

# Wild Edible Plants of the Midwest

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SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME	PARTS USED
1. <i>Acer spp.</i>	Maple	inner bark, seeds
2. <i>Allium spp.</i>	Wild Onion, Garlic, Leek	bulb, leaves
3. <i>Amaranthus spp.</i>	Amaranth	seeds, shoots, leaves
4. <i>Apios americana</i>	Groundnut	tubers
5. <i>Arisaema atrorubens</i>	Jack in the Pulpit*	corm (well dried)*
6. <i>Armoracea lapathifolia</i>	Horseradish	young leaves, root
7. <i>Asarum canadense</i>	Wild Ginger	rootstock
8. <i>Asclepias spp.</i>	Milkweed	sprouts, leaves, flowers buds, young fruits
9. <i>Asimina triloba</i>	Pawpaw	fruits
10. <i>Artium spp.</i>	Burdock	root
11. <i>Barbarea spp.</i>	Winter Cress	young leaves,* flower*
12. <i>Betula spp.</i>	Birch	sap, inner bark, twigs
13. <i>Brassica spp.</i>	Wild Mustards	young leaves,* flowerbuds,* seeds
14. <i>Capsella bursa-pastoris</i>	Shepard's Purse	young leaves, seedpods
15. <i>Carya spp.</i>	Hickory and Pecan	nuts
16. <i>Castanea pumila</i>	Chinquapin	nuts
17. <i>Celtis spp.</i>	Hackberry	fruits
18. <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Redbud	flowers, young pods
19. <i>Chenopodium album</i>	Lamb's Quarters	young leaves and tops
20. <i>Cichorium intybus</i>	Chicory	young leaves. root
21. <i>Cirsium spp.</i>	Thistle	young leaves, inner stem (pith), 1 <sup>st</sup> year root
22. <i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>	Ox-Eye Daisy	young leaves
23. <i>Claytonia spp.</i>	Spring Beauty	corm**
24. <i>Commelina spp.</i>	Day Flower	young leaves and stem
25. <i>Corylus spp.</i>	Hazelnuts	nuts
26. <i>Crataegus spp.</i>	Hawthorn	fruits
27. <i>Cyperus esculentus</i>	Chufa, Nut Grass	tuber
28. <i>Daucus carota</i>	Wild Carrot	root**
29. <i>Diospyros virginiana</i>	Persimmon	fruits
30. <i>Erechtites hieracfolia</i>	Fireweed	young shoots and leaves
31. <i>Fragaria spp.</i>	Wild Strawberry	fruit, leaves*

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32. <i>Fagus grandifolia</i>	Beech	nuts
33. <i>Fraxinus spp.</i>	Ash	fruits
34. <i>Galium aparine &amp; verum</i>	Cleavers, Bedstraw	young shoots/leaves
35. <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Honey Locust	fruits
36. <i>Helianthus tuberosus</i>	Jerusalem artichoke	tuber
37. <i>Hemerocallis fulva</i>	Day Lily	young shoots, flower, flower buds, tuber
38. <i>Heracleum maximum</i>	Cow-Parsnip	young stems/ leafstalks, seeds, root**
39. <i>Juglans nigra</i>	Black Walnut	nuts
40. <i>Lactuca spp.</i>	Wild Lettuce	young leaves
41. <i>Lamium amplexicaule</i>	Henbit	tips
42. <i>Lepidium spp.</i>	Peppergrass	young leaves, seedpods
43. <i>Lycopus spp.</i>	Bugleweed	tubers
44. <i>Malva neglecta</i>	Common Mallow, Cheeses	young leaves, green fruit
45. <i>Matricaria matricarioides</i>	Pineapple-Weed	flowers
46. <i>Medeola virginiana</i>	Indian Cucumber-Root	tuber
47. <i>Mentha, spp.</i>	Wild mint	leaves
48. <i>Mitchella repens</i>	Partridgeberry	fruits
49. <i>Morus, spp.</i>	Mulberry	fruit
50. <i>Nasturtium officinale</i>	Watercress	young leaves and stems
51. <i>Nelumbo lutea</i>	American Lotus	young leaves, seeds, tubers
52. <i>Nuphar, spp.</i>	Yellow Pond Lily, Splatterdock, Cow-Lily	rootstocks, seeds
53. <i>Nymphaea spp.</i>	Water Lily	young leaves, flowerbuds, seeds, tubers
54. <i>Oenothera biennis</i>	Evening Primrose	1 <sup>st</sup> year taproot
55. <i>Opuntia humifusa</i>	Prickly-Pear	young leaf pads,* fruit, seeds
56. <i>Oxalis, spp.</i>	Yellow Wood-Sorrels	leaves, fruit
57. <i>Pastinaca sativa</i>	Wild Parsnip	taproot
58. <i>Phragmites communis</i>	Reed, Phragmites	young stem, seeds, rootstock
59. <i>Physalis spp.</i>	Ground-cherry	fruits
60. <i>Phytolacca americana</i>	Pokeweed	young leaves**
61. <i>Plantago spp.</i>	Plantain	leaves
62. <i>Podophyllum. peltatum</i>	May-apple, Mandrake	only mature fruit**
63. <i>Polygonum cuspidatum</i>	Japanese Knotweed	new bamboo-like tips
64. <i>Pontederia cordata</i>	Pickernel Weed	shoots, seeds
65. <i>Portulaca oleracea</i>	Purslane	stems and leaves, seeds

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66. <i>Prunus americana</i>	Wild Plum	fruits
67. <i>Prunus spp.</i>	Wild Cherry (Choke, Black)	fruits
68. <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	Bracken fern	fiddlehead
69. <i>Pteretis pensylvanica</i>	Ostrich Fern	fiddlehead
70. <i>Pyrus angustifolius</i>	Crap Apple	fruits
71. <i>Pyrus, spp.</i>	Chokeberry, Chokecherry	fruits
72. <i>Quercus spp.</i>	Oak	acorns*
73. <i>Rhexia virginica</i>	Meadow Beauty	tender leaves, tubers
74. <i>Ribes spp.</i>	Gooseberries, Currents	fruits
75. <i>Robinia pseudo-acacia</i>	Black Locust	flowers (only)
76. <i>Rosa spp.</i>	Wild Rose	petals, fruits (hips)
77. <i>Rubus spp.</i>	Brambles (Blackberry, Raspberry, Dewberry, etc.)	fruits, leaves
78. <i>Rubus typhina and spp.</i>	Staghorn Sumac (and others)	fruit**
79. <i>Rumex acetosella</i>	Sheep (or Common) Sorrel	tender leaves and stems
80. <i>Rumex crispus</i>	Dock, Curled and Yellow	young leaves
81. <i>Sagittaria spp.</i>	Arrowhead	tubers
82. <i>Salix spp.</i>	Willow	leaves, inner bark
83. <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	Elderberry	flower clusters, ripe fruit**
84. <i>Sassafras albidum</i>	Sassafras	leaves, root (for tea)
85. <i>Scirpus</i>	Bulrush	shoot, pollen, seeds, rootstock
86. <i>Smilax spp.</i>	Catbrier, Greenbrier	young shoots and leaves, rootstock
87. <i>Solidago odora</i>	Sweet Goldenrod	leaves and flowers
88. <i>Stellaria spp.</i>	Chickweed	tender leaves and stems
89. <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Dandelion	leaves and root
90. <i>Tilia americana</i>	Basswood	leaf buds and flowers
91. <i>Tradescantia spp.</i>	Spiderwort	shoot
92. <i>Tragopogon porrifolius</i>	Salsify, Oyster-Plant	young leaves and root
93. <i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red Clover	young leaves and flowers
94. <i>Trifolium spp.</i>	Clover	young leaves, flowerheads
95. <i>Typha spp.</i>	Cattails	young shoots and stocks (inner core), immature flower spikes, pollen, root
96. <i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging Nettle	young shoots and leaves*
97. <i>Vaccinium, spp.</i>	Blueberry, Huckleberry	fruits
98. <i>Valerianella olitoria</i>	Corn-Salad	young leaves
99. <i>Viola, spp.</i>	Violet	leaves and flowers
100. <i>Vitis, spp.</i>	Grapes	tender leaves and fruit**

\* There is something about this plant that needs study before you either collect or eat it.

\*\* Caution this plant either has a poisonous look-alike, or parts of it are toxic. Research.

# Tips & Reference Books

1. ***Know what you are picking.*** Be absolutely sure it is the plant you seek. Learn how to key plants according to their features. Many edible plants have a poisonous look-alike.
2. ***As a further precaution*** once the edible plant has been identified, take a tiny nibble, then wait for 30 minutes to observe for any adverse reactions.
3. ***Be extremely careful when collecting mushrooms. Mistakes can be fatal.***
4. ***Know what part to pick.*** One plant part may be safe to eat and another toxic. For example, elderberry blossoms and fruits are edible, but the leaves are an emetic and make you vomit.
5. ***Just because animals or birds eat a plant, does not always mean it is safe for humans.***
6. ***Avoid collecting plants in commercially fertilized areas or where toxic herbicides or other chemicals may have been sprayed.*** Avoid collecting under power lines, in unfamiliar weed lots or lawns, beside commercial crop fields, or close to roadsides. Error on the side of caution!
6. ***Be grateful.*** Before picking or digging, pause for a moment and give thanks to the plant that is giving itself to you. ***Collect with consciousness.*** Make the area look as though you were not there. Take what you need, leaving plenty for wildlife and future years.
7. ***Once the food is collected, clean and sort it 'in the field'.*** It is much easier there. No cook wants a sink full of muddy roots mingled with grass blades and half an anthill.
8. ***Before you prepare a food, read.*** Many plants can be mildly toxic and may require cooking or parboiling (and then discarding) the first *and* second 'waters' before ingesting.
9. ***Practice moderation*** and avoid gorging yourself on unfamiliar wild edibles. They are powerful foods and you may need to adjust.
10. ***Learn to blend wild produce into a meal in subtle ways.*** Often the flavors are quite strong.

## Suggested Books

**Edible Wild Plants**, Peterson Field Guide Series, by Lee Allen Peterson, Houghton Mifflin Company. Great Identification book. Color pictures.

**Wild Edibles of Missouri**, by Jan Phillips, The Missouri Department of Conservation. Well written reference material. Black and white sketches of plants.

**Wild Foods Field Guide and Cookbook**, by Billy Joe Tatum, Workman Publishing Company. Contains plant descriptions and 350 recipes.