

THE INCREDIBLE EDIBLE PORTLAND



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Environmental Education Through Native American Lens
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INTRODUCTION

Before the age of western medicine, indigenous people had many ways to cure their ailments. The cures did not have to be produced. Instead, they were found. They found cures in places we would not think today to look. Indigenous people looked to the world around them for these cures, and often, they would find them in what today we would call “weeds.” Otherwise known as the obnoxious plants that you have to remove to keep your garden looking great. The native cultures, however, were intimately connected with their environment and their place in it. In our region, we are lucky to have plenty of these medicinal plants just lurking beneath our feet. All we need is to be aware of them.



Western Red Cedar

Contrary to how people tend to think about indigenous medicines, their practice was both based on experiments and also their spiritual beliefs. Unlike most of us today who grow up in many kinds of homes and households, indigenous communities were really close and depended on the elders whose wisdom aided the community. Their knowledge was passed down from generation to generation, and it contained secrets to local plants and herbs that helped cure and help with common ailments. The wisdom of the healing properties known by the elders were beneficial for the community as a whole and the most esteemed promote the health and long life of the people the best. Let’s take a look at some of the plants in our region that contain these medicine qualities.

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TABLE 6-1.

A SAMPLING OF COMMON EDIBLE WEEDS

Common name	Botanical name	Edible part
Burdock	<i>Arctium lappa</i>	root
Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	leaf
Chicory	<i>Cichorium intybus</i>	leaf, root, flower
Cleavers	<i>Galium trifidum</i>	leaf
Dandelions	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	leaf, root (roasted), flower
Dock, curly	<i>Rumex persicarioides</i>	leaf, root
Dock, yellow	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	leaf, root
Epazote	<i>Chenopodium ambrosioides</i>	leaf
Garlic mustard	<i>Alliaria officinalis</i>	leaf, root, seed
Goldenrod	<i>Solidago</i> spp.	flower (for tea or spice)
Knotweed	<i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i>	shoot
Lamb's quarters	<i>Chenopodium album</i>	leaf
Lettuce, wild	<i>Lactuca scariola</i>	leaf
Mint	<i>Mentha</i> spp.	leaf
Mustard, wild	<i>Brassica</i> spp.	leaf, flower, seed
Pigweed	<i>Amaranthus retroflexus</i>	leaf, seed
Pineapple weed	<i>Matricaria matricarioides</i>	leaf (for tea)
Plantain	<i>Plantago</i> spp.	leaf, seed
Purslane	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	leaf
Queen Anne's lace	<i>Daucus carota</i>	leaf, flower, root
Shepherd's purse	<i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	leaf, seed, seedpod
Sorrel, sheep	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	leaf
Sow thistle	<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	leaf
Stinging nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	leaf (cooked)
Wintercress	<i>Barbarea vulgaris</i>	leaf

From *Gaia's Garden* by Toby Hemenway

A NOTE ON WILD CRAFTING

Since we can find these medicines out in the wild, we gather them when we need them. However, we can't take advantage of nature. We need to respect her. This is part of what has recently been called "wildcrafting." This is a kind of ethic of gathering, to not take more than you need. When we gather these herbs and plants, we take care to think about nature itself. It is a way of being aware of our place in nature with these plants and herbs that benefit us.

When locating and collecting plants, one must be conscientious and connected with where the plants are coming from, the soil, the roots, the surrounding forms of life. Human beings can speak, and the plants can hear our speech. We take thanks in the plants that we collect and benefit from, for we, like the plants, are dependent on the natural world for our life. Taking more than we can chew from a plant is brought about by a lack of awareness, a thought that the plant is there only for humans. Instead, the wildcrafting ethic has us realize that this view is unfounded. Our relations to plants and animals, how we treat them and how we perceive them shape our sense of place in the natural world, is determined by where we think we stand in relation to them. If we misuse them, there's a chance that we will feel the same way, misused by nature. Indigenous ways of thinking do not put humans above other lifeforms in nature. We're all on the same level because we have the same origin, and when we collect from the wild, we must be mindful of this.

IMPORTANT REMINDER

There are poisonous plants in Portland, Oregon, make sure you know how to identify plants safely.

CHICORY *Cichorium intybus*

HABITAT: Wild gardens and roadsides with lots of sun. It tends to grow in chalky soils filled with gravel.

FLOWER: Chicory has angular flower stalks that reach up to 4 feet tall. Sky-blue dandelion-like flowers bloom from June to November.

LEAVES: Deeply toothed (serrated) leaves, which reach 3 to 6 inches in length. They hug the ground

CULINARY: Young leaves can be collected in March and again in November. The leaves tend to be too bitter in the months in between. The young leaves can be added to salads or cooked in recipes. The older leaves have bitter taste that can be adjusted by boiling. Chicory leaves are filled with vitamins A, B complex, K, E, and C. It also contains potassium, calcium, phosphorus, copper, zinc, and magnesium. The roots can be made into a coffee like beverage in the fall and early spring. Scrub, chop, and toast the roots in a 350 F oven for 1 hour, or until dark brown and brittle while occasionally stirring. Next grind the chicory with a blender or a spice grinder. Use 1 tsp of this blend per cup of water.

MEDICINAL: A strong tea of the boiled roots, flowers, and leaves is known to be a good wash for skin irritations, including athlete's foot. You can apply boiled leaves and flowers, wrapped in a clean cotton cloth, to swellings, boils, and mild inflammations. Chicory has been attributed to incite appetite, arouse digestion, and relieve urinary infections. Some herbalists consider Chicory useful to diabetics because it lowers blood-sugar levels and sufferers of arthritis, gout, and edema.



OREGON GRAPE TEA:

Oregon grape root is taken either as a tea or tincture. To make tea, simmer 1 to 2 teaspoons of dried, coarsely chopped root in 1 cup of water for 10 to 15 minutes. Strain out the leftover root (or eat it, if you prefer), and sip the remaining liquid just before eating each substantial meal.

STORAGE:

Keep dried Oregon grape root away from light and heat. Do not keep longer than one year. Tincture will keep indefinitely if stored away from light and heat.

DOSAGE AND CONSUMPTION:

Leaf tea can be taken as needed. Tincture, 1/2-3/4 teaspoon (3 ml) three times per day, can be used.

An ointment made with 10% Oregon grape extract can be applied three or more times daily may be useful for psoriasis.

HEALING PROPERTIES:

1. Used as a bitter tonic for impaired salivary and gastric secretions
2. Used as a stimulant to liver and skin protein metabolism
3. Used as an antimicrobial for the skin and intestinal tract.

WINTERTIME TEA

(Good for colds, flu, coughs, sinusitis/infection)

- 1 part Douglas Fir (branch/needles)
- 1 part Oregon Grape Leaves
- ¼ part Western Red Cedar Leaves
- ¼ part Rose Hips

Decoct in water for 10 minutes, covered. Steep 10 to 15 minutes, covered. Sip as needed. A refreshing cold infusion (no heating, just steeping/soaking) can be made in summer and can provide relief from some plant allergy symptoms.

LANDSCAPING DESCRIPTIONS/USES.

Indigenous to the temperate rain Forrest of the Pacific Northwest, Oregon Grape is an Evergreen, Oregon Native – deer resistant, drought tolerant, shade loving and low maintenance.

TINCTURE RECIPE:

Tincture can be used to treat eczema, acne, herpes and psoriasis. Oregon Grape is an effective alternative to antibiotics in many situations

PRECAUTIONS

The bitterness of Oregon grape root makes some people nauseous when they first start taking it, though this usually passes after the first few doses.

Do not take Oregon grape root if you have chronic diarrhea, a duodenal ulcer, or excessive stomach acid, as it could make these conditions worse. Do not take Oregon grape root in pregnancy without first consulting with a natural health care professional.

**Disclaimer/Precaution: Check with naturopathic physician or herbalist for treatment of infectious conditions. Not recommended for pregnant and breast feeding women. Limit use to no more than 7 consecutive days for adults 3 for children*

OREGON GRAPE TINCTURE:

100 proof vodka

Brown Storage Jar

Oregon Grape

½ cup dried/fresh Root

2 Cups Alcohol

Allow mixture to sit for six weeks, shake everyday.

CHICKWEED *Stellaria media*

HABITAT: Sunny lawns, roadsides, meadows, gardens, partially shaded areas.

FLOWER: Small white starlike flowers opening from March to late fall

LEAVES: tiny pointed oval leaves that are smooth and pale green.

CUZINARY: Chickweed is a great green for the base of a salad. You can boil or steam the leaves for a side to almost any meal. Get creative with this edible weed, you can throw the leaves into a sandwich or use it as a garnish for a soup. Chickweed is an excellent source of vitamins A, D, C, and B complex, as well as iron, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, zinc, manganese, sodium, & copper.

MEDICINAL: Chickweed can be used externally and internally. Applied externally, finely chopped chickweed can soothe irritated skin especially when combined with marsh mallow (the plant not the marshmallows in your cocoa.) It's good for cuts, minor burns, eczema, and rashes.

CHICKWEED TEA: Pour 1 cup of boiling water over 1/4 cup of fresh leaves. Steep for 15 to 20 minutes, Strain herbs and drink. This tea is used to for cleansing the blood and riding the liver and kidneys of harmful waste. It also has been known to help coughs, colds, hoarseness, and hemorrhoids.



Drawing by Mimi Kamp

STINGING NETTLE *Urtica dioica*

HABITAT: Moist groves, rivers, and along partially shaded trails

LEAVES: Dark green heart shaped pointed leaves with a rough papery texture.

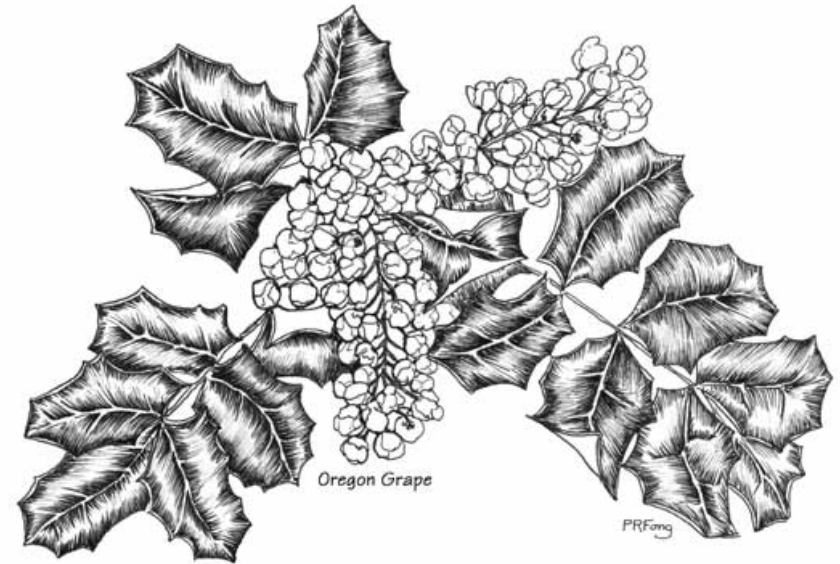
FLOWER: Stinging Nettle is a dioecious plant, which means that there are male and female flowers on separate plants. They are tiny light green and clustered in leaf axils.

CUZINARY: The leaves and stems of Nettles can be added to any meal as a nutritious complement. It's best to collect nettle leaves before they flower in spring. It has been said that they are bad for the kidneys after flowering. Stinging nettles are filled with little hypodermic needles containing formic acids and histamines that easily irritate the skin, so it's best advised to wear rubber gloves while collecting. If stung, plantain and dock will cure the rash. Once cooked, steamed, boiled, or dried these needles are destroyed. Cooked nettles are a perfect addition to any meal. Get creative with your culinary talent, add them to casseroles, pizzas, stews, steam them for a side dish or make a tasty nettle pesto. Nettles are extremely nutritious they contain high amounts of minerals, especially, calcium, magnesium, iron, potassium, phosphorous, manganese, silica, iodine, silicon, sodium, and sulfur. They're a great source of vitamin C, beta-carotene, and B complex vitamins. Nettles also contain easily absorbable amino acids. They're ten percent protein, much more than other vegetables.

MEDICINAL: Nettles are not only extremely nutritious they are also very medicinal. Eating nettles or drinking nettle tea makes your hair brighter, thicker and shinier, and makes your skin clearer and healthier. Internally it can help with asthma, anemia, lung troubles, excessive menstruation, bleeding from hemorrhages, bad coughs, nose bleeds, and bloody urine. Additionally nettles are good food for people with allergies. Also it is good for wounds,

OREGON GRAPE

Mahonia aquifolium / Berberis aquifolium



OTHER NAMES:

Rocky Mountain Grape, California Barberry Holly Leaved Barberry

FUN FACTS:

- ★ Oregon's state flower (July 18, 1892)
- ★ Not related to grape family, but gets name from the cluster of blueberries that form.
- ★ Grows 1-5 m tall
- ★ Flower is yellow – A yellow dye is made out of its bark and roots
- ★ Plant is self-fertile – insects pollinate flowers.
- ★ Yellow Dye is taken from roots and bark

The Oregon grape leaves are alternate and consist of 3 or 4 pairs of leaflets and an off one. Each leaflet has 15-30 spiny teeth.

PLANTAIN *Plantago major*

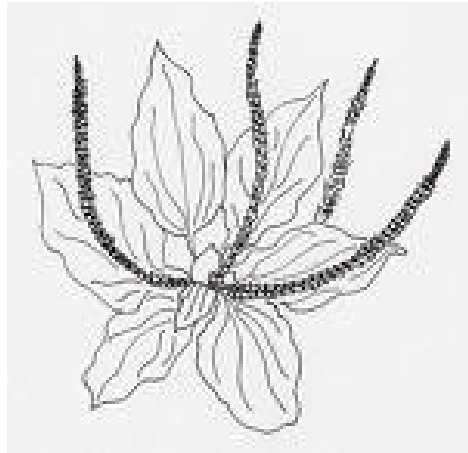
HABITAT: Lawns, fields, roadsides, practically any soil.

FLOWER: Tall skinny pencil-like stalks with a quantity of small white flowers.

LEAVES: Smooth edged oval shaped leaves growing close to the ground

CUZINARY: rich in potassiums and salts you can eat the smallest leaves in early spring, which taste like wheat grass. Add them to spring salads or steam them along with your other edible weeds, but be careful they are slightly laxative.

MEDICINAL: The leaves, roots and seeds of plantain fresh or dried have been used for the treatment of poison wounds, asthma, dysentery, earaches, and kidney disorders. The shredded leaves of plantain can help cure a poison ivy rash or a brush with stinging nettle. Almost any skin irritations including cuts, infections, burns, and ulcerations will benefit from a little plantain massage. A tea concoction (1 ounce herb to one pint of water) drunk 3 to 4 times a day can help relieve coughs, diarrhea, bronchitis, hemorrhoids and excessive menstrual discharge, as well it has been known to neutralize stomach acids. Plantain roots have been known as a cure for toothaches. When dried and placed on a hollow tooth they act as a painkiller.



cuts, stings, and burns. Nettles act as a counterirritant; by being placed on inflamed skin it increases the blood flow to the affected area reducing inflammation. A nettle tincture can be used for flu, colds, bronchitis and pneumonia. As you can see it is quite the efficient plant.

OTHER USES:

The fibrous stems of stinging nettle have been made for clothing, cordage, and even paper. You can even extract a yellow dye from the roots.

NETTLE PESTO!

6 cups fresh nettle, cooked in boiling water for a minute, drained and roughly chopped
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
1/3 cup pine nuts
1/2 cup grated parmesan cheese
1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
pinch of sea salt and freshly ground pepper

INSTRUCTIONS:

Place the cooked nettles, pine nuts, parmesan cheese, and some salt and pepper, in a blender. Blend the mixture until it's smooth, scraping down the side occasionally. While blending, gradually pour in the olive oil until well distributed. Place the Pesto in a your favorite mason jar and pour a little extra olive oil over the top. Now you have a nice nutritional topping for your toast, pizza, or pasta that you collected and prepared all by yourself or with your friends!

ENJOY!



DANDELION *Taraxacum officinale*

HABITAT: Lawns, fields, meadows, practically everywhere

FLOWER: Grows individually on hollow stalks from 2 to 18 inches tall, each flower head consists of hundreds of tiny golden ray flowers stretching 1 to 2 inches wide. The flower head can change into the familiar, white, spherical seed head overnight- which you can blow to the wind while making a wish.

LEAVES: 3 to 18 inches long and 1/2 to 2-1/2 inches wide, jagged, grooved and bright green leaves look like sharp teeth, in Old French. Dent-de-lion means lion's tooth

CUZINARY: Practically every part of this plant can be consumed. The leaves are best collected in spring before the flower appears. This helps control some of the bitter taste that you will find between spring and fall. If you still want to pick during this season you can boil out the bitterness but lose the water-soluble vitamins. Throw the fresh leaves in with other greens to make a beautiful salad medley. The flower's golden petals can also be consumed plus made into a wine. There are also recipes for dandelion beer. The green sepal at the base of the flower is bitter and recommended to divide from the yellow petals. Throw these flowers in with your stir-fry of veggies or steam them with greens to improve our culinary ability. The taproot is edible all year, but is best harvested between late fall to early spring. Although not as flavorful as some other roots, it is a great complement to stews or sweeter vegetables. Dandelion leaves are more nutritious than anything you can buy in your local produce aisle. They have more beta-carotene than carrots. They have more iron and calcium than spinach. Plus they contain a large list of vitamins and minerals that include: B-1, B-2, B-5, B-6, B-12, C, E, D, biotin, potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, and zinc.

MEDICINAL: Dandelion root is one of the safest and most popular

herbal medicines. A traditional tonic allegedly strengthens the entire body, especially the liver and gallbladder, and promotes the flow of bile. It helps with gallstones, chronic hepatitis, indigestion, reduces liver swelling and jaundice. Be cautious and try not to use dandelion with irritable stomach or bowels. Dandelions are also good for the bladder, spleen, pancreas, stomach and intestines. Anyone who is a victim of fatty foods, excessive white flour, and concentrated sweeteners could benefit from a daily cup of dandelion tea. The leaf's white, milky sap removes warts, moles, pimples, calluses, sores, soothes bee stings and blisters.

