

The Best Recipes
from
The Wise Woman
Center

In Celebration of Our Thirty-Third Year

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Susun S. Weed

Introduction

Welcome! You have been asking us to share our recipes with you for many years. Here they are.

The Wise Woman Center is, for legal purposes, a food-preparation club whose members enjoy identifying, finding, and preparing wild and home-grown foods. We practice these skills at hands-on workshops and work-exchange weekends at the Wise Woman Center, located in the Hudson River Valley and the Catskill Mountains near Woodstock New York. Please join us for one or more days or weekends of green blessings, and discover the wealth of food and medicine already growing right around you, no matter where you live.

This compilation of recipes has been grown with loving care to help you recreate the dishes we enjoy . . . in your own kitchen. They are simple, as well as delicious, plant-based foods. (You can make the chicken soup without the chicken if you can't find a free-range, local, or organic hen.) I do have a few simple requests to make of you:

Please try the recipe exactly as it is written the first time around. That way you get a chance to experience the food in a new way at least once. After that, go ahead and make it your way.

Please do not add pepper to any of these recipes. Their tastes are subtle and easily overpowered by spicy, peppery, seasonings.

Please do not wash the greens and flowers you pick for salad. There are soil bacteria on them that are critical to optimum health. In fact, I often say that we are eating salad more for the beneficial bacteria than for any miniscule amount of nutrition we can get from it.

Use the best quality food you can get your hands on. Look for local or organic when buying. Join a Community Sponsored Agriculture farm group (CSA) for loads of fantastic fresh vegetables every week. Visit farmers' markets and get to know the people who grow your food. Look for organic fruits and vegetables in the freezer at your local supermarket. (Yes, frozen is as nutritious as fresh, sometimes more so.) Don't be afraid of leftovers.

All right! Grab some scissors and a basket and let's cook up some.

GREEN BLESSINGS! TABLE of CONTENTS

Lunch

is on us at every class and every work-exchange day here at the Wise Woman Center, as well as at the longer intensive workshops. Lunch follows an easy formula: soup, salad, whole-grain breads and chips, and goat cheese. Simple, tasty, real-food.

Nettle Soup Simple

Nettle Soup Fancy

Jewelweed Soup

Dinner

is the main meal of the day for the apprentices at the Wise Woman Center. Everyone gathers to enjoy a simple, satisfying meal of whole grains, lots of well-cooked vegetables from our gardens and our CSA share, goat cheese, beans or fish, and of course, wild salads.

If you want to eat dinner with us, join us for the Green Witch Intensive (three dinners), the Green Goddess Apprentice Week (six dinners), or a work-exchange weekend (dinner on Saturday night). Or become a live-out apprentice and eat dinner with us once every month.

Russian Borscht

Anti-Radiation Easy Meal

Cooked Greens

Amaranth Greens

Salads

are a work of art here at the Wise Woman Center. We serve salad at both lunch and dinner. The ever-changing availability of wild greens and flowers means no salad is ever the same.

In the earliest spring, there may be only a leaf or two for each of us to eat, but we take the time to seek out and eat those tender young greens, because they help us nourish the wild spirit that informs our work with the plants.

I remind you to refrain from washing your wild greens. (See my note in the introduction about the importance of soil bacteria for health.) Experiment! Enjoy!

Early Spring Salad
Wild Salad with Wild Flowers

Herbal Vinegars

add nutrition to our salads. Vinegar extracts minerals and antioxidant vitamins out of fresh green plants and gives them to us along with the special scents and tastes of the plants. A tablespoonful of mint vinegar can have 100 mg of calcium.

Herbal vinegars are so much fun to make and taste soooo delicious that you will want to make many of them. Almost any edible plant makes a yummy vinegar.

Home-made Balsamic Vinegar (Winter)

Beverages

equal nourishing herbal infusions at the Wise Woman Center. Whether served hot with honey in the spring and fall or icy cold in the summer, nourishing herbal infusion is what you will be offered as a beverage all day long. Learn lots more about nourishing herbal infusions in any of my books, at my online course: “Drink Your Way to Health,” or on YouTube.

Nourishing Herbal Infusion
Hibiscus Punch Concentrate

Herbal honeys

I love honey. Honey is pure medicine. And when you add herbs, the healing possibilities grow sweeter yet. Herbal honeys make instant herbal teas: Just pour boiling water over a spoonful of sage honey in a cup and you have an immediate throat soothing, cold busting, head clearing beverage. Herbal honeys make your skin plump and glowing: Try smoothing a light film of jojoba oil on a wet face, and then adding violet flower honey for an over night skin restoring masque. And herbal honeys can be hormonal: Rose petal honey is an aphrodisiac, dripping off a hot biscuit, it could get anyone thinking about Valentine’s Day.

Rose Petal Honey

Magic and Mystery

It is critical to longevity and good health to play everyday.

Dr. Dent de Lyon's Practical Magical Digestive Aide

Nettle Soup Simple

Leave some time for this to cook. Best to start it in the morning.

Gather 1-2 ounces of **fresh nettle** tops and leaves per serving of soup.
Drop them into **boiling water**: 12-16 ounces of water per serving.
Bring to a rolling boil and adjust heat to a simmer.
Cook, tightly covered, for as long as possible, or up to four hours.
Reheat before serving.

Amazingly enough, this soup keeps well for up to a week refrigerated. And it freezes really well. I love to sit down to simple nettle soup in the middle of the winter.



Nettle Soup Fancy

It is so easy to add ingredients to your simple nettle soup. Try them one at a time at first, then get really fancy and add several.

Gather 1-2 ounces of **fresh nettle** tops and leaves per serving of soup.
Drop them into **boiling water**: 12-16 ounces of water per serving.

Add any one or more of these healing foods to fancy up your nettle soup:

- 1 stick of **astragalus** for each two servings
- 1-3 **shiitake** mushrooms per serving
- any amount of **seaweed**, especially **wakame** or **kombu**
- ½ **potato** or **sweet potato** per serving
- ½ of any root per serving: **carrot**, **parsnip**, **turnip**, **celeriac**, **burdock**



Bring to a rolling boil and adjust heat to a simmer.
Cook, tightly covered, for as long as possible, or up to four hours.
Reheat before serving



Jewelweed Soup

This soup is delicious cold in the summer and the bright color makes it a standout. I also freeze some of it to have on hand to counter swelling and itching whether from poison ivy or arthritis. Counters the pain of tennis elbow and carpal tunnel syndrome, too!
Enjoy!

Harvest any amount of **jewelweed, roots and all.**

Rinse the dirt off the **roots** and press the **plants** into a saucepan.

Add enough **cold water** to cover.

Bring to a boil and reduce heat to a simmer.

Cook for 15-20 minutes, or until the water turns orange. (Doesn't happen? Your roots were not red enough.)





Russian Borscht

Adapted from the original *Moosewood Cookbook*
by Mollie Katzen

*We like to gather 6-8 women in the kitchen to chop the vegetables for
this superb soup.*

Serves 15

- Slice **6 cups potatoes** thinly
- Slice **4 cups beets** thinly

Put in a saucepan with water to cover and cook. Meanwhile cook 6 cups **chopped onion** in 6 tablespoons **pure olive oil**

- Add 1 tablespoon **caraway seeds**

Cook about ten minutes, stirring often, until the **onion** is translucent. Then add 4 stalks **celery**, chopped (I substitute my own organic dried celery tops). Cook for three minutes. Then add:

- 4 large **carrots**, sliced
- 8-12 cups chopped **cabbage**

Cook for five minutes. Then add the potatoes, beets, and the water they cooked in. Add:

- 5-6 quarts/liters of **water**
- 2 tablespoons **sea salt**
- 1 teaspoon **dill weed**

Bring to a boil, then simmer for an hour or until everything is tender.

Turn off the heat and add the following mixture:

- 6 tablespoons **honey**
- 6 tablespoons **herbal vinegar** (I prefer *Artemisia vulgaris*)
- 6 tablespoons (I small can) **tomato paste**
- 1 cup **water**

Serve at once, hot; or cool and refrigerate and enjoy as a cold soup. It is traditional to serve

This delicious, nutritious, versatile soup lasts forever in the refrigerator (like for 6 weeks!) and keeps in the freezer for up to a year, so don't be afraid to make a big pot of it. The vinegar acts as a preservative. If this still seems like too much, then simply divide the recipe in half.



Anti-Radiation Easy Meal

Excerpt from: *Breast Cancer? Breast Health!* by Susun Weed
Serves 2-4

- 1 cup/250 ml sliced **cabbage**
- 1 cup/250 ml sliced **carrots**
- 1-2 fresh **burdock roots** sliced
- 1/2 cup/125 ml soaked **seaweed**
- 8 ounces/240 grams fresh wild or exotic **mushrooms**
- 4 cups/1 liter **water** (spring water or filtered water)
- fresh grated **ginger** to taste
- 1 cup/250 ml cooked **lentils or beans**
- 4 tablespoons/60 ml **miso** plus 8 tablespoons/125 ml **water**

Combine **all ingredients** except **beans** and **miso**. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and cook until **carrots** are tender, about 30 minutes. Add the **beans**.

Serve, or refrigerate for later use. (This dish is equally tasty cold or warm.)

Wait until just before serving to blend the warm **water** and **miso**, and add to the **vegetables**.





Yummy Cooked Amaranth Greens

Harvest amaranth before it flowers. The flowers are bristly, and not good to eat, and, as they appear at every leaf axil, not just out at the growing tip, they are a pain to try to remove. Plants can get very big in rich soil before they flower.

The stalks of amaranth soften completely when cooked, so use those too.

Harvest as much as you can.

Lay rinsed **amaranth** on a wooden counter and cut into one-inch pieces, stalks and all.

Put an inch or **water** in a stock pot and bring to a boil.

Add the **cut amaranth stalks and leaves**.

Bring to a boil and cook for 50-60 minutes, adding water if needed.

Serve with **tamari** or **miso**.

If there are leftovers, freeze them. Nothing is better than amaranth greens in the dead of winter.



Early Spring Salad

Dress with plenty of olive oil, a splash of tamari, and a little herbal vinegar of your choice.

Garlic mustard leaves
violet leaves
dandelion leaves



Wild Salad with Wild Flowers

You will need a sharp pair of plant scissors and a few baskets. For safety sake, I harvest each plant into a different container. Keep the chickweed stalks parallel as you cut them and place them in your basket that way, making them much easier to cut into uniform pieces.

- Largest basket (about 50% of salad): **chickweed leaves, flowers, and stalks**
- Large basket (about 25% of salad): **first year garlic mustard leaves**
- Medium basket (about 5% of salad): mild leaves, your choice, **mallow** or **five-finger ivy** (Virginia creeper)
- Smaller baskets (total of 20% of salad): aromatic, strong-tasting plants like **lemon balm, wild oregano, bergamot, cronewort, mint, catnip, and thyme**
- Smallest basket: Mixed flowers. Individual blossoms of **Queen of the Night, violets, periwinkle, and wild geranium**. Entire flower heads of **garlic mustard** and **barbara's cress**.

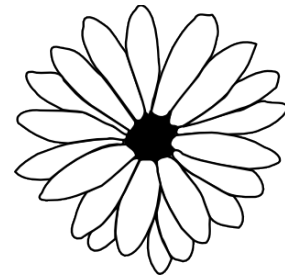
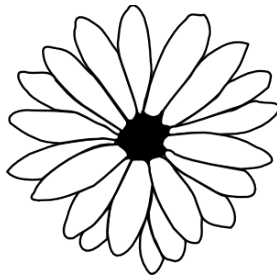
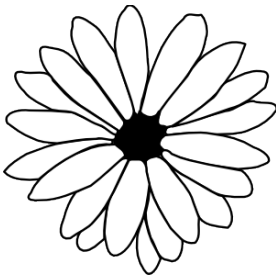


Preparation: Cut **chickweed** into small (1/2 inch) pieces; tear **garlic mustard, mallow, and five-finger ivy** into bite-sized pieces; finely mince aromatic plants.

Combine in a bowl. Add a splash of **tamari**, a good pour of **herbal vinegar**, and plenty of **extra virgin olive oil** (at least one tablespoonful per serving of salad).

Toss, artfully arrange flowers or simply toss them on the salad and serve.

I like gomasio (sesame salt) on my salads



Homemade Balsamic Vinegar

This easy vinegar is a delicious way to ingest natural vitamin C, trace minerals, and anti-infective, anti-oxidant resins. It may be made any day of the year, including in the middle of the winter.

Fill a jar to the very top with needles from your favorite pine tree.

In the Northeast, white pine is the tastiest. In the west, pinon pine tops the list. No pine is poisonous, so feel free to experiment with your local pines.



Pines have long, thin needles, not short, flat needles like poisonous yew. If you are uncertain about the pine you have in mind, make a small amount the first time. Some pines are too resinous to make tasty vinegars.

Then fill your jar with apple cider vinegar.

Put a plastic, glass, cork, or other non-metal lid on the jar.

Wait six weeks, then add to salads, soups, beans, anywhere you would use regular balsamic vinegar.

If you are particularly impatient you could start using your homemade balsamic vinegar in as little as two weeks. The longer it sits, the better it gets.





Nourishing Herbal Infusions

- On a scale, weigh out **one ounce** of dried herb
- Put it in a **quart** jar and
- Fill to the top with **boiling water**
- Stir with a wooden spoon until the herb is all wet
- You may need to add more hot water now.
- Or you can add **one ounce** of dried herb to a **quart of boiling water** and stir well.
- In either case, cover closely and allow to steep for **four hours**.
- Strain the liquid from the herb.
- Squeeze the herb to extract all the liquid.
- Return the herb to the earth.
- Refrigerate the liquid.
- Drink it cold. Drink it hot. Add honey or not.

Nourishing herbal infusions are made from food-like herbs like stinging nettle, oat-straw, comfrey leaf, raspberry leaf, mullein, hawthorn leaves and flowers, rosehips, and red clover blossoms. Nourishing herbs provide lavish amounts of bio-available phyto-nutrients.

Nourishing herbal are less expensive, safer, and more effective than supplements. Nourishing herbal infusions are real food, real protein, real minerals, real vitamins, with little or no calories.

Infusions do not need to be digested. Because the minerals in a nourishing herbal infusion carry valences opposite those of blood, they are electrically drawn the bloodstream, bypassing digestion.



Surprisingly fast results, in as little as ten days, include more energy, greater ability to focus, less anxiety, improved complexion, better sleep, less overall pain, and better oral health. Daily use of nourishing herbal infusions helps keep blood pressure low, blood sugar even, and provides iron, calcium, potassium, and other minerals in lavish amounts.

I drink at least a quart a day, choosing infusion in preference to juice, soda, beer, wine, even water. I rotate through stinging nettle, red clover, oatstraw, linden, and comfrey leaf infusions.

* Stinging **nettle** (*Urtica dioica*) is the herb of **energy**. Nettle infusion rebuilds the **adrenals** and the **kidneys**.

* Grown for pregnant and lactating cows, **red clover** blossoms (*Trifolium pratense*) are one of the best **fertility** medicines and the world's leading **anti-cancer** herb.

* **Oatstraw** (*Avena sativa*) infusion strengthens the **nerves**, protects the heart, nourishes the **bones**, and put the **zest** back in between your legs.

* Linden (*Tilia americana*) flower tea is the world's leading **cold and flu** preventative/curative. I use ½ **ounce** dried blossoms per quart of boiling water. Linden **counters inflammation** throughout the body.

* **Comfrey** leaf (*Symphytum uplandica x*) infusion makes the ligaments, tendons, skin, and bones **strong and stretchy**, powerful and flexible. Comfrey the comforting is an amazing healer. Comfrey improves the functional ability of the brain.



Hibiscus Punch Concentrate

I buy commercial Hibiscus sabdariffa and brew it up strong as the basis of this punch, adding herbs from my garden to change the flavor as I wish. Hibiscus helps counter bladder infections as well as cranberry and can lower blood pressure as well as hawthorn. And all this health from an herb that tastes like (sour) candy!

Place one ounce **hibiscus** in a quart jar.

Add 1-3 teaspoonfuls dried or 1-3 Tablespoonfuls **fresh peppermint** (or **wild mint, spearmint, chocolate mint, orange mint**).

Harvest as much as you can.

Add 2-6 teaspoonfuls dried or 2-6 Tablespoonfuls of **lemon verbena** (or **lemon grass, lemon balm**).

Add 2-4 Tablespoonfuls of **honey**.

Fill jar to the top with **boiling water** and tightly lid.

Steep at room temperature for 4-10 hours.

Strain. Chill if not using at once.

To serve: Add 4-6 ounces of Hibiscus Infusion Punch to one quart of water; pour over ice; add a sprig of fresh flowers



Rose Petal Honey

This lovely honey can be made with any unsprayed rose petals. Regular use of rose honey is said to prolong life. I love to spread it on my toast; rose petals and all. Pour boiling water over a spoonful to make a tea that can ease premenstrual problems. Rose honey is thought to enhance fertility and to promote desire, too.

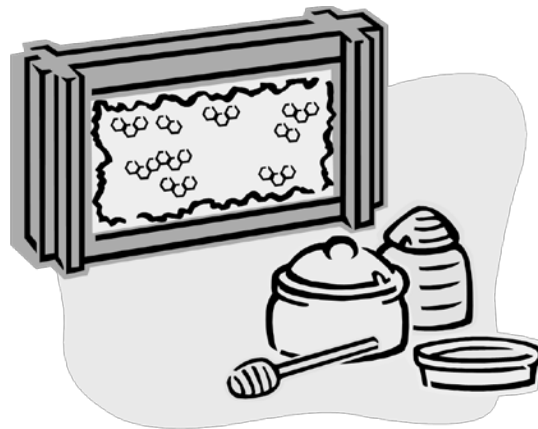


Lay an old sheet under a wild (or cultivated) rose bush.

Shake the bush so the rose petals fall onto the sheet. Give the bugs a moment to fly, run, and amble off.

Then pour the rose petals into a jar, filling it as much as possible (press hard).

Then fill the jar with honey. Label, lid, and wait six weeks before using.



Dr. Dent de Lyon's Practical Magical Digestive Aide

I am Dr. Dent de Lyon, the most generous of all plants. I am ready to help you. I am so easy to use. You cannot do wrong.

Come here. What troubles you? Acid reflux? Loss of appetite? Gall bladder pain? Sour stomach? Gas spasms? You are at the right place. Take what you will of me; I am ready to help you. What will you have? My flowers? Take them! My leaves? Take them! My roots? Take them! Good medicines, all. Take, take. I am the most generous of all plants.

Take me gently, gently, else I will cry milky tears and lose some of my power. Dig my root if you will. Gently loosen my perennial connections underground. Take me gently, gently from Her breast to yours.

Shake clinging soil back to the ground, then rinse me gently, gently, softly scrub the last bits of dirt away if you will.

Then be sharp and quick. Sharp knife, quickly cut through my root, through my leaves, make small pieces to fill your jar. Then, quick. Quick! Cover my exposed pieces with vinegar, with vodka. Make of me what you will. I am the Practical Magical Digestive Aide. I am Dr. Dent de Lyon.

Oh, and don't forget, you can also dry my roots in the oven until very brown and grind and brew them like coffee. I am the most generous of all plants.

