

EATING WEEDS

Urban forager and author comes to Cozmic

The first time she pulled weeds out of someone's yard in Portland and made them into a salad, Rebecca Lerner didn't much like them, saying they had "an unpleasant texture that suggested I was eating lawn clippings." For five days she boiled slugs, made nettle broth and munched burdock root. She wound up not eating the slugs, she writes in her book, *Dandelion Hunter: Foraging the Urban Wilderness*, after "their skin turned white and their guts burst out in green goo."

It may sound like an episode of *Portlandia*, but it's her life. Lerner is an author, blogger and urban forager. Her original mission to eat only wild food she foraged in Portland for one week was a challenge to see if she as an urban dweller could survive an apocalypse. She didn't make it the full week, but she turned the project into a blog, book and an education about how to live off the land, city-style.

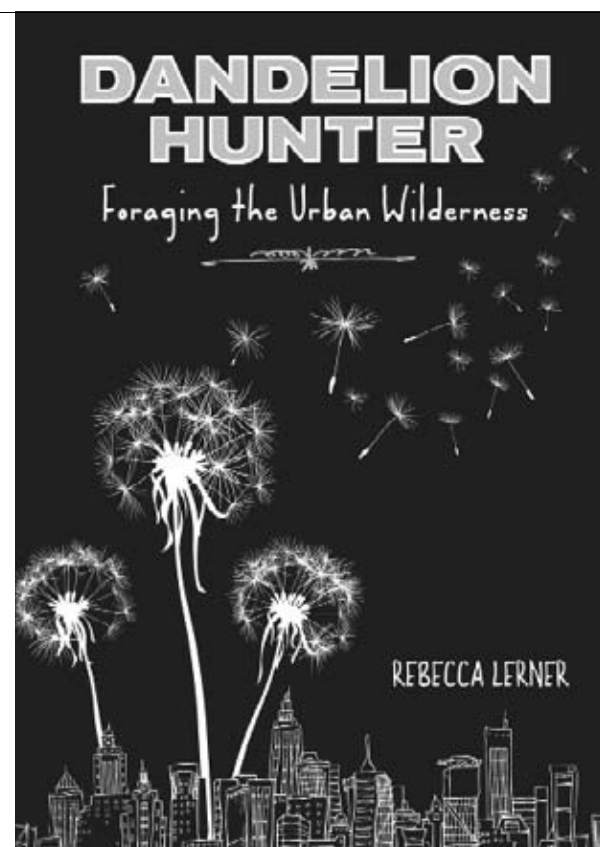
Lerner is not a full-time forager. "It's not what I do instead of grocery shopping," she says. She adds, "I would

be concerned about my impact," because she doesn't feel the urban environment could support a 100-percent foraged diet for her and for other people.

She does want people to see the abundance that even a city has so they don't spray chemicals like Roundup. Weeds from dandelions are more than just "invasives." Most of the plants she sees are useful, she says, and one thing her book attempts to convey is that "there is a great reason not to kill them all, but instead treat them with respect."

Lerner advises harvesting in the city with common sense — a weed-filled yard has probably not been sprayed with chemicals, but a manicured yard with just a weed or two is not such a safe bet.

Want to learn to forage? Lerner will be speaking about urban foraging at Cozmic at 6 pm Monday, April 22. The event is free. She will be reading from her book and selling copies, and her blog about urban foraging can be found at firstways.com ■





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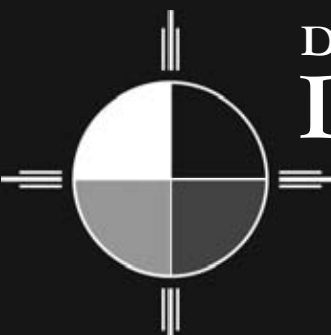


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