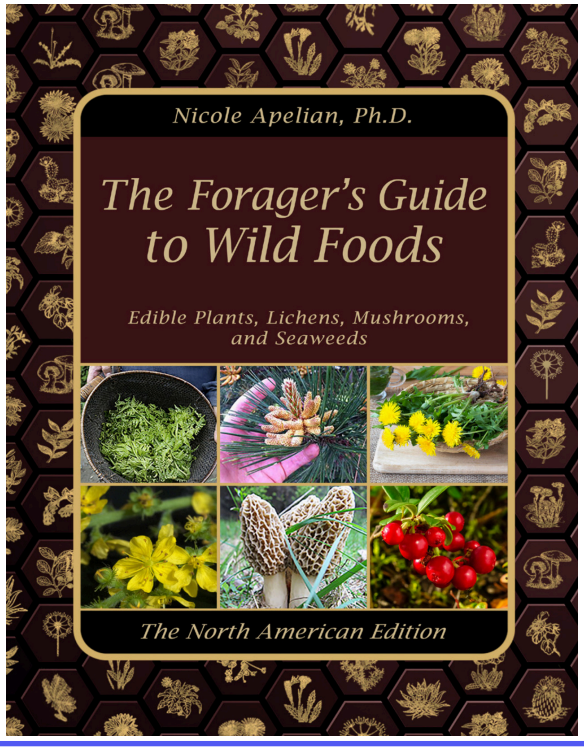


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sum
Fendler's Horsenettle, *Solanum fendleri*..... 68
Fennel, *Foeniculum vulgare*..... 68
Field Pennycress, *Thlaspi arvense*..... 69
Fireweed, *Chamerion (Epilobium) angustifolium*..... 69
Fleabane, *Erigeron* spp. 70
Fringed Redmaids, *Calandrinia ciliata*..... 70
Glacier-Lily, *Erythronium grandiflorum*..... 71
Glasswort, *Salicornia* spp. 72
Goldenrod, *Solidago* spp. 72
Greater Stitchwort, *Rabelera holostea*..... 73
Greenthread, *Thelesperma megapotamicum*..... 73
Groundcone, *Boschniakia* spp. 74
Groundnut/Hopniss, *Apios americana*..... 74
Hedgenettle (Common), *Betonica/ Stachys officinalis*..... 75
Hops, *Humulus lupulus*..... 75
Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*..... 76
Horsetail, *Equisetum arvense*..... 76
Indian Cucumber, *Medeola virginiana*..... 77
Japanese Knotweed, *Polygonum cuspidatum*..... 78
Jerusalem Artichoke, *Helianthus tuberosus*..... 78
Jewelweed, *Impatiens capensis*..... 79
Kudzu, *Pueraria* spp. 79
Lady Fern, *Athyrium filix-femina*..... 80
Land Cress, *Barbarea verna*..... 80
Lamb's Quarter, *Chenopodium album*..... 81
Largeflower Triteleia/Wild Hyacinth, *Triteleia grandiflora*..... 82
Licorice Fern, *Polypodium glycyrrhiza*..... 83
London Rocket, *Sisymbrium irio*..... 83
Mallow, *Malva* spp. 84
Mariposa Lily, *Calochortus* spp. 85
Marsh Marigold, *Caltha palustris*..... 85
Marsh Woundwort/Swamp Hedgenettle, *Stachys palustris*..... 86
Meadow Beauty, *Rhexia virginica*..... 86
Mayapple/Wild Mandrake, *Podophyllum peltatum*..... 87
Milk Thistle, *Silybum marianum*..... 88
Milkweed (Common), *Asclepias syriaca*..... 88
Miner's Lettuce/Spring Beauty, *Claytonia (Montia)* spp. 89
Missouri Gourd, *Cucurbita foetidissima*..... 90
Potentilla indica.....
Mimulus ringens.....
Oxyria digyna.....
Mullein, *Verbascum thapsus*..... 92
Nipplewort, *Lapsana communis*..... 93
Northern Water Plantain, *Alisma triviale*..... 93
Ohio Spiderwort/Blue Jacket, *Tradescantia ohiensis*..... 94
Ostrich Fern, *Matteuccia struthiopteris*..... 94
Oxeye Daisy, *Leucanthemum vulgare*..... 95
Oysterleaf, *Mertensia maritima*..... 95
Partridgeberry/Twin-flower, *Mitchella repens*... 96
Passion-flower, *Passiflora incarnata*..... 96
Pearly Everlasting, *Anaphalis margaritacea*..... 97
Peppergrass, *Lepidium virginicum*..... 97
Pineapple Weed, *Matricaria discoidea*..... 98
Pipsissewa/Prince's Pine, *Chimaphila umbellata*..... 98
Plantain, *Plantago* spp. 99
Prairie Turnip, *Psoralea esculenta*..... 99
Pond Lily/Cow-Lily, *Nuphar lutea*..... 100
Prickly Pear Cactus, *Opuntia ficus-indica*..... 101
Puncture Vine, *Tribulus terrestris*..... 102
Purple Poppy-Mallow, *Callirhoe involucrata*..... 102
Purslane, *Portulaca oleracea*..... 103
Queen's Cup, *Clintonia uniflora*..... 103
Quickweed/Potato Weed, *Galinsoga parviflora*.. 104
Ram's Horn, *Proboscidea louisianica*..... 104
Red Root/New Jersey Tea, *Ceanothus americanus* 105
Rose Root/Golden Root, *Rhodiola rosea*..... 105
Saguaro, *Carnegiea gigantea*..... 106
Salsify, *Tragopogon* spp. 106
Saltbush/Orache, *Atriplex* spp. 107
Sea Milkwort, *Lysimachia (Glaux) maritima*..... 107
Sea Rocket, *Cakile edentula*..... 108
Seabeach Sandwort, *Honckenya peploides*..... 108
Seacoast Angelica/Wild Celery, *Angelica lucida*.. 109
Seaside Arrowgrass, *Triglochin maritima*..... 109
Self Heal/Heal-all, *Prunella vulgaris*..... 110
Sheep Sorrel/Sour Dock, *Rumex acetosella*..... 110
Shepherd's Purse, *Capsella bursa-pastoris*..... 111
Silverweed/Cinquefoil, *Argentina (Potentilla) anserina*..... 111
Skunk Cabbage, *Symplocarpus foetidus* (Eastern) and *Lysichiton americanus* (Western)..... 112
Sowthistle (Common), *Sonchus oleraceus*..... 113
Dryopteris expansa.....
Veronica

Sedum .....
Stork's-Bill, *Erodium cicutarium*..... 116
Strawberry Blite, *Blitum capitatum*..... 116
Sweet Alyssum, *Lobularia maritima*..... 117
Sweet Flag, *Acorus calamus*..... 117
Sweet Clover (Yellow), *Melilotus officinalis*..... 118
Sweet Gale, *Myrica gale*..... 119
Tiger Lily, *Lilium columbianum* and *L. lancifolium*..... 119
Thistle (Plume), *Cirsium* spp. 120
Twisted Stalk/Watermelon Berry, *Streptopus amplexifolius*..... 121
Violet (Wild), *Viola* spp. 122
Water Avens, *Geum rivale*..... 123
Water Parsnip, *Sium suave*..... 124
Watercress, *Nasturtium officinale*..... 124
Waterleaf, *Hydrophyllum* spp. 125
Water-Lily (Fragrant)/Beaver Root, *Nymphaea odorata*..... 126
Western Sword Fern, *Polystichum munitum*..... 126
Wild Carrot, *Daucus pusillus*..... 127
Wild Garlic, *Allium ursinum*..... 127
Wild Ginger, *Asarum canadense* and *A. caudatum*..... 128
Wild Leek/Ramps, *Allium tricoccum*..... 128
Wild Lettuce, *Lactuca* spp. 129
Wild Licorice, *Glycyrrhiza lepidota*..... 129
Wild Mint, *Mentha arvensis*..... 130
Wild Rhubarb, *Rumex hymenosepalus*..... 130
Wild Onion, *Allium stellatum*..... 131
Wild Radish, *Raphanus raphanistrum*..... 132
Wild Rice, *Zizania* spp. 133
Wild Strawberry, *Fragaria vesca*..... 133
Wood Lily, *Lilium philadelphicum*..... 134
Wood Sorrel, *Oxalis* spp. 134
Wood/Canada Nettle, *Laportea canadensis*..... 135
Yampah, *Perideridia* spp. 135
Yarrow, *Achillea millefolium*..... 136
Yellow Rocket, *Barbarea vulgaris*..... 137
Yellowcress, *Rorippa palustris*..... 137
Yerba Buena, *Clinopodium douglasii*..... 138
Yerba Mansa, *Anemopsis californica*..... 138
SHRUBS AND BERRIES..... 139
Arctic Raspberry, *Rubus arcticus*..... 140
Bearberry, *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*..... 141
Callicarpa americana.....
Ribes americanum.....
Rubus .....
Blueberry (Bog/Alpine), *Vaccinium uliginosum*.. 143
Blueberry (Highbush), *Vaccinium corymbosum*.. 144
Chokeberry (Black), *Aronia melanocarpa*..... 144
Chokecherry, *Prunus virginiana*..... 145
Cloudberry, *Rubus chamaemorus*..... 145
Cranberry, *Vaccinium* spp. 146
Cranberry (Highbush), *Viburnum trilobum*..... 146
Crowberry, *Empetrum nigrum*..... 147
Desert Lavender, *Hyptis emoryi*..... 147
Devil's Club, *Oplopanax horridus*..... 148
Dewberry, *Rubus* spp. 148
Elderberry, *Sambucus nigra* ssp. *caerulea* (Blue) and *S. nigra* ssp. *canadensis* (American/Black)... 149
Fendler's Ceanothus, *Ceanothus fendleri*..... 150
Giant Reed, *Arundo donax*..... 150
Golden Currant, *Ribes aureum*..... 151
Hackberry (Spiny/Desert), *Celtis ehrenbergiana*..... 151
Gooseberry, *Ribes* spp. 152
Grape (Wild/Muscadine), *Vitis rotundifolia*..... 153
Hobblebush, *Viburnum lantanoides*..... 154
Honeysuckle (Mountain Fly)/Waterberry, *Lonicera villosa*..... 154
Huckleberry (Black), *Gaylussacia baccata*..... 155
Huckleberry (Bog), *Gaylussacia bigeloviana*..... 155
Huckleberry (Evergreen), *Vaccinium ovatum*..... 156
Huckleberry (Red), *Vaccinium parvifolium*..... 156
Juniper (Common/Dwarf), *Juniperus communis*..... 157
Lingonberry, *Vaccinium vitis-idaea*..... 157
Labrador Tea/Trapper's Tea, *Rhododendron (Ledum) groenlandicum* and *R. neoglandulosum*..... 158
Manzanita (Hairy), *Arctostaphylos columbiana*.. 159
Manzanita (Pointleaf), *Arctostaphylos pungens*.. 159
Mormon Tea, *Ephedra viridis*..... 160
Nannyberry, *Viburnum lentago*..... 160
Northern Redcurrant, *Ribes triste*..... 161
Oregon Grape, *Mahonia aquifolium*..... 162
Osoberry, *Oemleria cerasiformis*..... 162
Pale Desert-thorn, *Lycium pallidum*..... 163
Pokeweed (American), *Phytolacca americana*... 163
Prickly Currant, *Ribes lacustre*..... 164
Raspberry, *Rubus* spp. 164
Rosa .....
Nolina microcarpa.....

Rubus spectabilis.....
Saskatoon Berry, *Amelanchier alnifolia*..... 167
Smooth Witherod, *Viburnum nudum*..... 167
Soapberry, *Shepherdia canadensis*..... 168
Sotol, *Dasylirion wheeleri*..... 168
Squashberry, *Viburnum edule*..... 169
Stink Currant, *Ribes bracteosum*..... 169
Sumac, *Rhus* spp. 170
Sweet Fern, *Comptonia peregrina*..... 171
Thimbleberry, *Rubus parviflorus*..... 171
Trailing Arbutus, *Epigaea repens*..... 172
Wax Myrtle, *Morella cerifera*..... 172
Wintergreen, *Gaultheria procumbens*..... 173
Yaupon Holly, *Ilex vomitoria*..... 173
Yucca (Banana/Blue), *Yucca baccata*..... 174
TREES..... 175
Basswood, *Tilia americana*..... 176
Beech, *Fagus grandifolia*..... 176
Birch (Black), *Betula lenta*..... 177
Birch (Yellow), *Betula alleghaniensis*..... 177
Black Locust, *Robinia pseudoacacia*..... 178
Box Elder, *Acer negundo*..... 178
California Bay Laurel, *Umbellularia californica*..... 179
Chestnut (American), *Castanea dentata*..... 180
Chinquapin (American), *Castanea pumila*..... 180
Cottonwood, *Populus deltoides*..... 181
Common Prickly-Ash, *Zanthoxylum americanum*..... 182
Douglas Fir, *Pseudotsuga menziesii*..... 182
Hackberry, *Celtis occidentalis*..... 183
Hawthorn, *Crataegus* spp. 183
Hazelnut, *Corylus* spp. 184
Honey Locust, *Gleditsia triacanthos*..... 185
Juniper (Alligator), *Juniperus deppeana*..... 186
Juniper (Utah), *Juniperus osteosperma*..... 186
Kentucky Coffeetree, *Gymnocladus dioicus*..... 187
Lilac (Common), *Syringa vulgaris*..... 187
Magnolia (Southern), *Magnolia grandiflora*..... 188
Maple (Bigleaf), *Acer macrophyllum*..... 188
Maple (Sugar), *Acer saccharum*..... 189
Mulberry, *Morus* spp. 189
Mesquite, *Prosopis* spp. 190
Oak (Gambel), *Quercus gambelii*..... 191
Oak (White), *Quercus alba*..... 191
Malus fusca.....
Asimina triloba.....
Diospyros virginiana.....
Pignut Hickory, *Carya glabra*..... 194
Pin Cherry, *Prunus pensylvanica*..... 194
Pine (White), *Pinus strobus*..... 195
Pinyon Pine, *Pinus edulis*..... 195
Plum (American), *Prunus americana*..... 196
Quaking Aspen, *Populus tremuloides*..... 196
Redbud, *Cercis canadensis*..... 197
Rowan, *Sorbus americana*..... 197
Sassafras, *Sassafras albidum*..... 198
Saw Palmetto, *Serenoa repens*..... 198
Sea Grape, *Coccoloba uvifera*..... 199
Shagbark Hickory, *Carya ovata*..... 199
Siberian Elm, *Ulmus pumila*..... 200
Sitka Spruce, *Picea sitchensis*..... 200
Slippery Elm, *Ulmus rubra*..... 201
Walnut (Arizona), *Juglans major*..... 201
Walnut (Black), *Juglans nigra*..... 202
Walnut (White), *Juglans cinerea*..... 202
LICHENS..... 203
LICHENS FORAGING, ID, AND SAFETY..... 204
TERMINOLOGY LIST..... 205
EDIBLE LICHENS..... 206
Iceland Moss, *Cetraria islandica*..... 206
Lungwort Lichen, *Lobaria pulmonaria*..... 207
Oak Moss, *Evernia prunastri*..... 208
Reindeer Lichen, *Cladonia rangiferina*..... 209
Rock Tripe, *Umbilicaria* spp. 210
Usnea Lichen, *Usnea* spp. 211
Wila/Edible Horsehair Lichen, *Bryoria fremontii*..... 212
POISONOUS LICHENS..... 213
MUSHROOMS..... 214
MUSHROOM FORAGING, ID, AND SAFETY..... 215
TERMINOLOGY LIST..... 219
MOREL MUSHROOMS..... 220
Black Morel group, *Morchella elata*..... 220
Blushing Morel, *Morchella rufobrunnea*..... 221
Common Morel, *Morchella esculenta*..... 221
Thick-stemmed Morel, *Morchella snyderi*..... 222
TRUFFLES..... 223
Oregon White Truffle, *Tuber oregonense* and *T. gibbosum*..... 223
LOBSTER MUSHROOMS..... 224
Lobster Mushroom, *Hypomyces lactifluorum*..... 224
CUP FUNGI
Aleuria aurantia.....

Laccaria amethysteo-occidentalis..... 226
Deceiver, *Laccaria laccata*..... 227
Deer Mushroom, *Pluteus cervinus*..... 228
Fairy Ring Mushroom, *Marasmius oreades*..... 229
Glistening Ink Cap, *Coprinellus micaceus*..... 230
Inky Cap, *Coprinopsis atramentaria*..... 231
Matsutake, *Tricholoma murrillianum*..... 232
Meadow Mushroom, *Agaricus campestris*..... 232
Orange Milkcap, *Lactarius deliciosus*..... 233
Oyster Mushroom, *Pleurotus ostreatus*..... 234
Parasol Mushroom, *Macrolepiota procera*..... 235
Salt-loving Mushroom, *Agaricus bernardii*..... 236
Shaggy Mane, *Coprinus comatus*..... 237
Shrimp Mushroom, *Russula xerampelina*..... 238
BOLETE MUSHROOMS..... 239
Bragger's Bolete, *Aureoboletus mirabilis*..... 239
Fat Jack, *Suillus caerulescens*..... 240
Fib King Bolete, *Boletus fibrillosus*..... 241
King Bolete, *Boletus edulis*..... 242
Queen Bolete, *Boletus regineus*..... 243
Shaggy Stalked Bolete, *Aureoboletus betula*..... 244
Short-stemmed Slippery Jack, *Suillus brevipes*... 244
Slippery Jack, *Suillus luteus*..... 245
Spring King Bolete, *Boletus rex-veris*..... 245
Suede Bolete, *Xerocomus subtomentosus*..... 246
Western Painted Suillus, *Suillus lakei*..... 247
White King Bolete, *Boletus barrowsii*..... 248
GILLED BOLETES..... 249
Insidious Gomphidius, *Gomphidius oregonensis*... 249
Rosy Gomphidius, *Gomphidius subroseus*..... 250
Slimy Spike Cap, *Gomphidius glutinosus*..... 250
CHANTERELLES AND CHANTERELLE-LIKE MUSHROOMS..... 251
Black Chanterelle, *Craterellus cinereus*..... 251
Blue Chanterelle, *Polyozellus multiplex*..... 252
Golden Chanterelle, *Cantharellus cibarius*..... 253
Horn of Plenty, *Cantharellus cornucopioides*..... 254
Oak Chanterelle, *Cantharellus californicus*..... 255
Pig's Ear, *Gomphus clavatus*..... 256
Red Chanterelle, *Cantharellus cinnabarinus*..... 257
White Chanterelle, *Cantharellus subalbidus*..... 258
Winter Chanterelle, *Craterellus tubaeformis*..... 259
POLYPORE MUSHROOMS/BRACKET FUNGI/SHELF FUNGI..... 260
Sparassis radicata.....
Inonotus obliquus.....
Laetiporus conifericola..... 262
Reishi, Ling-zhi, Varnish Conk, *Ganoderma* spp. .. 263
Western Hardwood Sulphur Shelf, *Laetiporus gilbertsonii*..... 264
CLUB AND CORAL MUSHROOMS..... 265
Club Coral, *Clavariadelphus truncatus*..... 265
TOOTHED/SPINED MUSHROOMS..... 266
Bear's Head, *Hericium abietis*..... 266
Coral Tooth Fungus, *Hericium coralloides*..... 267
Hedgehog Mushroom, *Hydnum repandum*..... 268
Lion's Mane, *Hericium erinaceus*..... 269
Scaly Hedgehog, *Sarcodon imbricatus*..... 270
White Hedgehog, *Hydnum albidum*..... 271
PUFFBALLS..... 272
Gem-Studded Puffball, *Lycoperdon perlatum*..... 272
Stump Puffball, *Lycoperdon pyriforme*..... 273
JELLY FUNGI..... 274
Toothed Jelly Fungus, *Pseudohydnum gelatinosum*..... 274
Witches' Butter, *Tremella mesenterica*..... 275
SEAWEEDS AND MARINE GRASSES..... 276
SEAWEEDS AND MARINE GRASSES ID..... 277
TERMINOLOGY LIST..... 278
BROWN ALGAE..... 279
Bladderwrack/Rockweed, *Fucus vesiculosus*..... 279
Bull Kelp, *Nereocystis luetkeana*..... 280
Dwarf Rockweed, *Pelvetiopsis limitata*..... 281
Feather Boa Kelp, *Egregia menziesii*..... 282
Giant Kelp, *Macrocystis* spp. 283
Hijiki, *Sargassum* spp. 284
Kombu, *Saccharina japonica*..... 285
Oarweed/Kombu, *Laminaria digitata*..... 285
Spiral wrack, *Fucus spiralis*..... 286
Sugar Kelp, *Saccharina latissima*..... 286
Sweet Kombu/Sea Cabbage, *Saccharina sessilis (Hedophyllum sessile)*..... 287
Wakame, *Undaria pinnatifida* and *Alaria marginata*..... 287
GREEN ALGAE..... 288
Gutweed, *Ulva intestinalis*..... 288
Sea Lettuce, *Ulva lactuca, U. rigida, U. obscura,* and *Monostroma grevillei*..... 289
RED ALGAE..... 290
Cat's Tongue, *Mastocarpus papillatus*..... 290
Palmaria palmata *Palmaria mollis*....
Chondrus crispus.....

Porphyra Pyropia .....
MARINE GRASSES.....
Surfgrass, *Phyllospadix* spp. 293
Eelgrass, *Zostera marina*..... 294
POISONOUS AND TOXIC LOOK-ALIKES..... 295
Bog Laurel, *Kalmia polifolia*..... 295
Bog Rosemary, *Andromeda polifolia*..... 295
Buckthorn, *Rhamnus cathartica*..... 295
Buttercup, Cursed/Celery-leaf Buttercup, *Ranunculus sceleratus,* and Tall Buttercup, *R.acris*.. 296
Cade/Prickly Juniper/Sharp Cedar, *Juniperus oxycedrus*..... 296
Cherry/Common Laurel, *Prunus laurocerasus*.... 296
Chinese Ephedra, *Ephedra sinica*..... 296
Chinese Privet, *Ligustrum sinense*..... 297
Coat Buttons/Tridax Daisy, *Tridax procumbens*.. 297
Common/Canadian Moonseed/Yellow Parilla, *Menispermum canadense*..... 297
Creeping (European) Pennyroyal/Pudding Grass, *Mentha pulegium*..... 297
Death Camas (*Zigadenus venenosus*), *Toxicoscordion venenosum*..... 298
Devil's Walking Cane, *Aralia spinosa*..... 298
False Hellebore/Indian Poke, *Veratrum viride*... 298
Foxglove, *Digitalis purpurea*..... 298
Giant Hogweed, *Heracleum mantegazzianum*.... 299
Grecian Wildflower/Balkan Anemone, *Anemonoides blanda*..... 299
Groundsels/Ragworts, *Senecio* spp. 299
Hercules Club/Pepperwood/Southern Prickly Ash, *Zanthoxylum clava-herculis*..... 299
Holly (Common/English), *Ilex aquifolium*..... 300
Horse Chestnut, *Aesculus hippocastanum*..... 300
Indian Rhubarb/Umbrella Plant, *Darmera peltata*..... 300
Blue Flag Iris, *Iris versicolor,* and Yellow Water Iris/False Acorus, *I. pseudacorus*..... 300
Lesser Celandine/Pilewort, *Ficaria verna*..... 301
Lily of the Valley, *Convallaria majalis*..... 301
Longleaf Pine, *Pinus palustris*..... 301
Mountain Deathcamas/Elegant Camas, *Anticlea elegans* (formerly *Zigadenus elegans*)..... 301
Mountain Laurel, *Kalmia latifolia*..... 302
Norfolk Island Pine, *Araucaria heterophylla*..... 302
Northern Labrador Tea, *Rhododendron tomentosum*..... 302
Conium maculatum..
Toxicodendron radicans
Rhus radicans Rhus Toxicodendron .....
Poison Sumac, *Toxicodendron vernix* (formerly *Rhus vernix*)..... 303
Savin Juniper, *Juniperus sabina*..... 303
Scarlet Pimpernel, *Anagallis arvensis*..... 304
Silverleaf Nightshade, *Solanum elaeagnifolium*.. 304
Solomon's Seal, *Polygonatum* spp. 304
Spotted Spurge, *Euphorbia maculata*..... 304
Texas Mountain Laurel, *Sophora secundiflora*..... 305
Tuberous Water Lily, *Nymphaea tuberosa*..... 305
Virginia Creeper, *Parthenocissus quinquefolia*..... 305
Water Hemlock, *Cicuta douglasii*..... 305
Water Hemlock (Spotted), *Cicuta maculata*..... 306
Winterberry, *Ilex verticillata*..... 306
Yew (English), *Taxus baccata, a*nd Yew (American /Canada), *T. canadensis*..... 306
Yew Pine, *Podocarpus macrophyllus*..... 306
INDEX..... 307

We hope that this book will become a favorite reference for you and serve as a starting place on your journey to identify edible plants.



Nicole Apelian, Ph.D.

Dr. Nicole Apelian is an herbalist, a biologist, a survival skills instructor, and an anthropologist. She graduated with a degree in Biology from McGill University in Canada and has her Master's degree in Ecology from the University of Oregon. She earned her Doctorate through Prescott College while working as an anthropologist and ethno-botanist in Botswana. She is also the co-author of "A Reference Guide to Surviving Nature: Outdoor Preparation and Remedies" and "The Lost Book of Herbal Remedies; The Healing Power of Plant Medicine".

For more about Nicole, her herbal apothecary, wild foods, and her blog, please visit www.nicoleapelian.com.

An unexpected diagnosis of multiple sclerosis in 2000 led Nicole to apply her research skills towards her own personal wellness. She focuses on a healthy living strategy, including deep nature connection and gratitude practices. Through changes in her diet and lifestyle, recognizing profound mind-body linkages, and making use of her own herbal remedies, Nicole went from bedridden to being fully alive and from surviving to thriving.

In 2015 she was among the first women ever selected for the History Channel's hit TV show "Alone". Despite having MS, she went on to survive solo for 57 days straight in a remote area of Vancouver Island with little more than her hunting knife and the wild foods and medicines she found there.

Nicole has spent years living in nature with the San Bushmen of the Kalahari Desert, one of the last Indigenous peoples who still live as hunter-gatherers. Developing strong relationships within the tribe helped Nicole learn many of the skills she practices and teaches today. A portion of the sales of this book go to their co-founded non-profit, The Origins Project.
Wild foods are a part of a holistic philosophy of being self-reliant - of connecting your mind with your body and your body with nature. May this book help you on your journey, and help provide healthy wild foods for you and your family.

A Message from Nicole

You've taken an amazing first step in learning about foraging by purchasing this book. The next step is using your new knowledge!
I want to help you by inviting you to join my Survive & Thrive community. To join my private email list, please visit my website and become part of the Survive & Thrive Crew. Use this link www.nicoleapelian.com to join now. You can also find me on Instagram at www.instagram.com/nicole_apelian/ and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/nicoleapeliansurvival.

Here's to thriving!

Nicole Apelian

Weeds, trees and leaves. Bulbs, berries and bark. Every day we are constantly surrounded by wild edibles – wild edibles that can be harvested ethically and sustainably with some extra knowledge on hand.

The purpose of this book is to assist foragers to identify wild, edible foods and to help you develop the skills to ethically harvest, store, and use the abundance of edible plants, seaweeds, lichens, and mushrooms that surround you. Every species described in this book is edible (though please heed the warnings!). Each has a general introduction, a range map, a list of its general medicinal uses, a brief description of poisonous look-alikes, a description of its flowers and leaves, information on how to harvest and eat it, as well as a simple recipe.

There is also information on how to harvest from the wild ethically, how to preserve foraged food, and some general guidance on the nutritional values of wild edibles.

The knowledge gained from this book allows the reader to forage while out walking or hiking, or while spending the day foraging with friends and family, sharing new skills and knowledge while supplementing your diet with wild plants. The information in this book can even help equip you in a survival situation.

Ethical Harvesting and Tending the Wild

Ethical harvesting both reduces your impact on the environment while foraging and assists the species you harvest so that they continue to grow successfully. It ensures future harvests are abundant for foragers, including other animals that rely on these resources.

Ethical harvesting requires a basic understanding of how plants reproduce; via seed annually, spreading from underground rhizomes, re-sprouting every season from a tuber or bulb, via spores spread on the wind, and/or sending out suckers from the parent plant. There are a variety of ways that plants cope with disturbance, and knowing their method of reproduction can help foragers ensure that they are harvesting ethically.

When you find a plant that you want to harvest, take a look around the vicinity to determine if that particular species is abundant. If the patch is sparse, or there are only a few scattered plants, then you should refrain from harvesting there. Even if the patch is large and wildlife and other foragers can also reap the benefits. When re-visiting the same site each year for foraging, take a mental note or even set up an annual photo point of the patches. This way you can monitor the site every year by simply comparing the photos to make sure the patch isn't becoming depleted over time. There are plenty of citizen science websites and apps to help set this up easily.

Another aspect to consider is what kind of medicinal or nutritional benefits you are targeting. For example, if you are harvesting a plant for its vitamin C content, then it should be consumed immediately, or at the very least, within 1 – 2 days, since vitamin C breaks down quickly. Taking only what you need is an important part of ethical harvesting from the wild. In most cases, dried herbs lose their potency over time, and should be replaced annually.

Targeting exotic weed species is guaranteed ethical harvesting. This helps to control exotic populations so that native species can thrive. Kudzu and Japanese Knotweed are both highly invasive exotic species whose young shoots can be foraged for their fiber content and trace minerals.

Picking leaves is one of the most sustainable ways to forage from the wild, since it doesn't disturb the roots and preserves the flowers and therefore the seeds. This is especially important for annuals, since they grow from seed every year. Picking only the tips or new growth from both annuals and perennials can promote bushier growth (as well as a tastier harvest).

When collecting mushrooms, carry them in an open basket gills down, so that the spores are dispersed through the forest. Harvest mushrooms once the gills have developed and clean mushrooms where you find them.

When harvesting tubers or taproots, try to cut off what you need and leave half of the root undisturbed. This will likely reshoot next year, especially if the hole has been re-filled but not compacted, and the foliage cut back in proportion to the remaining roots to reduce water stress.

When harvesting bulbs, try not to disturb the root crown. If you do happen to pull up the entire bulb, cut off the root crown and re-plant it.

Husking seed from native plants is best done on site, so that any stray seeds can fall to the ground to ger-

Tread carefully when foraging. Minimize trampling on plants and habitat by keeping to paths or animals tracks where possible. Ideally, you should leave little trace of your foraging activities, except where you are tending the wild and spreading the species you are harvesting.

Wild Nutrition from Plants

The percentages below are calculated from the recommended daily allowance (RDA) based on 100 grams of uncooked plant material, bearing in mind that collecting 100 grams of nuts or berries doesn't require as much effort as collecting 100 grams of tiny seeds or digging up roots. Also keep in mind volume; eating 100 grams of nuts, berries, bulbs and roots can equate to around ¾ of a cup. Compare this with eating 100 grams of flowers or leaves, which can equate to up to 2 cups.

Below is a general overview of the nutrient characteristics in some commonly foraged wild plants. It can be used as a basic guide to assist foragers by listing some of the top performers with respect to vitamin, mineral, and nutrient content. All plants have some nutritional value associated with them; however, some of the high achievers are broadly discussed below.

Many native and exotic wild plants contain vital nutrients and minerals, but if you're searching specifically for calories, protein, carbohydrates, fats, and starches, then target seeds, nuts, fruits, bulbs, and tubers. In most plant species, the roots and tubers are higher in carbohydrates and sugars than their leaves.

Boiling or roasting seeds and nuts can often increase their mineral and protein content while decreasing their concentration of anti-nutrients (compounds that block the absorption of essential minerals). On the other hand, heating some compounds can actually cause them to deteriorate, and can therefore decrease the amount of anti-oxidants, vitamin C, and B vitamins. Vitamin C and B are both water soluble, which means a large portion of these two vitamins will dissolve into water when boiled. For this reason, it's recommended to either consume the boiled water as well, or eat the foraged food raw if you are targeting either vitamin C or B.

Many edible seeds from the carrot family (Apiaceae), leaves, stems and seeds from primrose-willow species (*Ludwigia* spp.), and the roots of some species of mallow can provide almost an entire RDA for iron.

lamb's quarter (*Chenopodium album*) and Mexican tea (*Chenopodium ambrosioides*) can all provide up to 30% of your RDA for calcium.

Most nuts and seeds have enough phosphorous, magnesium, and zinc to provide between 40 – 120% of the RDA. Seeds and nuts can also provide between 15 – 35% of the RDA for potassium, but arrowhead (*Sagittaria* spp.) can also provide similar amounts. Nuts, seeds, bulbs, tubers, and roots are all high in fiber as well.

Maintaining vitamin A levels from wild foraged plants is easy. A handful of leaves from most edible species within the mint, mustard, or goosefoot family can achieve this. In addition to these three families, dandelion, dock, peppergrass, pokeweed, storksbill, and violets are all sustainable sources for vitamin A.

Sunflower seeds are one of the best, natural sources of vitamin B, and 100 grams of sunflower seeds can yield almost 50% of the RDA for protein. Other seeds generally contribute to approximately 30% of the RDA for protein.

Alfalfa, dock, pokeweed, rosehips, wild mustard, and violets all contain enough vitamin C to fulfill the RDA, while mugwort and amaranth provide around 70%.

100 grams of wild hazelnuts or purslane contains over 100% of the RDA for vitamin E. Purslane is also a rare source of plant-based omega-3s and omega-6.

Some plants, such as chickweed, may not have a particularly high concentration of nutrients and minerals, but it does have a high concentration of saponins instead, which help minerals and vitamins be absorbed by the body at the cellular level. Other plants that tend to be high in saponins include legumes and some Allium species such as wild garlic and onions.

Methods for Preserving and Storing Wild Edibles

Correctly preserving and storing your hard-earned edibles in sterilized containers extends the shelf-life by inhibiting the growth of mold and bacteria and by slowing down the enzyme activity that leads to the natural breakdown of plant material. It's important to preserve freshly harvested species.

For short-term storage, wash and pat dry your fresh, leafy greens and loosely wrap them in a towel. Place the towel in a sealed food container to keep them fresh for a week.

especially if the sauce has a high acidity.

Plant material preserved via vinegar or salt pickling is easy and this method can preserve food for 3 - 6 months in the fridge. For most food, it requires at least a week of anaerobic fermentation where the food is completely submerged in a brine or vinegar solution.

Fermentation can preserve food for at least 3 months, and storing fermented food in a cool location will often extend this to 6 months, since the lower temperatures will decrease the rate of fermentation, which will keep the food from turning too sour. Wild edibles that are low in acid don't tend to preserve as well, so fermenting can be a good option for these types of food.

Some root vegetables and bulbs can be hung in string bags or covered in sand and stored in a cellar or basement for a few months, similar to potatoes. This is an easy option for storing larger quantities as long as the temperature is between 40–50°F (4.5-10°C) and there is sufficient ventilation. When using this method, don't wash the roots or bulbs; brush them instead to remove the dirt, and only wash as you use them.

Blanching leafy greens, vegetables, and roots before freezing can decrease the concentration of water-soluble nutrients, however, blanching and freezing will help to preserve non-soluble nutrients for 6–9 months. Berries are easily frozen without blanching or drying. Just pop into an airtight container and into your freezer.

Dehydrating fruit, vegetables, bulbs and roots will retain most nutrients and minerals except for volatile ones like vitamin C and beta-carotene. A pre-treatdrated, it must be stored in an airtight container to prevent the food reabsorbing moisture and spoiling. In general, fruit should be dehydrated slowly and end up with a moisture content of around 20%. Dried fruit can last for up to a year. Vegetables, roots, and bulbs on the other hand, should be cut into smaller pieces to dry, and end with a 10% moisture content. They tend to last about 6 months.

Many herbs and flowers can be tied into small bunches and hung upside down in a dark, cool room to dry. Once the bunches are completely dry, they are best stored in airtight containers and will keep for approximately a year. It is essential to completely dry the plant material before storing away in a jar to prevent mold from growing.

Jams and jellies tend to have a long shelf life due to their high sugar content, and they are very adaptable for a large range of wild edibles. The shelf life of most jams and jellies is at least a year.

Canning preserves food for at least a year, as long as the seal remains intact. The easiest method for canning food that is highly acidic involves completely submersing the canned food in boiling water for at least 10 minutes. For produce that has a low acidity, pressure canning is recommended instead.

Airtight storage containers are essential to prevent moisture, bacteria and oxidization, which is why vacuum-sealed bags are a great storage option, especially for dried, blanched, or frozen food.

Always check stored food regularly and remove any rotting or moldy produce immediately.