>	<i>Cornus canadensis</i>	Use fruit to make jam, jelly. Eat raw	Berries not overly palatable when eaten raw
<b>BLACKBERRY</b>	<i>Rubus</i>	Use fruit to make jam, jelly. Eat raw	Considered a superfood. High in beneficial vitamins (C, K) and minerals (manganese), fiber, and antioxidants. Low in calories, carbs, and fat.
<b>SPRUCE BUDS</b>	<i>Picea glauca</i>	Eat spring buds raw. Needles for tea; can be used instead of rosemary as a seasoning	Exceptionally high in Vitamin C. Use buds in spring only.
<b>QUEEN ANNE'S LACE</b>	<i>Daucus carota</i>	Also known as wild carrot. Use root as carrot. Use flower for jelly; batter, deep fry; 1st year leaves for salad	Harvest root in fall. Has a high sugar content; many vitamins, minerals. Can be confused with Poison hemlock which is poisonous
<b>WHITE CLOVER</b>	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	Eat leaves raw or boiled	
<b>BURDOCK</b>	<i>Arctium spp.</i>	Peel stalk, eat raw or boiled. Boil leaves with several changes of water to remove bitterness. Root can be peeled, boiled to remove bitterness	Roots are particularly nutritious and a good source of carbohydrates, protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals.
<b>PINEAPPLE WEED</b>	<i>Matricaria matricariodes)</i>	Dry leaves, makes tea similar to chamomile. Add young leaves to salad	
<b>STINGING NETTLE</b>	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Eat leaves, boil first	
<b>OSTRICH FERN</b>	<i>Mattheucia struthiopteris</i>	Boil fiddleheads with several changes of water.	Ultimate antioxidant food (2X blueberries), anti-inflammatory, high fibre
<b>HAZELNUT</b>	<i>Corylus cornuta</i>	Husk, crack, roast before eating	Rich in protein, monounsaturated fat, vitamin E, manganese, and numerous other essential nutrients
<b>WILD SARSAPARILIA</b>	<i>Aralia nudicaulis</i>	Edible fruit, leaves and root.	The leaves, fruits, and roots are edible. Roots are most commonly used as emergency food; to make root beer and syrup. Leaves and roots can be brewed to make herbal tea.
<b>CATTAIL</b>	<i>Typha spp.</i>	Most parts are edible. Rhizome is boiled or eaten raw and can be made into flour. Boil leaves. The tender white inner part of stem near the base can be eaten raw or boiled. In early summer the corn dog-looking flower spike can be eaten like corn on the cob.	Very low in saturated fat. Good source of iron and phosphorus, and a very good source of dietary fiber, vitamin K, vitamin B6, calcium, magnesium, potassium and manganese. Caution: high in sodium; carefully wash any parts harvested from under water.