



# “Musing from the Hill” by Susan Crossett

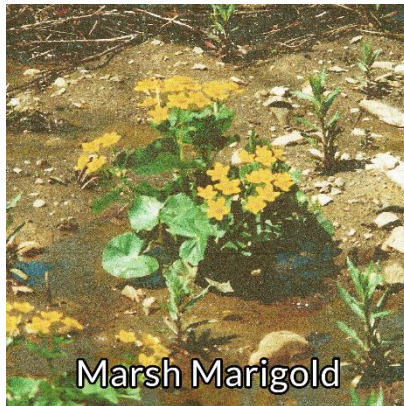
as seen on the *Dunkirk Observer* on Fridays  
and the *Jamestown Post-Journal* on Saturdays



## Finding More New Things to Eat

Published November 19, 2021

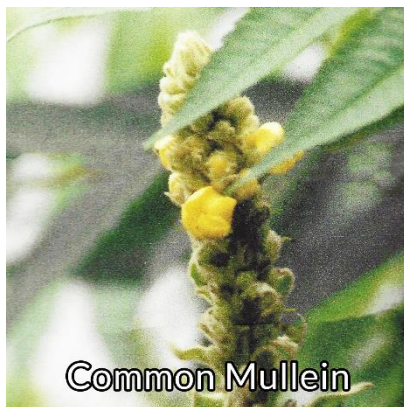
Ready for more suggested recipes? I do suspect one would now have to wait until the lovely days of spring and summer to continue gathering the goodies. But let's go.



Marsh Marigold

Marsh-marigold (Cowslip): Collected before the plant has finished blossoming, the young leaves (with the stalks removed) are excellent cooked for 20-30 min. in 2 or 3 changes of boiling water. The flower buds can be used as capers when boiled for 10 min. in 2 changes of water and pickled in hot vinegar. Do not drink the juice in which the buds have been pickled. Do not eat raw. Cowslip contains an acrid poison that is only dispelled upon cooking.

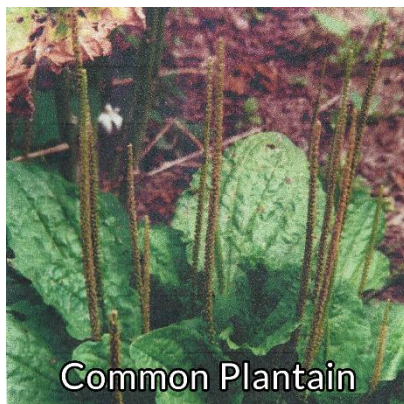
Common Mullein: Steep the dried leaves for 5-10 min. for tea.



Common Mullein

Wild mustards: The tender young basal leaves, gathered during the first warm days of spring, are excellent boiled for 30 min. – like spinach they lose their bulk upon cooking. Although slightly bitter, a few freshly chopped young leaves are a fine addition to fresh salads. As the leaves mature, they become too bitter to use. The clusters of unopened flower buds, boiled for 3-5 min., are a delicious substitute for broccoli. Do not overcook. The tender green seedpods, collected while the flowers are still in bloom, can be pickled or added to fresh salads. The ripe seeds are a familiar seasoning in pickle recipes; in addition, they make an outstanding hot yellow mustard when finely ground.

Nettle: The young shoots (while still only a few inches tall) and tender, pale green top leaves are excellent simmered for 10-15 min. in just enough water to cover and served with butter and lemon; the stinging qualities disappear upon cooking. Leaves contain vitamins A and C, as well as iron and protein.



Common Plantain

Pigweed; Lamb's-quarters: The tender leaves and tips are excellent steamed or boiled for 10-15 min., bulk greatly reduced after cooking. The highly nutritious seeds can be boiled to make a breakfast gruel, or ground into flour.

Plantains: Chop and add to salads, or boil for 10-15 min. and serve with butter. Collect Common Plantain leaves while very young; they soon

become too stringy to use.

Purslane: The mildly acid mucilaginous stems and leaves are excellent added to salads or boiled for 10 min. in just enough water to cover; wash them thoroughly first to remove any sand or grit. The tender fat stems can be pickled. Leaves and stems rich in iron also contain vitamins A and C, calcium, phosphorus.

Queen Anne's Lace: Prepare the first-year roots like garden carrots. Caution: early leaves resemble Poison Hemlock. (Small amounts may cause paralysis and death.)

Shepherd's Purse: Add the young leaves to salads, or prepare like spinach; gather before the flowers appear. Use the dried seedpods as a pepperlike seasoning.

Staghorn sumac: Collect the entire fruit cluster, rub gently to bruise the berries, and soak for 10-15 min. in cold water. Remove the cluster, and pour the pink juice through cheesecloth to strain out the hairs and any loose berries. Sweeten to taste and chill; tastes like pink lemonade.

Common sunflower: The seeds are smaller than those from domesticated plants, but just as good. Boiling the crushed kernels releases a light vegetable oil. The roasted shells can be used to make coffee.

Sow-thistles: The young leaves can be prepared like those of Common Dandelion. In case of Spiny-leaved Sow-thistle, remove the spines first.

Bull thistle: With the spines removed, the young leaves can be added to salads or cooked as greens. The pithy young stems are excellent peeled and eaten raw or cooked. The raw or cooked roots of first-year plants (those without stems) are a fine survival food.

Yuccas: The large petals make an interesting addition to salads. "Interesting"? Good eating!

I have omitted (there is a space limit plus some are rather more obvious) wild leek, wild lettuce, Jerusalem artichoke, dandelions, cress, chicory, wild basal and Japanese bamboo (since we can't get rid of it, enjoy like asparagus). And wouldn't you think False Buckwheat and Butter-and-eggs would have made the list?

All right, readers. Stick this away until early spring and then HAPPY HUNTING!

I plan to be enjoying with you.

Written October 8, 2021

