



Spring Newsletter



Welcome to the first edition of the Wild picks newsletter.

Spring is with us at last, the bees are out collecting nectar from spring time bulbs displaying their colours of whites, blues, purples and yellows from crocus, daffodils, to swathes of snow drops that fill the landscape.

Down in the south west of England the weather has been cold, windy and wet, but it's the start of new beginnings of growth up and down the countryside.

In my own garden I have been preparing with cuttings, sowing seeds, researching new techniques for planting to encourage wildlife in helping with pollinating my plants.

I have created a small area to help with this as some parts can be quite shady limiting growth of my most vegetative plants, I created a small wildlife pond surrounded by ferns, grasses and moss. I love the use of *Choisya ternata*, the foliage on this plant can be quite stunning and goes well alongside *Cordyline australis*, *Fatsia japonica*,

primula vulgaris and wild alpine strawberries.

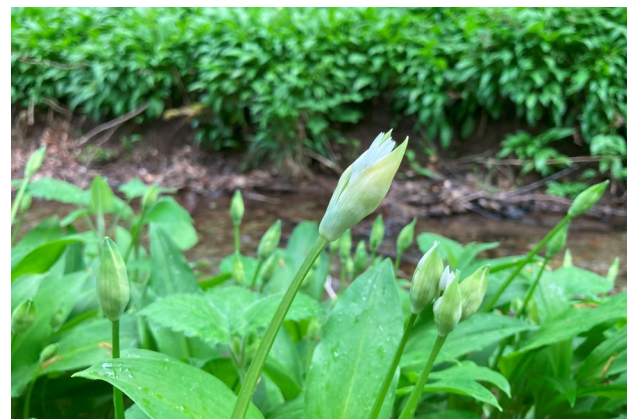
I am eager in anticipation for small birds to start using this area, bathing themselves in the pond and for beneficial bugs to find a place within the garden so that life can truly begin to thrive here.

The plants for me that I'm most excited about waiting to germinate is the strawberry tree *Arbutus unedo* and the very unusual Cloudberry, *Rubus chamaeris*.

In this newsletter you will find helpful information on some edible plants that you can find growing around the countryside, useful tips with foraging plus some of my own recipes that I love to cook.



Pictured *Taraxacum officinale*, Dandelion.



Wild Garlic

Allium ursinum 'Ramsons'

Wild garlic season is already on it's way, you will often find this culinary herb growing in deciduous woodlands distinctively by it's broad, spear-shaped leaves, they are very versatile in many dishes with it's pungent smell and flavour of garlic. The flowers of this plant begin to appear by late April into June , a showy display of star shaped six petalled white flowers. Later into the season wild garlic becomes bitter in flavour as it dies back down for next years display. I have included some recipes that I love making every year, although the possibilities are somewhat endless in cooking.



Wild Garlic Pesto

Ingredients

200g wild garlic stems and leaves, washed
 50g parmesan
 1 garlic clove, crushed
 1 lemon, juiced plus extra for seasoning
 50g hazelnuts, toasted
 100ml extra virgin olive oil or rapeseed oil
 A pinch of sea salt
 A pinch of black pepper

Method

Wash the wild garlic removing any soil or dirt, roughly chop or tear and put into a food processor. Blitz for a few seconds then add the garlic and parmesan, blitz again.
 Place the hazelnuts in a dry frying pan and lightly toast until a golden colour always moving them around so not to burn. Add these to the food processor along with the lemon juice, olive oil, salt and pepper then blitz to smooth consistency.
 Check for seasoning adding more lemon juice, salt or pepper if needed.

Three-cornered Leek, *Allium triquetrum*.

I came across this plant on my travels down by the coast. I had read about it's uses for edibility, so I had to forage some to try out it's flavour.

The stems are slightly similar to cultivated leeks in appearance. They grow from a bulb in the ground producing white bell shaped flowers that hang off the stem. They grow in abundance which makes good for harvesting.

Uses for their edible properties in cooking, Three-cornered leek has a taste that of a mild leek and onion. This goes great in soups, or used as a replacement for leeks in any recipe.



Pictured *Allium triquetrum*.

Foraging is an exciting way to find free food. The discoveries of plants that are actually edible is rather exciting and surprises most with the abundance of produce growing around us. Although foraging can be resourceful in supplying food, some plants are too toxic for human consumption and can cause severe illness and even death.

It's best to know what being picked is safe to consume. There are many educational books which give detailed descriptions of plants but you can also find useful information on the RHS website.
www.rhs.org.uk/plants

Many plants that grow in spring have edible properties but one of my favourites

is *Taraxacum officinale*. The common weed, dandelion.

Dandelions are very nutritious, the whole plant is edible including the root which makes a great coffee substitute when roasted, the flowers can be used to make jelly and the leaves make a great addition in salads.

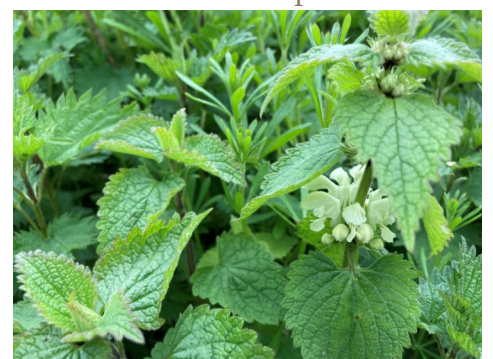
Borage grows this time of year, it's blue/pink flowers provide pollen and nectar for beneficial insects such as bees and butterflies.

It has long hairy hollow stems which taste similar to cucumber and also the leaves of this plant could be used as a substitute to the wild garlic pesto above if your not too keen on the heady garlic taste.

Stinging nettles, *Urtica dioica* can be seen growing pretty much anywhere. It grows on fertile soil and is distinct from the stinging sensation whenever you may of brushed past it.

The plant is very beneficial to us as it has many medicinal properties as well as having edibility.

For more information and recipes you can visit my website at www.wildpicks.co.uk



Pictured *Urtica dioica*, common nettle.

Wild Garlic & Rosemary rolls

Ingredients

150ml whole milk
50g unsalted butter
75ml water
50g wild garlic, Leaves
(stalks and flowers can be used too)
20g rosemary
450g strong white bread flour
7g instant yeast
10g salt
1 large egg, beaten
120g mature cheddar, grated
40g parmesan, grated
Oil for greasing

Method

In a saucepan, combine the milk, butter and water and gently heat until the butter has melted. Take off the heat leaving to cool slightly.
Finely chop the wild garlic and rosemary, then add to the warm milk mixture stirring to combine.
In a large bowl combine the dry ingredients, make a well in the centre, then pour in the cooled milk mixture and the egg. Bring together to form a rough

dough. Lightly dust a work surface and knead until you have a soft firm dough that springs back when poked with your finger.
Place the dough in a well oiled bowl, cover and leave to prove until doubled in size. approx. 1 hour.
When the dough has doubled in size gently punch it down, spreading it flat. Sprinkle over the cheese then fold the dough, kneading until all is combined. Shape into 12 rounded balls, place on a baking tray then cover with greased clingfilm and leave in a warm spot to double in size again.
Pre-heat the oven to 220C, 200 fan, gas mark 6.
After final proving, lightly brush the buns with milk then bake in the oven for 15-20 minutes until golden brown.
Transfer to a wire rack and allow to cool.

‘These are best served warm, toasted with heaps of butter.’



‘Beetroot is one of my favourite vegetables, it contains lots of vitamins and is also a good source of potassium. There are different varieties of beets each with their own unique flavour profile. Whenever I have a surplus of red beetroot I always make these chocolate brownies.’

Beetroot Brownies

Ingredients

200g beetroot, peeled and chopped
150g unsalted butter
100g dark chocolate
1 tsp vanilla paste
3 large eggs
125g soft brown sugar
75g golden caster sugar
120g plain flour
20g cocoa powder
Pinch of sea salt

Method

Preheat oven to 180C, 170fan.
Put beetroot in a saucepan of water and boil for 20 minutes or until tender.
In a bowl add the butter, chocolate, warm beetroot and vanilla, then blitz until a smooth puree. Leave to cool. The residual heat from the beetroot will melt the butter and chocolate.
In a separate bowl combine the eggs and sugars, then whisk until pale and creamy. Combine this with the cooled beetroot mix then sift together the flour and cocoa powder, adding in the salt lastly.
Give this all a gentle mix until all combined ensuring not to lose any air bubbles.
Pour into a lined, square baking tray, then place into the oven baking for 25—30 minutes.
Leave to cool in the tin before transferring to a wire rack. Cut into squares and serve.