

6 Healthy Wild Plants to Harvest Now



Healthy, wild plants, herbs and botanicals grow everywhere in spring. Many of the healthy wild plants in your yard have healing properties. From the common dandelion to wild violet, chickweed and berries, wild plants contain healthy nutrients. Many wild plants can be used as greens in salads, or added to a light oil to make an infusion. With the right knowledge, the tinctures and extracts can provide powerful healing without resorting to pharmaceuticals. [Adding dried herbs to baking](#) takes the flavor to a whole new level.

Pick the Wild Plants In Your Yard, Don't Kill Them

Being new to this subject field, I have been reading many blog posts and articles on using wild plants and herbs in different ways. I provide links to the source whenever possible. Please click on the links for more information.

Dandelions

The oh so common and well known wild plant is present in most yards that are not treated with chemicals. Dandelions (Taraxacom) are both edible and medicinal wild plants.

Pollinating insects love dandelions too. Many bee and fly species are very happy to drink the abundant nectar.

Dandelions play a vital role in honey production because of how much pollen and nectar they feed to the bees. The soil benefits because dandelions produce lots of nutrients, particularly Nitrogen, that go back into the soil.

There are so many beneficial uses for dandelions including the leaves for salad greens, the flowers can be fried, the root can be used as a tea or coffee substitute. [Medical professionals caution](#) that the use of any herb can be overdone, cause a reaction, or interfere with prescription medications. Dandelions can be made into tea, tinctures, extracts, oil infusions, raw greens, and dehydrated.



Plantain

Plantain (*Plantago Major*) was introduced to this country by the early colonists. What many people don't realize is, Plantain is actually an herb. In our yard, we actually have both the broad leaf and the thin leaf varieties. The leaves are edible and contain antibacterial and antiseptic properties for healing. The leaves can simply be chewed to release the juice and the mushed leaves placed on the insect bite or inflammation. Plantain leaves can be used to make a tincture, tea, or infusion. To store nature's bounty of plantain for winter, freeze the leaves or dehydrate. Leaving plantain in the garden or lawn is good for the other plants. Plantain is a wild plant that accumulates nutrients in the soil, making the soil better for growing.



Wild Violet

These small purple flowers grow abundantly in shaded areas and in lawns. The leaves and flowers are both edible. [The violet flowers are used in salads, and also can be sugared and used to decorate pastry.](#) The leaves are high in vitamin C.

Gathering a basket of the tiny violets is not hard once a patch is established. The seeds spread widely from a hidden green flower in the plant. The flavor is reportedly mild and somewhat sweet.

For culinary use, gather the blossoms and make [violet infused vinegar or violet jelly.](#)

Medicinally, this tiny posy has quite an impact. Violets contain salicylic acid (common aspirin) and components that aid respiratory problems and wound healing. Not bad for a [weed,](#) right? Violets are so powerful that herbal info includes a warning to be cautious in the use, particularly the

roots, because it is so strong.

Chickweed

Chickweed is a favorite treat of my chickens, ducks and small ruminants. I thought it was appropriate that the chickens liked the chickweed! Did you know that chickweed is a wild plant that is very good for us to eat too? Bees and other pollinators love the tiny flower of chickweed. We can use it in a salad. Leaving it for the pollinating insects is a great idea. If you cut the grass and wild plants, leave the chickweed to decompose on the ground. It will add nutrients back into the soil. [Chickweed does many healthy things](#) for our bodies if eaten. It is a mild diuretic and contains lots of vitamins!

Purslane

Purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*), is so high in Omega 3 fatty acids that it is considered a super food. In addition, Purslane is high in vitamins and beta carotene. It looks somewhat like a small leaf succulent. You can eat the entire plant, leaves and stems as a salad or green. Pectin amounts are also high in Purslane so it can be used as a thickener in recipes.

Purslane can grow anywhere, although I have read that it [prefers rich freshly turned soil](#). In our gardens it seems to grow in the more barren, dry areas of the garden where other plants are struggling to survive. It grows like a ground cover. If we don't eat it, I pull it up and throw it to the chickens who seem to be very happy to have a Purslane snack.

Purple Dead-nettle

An early growing weed that spreads quickly has probably been in your garden. I have quite a lot of it in my yard so I wanted to know how it could be used. The Purple Dead-nettle is not very heat tolerant and doesn't survive the hot summer

weather we have. It comes back again in the fall. My favorite use for this plant is [making natural dye](#) for use on wool yarn.

The medicinal properties have been used to help heal bruising after making a poultice. Also, it has been used to stop bleeding. [Teas made from Purple Dead-nettle](#) have been used to treat chills.

Dandelion Salve for Achy Muscles and Skin Healing

Dandelions are a completely edible wild plant. The flowers are eaten battered and fried by many people. [Dandelion wine and Dandelion jelly](#) are both delicious ways to use dandelions. The greens are delicious in salads, and my rabbits, chickens, ducks and pigs all love a healthy dandelion green treat.

Take care to harvest dandelions that have not been sprayed with chemicals and herbicides. Also, you might not want to collect your dandelions from the edge of the road. These dandelions might contain contaminants from the road and automobiles.

This was my first attempt at making a herbal salve so I consulted a few friends blogs about the subject. I most closely followed this one from [Grow Forage Cook Ferment](#).

Harvesting Wild Plants for Salve

After I harvested a few cups of yellow dandelion flowers, I laid them on a cookie sheet on paper towels. Since our weather had warmed up, I left the tray on the porch to take advantage of the warm breeze and sun. What you are trying to do is dry out the flowers some because they have a high water content. After a day or two the flowers should be dry enough to start the oil infusion. Infusion sounds so medical to me. It's really simple. Add the Dandelion flowers to a pint size

jar until about three quarters full. Pack lightly. Add olive oil or sweet almond oil to the jar until the flowers are completely covered.

To make the infusion, place the jar in the sun for a few days. If you don't want to wait that long, place the jar in the top piece of a double boiler set up. Bring the water to simmer, and then turn off the heat. Let the flowers in the jar of oil sit in the warm water for a few hours.

Strain the oil. I used a mesh strainer. Add a piece of cheese cloth if you think it is necessary. Store the oil in the refrigerator until you are ready to use it in a salve or lotion recipe.



Make the Dandelion Salve

Making a healthy salve from the dandelion flowers in another way to benefit from what many consider a weed.

Again, use a double boiler type set up. Heat 16 ounces of Dandelion oil in the double boiler. I didn't have quite enough infused Dandelion oil so I just added more olive oil.



Melt 2 ounces of [Beeswax](#) and 2 ounces of solid coconut oil. When the three ingredients are completely melted, add the other optional ingredients. I used some ground lavender leaves, lavender essential oil and a few drops of wild orange essential oil. Stir to combine and then quickly pour the mixture into the small glass jars or [small metal containers](#).

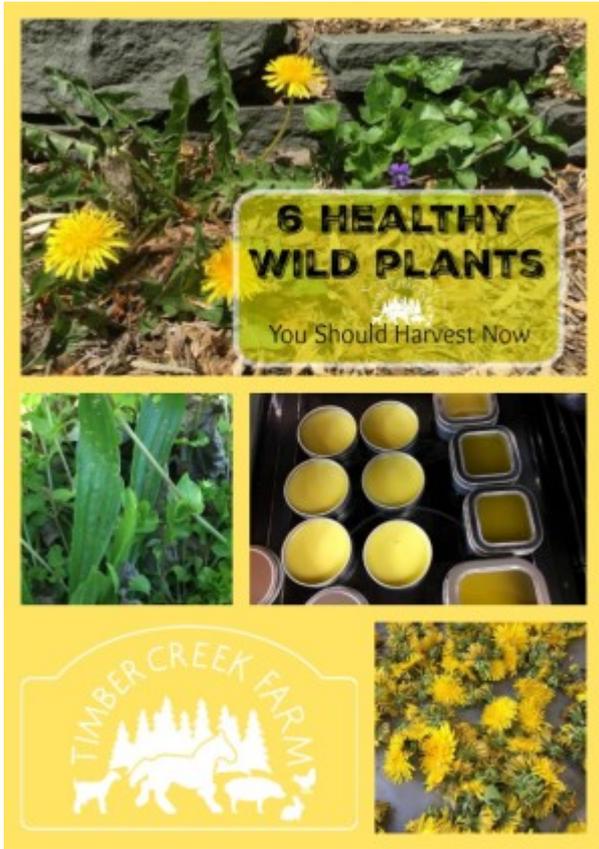
Using the Salve Made From Wild Plants

The salve will harden fairly quickly. Since it has so much coconut and olive oil in it, when you take a scoop to use the salve it melts quickly and absorbs quickly into your skin. After the oil has penetrated your skin, the salve continues to work and heal your skin.



These are a handful of wild plants that are growing in my yard. What sort of wild plants do you use in cooking or homemade remedies? Share with me in the comments.

Save this for later



Disclaimer – None of the information presented here is intended to be medical advice. When using plants for health care, it is always best to consult your health care provider.