

# Nutrition – Nature's Way

## EdibleWildFood.com

### The Maple Tree – A Great Food Source

Spring is just days away and the tree sap is flowing! Did you know that drinking the sap from maple trees is a healthy beverage?

Many people do not tap trees because they haven't the time or the inclination to boil the sap into syrup. Making syrup sure can be fun however tapping trees for its sap is just as fun. Typically the sugar maple is the tree of choice for yielding high sugar content however, any maple can be tapped and the sap enjoyed. Drink the sap as is, or you use the sap to make rice or quinoa. Add the sap into your smoothies!

Maple is not the only tree right now that you can tap to enjoy the sap. You can tap birch trees as well! You can also tap Box Elder, Hickory, Walnut, Sycamore, and Pecan trees.

When tapping a tree be sure to select a healthy tree that measures minimum 30cm in diameter (12"). Also, be sure to try to select trees that have good exposure to sunlight because it is the cold nights and warm days that get the sap flowing. For more information on tapping check out [Tap My Tree](#).

Maple seeds are also edible so when those annoying "helicopters" cover your yard and you have to rake them – collect them! While watching a movie remove the pericarp (wing) and seed coat to get to the seed. These seeds are nutritious (as is the sap) and can be frozen for winter storage (although their nutrition level will diminish).

Roast maple seeds (eat them as is or toss onto a salad) or dehydrate them then grind them into flour. (You can dry them in the sun as well.)

Any finally, you can collect the fresh buds from a maple tree; eat them as is, toss them in a salad, or freeze them for later use!

### Edible of the Month The Maple Tree



### Edible parts of the maple tree

Seeds – Young leaves - Fresh buds - Sap

- potassium and zinc)
- organic acids (primarily malic acid)
- phenolic compounds
- amino compounds
- vitamins (trace amounts)



**Trout Lily**  
**Erythronium americanum**



**Ostrich Fern (Fiddlehead)**  
**Matteucia struthiopteris**



Spring fever is hitting us in the northern regions of the planet and with it the desire to get out there the moment all the snow has melted and get foraging. Of course there has been plenty of foraging opportunities throughout the winter and I was fortunate to have the pleasure of providing three winter walks. We are on the threshold of spring and fresh green growth is what many of us are anxiously awaiting! This is a list of the most common spring growth. Some of these are already out there and some may not appear until April; be sure you accurately identify them **100 percent** before collecting.

- Pigweed** (Amaranth): young shoots, leaves, and flowers
- Birch** (Betula alba): catkins and sap
- Blackberry** (Rubus fruticosus): leaves and flowers
- Burdock** (Arctium lappa ): young leaves, burrs, and roots from the 1st year plant
- Cattails** (Typha latifolia ): flower (green head) and shoots
- Chamomile** (Matricaria chamomilla): leaves
- Chickweed** (Stellaria media): leaves and flowers
- Yellow Dock** (Rumex crispus): leaves stems roots
- Evening primrose** (Oenothera biennis): leaves
- Fireweed** (Chamerion angustifolium): leaves and buds
- Garlic mustard** (Alliaria petiolata): leaves, flowers and root
- Lilac** (Syringa vulgaris): flowers
- Maple** (Acer): buds, sap and young leaves
- Mullein** (Verbascum thapsus ): leaves
- Mustards** (Brassica): leaves, buds and flowers of any edible mustard
- Nettles** (Urtica dioica): leaves, buds, and flowers (caution – cook or dry leaves before consuming)
- Ostrich ferns** (Matteucia struthiopteris): fiddlehead tips only
- Phragmites** (Phragmites australis): young shoots
- Pine** (Pinus): catkins and sap
- Raspberry** (Rubus): leaves
- Sheep sorrel** (Rumex acetosella): leaves, buds, and flowers
- Shepherd's purse** (Capsella bursa-pastoris): leaves, buds, and flowers
- Strawberries** (Fragaria): flowers and leaves
- Trout lily** (Erythronium americanum): leaves and flowers
- Violets** (Viola): leaves and flowers

## Fields of Nutrition

Fields of Nutrition is now a hardcopy magazine. This publication contains 30 common plants that are found in many countries and not only are there photographs to help identify each plant; it contains each plant's health benefits and nutritional information. Fields of Nutrition is only (Canadian) \$10 plus postage. When you place an online order you will receive a free PDF copy of Free Food from Foraging! [Click here to order!](#)

## Lilac Bushes

Lilac (*Syringa species*) is a member of the Oleaceae (Olive) family and one of the most adored scents of spring. Lilac blossoms are edible, though they smell better than they taste, so it is best to use these in small quantities. A springtime treat is to make a lilac cold-water infusion. Simply fill a glass pitcher with fresh lilac blossoms. Fill to the top with spring water. Let steep for about an hour. Strain before serving in glasses. Drink in the beauty and aroma. Scatter a few lilac blossoms on salads. Lilac blossoms can be candied and preserved to decorate desserts later in the year.

## Coming up!

My e-book ***Everything Pine*** will be completed (at long last) later this month. (Those of you who have been patiently awaiting your copy thank-you for your patience !)

If you haven't noticed, there is a Freebie section on my website and there are now crossword puzzles as well as a colouring book and some information you may find interesting. Also, I have two new sections started on the website and it will take time to add to them; these sections are Edible Flowers and Biographies.

If you are in Ontario, be sure to check out the events page later this month. I will have a schedule of edible walks posted and I am doing some traveling this year. On March 30 I'll be in Windsor.

Thank-you for your support and here's hoping that foraging this month gets off to a good start! Be safe everyone!



## Something to Sprout About!



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