

To whom it may concern,

The following was originally published in “The Beginners Guide to Backpacking.” It was removed in version 1.2.0 of the publication. Unless you know what you are looking for, do not eat any plant, animal, or fungus growing in the woods. Remember, humans are not accustomed to most natural foods and many plants will make you severely sick, or worse. The following information is for knowledge only, and should probably not be put to use unless you are an instructor or other professional. Read on knowing that GreenMan Games and Leif902 will not be held accountable for what you do with this information.

## Natural Foods

Note: If you do not know what to look for or are not an experienced hiker, do not eat food found on the trail.

Many natural foods already exist on the trail; however, if you are in a national park or designated wilderness area it may be illegal to take these foods, so make sure you know the local law before eating any of the following:

Dandelion Greens are very healthy, just pick a leaf off of each dandelion you see as you walk, by the end of the day you will have a nice salad waiting for you (make sure to wash them very well)!

It surprises many to find that acorns are edible, and in fact quite good if prepared right. Acorns come from two types of oak, those with pointy lobes on the leaves (Red, Black and Willow Oaks, most commonly) and those with rounded lobes (White Oaks and Chestnut Oaks). Oaks with round lobes on the leaves produce sweet acorns that are quite good raw, and even better roasted. Oaks with pointy leaves produce bitter acorns. The bitter taste acorns normally have can be attributed to a substance known as tannin which is, quite fortunately, soluble in water. This means that by simple leaching or boiling of the acorns we can rid them of the tannin, thereby making them edible (if a little bland). Try experimenting; acorns cooked correctly can be a valuable food source when your mixed nut or trail mix supply runs out.

Wild fruits are everywhere in the mountains, crab apples can be boiled and mashed, strawberries and blackberries are numerous. Just wash them first in filtered or purified water.

Wapattoo or Arrowhead, also called Arrowleaf, Duck Potatoes or more properly *Sagittaria* have edible tubers which are quite satisfying once cooked.

Surprise, surprise, Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*) grows wild all across North America. It can be recognized by the single dead stalk that will rise up in the center of a path to a height of about three feet. And will have a “central stem or ‘trunk’ about a half inch in diameter which easily [distinguishes] it from weeds with forking stems.” The whole dead part of the plant has a slender “Christmas tree outline.” It is also the topic of one of my favorite books (from which the quotes were taken): *Stalking the Wild*

*Asparagus* by Euell Gibbons. This is possibly the best meal it is possible to find and cook on the trail.



Asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*)



Sagittaria (Wapattoo) tubers eat like potatoes. This edible plant can be found near streams all over North America.