

Native Wild Foods

Wild Onions and Garlic

New recipes!



by Dick Deuerling and Peggy Lantz

Any plant that smells like onion or garlic is good to eat. If it looks like onion or garlic – but doesn't have the odor – beware of it.

Onions and garlics belong in the lily family. The most common edible species is *Allium canadense*, sometimes called meadow garlic, as well as wild onion. It has flattened solid leaves instead of hollow tubes, and the spathe is at the top of a pith-filled round tube that may carry just bulblets, or may have bulblets with pinkish-white flowers, or may have sprouted bulblets with green tails.

All parts of the onion are edible – the underground bulbs, or the leaves on top, or the bulblets. You can use them like green onions before the flower stalk shoots up, or dig the bulbs at the time when the tops shatter and the bulblets break up and fall to the ground, or you can eat the bulblets. Or pickle them. Or plant them and make an onion patch of your own in the back yard.

In late summer all evidence of the plant is vanished. If you want to dig the bulbs then, you'll have to remember where they were, and you'll have to dig four to six inches deep to find them.

Onions propagate by splitting the underground bulb, by top bulblets growing like onion sets, and sometimes by seed. Garlic sets pro-

duce toes on the sides of the underground bulb and sometimes bulblets on the top.

Wild onions can be substituted in any recipe that calls for grocery store onions. Here are a few especially for the wild ones.

Wild Onions, Scrambled Eggs, and Bacon.

6 wild onion bulbs, peeled, washed, and chopped
 4 slices of bacon
 2 Tbsp. milk
 2 eggs, beaten lightly
 Morton's Seasoned Salt to taste
 Fry bacon until almost crisp. Drain off fat except for 2 Tbsp. Push bacon to one side of skillet. Add wild onions and seasoning salt, and saute until onions are clear yellow. Remove bacon to plate. Add milk to eggs in bowl, whip lightly. Add egg mixture to onions, and cook until as done as you like them. Put eggs on top of bacon. Enjoy! I do, lots of mornings!

Pickled onions

1 ½ qts. wild onion bulbs
 ½ cup salt
 1 ½ cups granulated sugar
 1 ½ Tbsp. mustard seed, either wild or from the store
 1 ½ Tbsp. peppergrass seed
 2 bay leaves per ½ pint jar
 4 ½ cups distilled vinegar
 Scald onions in boiling water for 2 minutes, then quickly dip in cold water. If any skins are loose, peel them off.
 Put onions in a glass, stainless steel, or enamel pan. Sprinkle with salt. Cover with cold water, and let stand for 12 hours. Then drain, rinse, and drain again.
 Combine sugar, mustard seed, peppergrass seed, and vinegar, and simmer for 5 or 6 minutes.
 Sterilize jars. Pack onions in the clean hot jars. Add 2 bay leaves to each jar alongside the onions. Pour hot liquid over top to within a half inch of top, covering all onions. Cap immediately, using new lids. Process for 5

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minutes in boiling water bath. Makes 6 or 7 half-pints.

Wild Onion Soup

- ¼ cup butter
- 1 cup of wild onions, sliced thin
- 1 Tbsp. flour
- 1 quart of beef stock

Melt butter in a skillet, add onions and saute until onions are clear yellow. Add flour and stir for 5 minutes. Add beef stock and simmer until onions are nice and tender. Serve with toast. Makes enough for four.

This recipe is from Marie Mellinger of Georgia. I haven't tried it, but it sounds like a winner to me. She had many recipes on wild onions.

Wild Onion Skillet Bread

- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 ½ tsp. salt
- ½ cup cold water
- 1 cup wild onions, chopped

Mix ingredients together. Put a dollop of bacon fat in a skillet. When hot, drop the dough by tablespoonful in the skillet and fry like pancakes.

Here's another recipe from Marie Mellinger. This is a really simple one. I haven't tried it, but when Marie does it, it's good.

Clean and wash onions, parboil them, strain, cook them again, and drain. Season with melted butter, dress with fried bread crumbs.

As always, collect your wild foods in safe places, not along roads where pesticides may have been sprayed, or automobile exhaust poisons have collected. Be safe, not sorry.

Garlic or Onion Butter

- 5 stalks of wild onion or field garlic
- ½ lb. of butter or margarine

Wash the onion stalks and cut off any pieces that aren't nice. Soften the butter, and put it in the blender, blending until all the pieces disappear. The butter will take on a beautiful chartreuse color, and it tastes somewhat out of this world.

Pour the butter into a closeable plastic container and chill it. Serve as dip on crackers or French bread. Or slice French bread the long way, spread on the butter, and broil it a minute or two. Great!

Creamed Wild Onions

- 1 cup wild onions with leaves
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 2 T flour
- ¾ tsp. salt
- Pepper to taste
- 1 cup milk

Wash onions thoroughly, remove tough skins from the outside, and any yellow parts from the leaves. Cut up into one inch pieces. Simmer in water till tender. Melt butter, add flour, salt, and pepper, and cook, stirring, for a minute. Add onions, stir in milk, simmer until thick.

And then there's this recipe. Just reading it sounds good.

Jelly Glazed Wild Onions

- ½ cup of beauty berry jelly
- 1 Tbsp. butter
- 20 wild onion bulbs

Parboil the washed onions, and drain. Blend the jelly and butter on low heat until smooth. Put onions in baking dish, add the jelly mix, and bake for 20-30 minutes at 350°, turning several times until glazed. Serves four.

Do you need a jelly recipe for beauty berry (*Callicarpa americana*)? Here are two passed on by Betty Kerr:

Beauty Berry Jelly

- 1 ½ qts. beauty berries, washed
- 2 qts. water

Boil 20 minutes and strain to make infusion. Use 3 cups infusion, bring to boil, add 1 envelope Sure Jel and 4 ½ cups sugar. Bring to second boil and boil 2 minutes. Remove from burner and allow to stand until foam forms. Skim off foam. Pour into sterilized jars and cap.

Even Better Beauty Berry Jelly

Follow previous instructions, except use 3 cups infusion plus ½ cup lemon juice, 1 envelope Sure Jel, and 5 cups sugar.

Any requests for special recipes? Or do you have some recipes to share? Or information or questions about other edible plants? Write Dick Deuerling, 5611 Sandalwood Drive, Orlando, FL 32809.