

Nutrition – Nature’s Way

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Ok – it is winter, and this plant will not make its reappearance for a few months still, but it is so worth talking about. Cleavers, although edible, is well-recognized as a refreshing beverage. It contains citric acid (which makes it refreshing as a drink). Cleavers help to strengthen your immune system and is good for the lymphatic system.

The fruits of this plant supposedly can be used in place of coffee for that morning brew. I have not tried this to know if it a good coffee replacement but it is a relative of coffee so it may be possible. Those who have tried this claim it is much better than any other plant as a “stand-in” for coffee. Here’s the kicker – you have to roast the seeds first, and then grind them. These seeds measure only 1mm long – VERY tiny! However, a single plant can produce up to 3,500 seeds that remain viable for up to 6 years in the soil. So – should you ever be so inclined to give it a try, I’d love to hear what you think about the taste!

This is an edible plant that has been used for medicinal purposes for centuries. Gerard wrote about cleavers “as a marvelous remedy for the bites of snakes, spiders and all venomous creatures.” Pliny the Elder once said: “A pottage made of Cleavers, a little mutton and oatmeal is good to cause lankness and keepe from fatnesse.”

I won’t go into the plethora of medicinal values of this incredible plant but I will speak about one – from experience. In May of this year I was teaching on Manitoulin Island. The day before I left I was hiking in the woods with my son and a 3” diameter (dead) tree came straight down on my foot. (Thankfully I got my head out of the way.) Even though I had footwear on, my foot was a mess. I was not able to wear shoes so I was in a pair of men’s water shoes. When I arrived on Manitoulin (an almost 4-hour drive), I was doing some photography and came across a huge patch of cleavers – of which I harvested a fair bit. This is all I drank for 48 hours and my severely bruised foot cleared right up and the swelling subsided. Never underestimate the power of what many label as an invasive weed.

Edible of the Month Cleavers – *Galium aparine*



Calcium & Phosphorus

Alkaloids
Anthraquinones
Citric acid
Coumarin
Flavonoid
Gallotannic acid
Phenols

Horsetail branches



Horsetail *Equisetum arvense*



Nail Health

Our nails are a modified version of the epidermis, which is part of our body's largest organ. The many layers of the nail are fused together with keratin. In addition to keratin, healthy nails contain calcium, iron, magnesium, selenium, silica, potassium, phosphorus, sulfur and oxygen, all of which contribute to their characteristic qualities.

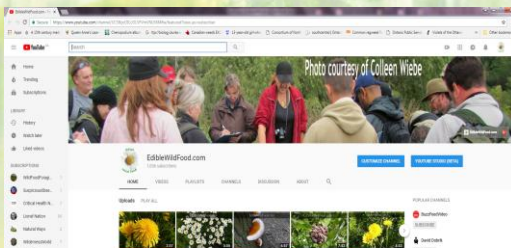
Healthy fingernails can grow to 4mm a month and they are considered a portal to what is happening inside of your body. While normal nails have a pink colour, which indicates healthy blood flow underneath, nails that are pale or white may indicate circulatory problems such as a low red blood cell count and anemia. Yet nails that have a beet red hue may indicate heart disease. Sometimes, abnormal circulation in the nail bed creates the appearance of horizontal white lines, most often in the middle three fingers. Because this problem occurs in the nail bed, it will not progress up as the nail grows.

Nutrition plays a vital role in nail health. Because of their rapid growth, shortages in key nutrients will show up in the nails before any other part of the body. A lack of magnesium can lead to nail softening and shortages of iron can cause them to spoon becoming concave, rather than convex. Other minerals like calcium, sulfur, zinc and silica are critical for nail strength and resilience. Vitamin D is essential for calcium absorption. A lack of the B-vitamins (especially B-12) and Vitamins A and C can affect nail shape and create both horizontal and vertical ridges, and because the nail is mostly made up of protein both lack of intake as well as digestive impairment can lead to nail thinness and fragility. Essential Fatty Acids are important and nail cracking and splitting can result under conditions of Omega-6 deficiency.

I am working on a blog that I'll post in January that will go much deeper into this topic including how most nail polishes are toxic and how wild plants can help – especially horsetail. Getting small amounts of horsetail on a regular basis can help remedy vitamin and mineral imbalances in the nail. Stay tuned for that one!

In the meantime, if you are looking for other material I have written here is a link to my blog. Please feel free to share in your social media!

<https://www.ediblewildfood.com/blog/>



2019 was a very busy year for me as I did some traveling to teach people about wild edible food. I met so many wonderful people and truly enjoyed every moment. In addition to working part time (I work with identified children in the school system) I also earned a diploma as a Chartered Herbalist, in Acute Canine Herbalism, and I am officially a student once again, this time working toward becoming a Master Herbalist. As crazy as this sounds, I do all this to gain more knowledge to share on my website and with those who I do walks and presentations for.

My husband is the guy behind the scenes and he is the tech guy for the website. I do the writing and photography, he does all the hair-pulling work that keeps the site going. He is also an SEO specialist and he has asked me to pass on a message to everyone - whenever you can, please share any material I post in social media. We both would be very grateful for your help!

On that note... please remember to "like" my FB page (EdibleWildFood.com), or to follow me on Twitter & Instagram (EdibleWildFood) or to subscribe to my YouTube channel (EdibleWildFood.com)

Another year behind us and it went by at warp speed. I truly hope that for all of you who celebrate Christmas that you have a truly peaceful and joy-filled day. As for 2020 - I truly hope you all have a year filled with good health, and being at peace with yourself.

Thank you to each and every one of you who have been faithful followers for many years - I am truly grateful to each of you.

And to those new to EdibleWildFood.com - - welcome and I am very thankful you are here!

Be well everyone!



[Spiced Chaga](#)

