

## BOOK REVIEW

**Wild Seasons: Gathering and Cooking Wild Plants of the Great Plains.** Kay Young. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press. 1993. \$15.00 (paper); \$40.00 (cloth). Pp. xxiv, 318. ISBN 0-8032-4906-3 (alkaline paper); 0-8032-9904-4 (paperback).

Quite simply, in this wonderful book (and quite literally it is filled with wonder); author Kay Young and illustrator Marc E. Marcuson approach perfection. The nearly 250 recipes it includes have been tested by the author and other cooks of long experience. If I had not been already convinced that the author "knew her onions," this quote from her discussion of wild black raspberries would have persuaded me: "Plants growing along streams or in other areas where they can draw enough moisture produce plump, juicy fruit and are one of nature's most outstanding treats." (p. 163).

I was impressed with the glossary of botanical terms, glossary of cooking terms, the appendix on canning, freezing, and drying, and the three indexes of

plants, of recipes by plant, and of recipes by food category. These carefully prepared features contribute to easy use of the book.

Readers are guided and encouraged to develop environmental and ecological sensitivity to wild plant resources. The Introduction ends with "Guidelines for the Safe and Sustainable Use of Edible Wild Plants." These ten points could and should serve as a model for the development of environmental awareness anywhere and everywhere.

Throughout the book the author offers accurate information about each species or group of related species discussed, such as a description of the plant, its distribution and habitat, edible parts, seasons to collect, and any cautions of which the collector should be aware. Kay Young also offers interesting and useful anecdotal material about how, when, and where she acquired additional information and recipes. I especially liked reading about the annual Poke Sallet Festival in Harlan County, Kentucky.

What more can I say? Beg, borrow, or preferably buy Kay Young's *Wild Seasons*. As in the Shaker hymn, *Simple Gifts*, while reading it you will find yourself "in the valley of love and delight."

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