
Week of Wild Food - Day Two

Contributed by Becky Lerner
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The wonders of pineappleweed tea, baked burdock root, and an amazing trick for stinging nettles

Today was great. I don't feel hungry at all, and I have lots of energy. I do have a very mild head ache though, and I think I was a little cranky. I started the day with pineappleweed tea, which is honestly the most delicious tea I've ever tasted! It grows along the sidewalk by a chain-link fence about 6 blocks west of my apartment. It smells like pineapple and tastes amazing.

After drinking the brew, I spent 5 hours foraging at a park near a river and then later at a mountainous forest. My herbalist friend Emily Porter (www.wildheartshealing.com) came along, and the local TV news station, KATU-ABC, filmed us for a one-minute spot on the 11 o'clock news tonight.

Emily and I dug up two wild carrots and I ate the root in front of the camera. They were tiny -- thinner than a pencil and only about two inches long -- but they tasted good. We also collected rose petals and ground ivy. Each will make a nice tea later on. Ground ivy can be used medicinally to treat respiratory problems, and occasionally they strike me, so I'll keep it on hand. Fresher is not better when it comes to medicinal tea -- drying makes them more powerful.

The highlight of my day was harvesting stinging nettles. At first I tried to keep my distance from the plants, using a pair of scissors to snip the leaves and top portions so that they would fall into the grocery bag I was holding. When I touched them, they gave me a few mild stings. But then I remembered an e-mail I got this morning from a reader named Coral in Winnipeg, Canada. Coral wrote to say that if you talk to the plant and let it know your intentions are good, it won't sting you. I gave her advice a shot, and it actually worked. I know it sounds crazy, but when I said, "Thank you," -- whether silently or out loud -- I really was able to pluck leaves and touch all parts of the plants with my bare hands without getting stung. It makes you think differently about plant consciousness, does it not?

At home I boiled the nettles into a nutritious, tasty broth. Nettle leaves can be cooked like spinach when young, but because these were more than 5 feet tall, I decided the broth was more appealing. I did taste the boiled leaves. They were not objectionable, but the texture was, for me, a bit too tough to enjoy.

Emily and I also dug up some burdock roots, which I rinsed and baked in the oven in foil at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. They actually tasted quite good!

Whereas the Day One foods were bitter and unpalatable, I wholeheartedly give two thumbs-up to the Day Two foods. My

neighbor, Steve, came by to taste the nettle broth and said he could imagine it as a great soup base with salt and other greens in it.

I look forward to mushroom hunting tomorrow!

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