

Forage, Harvest, Feast: A Wild-Inspired Cuisine

Marie Viljoen

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The renewed interest in foraging wild foods has inspired many new cookbooks, but none is as comprehensive as Marie Viljoen's *Forage, Harvest, Feast: A Wild-Inspired Cuisine*. Viljoen is a writer and wild foods evangelist who packs nearly five hundred recipes for thirty-six wild plants into her well-illustrated, playfully written book.

The emphasis is on plants that can be sustainably harvested or which have potential for commercial growing, such as lamb's quarters, serviceberries, and nettles. Gardeners will be doubly delighted to learn how to transform traditional weeds and invasive plants into tempting dishes. How soul-satisfying to turn the chore of weeding out destructive garlic mustard and pesky purslane into harvesting for pesto or a refreshing gazpacho.

While the author stresses that her cookbook should be supplemented by field guides and other plant identification resources, she does include information about when plants are ready to harvest, botanical history and lore, and pointers for home and small-scale cultivation. An important bonus are the frequent descriptions of the amount of labor involved in harvest or preparation of recipes; most recipes are simple enough for novice cooks, but it is helpful to know up front when their preparation will require lengthier or trickier cooking or abundant amounts of elbow grease.

Extensive chapter and recipe introductions are well researched and fun to read. The author relates her own experiences and experiments, invoking many a humorous phrase along the way, as when she wisely advises cooks to carefully pit stone fruit "if you are worried about tooth lawsuits" and rhapsodizes about a Cucumber and Green Prickly Ash Salad that is "a smooth, crisp, sweet-and-sour flavor bomb."

Recipes range from classics like Elderberry Syrup to boldly flavored concoctions like Bayberry Back Ribs and Pokeweed with Anchovy Butter. A smattering of sophisticated cocktails round things out, including Black Ice (fir vodka, black chokeberry syrup, and vermouth) and milkweed-based cocktails like Migration and The Monarch.

Forage would be a great addition to the shelves of any outdoors enthusiast, small farmer, gardener, or adventurous cook.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (September/October 2018)

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