

## Unexpected Edibles

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Many perennials and woody plants that are a permanent part of our landscapes have edible possibilities. Some are obvious and others more obscure.

### Plants With Fruit

Species	Common Name	Attributes
Actinidia varieties	Kiwi	Fruits better with male pollinator, smaller but sweeter than commercial grown.
Akebia quinata	Fiveleaf Akebia	Fruit is gooey and has a great, sweet taste but seedy. The skin though, is bitter. Not self-fertile.
Amelanchier species & cvs	Serviceberry	Sweet, small fruit ripen in June, can be used raw, cooked, or dried.
Arctostaphylos uva-ursi	Bearberry	Small red berry is edible, becoming sweeter when cooked. Leaves used for tea.
Aronia melanocarpa & cvs.	Chokeberry	Fruit tastes vary by variety, used in jelly & juice, self-fertile, rich in pectin.
Chaenomeles speciosa & cvs.	Flowering Quince	Astringent tartness dissipates with cooking, used in jelly. Pick after frost.
Cydonia oblonga	Quince	Quince is high in vitamin C and pectin used for classic quince jelly.
Cornus kousa & cvs.	Chinese Dogwood	Fruit is used raw or cooked, sweet and juicy, custard-like flesh. Ripe late summer.
Cornus mas	Cornelian Cherry	Tart cherry-like fruit ripen in August. Use in jelly and jam.
Diospyros virginiana	Persimmon	Fleshy tomato-shaped fruit tasting of honeyed apricots when fully ripe after a frost.
Gaultheria procumbens	Wintergreen	Round 3/4 inch bright red berries have wintergreen flavor. Best after frost.
Hippophae rhamnoides	Sea Buckthorn	Small, bright orange, tart berries on female plants used in juice, high in vitamins A & C.
Malus domestica cvs.	Eating Apples	Domestic fruit, grown for apples. Cultivars range in texture and tartness.
Malus Dolgo & others	Crabapple	Can be used in jellies and jams.
Sambucus canadensis & cvs.	Elderberry	Cooked flowers and fruit are very flavorful, useful in pies and jelly. Must be cooked, never eat raw.
Schisandra chinensis	Magnolia Vine	Tart berries used in juice and jelly, or dried for journeys, rich in sugar. Has a sweet/sour flavor.
Vaccinium corymbosum & angustifolium	Blueberry	Useful raw, cooked or dried.
Vaccinium macrocarpon & cvs.	American Cranberry	Classic cranberry, tart fruit is usually dried or cooked, high in vitamin C.
Viburnum native species	Viburnum species	V. cassinoides, lentago, prunifolium have edible raisin-like fruits in autumn. V. trilobum in jelly and jam.

### Plants with Nuts & Seeds

Species	Common Name	Attributes
<i>Carya illinoensis</i> , ovata & lacinosa	Pecan & Hickories	Edible nuts are sweet raw or cooked into cakes and pies.
<i>Castanea crenata</i>	Japanese Chestnut	Sweet nuts when cooked, low in fat and oils but high in good carbohydrates and protein.
<i>Castanea mollissima</i>	Chinese Chestnut	Sweet nuts when cooked, low in fat and oils but high in good carbohydrates and protein.
<i>Corylus</i> species & cvs.	Filbert	Edible Hazelnuts, excellent raw or can be used in baking. Ripens mid to late fall.
<i>Fagus americana</i>	American Beech	Sweet nuts in fall, with a good texture. Can be used raw or cooked.
<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>	European Beech	Edible nuts can be toxic in large numbers.
<i>Juglans</i> species	Walnuts and Butternut	Produces large nuts with age. Raw seed is sweet and rich tasting.
<i>Quercus</i> species	Oak	Nuts can be sweet. Bicolor, alba, and robur are most flavorful. Can be used raw, cooked, or ground.
<i>Cephalotaxus harringtonia</i> and cvs.	Japanese Plum Yew	The seed and fruit are eaten in Japan. Fruit is said to be better from <i>Fastigiata</i> . Not self-fertile.
<i>Pinus koraiensis</i>	Korean Pine	Pines are not self-fertile. Seeds are delicacies.
<i>Pinus parviflora</i>	Japanese White Pine	Pines are not self-fertile. Seeds are delicacies.
<i>Xanthoceras sorbifolium</i>	Yellowhorn	Flowers, leaves, & seed are sweet when cooked, the seed tastes like a sweet chestnut.

### For the Tropical Feel

<i>Asimina triloba</i>	Paw Paw	A relative of the tropical Custard Apple, the fruit tastes of banana custard. Fruit ripens in fall and needs cross-pollination.
<i>Ficus carica</i> 'Chicago Hardy'	Chicago Hardy Fig	Fruits are purplish-brown with a good sweet flavor when fully ripe.
<i>Musa basjoo</i>	Japanese Fiber Banana	3" long banana after a few years. Needs a long growing season to ripen.
<i>Passiflora incarnata</i>	Hardy Passion Vine	Fruit has a sweet taste cooked or raw, once ripe. Useful in jelly, little pulp. High in niacin.
<i>Phyllostachys aureosulcata</i>	Yellow Groove Bamboo	Young shoots are excellent after cooking, barely bitter. Can also be used raw.
<i>Phyllostachys nuda</i>	Snow Bamboo	Young shoots are excellent after cooking, barely bitter. Can also be used raw.
<i>Poncirus trifoliata</i> 'Flying Dragon'	Hardy Orange	Small 2" bitter orange can be used in jams and preserves.

### Edible Flowers

Species	Common Name	Attributes
Aquilegia species & cvs.	Columbine	Flowers are very sweet, rich in nectar, and make a beautiful garnish.
Asclepia tuberosa	Butterfly Weed	Flower buds cooked. Flower clusters can be boiled down to make a sugary syrup.
Hemerocallis varieties and hybrids	Daylily	Daylily buds and flowers can taste a bit like asparagus/green peppers.
Hibiscus syriacus cvs.	Rose of Sharon	Flowers and young leaves have a mild, sweet flavor.
Lavatera t. 'Barnsley'	Lavatera Barnsley	Young leaves and flowers have a pleasant mild taste. Raw or cooked.
Monarda species & cvs.	Bee-Balm or Bergamot	Leaves and flowers add pleasant aroma to salad and tea, reminiscent of Earl Grey tea.
Perovskia atriplicifolia	Russian Sage	Flowers have a sweet taste, lavender scent, useful in salads or as a garnish.
Tradescantia species & cvs.	Spiderwort	Flowers (raw) and young leaves (raw or cooked) edible. Flowers make a nice garnish.

### Aromatic Foliages & Seasoning

Agastache foeniculum & cvs	Anise Hyssop	Sweet anise taste to the leaves that can be used raw or cooked.
Lavandula angustifolia cvs.	Lavender	Raw leaves and flower petals used as aromatics only in moderation.
Myrica pensylvanica	Northern Bayberry	Leaves can be used as bay leaves, remove after cooking. Delicate but subtle flavor.
Thymus species & cvs.	Thyme	Leaves raw or dried give a nice aroma and flavor to food. Harvest early summer if drying.

### Stems & Roots

Acorus varieties	Sweet Flag	Stalks and spadix taste good when tender, rhizomes are candied or dried and ground.
Asarum canadense	Wild Ginger	Roots edible, spicy flavor, aids digestion.
Dryopteris filix femina, Matteucia struthiopteris, Osmunda cinnamomea	Ferns	Young fronds, before they fully unroll, are thick and succulent when cooked.
Pontaderia cordata	Pickereel Rush	Whole plant can be eaten raw or cooked, nutty flavor. Seed can be cooked like rice or roasted.
Sagittaria latifolia	Arrowhead	Root has texture of potato and flavor of sweet chestnut when roasted. Harvest late summer.
Typha latifolia	Cattail	Highly edible plant with many uses and preparations. Young flower shoot tastes like sweet corn.

## Tea

Species	Common Name	Attributes
Galium odoratum	Sweet Woodruff	Leaves make an excellent tea, flowers a tasty garnish. Scent of freshly mown hay.
Ledum groenlandicum	Labrador Tea	Used as a bay leaf substitute or in tea, NOT EATEN OR HEATED IN CLOSED CONTAINERS.
Rhus typhina	Staghorn Sumac	Fruit has a tart lemony flavor high in vitamin C. Soak in hot water for a lemonade substitute.
Rosa rugosa and cvs.	Rugosa Rose	Very sweet fruit is large for roses, used raw or cooked, high in vitamin C. Flower petals edible too.
Sassafras albidum	Sassafras	Collect roots in spring when tree is dormant.

## Important to Bee Keepers

Nyssa sylvatica	Black Gum or Tupelo	Source of tupelo honey.
Oxydendrum arboreum	Sourwood	Pollen source for late season honey.
Evodia daniellii	Korean Evodia	Pollen source for late season honey.

## Other Uses

Acer saccharum	Sugar Maple	Sap is used in production of maple syrup, harvested late winter, early spring.
Betula alleghaniensis	Yellow Birch	Usefulness as flavoring, tastes of a sweet wintergreen. Sap is harvested early spring.
Humulus lupulus cvs.	Hops	Used mainly for the flavoring of beer. 'Nugget' used to bitter beer, has a high yield.
Juniper communis & scopulorum		Dried fruits of these varieties can be used for flavoring. Communis is used to flavor Gin.

No liability is accepted for any adverse reactions from the use of these plants. Plants need to be correctly identified, properly cleaned, and where applicable, prepared correctly. Many resources exist for obtaining more certainty before any plant is ingested.

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