

# Foraging your Backyard

## 1. **Lamb's Quarters** (*Chenopodium album*)

Identification:

- Gray green leaves w/ white powder coating
- Spade, egg, or lance shaped leaves 1–5 cm long
- Lookalikes: *Solanaceae* species

Harvest:

- Young plants can be cut and eaten w/ stems, larger plants will have tough stems- harvest leaves only
- Seeds can be harvested and eaten in moderation

Preparation:

- Prepare like spinach- no blanching needed



## 2. **Stinging Nettle**

(*Urtica dioica*)

Identification:

- Dark green, opposite, deeply serrated leaves
- Covered in stinging hairs

Harvest:

- Harvest tender green in spring
- Harvest seeds in late-summer early autumn

Preparation:

- Can be eaten raw if crushed (mortar and pestle, food processor, blender, etc.)

3. Cooking destroys stinging hairs (does not need to be blended prior)

## 4. **Smartweed** (*Persicaria*

*pennsylvanicum*)

Identification:

- Smooth, reddish stems w/ swollen nodes, up to 3 ft tall
- Leaves are alternate, elliptic, with tufts of hairs at base of the leaf
- Flowers clustered in terminal spikes, usually pink, sometimes white

Harvest:

- Harvest aerial parts

Preparation:

- Can be eaten raw or cooked- occasionally smartweed is a bit peppery, so taste the batch before adding to a dish





#### 5. **Broad Leaf Dock** (*Rumex obtusifolius*)

Identification:

- Grows in basal rosette
- Broad, smooth oblong leaves with densely netted veins

Harvest:

- Harvest young leaves (unfurled are the best)

Preparation:

- Cook like spinach for a slightly bitter green or blanch for 30-60 second before adding to a dish to remove some of the bitterness

#### 6. **Chickweed** (*Stellaria media*)

Identification:

- Succulent, tender, lush
- Tiny spade-heart shaped leaves
- Small, white, star shaped flowers with five petals split to look like 10
- Single line of fine hairs running down the stem
- Lookalike: *Anagallis arvensis*

Harvest:

- Harvest aerial portions

Preparation:

- 7. Delicious raw, can also be cooked



#### 8. **Common Mallow** (*Malva neglecta*)

Identification:

- Low lying
- Round leaves with long petioles and crenate margin
- Stems & leaves covered with short, stiff hairs
- Small pink flowers

Harvest:

- Harvest leaves or small wheel-like seeds

Preparation:

- Leaves can be eaten raw as a mild green
- Add seeds fresh to salads, smoothies, etc.
- Cooked greens and seeds will thicken dishes



9. **Wood Sorrel** (*Oxalis stricta*)

Identification:

- Small, clover like leaves but leaflets are heart-shaped
- Tiny yellow flowers

Harvest:

- Harvest aerial portions

Preparation:

- Eat raw as a refreshing snack or added to salads
- Add small amounts to dishes for a lemony flavor



10. **Blackberry** (*Rubus allegheniensis*)

Identification:

- Thumb-sized black aggregate berries

Harvest:

- Ripe berries will be black and soft-ripe in July-August
- Harvest leaves from 1st year canes

Preparation:

- Raw, desserts, janes, meat sauces, etc.
- Young leaves can be made into tea