

# Field of Greens

## Digging Deep with Cynthia Brian

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With that proclamation, let's eat our lawns. As long as you haven't applied insecticides, pesticides, or non-organic fertilizers, your organic turf may be your ticket to a free feeding frenzy. Dandelions, chicory, chickweed, purslane, cresses, violets, and prickly lettuce are common specimens growing in Lamorinda backyards. Whether we want to admit it or not, a weed is merely a plant growing where we don't want it to grow. All of these "weeds" are actually cherished cultivars in other cultures. In Greece, on the island of Crete, the residents rank amongst the healthiest people in the world with zero heart disease, almost no dementia, cancers, or other diseases. Their diet consists of colossal amounts of foraged greens, which supply a maximum amount of vitamins and nutrients. The Mediterranean diet is healthy and effective because of the plentiful consumption of wild vegetation.

My current personal favorite is wild arugula. Both the leaves and the flowers provide a tasty, peppery flavor to my salads, sandwiches, and soups. I'm also a huge fan of wild garlic mustard with its sharp, pungent essence. Raw, steamed, sautéed, or stir-fried, these are great sources of calcium and iron. Whether it is sorrel, chives, thistle, calendula, or Miner's lettuce, the dietary content of wild greens is generally more nutritious than anything you can purchase at the supermarket. Depending on the specific greens, you'll ingest high concentrations of vitamin A, C, beta-carotene, zinc, manganese, fiber, and omega 3s.

Besides consuming my "rabbit chow," my garden supplies me with carrots, Swiss chard, cabbage, kale, leeks, lettuces, dill, fennel, parsley, spinach, onions, peas, beans, beets, and radishes. I'm sowing new varieties from Renee's Garden Seeds this season including tricolor pole beans, Oregon giant snow peas, wasabi arugula, jewel toned beets, specialty eggplants in an Asian trio, and, of course, butterfly and hummingbird garden favorites.

Discover these yummy edibles in your garden and instead of eradicating them, embrace them into your culinary creations. Whether you forage or cultivate, venture where the wild things are. (Don't harvest from roadsides, city streets, dumps, or places that could be contaminated, and always wash all gatherings.)

Chickweed  
Chicory  
Dandelion  
Fennel  
Henbit  
Lamb's Quarter  
Milk Thistle  
Plantain  
Prickly Lettuce  
Purslane  
Sorrel  
Shepherd's Purse



Deep green, nutrient rich leaves of Swiss chard.

Spring has sprung. Let the grass grow while you bunny hop to your own personal field of greens.



The word "dandelion" comes from the French "dent de lion" meaning lion's tooth because of its serrated leaves.



Lacy fennel with yellow fennel blossoms with forget-me-nots interspersed.



Blue periwinkle, also known as vinca minor, is not edible. It's a great ground cover.