

An Unlikely Culinary Column: Getting Healthy By Eating Greens

By Karen Kain

The root of the dandelion is often used for medicinal purposes. The flowers can be harvested for wine. It is true the greens have a bitterness, but are eaten for their nutritional properties. Dandelions are packed with iron, vitamin A, vitamin K and calcium. They have been referred to as the most nutritious leafy vegetable that you can eat.

Dandelions support digestion, reduce swelling and inflammation; treat viruses, jaundice, edema, gout, eczema and acne. Recent studies suggest that they also combat cancer.

For these reasons dandelions have come to our dining room table. I fully admit that they can be, and are, quite frankly, bitter.

I am sharing a few recipes that I think you will enjoy and are my favorites. You can substitute kale, spinach or chard in all of these recipes. If you are going forward slowly I suggest you combine any of these with the dandelions to cut the bitterness.

Cheers!

Dandelion Sauté with Sausage

Ingredients

- 1 Bunch Dandelions chopped
- 2-3 Tbsp. Water
- 2-3 Tbsp. Olive oil
- 3 Cloves Garlic minced
- 1/2 Bunch Parsley, finely chopped
- To taste Salt and pepper
- Pinch Hot pepper flakes optional
- 2 Pounds Sausage

Directions:

Heat up the olive oil in a large skillet; add the garlic and sauté for a few minutes. Add the dandelions and sauté until they are al dente. Remove the dandelions from the pan and set aside. Chop the parsley. Add the sausage, garlic, parsley, salt and hot pepper to the skillet. Break up the sausage and add the water, stirring frequently. Cook on medium heat until they the sausage is fully cooked. Serve with a salad and crusty bread. This is a fabulous dish when served with red or white sauce over pasta noodles.

Dandelion Greens Pesto

Pesto is an adaptable treat with many different ways to make it and equally

many different ways to serve. This is one version of Dandelion Pesto.

Ingredients:

- 3/4 Cup Pumpkin seeds
- 4 Cloves Garlic minced
- 1/2 Cup Freshly grated Parmesan
- 1 Bunch Dandelion greens, about 2 cups loosely packed
- 1 Tbsp. Lemon juice
- 1/2 Cup Olive oil
- 1/2 Tsp Salt
- 1/4 Tsp Hot pepper flakes
- To taste Pepper

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Roast the pumpkin seeds until just fragrant, about 5 minutes. Remove from the oven and allow to cool. Chop the dandelion greens. Put the pumpkin seeds and garlic in a food processor. Pulse the garlic and pumpkin seeds together until very finely chopped. Add the greens to the food processor. Add Parmesan cheese, hot peppers, salt, oil, and lemon juice, then process continuously until combined. Stopping the processor when needed to scrape the sides, adding more oil if needed. Add salt and pepper to taste.



Spicy Dandelion Pineapple Juice

Ingredients:

- 1 Cup Dandelion greens
- 1 1/2 Cups Fresh pineapple
- 1 Jalapeño seeded
- 1 Lime cut into lime zest strips

Directions:

Cut the stem off the jalapeño and remove the seeds. Chop the pineapple. Thinly slice the zest off the lime. Juice the dandelion greens, pineapple and jalapeño. Garnish with lime zest and serve immediately, poured over ice cubes or at room temperature.

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City Water Service and Billing

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and Parks Service Fees, which helps fund Parks maintenance.

The inventory of all water services in the city system was a time consuming and tedious task. Now complete, the inventory mapped every single water service and collected information about each water meter at the associated water service. The inventory was completed by Public Works staff along with help from volunteers, including then City Councilor Donna Webb and Public Works Committee member Dale Webb.

The inventory identified mistakes that had been made previously in setting rates on certain accounts. "The ground truthing really started clarifying the correct meters size so everyone can be appropriately charged," says Mitchell. "When we don't know the correct data then we are potentially losing a whole bunch of revenue."

One of the issues for the City has been the fact that they have not had a Public Works Director for almost ten years. Without someone responsible for overseeing the City utilities, things have slipped through the cracks. "Everyone has been doing the daily work, but no one has been focused on and thinking about the big picture," says Mitchell.

With accurate data in hand, City staff and Mayor Mitchell have been work-

ing to verify information, input the new data into the billing system, and standardize and fix inconsistencies in billing. The new billing system will provide accurate reports and data for future decision making as well as allow the City to move forward with accurate water and sewer rate studies in the future. It will provide valuable information for current budgeting and future capital improvement projects. According to Mitchell the City intends to implement usage based billing for sewer charges in the near future.

Through the water service inventory the City has identified 1003 potential billable water services. 867 of those services are currently active. "Our old billing system couldn't even tell us how many accounts were active, which accounts were flood buy-outs or vacant," says Mitchell.

Fousek agrees. "Before it was a guessing game. Now when there's a problem there is a way to fix it."

"It's nice for the City to be in a place where we have steady and accurate data that we can rely on and use to base revenue projections," said Mitchell.

Vernonia's Voice is published twice each month on the 1st and 3rd Thursday. Our next issue will be out March 6.



Celebrate Dr. Seuss's Birthday at the Library!

Tuesday, March 3

6:00 pm

Get a picture taken with the Cat in the Hat!

Bring your own camera or the library will take one and send it to you for free.

BIRTHDAY CAKE!

Find Dr. Seuss characters hidden throughout the library March 2 - 7 and enter to win a prize drawing!

A Read Across America Event sponsored by the Friends of the Vernonia Library

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