

Edible Weeds

By Dorothy Coe for Gold Coast Organic Growers

Source: notes taken at John Palmers talk at the Botanical Gardens
(plus finer research done using various sources from Google.)

QUOTE: One person's weed-filled lawn is another person's salad bar.



Stinging nettle

People use the root and above ground parts as medicine for treating joint ailments, as a diuretic, and as an astringent. Stinging nettle above ground parts are applied to the skin for muscle aches and pains, oily scalp, oily hair, allergies, hayfever, and osteoarthritis.

In foods, young stinging nettle leaves are eaten as a cooked vegetable. Also ideal for making tea. Side effects are known so research before you use. Prefers moist fertile soil, shaded area.



Cobblers pegs - aka Farmer's Friend

One of the world's greatest natural digestive tract healers and lymphatic and anti-allergy remedies.

Cobblers Pegs tea or tincture has been used to treat ulcers, and traditionally to treat other conditions including wounds, flu, colds, fever, neuralgia, smallpox, snake bite, pain, anemia, rectal prolapse, hepatitis, jaundice, and colic. **John Palmer** suggested getting a damp bed sheet and dragging over the plants and the seeds will stick to it and you just leave them on there to sprout.

I have noticed that the bees love the flowers too.



Dandelion

Common edible weed is tasty both raw and cooked, from the roots to the blossoms.

The root of the dandelion can be dried and roasted and used as a coffee substitute. I have been doing this myself but with the non weed variety (I think it's called *radikia*) but I think you can do it with the weed variety too. I think you have to let the plant grow for about a year before pulling up to use the root.

Health benefits include: Bone Health, Liver Disorders, Diabetes, Urinary Disorders, Skin Care, Weight Loss, Cancer Jaundice, Gall Bladder Disorders, Anemia, High Blood Pressure.



Chickweed

Chickweed grows in a unique, intertwined manner. A thin hairy stem with pointed oval leaves. It produces small, white, star-shaped flowers throughout much of the year. Used as a folk remedy for centuries for many conditions including asthma, blood disorders, conjunctivitis, constipation, inflammation, dyspepsia, and skin ailments. Excellent for helping to dissolve fats in the body. Helps to liquefy and remove mucous from the Respiratory tract. The young shoots are edible – raw or cooked.



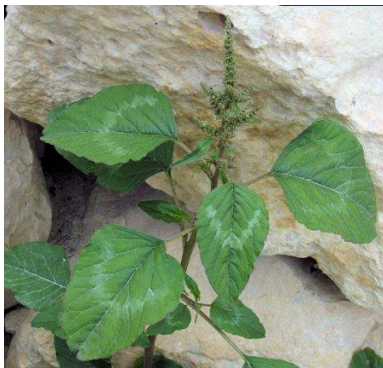
Herb Robert

Research has revealed Herb Robert is a source of germanium, a valuable element to the body, as it has the ability to make oxygen available to the cells. More oxygen, at cell level, means the body has the opportunity to fight disease by its own powers, and healing can take place quickly. Actions: astringent, antibiotic, adaptogen, antiviral, styptic, tonic, diuretic, digestive, sedative, antioxidant.



Thickhead

Sometimes regarded as a newcomer amongst Australian weeds. Has a carrot-like flavour which is great in salad. Herbal uses : indigestion , a decoction for headaches. Leaves used on fresh wounds to help healing.



Amaranth (Pigweed)

There are many Amaranth species. I don't know if all varieties are edible so do some research before eating. The leaves and the seeds can be eaten. Good substitute for spinach. Amaranth contain oxalic acid so only eat in low quantities. However Amaranth has many nutrients and health benefits. I discovered from personal experience growing this in my garden that grasshoppers love it so it's a good sacrificial plant. Plant it near grasshopper favourites such as kale and silverbeet.



Wood sorrel / Oxalis

Not to be confused with clovers, as it looks similar. There are various species, some have yellow flowers and some have purple. They contain more oxalic acid than clovers so don't eat too much at any one time. Wood sorrel is an incredible thirst quencher and is refreshing to eat. The leaves, flowers, and immature green seed pods are all edible having a mild sour flavour that some say resemble lemons. Wood sorrel tea when cooled can make a refreshing beverage especially when sweetened with honey. In moderate dosages, wood sorrel is cooling, diuretic, soothing to the stomach, relieves indigestion, astringent, and catalytic.



Clover

One of the more surprising sides of clover is that it's in the pea family, and its blossom is actually a bunch of little pea-like blossoms. The roots, leaves and blossoms can be eaten but apparently the blossoms are the only part that tastes nice. Blossoms can be eaten raw or in a tea. Clover is high in protein, has beta carotene, vitamin C, most of the B vitamins, biotin, choline, inositol, and bioflavonoids. Some people can be allergic to Clover so eat in low doses to start with.



Purslane

This plant has rounded, succulent, leaves and a reddish stem. It's loaded with antioxidant vitamins like vitamins A and C, and also contains healthy omega-3 fatty acids. Purslane is antibacterial, antiscorbutic, depurative, diuretic and febrifuge. Use as alternative to spinach. NOTE: Another plant which looks very similar to Purslane is "Hairy-stemmed spurge" which is a poisonous plant so be careful!



Fat Hen / Lamb's Quarters / Goose Foot / Wild Spinach

Another alternative to spinach. Fat Hen, is probably named because chickens get fat from eating it. It grows faster and absorbs nutrients more efficiently than any crop, and can grow in almost anything. That plus the fact that it is also a rich source of nutrients makes it one of the most useful plants that there is. Leaves and seeds can be cooked and eaten. Lambs Quarters is a purifying plant and helps to restore healthy nutrients to the soil if need be. Leaves, shoots, seeds, flowers are edible. Saponins in the seeds are potentially toxic and should not be consumed in excess. Also contains some oxalic acid so eat in small quantities. It is also a good source of Niacin, Folate, Iron, Magnesium and Phosphorus, and a very good source of Dietary Fiber, Protein, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin K, Thiamin, Riboflavin, Vitamin B6, Calcium, Potassium, Copper and Manganese.



Lebanese cress

Often used in salads or ground into pesto this perennial plant has carrot flavoured leaves and is often used as garnish. It grows to a height of 40cm and needs a shady position to grow.



Black Berried Nightshade

Unfortunately, there's considerable confusion over the popular name "deadly nightshade." The plant most commonly referred to as "deadly nightshade," is *Atropa belladonna*, which is a highly unpleasant and toxic hallucinogen. However "Black nightshade," *Solanum nigrum*, on the other hand, is edible. The leaves and tender shoots can be boiled in the same way as spinach and are eaten. The berries, when ripe can also be eaten. NOTE: John Palmer did say Do NOT eat the berries when they are green as they are poisonous until they ripen.



Gotu Kola

Plant this hardy perennial in a semi-shade position. Gotu Kola only grows to about 7cm high. Gotu kola is also used to treat bacterial, viral, or parasitic infections such as the common cold. Gotu kola is also used for fatigue, anxiety, depression, psychiatric disorders, Alzheimer's disease, and improving memory. Other uses include wound healing, trauma, and circulation problems, varicose veins, and blood clots in the legs. Some people use gotu kola for sunstroke, tonsillitis, fluid around the lungs, jaundice, systemic lupus erythematosus, stomach pain, diarrhea, indigestion, stomach ulcers, epilepsy, asthma, anemia, diabetes, and for helping them live longer. Avoid taking by mouth if you are pregnant.



Hydrocotyle / Pennywort

The leaf looks almost identical to Gotu Kola, so don't get the two confused. This plant grows low to the ground and is a creeping plant. Often grows in shady areas. Can be eaten raw or cooked.



Wandering Jew

The edible wandering jew weed is NOT the same species as the popular house and garden plant. This edible weed is rapid growing, chlorophyll- dense plant which are often nutrient-rich and apparently has a very pleasant taste and can be eaten raw – good for green smoothies and salads.



Slender Celery – Wild Carrot

Slender celery - it has very thin leaves and is in the celery family. I tried to research this weed but there is little information about it on the internet but I think it must be a common weed as I have it growing in my garden.



I have lost the content for this one– anyone know the name and I can look into it. I have tons of this one in my garden.

Not a weed but you can eat Hybiscus Flowers 😊

Another Great Weed is Radium Weed - **DO NOT EAT** – but the milky sap from the stems can be used on the skin to treat the common skin cancers. I don't have a photo of this one cause I don't want to include it here as it's not edible so just for your reference.

All these weeds apart from 3 are growing in my garden so I know they are local to Gold Coast areas and you might find that you have many of them in your garden too. ENJOY!