



Edible Weeds

Did you know that many of the plants we pull from our gardens are not only edible, but in fact packed with nutrients?

Check to see if you're pulling out any of these tasty treasures. Give them a wash and add the leaves to your next salad:

1. Dandelions
2. Purslane
3. Clover
4. Lambs quarters
5. Plantain
6. Chickweed

Double check each plant to make sure you've identified it correctly.

STEP 4. MAINTENANCE & CARE

Weed Control

The majority of time you spend in your garden will likely be for weed control. While it can seem daunting and time consuming at first, with practice weeding can actually become like any other enjoyable time outside.

Having a positive attitude about weeding is important because it is crucial to do regularly. If left alone, weeds can quickly overtake a garden and outcompete your veggies.

Prevent weeds in the first place by using 2 inches (5 cm) of mulch directly on the soil or on top of a newspaper or cardboard layer. You can purchase mulch or use wood chips, leaves, or a thin layer of grass clippings. Many gardeners mulch garden paths and even mulch in between rows. Mulch also keeps the soil cooler and helps it

retain moisture. A classic rule of gardening: bare soil is bad soil.

Even with mulching, you will still need some time each week to pull unwanted plants. Equip yourself with gloves, a trowel or weeding claw tool, a sitting pad or knee pads, and pail to collect the weeds.

You can compost the weeds you pull up but it will need to be done properly to ensure conditions will destroy seeds. See pages 14-15 on composting.

Ensure you pull up the weed roots. Only removing the leaves or flower head will often not actually destroy the plant. And be sure to remove weeds while they're flowering to prevent them from going to seed.

Pruning & Deadheading

Pruning involves removing parts of your plants with clean pruning shears or pinching off with your thumb and index finger. There are several reasons to prune: to remove dead or injured parts, disease and pest control, or enhancing a plant's productivity.

Your pruning practices will vary based on plant type, timing, and cause. Common plants to prune include tomatoes, cucumber, squash, and peppers. Consult the Farmer's Almanac, a local library, or a garden centre for specific information on your fruit and veggie varieties.

All dead and yellowing plant parts or entire dead plants should be removed. They can harbour diseases and pests which can spread to healthy plants. If

the plant in question died from a disease or pest, do not add it to your compost pile.

Deadheading is the practice of removing dead flowers from non-veggie plants such as marigolds. Removing flowers from your herbs may also be a good idea as they often become bitter after flowering and going to seed.

In addition, be sure to harvest your fruiting plants frequently (such as cucumbers, tomatoes, beans). When fruit becomes over ripe it slows the production of more fruit. While we often want to admire beautiful tomatoes on the vine, we'll have more to gain from harvesting them.

STEP 4. MAINTENANCE & CARE, CONTINUED

Watering

How often you water your garden will depend on a variety of factors: weather, plant's needs, and drainage. A general rule is to ensure your garden receives 2 inches (5 cm) of water per week. Containers may need more, especially in hot conditions.

Regardless of frequency, when watering any garden it is important to

be thorough so the water soaks in deeply. A soaker hose is the best option. Shallow watering leads to poor root growth.

The best time to water is in the morning when it is cool out and the water doesn't quickly evaporate. If mornings aren't an option, water in the evenings in the same conditions.

Succession Planting: From mid July to mid August, as you harvest some crops, there will be space for secondary plantings, called *succession planting*. Choose second crops with fewer days to ripening: peas, radishes, beans, carrots, lettuce, and broccoli. Follow the spring planting instructions and speed up germination by soaking the seeds overnight before planting.

Winterizing the Beds

Depending on your fruit and veggie varieties and the season, harvesting will begin in late July and continue until the end of September. Late September (if cool) is the time to plant next year's garlic. Choose a bed or section that didn't grow anything in the allium family this year. Work compost into the soil and plant the garlic cloves "*pointy side up*" 6 inches (15 cm) apart and 4 inches (10 cm) deep. Add a layer of mulch.

By October, your garden is ready to winterize. You'll want to ensure that all dead plants and any remaining fruit or veggies are removed. Certain pests and diseases can overwinter in the foliage and many composts are not hot enough to adequately kill pathogens. Any foliage that is moldy or diseased can be burned, thrown in the garbage, or composted separately.

Fall brings gardeners free mulch and future compost in the form of fallen

leaves. Instead of bagging them, gather them to create mulch layers, add them to your compost, and create leaf mulch (see page 12 for details).

Move away any pre-existing leaf or other mulch in the garden, pull any remaining weeds, and add a 1-2 inch (2.5-5 cm) layer of finished compost. Put back the old mulch on top of the compost. Add a thin layer of leaf mulch to the garden beds and, after the ground is frozen, add another layer of leaf mulch especially around perennials.

Fall is also a great time to build new gardens or expansions. Many garden centers will have soil, manure, and compost on sale.

Don't forget to take note of your season. Ensure you've written down what you grew, where, and how many. How did it fair? What did not do well? How much did you harvest? You will thank yourself next year!

Support Your Plants

Different varieties of fruits and veggies in your garden may need some type of physical support structure during the growing season.

For example, tomato plants are very top heavy and will collapse under their own weight. Many gardeners use a tomato cage to hold them upright.

Peas and pole beans are vines and require something to climb such as a trellis or fence.

Squashes, melons, and cucumbers are also vines and can take up less space if provided a structure to grow vertically.





Preserving the Harvest

Freezing, canning, cold storage (e.g. root cellar or similar), and dehydrating are tried and true ways to keep your harvest in your kitchen throughout winter. Here are some guides help you preserve the harvest:

1. Bernardin Guide to Home Preserving by Bernardin
2. The Ultimate Guide to Preserving Vegetables by Angi Schneider
3. The Farm Girl's Guide to Preserving the Harvest by Ann Accetta-Scott
4. Homegrown Pantry by Barbara Pleasant

ABOUT US

Georgian Bay is part of Lake Huron and the Great Lakes Basin. It is known as Spirit Lake (*Mnidoo-gamii*) by the Anishinabek peoples and was named a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2004.

The Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamii Biosphere is a non-profit charity that works to protect the environment, create vibrant communities, and support a healthy economy. Working with many partners across the region, GBBR relies on grants, contracts, memberships, and donations to do our work.

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Sustainable food systems are an important part of being a UNESCO biosphere reserve. A key factor in sustainable food systems is knowledge sharing and building capacity for people to grow their own food. Since 2008, GBBR has led and partnered on food and garden programs with dozens of partners.

Gardening is a rewarding experience with many benefits. It is a powerful way for people of all ages to connect with nature, it can have significant environmental benefits, and can even be an economical option for fresh produce.

ONLINE RESOURCES

1. The Georgian Bay Biosphere
www.gbbbr.ca/gardens
2. The Old Farmer's Almanac
www.almanac.com
3. Ontario Seed Company
www.oscseeds.com
4. Family, Food & Garden
www.familyfoodgarden.com
5. West Coast Seeds
www.westcoastseeds.com
6. Planet Natural Guide
www.planetnatural.com

HAPPY GARDENING

Gardening on any scale is healthy for our bodies and minds. We wish you lots of luck, fun, and success with your garden!

Please take a minute to share a picture of your garden with us. We'd love to see your green thumb!



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