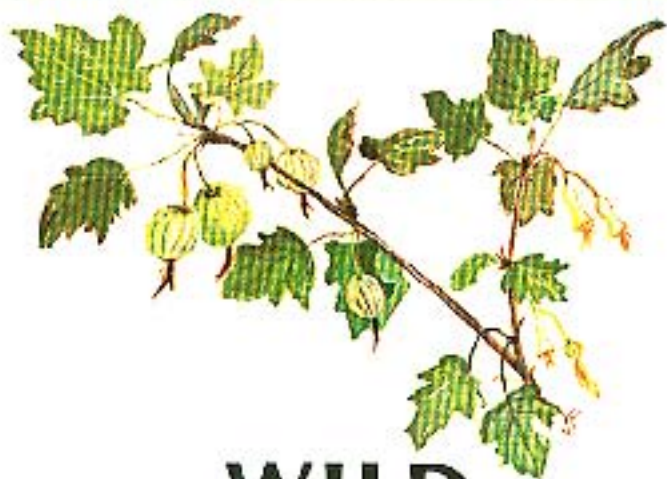




**WILD
EDIBLES
OF
MISSOURI**



Jan Phillips

WILD EDIBLES OF MISSOURI

Jan Phillips

edited by Bernadette Dryden
drawings by Cindie Brunner
paintings by Jan Phillips

published by
THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION



Printed on
Recycled
Paper

to my "wild" family
Abe, Sheli, & Janette
...who ate the weeds dutifully...

Second Edition

© copyright 1979, 1989, 1992, 1995
by The Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri

Equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from programs of the Missouri Department of Conservation is available to all individuals without regard to their race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to the Department of Conservation, P.O. Box 180, Jefferson City, MO 65102, or U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, 18th and "C" Streets NW, Washington D.C. 20240, Missouri Relay Center — 1-800-735-2966 (TDD).

introduction

In the many years of my teaching career I have been involved with an educational philosophy of teaching in which the curriculum is interdisciplinary and presented in an adventurous, experiential manner. This work has, indeed, been my adventure!

I was placed in a situation which impelled and required me to learn new skills. Those newly acquired skills of researching, recognizing, identifying and using edible plants were meaningful beyond my previous range of knowledge and required a great deal of planning and decision making. The feedback was immediate as my family either ate or rejected my edible dishes. The information needed to be organized into a book for my thesis which reflected upon the entire three years' experience and linked practice with theory. The additional challenge was to imagine that my book might be published.

The adventure could have ended on that note, yet, unimagined at the time, another total adventure was waiting. The editor strongly urged me to illustrate my work. In trying to portray the edibles, I have experienced the agony and ecstasy of painting. I am certainly not an artist and have no art class exposure, which will be evident in the paintings. Indeed, these have been a stress-challenge activity in which each painting will show the agony of trial and error and the ecstasy of having completed it. This *has* been an adventure!

Therefore, this book is a labor of love. The results were obtained by excitedly and painfully keying out plants, learning through mistakes, celebrating new finds. I wish I were a botanist, or even a person with a good background in plants; instead I am an avid lover of the out-of-doors whose hope it is to arouse some curiosity and interest in closer observation of nature's tremendous supply of plants.

This research was basically conducted on plants within Missouri, yet vacation travel has proved the availability of many of the same plants throughout much of the Midwest.

CAUTIONS for various plants have been included, not with the intention of scaring anyone away from trying the plant, but as a warning to always identify your plant carefully before you eat it. *It is essential that you know poisonous plants before collecting edible ones.* Some people may be sensitive to the chemicals contained in and on various plants while others show no effect. Incidentally, our domestic potato and rhubarb have poisonous parts. It would be a shame had we thrown the edible out with the inedible. I am intrigued and bewildered by the considerable discomfort which our forefathers must have experienced while identifying those plants which were not fit for consumption!

Many of the plants have fascinating life histories concerning personal uses, folklores or medicinal qualities. Such colorful background information is included strictly as points of interest — NOT as a suggestion that you become your own herb doctor!

While knowledge and uses of the wild edible is exciting and certainly a conversation piece, abandonment of your local grocery is not in order.

An exorbitant amount of time is required to locate, pick, clean and prepare wild edibles. I have spent seven hours picking and cleaning a salad for a Wild Food Party for eight. If dreams exist in your mind of becoming self-sufficient and living off the land, know that the energy spent in securing the food is rarely replaced by the resulting meal.

But be assured also that you are in for some fascinating adventures, some moments of stress, minutes of insightful realizations, hours of awe, days of wonder and a lifelong appreciation of the beauty and miracles found in the world of plants.

Jan Phillips
March 1979

acknowledgments

Much love to my mother, Jewell Robinson, who “planted” my love and awareness for the out-of-doors and whose recipes and insights are absorbed within this book.

A special thanks to Bill McConnel of Webster College who allowed and encouraged this work.

A grateful thanks for the outstanding work of Julian A. Steyermark, *Flora of Missouri*, from which I freely pulled and used information regarding habitat, location and length of flower bloom.

I am compelled to express an appreciation for Fernald and Kinsey's book, *Edible Wild Plants of Eastern North America*, which was invaluable.

Many thanks to the St. Louis County Parks and Recreation Department whose parklands were utilized for a good deal of my research.

Love and thanks to the Woods, Morleys, McIntires and Naus — who consented to be guinea pigs at my wild food parties and whose laughter aided me through this research.

My sincere appreciation to the Missouri Department of Conservation for publishing this book so that the contents may be shared with others.

A particular embrace to Michael McIntosh, publications editor, whose encouragement was instrumental in providing the necessary confidence for my paintings. His ideas, editing and joshing were appreciated.

preface

The purpose of this work was to locate and experiment with Missouri's wild edibles. This I have done.

The edibles are arranged by the plant's flowering color:

- 1) white; 2) yellow, cream and orange; 3) green;
- 4) brown; 5) red, also pink and lavender; 6) blue and purple.

Each plant has a botanical name attached. The length or season of the flower bloom is listed under "Flowers." "Habitat" refers to the areas where that particular plant prefers to grow, which gives a clue when trying to locate it. "Location" is a reference to where the plant is commonly found in Missouri. "Collection" tells when the plant is edible or ready to be picked, pinched or dug. My hope is that several of the "Uses" or suggested ways to prepare the wildings will be tried by others. "Caution" is a warning for possible poisonous or rash-producing plants or parts of plants.

Wild Edibles of Missouri may seem to be a contradiction on the conservation of plants. While most sources suggest that plants be protected from destruction, this book advocates that the plant be used.

Selected and careful use of wild edibles is imperative, both from the view of the plant as well as that of the user. Because of possible side effects, *all wild edibles should be eaten in moderation!* Because of fear of eradication, *all edibles should be picked in moderation!*

Fruits, nuts and berries may be gathered with little fear of any damage. However, additional attention should be given to plants that are either pulled or dug up. While good judgment must be exercised to assure the continued existence of any plant, danger does exist from the thoughtless collector who wipes out an entire colony. Pick specimens that will least affect that plant's continued reproduction.

Whenever possible, bits of roots and rhizomes should be replanted or the seeds scattered in the disturbed earth as some insurance for replacing any damage done.

You can practice good conservation habits and reap the harvest, too.

"A seed has an awesome responsibility, but it's superbly designed to do its task." (from *Living Water*, Brown & Cavagnaro)

Enjoy the wonders it produces.