

## **WILD VEGETABLE SEASON ENDS, BUT WILD GAME TIME IS NEAR**

### **September 17, 2002**

I have been interested in cooking and food preparation for several years. It all started when I complained to my mother about how my eggs were cooked. I was informed that henceforth I would have no one to blame by myself if I did not like them.

The television Food Network has been an excellent source for improving those culinary skills and providing new ideas and choices one may never have known about otherwise. Since my recent prolonged sickness left me with time on my hands and a subsequent loss of appetite, I availed myself of same to improve both aspect of preparation and loss of appetite.

Due to my health problems, very few of my anticipated goals for the summer were met. I began to turn some of them over in my mind and decided to express some of them here in this venue, one reason being I will forego my proclivity of exposing the disingenuous nature inherent in nearly all liberal philosophy and ideology. My good friends with that bent and quarter deserve a break and a respite from the truth of their convictions.

One of my anticipated goals was to gather a sufficient number of frog legs to have a long overdue favorite game meal. It is a meal that is becoming harder to come by in this part of the State. Acid rain conditions have seriously affected frog populations as it has fish as well. Pesticides and herbicides have had the same effect in areas not subject to acid rain.

As a youth I supplemented my meager earnings selling frog legs to local restaurants. The once-popular entrée was supplied locally while today's is normally imported from Bangladesh or other warm climate nations. Regardless of where they come from frog legs are in my opinion, a real gourmet treat. Deep-fried in batter enhanced with garlic or other flavorings to personal preference, they are delicious.

I derive a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction in gathering my own. I was looking forward to fulfilling my craving and introducing my five grandsons to both the eating and gathering this summer. It will be something to look forward to in the coming year.

Gathering wild food adds to the pleasure and satisfaction of their enjoyment. Some of the wild food the more squeamish individuals should have no problem participating in are mushrooms, several varieties of berries, leeks, milkweed, fiddlehead ferns and burdock shoots. Of the aforementioned items we were only able to afford ourselves of a generous portion of wild blackberries.

Both leeks and mushrooms are high on my list of preferred wild foods.

Mushrooms require much more knowledge of the several varieties and the desirability of their flavor and use. This is very important since some varieties, although eatable, have poor flavor and some are poisonous.

Wild mushrooms can be frozen, canned, and dried for future use, and their uses are many and varied. In many quarters they are considered superior to cultivated varieties for flavor.

A novice has little trouble or danger in gathering leeks. Although they do not possess the same number of uses as mushrooms, they still can be utilized to enhance several other food dishes.

Wild leeks do not grow as large as their domestic counterparts but they are much more pronounced in flavor. My favorite use for both is in potato leek soup. Many hardy should enjoy the tender young sprouts eaten raw. They leave a most pungent and penetrating odor on your breath that puts garlic to shame. They are better tolerated by companions who have also partaken of them.

Time is short and nearly out for most of the wild foods mentioned above, but the season for the more traditional wild game is fast approaching and I anticipate being somewhat able to cope with garnering a variety of it. My greatest pleasure will come in enjoying the sights and sounds of nature as I pursue my goals and introduce my grandchildren to the sport and the safe use of firearms in those pursuits.

Good luck to all of the many others of you reading this as you follow the same or other pleasures that you enjoy.