



**GLOBAL
GENERATION**

**THE
STAY AT
HOME
GARDEN**

*The healing
power of
plants*

Issue no **3**

GLOBAL GENERATION



Lots of these activities are things our team are doing with their time at home!
Look for the orange circles to find out who...

Welcome to our third issue of the Stay at Home Garden.

In the spirit of Beltain, the Gaelic May Day Celebration, we invite you to think about the fertility of the earth and especially the healing powers of the plants close by to us, the ones that often get overlooked, ignored, pulled up or thought of as weeds. As gardeners, budding botanists, artists, foragers and cooks alike we love weeds!! Yes that's right we said it. We love these ground creeping, soul nourishing, wild plants. Did you know wild plants have been known to have more vitamins and minerals than cultivated varieties. These wild plants are the plants that grow in unused spaces and at the end of your garden. England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland have a rich history of herbal medicine much like most other countries worldwide. Our medicinal history is steeped in folk-tales and witches, myths and legends. Some of these tales have helped inspire modern medicine.

The following pages will help you discover and enjoy these wiley, wild plant friends who are free to pick, growing in abundance beside our home, famously edible and medicinal but often forgotten. Join us on this adventure into who is growing by your side who you haven't noticed before.

From all of us at Global Generation

PS: We absolutely love seeing activities you're trying or recipes you're testing so please do continue to send them in to us!

PPS: Disclaimer*

Although some plants are named as edible and medicinal they are not for everyone. If you are pregnant or breastfeeding, taking medication or have just come out of surgery then these wild guys are most likely not for you.

Both the wonderful painting on the front cover and this beautiful spring photo are made by one of our fellows, Ellie, as part of the Voices of the Earth project.

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The healing power of plants



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Local plants growing now:

This guide has been written by Charlotte, one of our educational gardeners who has a keen eye for plants!



These plants are ones that grow close by, often growing through cracks in the pavement. They're often seen as 'weeds' 'undesirable and in the wrong place,' plants. Many of them (but not all) are **edible and medicinal**, some of these are stronger than others, some more delicious than others, some need to be picked at a certain time and some could be easily be confused with others that are poisonous.

The plant's scientific name, it's Latin name is written in *Italic*. Have a go at pronouncing these strange names.

Yarrow *Achillea millefolium*

One of Yarrow's old names is soldier's woundwort, and yarrow gets it's Latin name from the famous Achilles who used this plant as a field dressing to stop bleeding in the Trojan War.

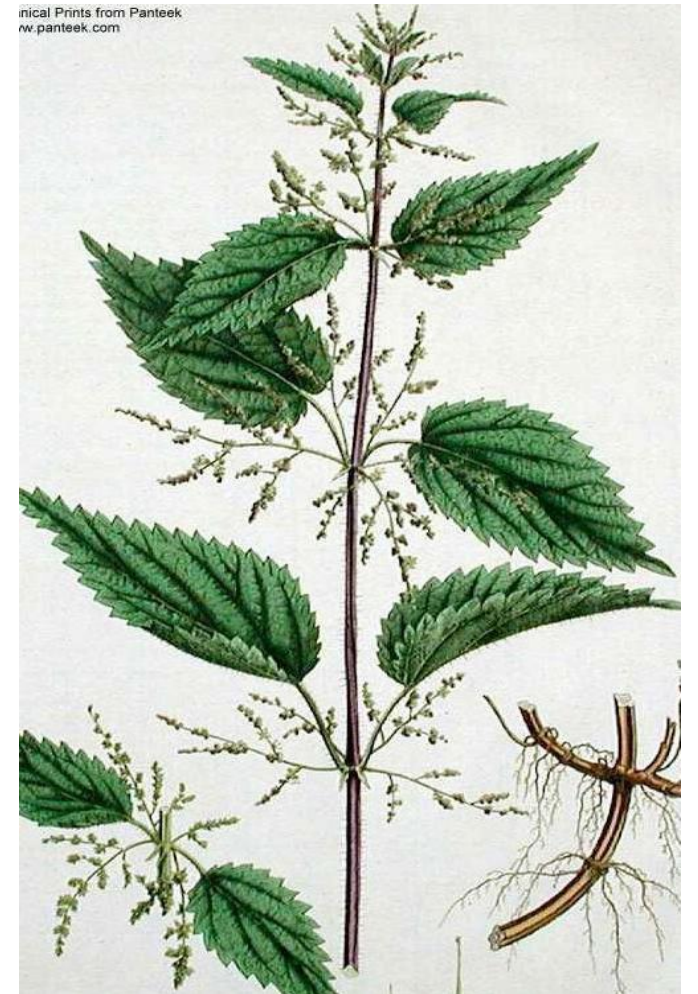
Welcome Yarrow
Check out Yarrow's soft feathery leaves.



Nettle *Urtica dioica*

The famous stinging Nettle - arguably one of the coolest plants around. Full of vitamins and minerals, the leaves, seeds and roots are used in food and medicine.

They can also be used to make cloth and rope, super cool!!



Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*

Crush and smell some of the leaves and flowers - it has a strong smell and once you know this smell you'll be smelling it everywhere. Sometimes this plant is more red or pink than green - have you seen this?



Local plants growing now: Continued



Mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris*

This plant grows in abundance along motorways but has been well known for its magical properties in the middle ages.

A dreaming and powerful herb for women, this is a much loved plant among many different cultures.



White Dead Nettle or Archangel Nettle *Lamium album*

This curious plant may look like stinging nettle but it has no sting at all and doesn't belong to the same family as stinging nettles. How curious it looks so similar. It's Archangel name comes from the beautiful white flowers. See if you can see this plant.



Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*

These are so common they grow between cracks in the pavement, they have black buds with tiny white flowers growing out of them in the summer and the buds surprisingly taste like mushrooms.



Grow your indoor GARDEN



Mircrogreens

Growing microgreens means growing young plants from seed and eating them before they mature. The cress on a traditional egg and cress sandwich is a microgreen as the cress has not grown to it's mature size. The seeds are sown very close together and harvested within 1-2 weeks of sowing. They are very nutritious, easy to do from home and take up very little space.

You will need to buy seed sowing soil or multi-purpose compost and either pea, spinach, cress, mustard or coriander seeds, which can be bought from garden centres, large supermarkets or online.

For a tray to grow these in you could buy a seed sowing tray, use a tray you already have or even recycle the plastic packaging that supermarket vegetables (such as mushrooms) come in, but make sure to poke some holes in the bottom if it doesn't have any already.

1

Take a small amount of seed sowing soil or compost and fill a tray to 1cm

2

Choose your seeds and sprinkle them all over the surface of the soil.

Charlotte
has been growing
micro-greens at
home and adding
them to salads and
sandwiches.



3

Sprinkle some soil back over, just enough to cover the seed.



4

Place tray on a plate and water gently. Water whenever the soil looks dry, try to keep it moist.



5

When shoots have first true leaves harvest entirely and keep in the fridge in a container. Sprinkle on top of your lunch or dinner!

(The crop in this photo is from pea shoots, your microgreens will look different depending on what seeds you use)



Creative

ACTIVITIES

for all ages...



Drawing the parts of a plant: Basic botany

This activity has been made by Sue, our head of gardens, she knows plants very well!

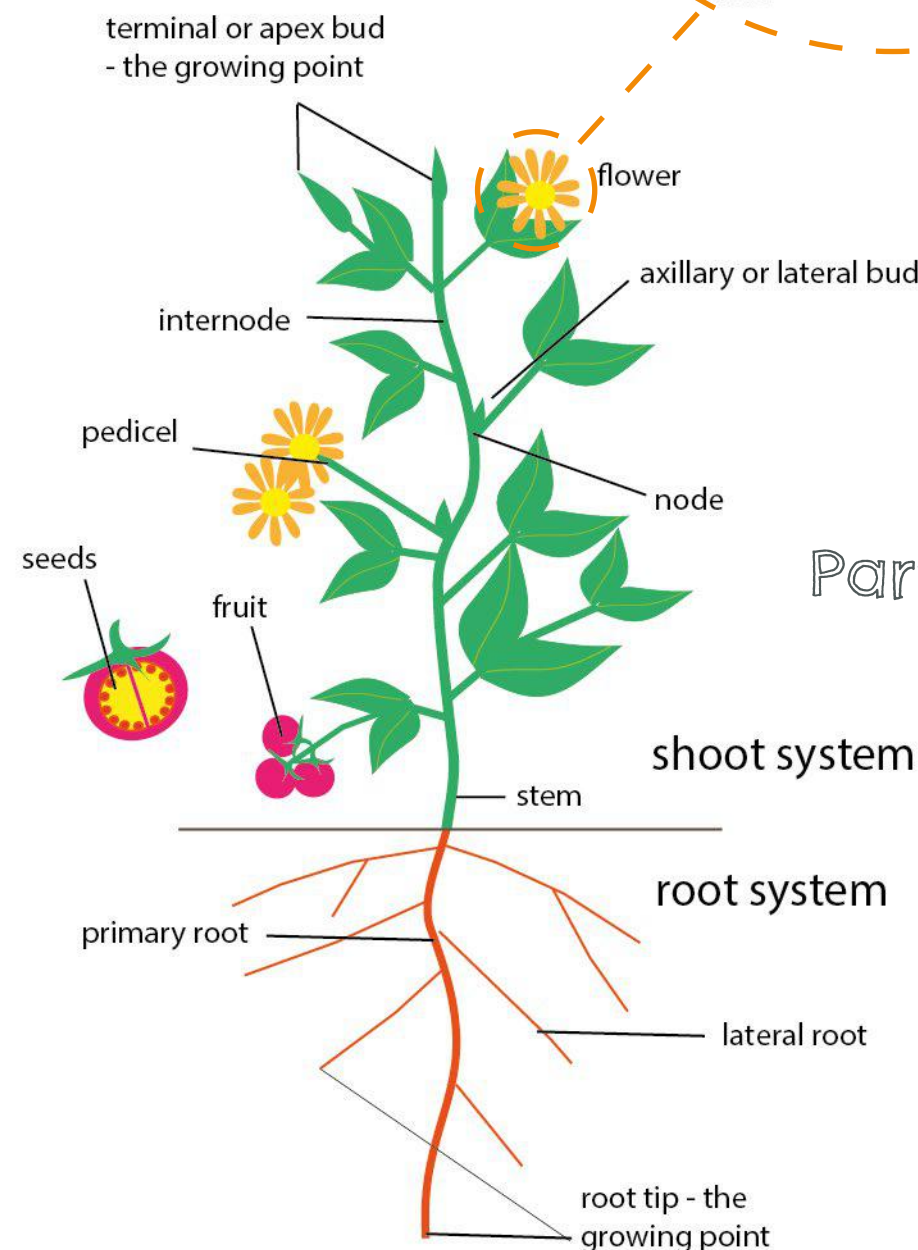
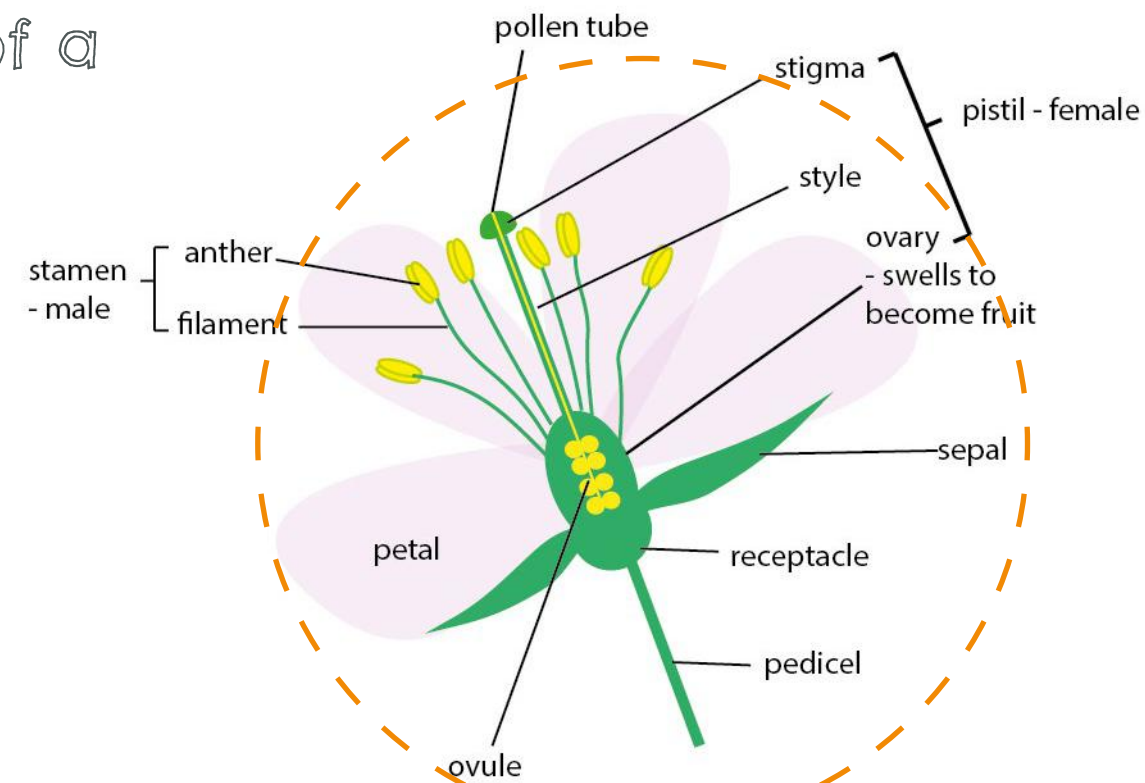
This activity is to help you learn about and identify all the different parts of a plant.

Do you have some plants in your home or garden? Look closely at them and using the guide opposite see how many different parts of the plant you can see. Draw each of the different parts of the plant and label them. You could do this with a couple of different plants and see how they all contain the same parts but may look a bit different on each one.

Don't forget to send us in photos of your lovely drawings!

* We would encourage you to do this activity without picking the plant you are observing, however if you do please don't pick any plants unless you know exactly what it is and have asked permission from whoever the plant belongs to.

Parts of a flower



Parts of a plant



ACTIVITIES



Flower and leaf pressing



Pressing leaves and flowers is an old form of art. For the last 400 years people have collected and stored examples of flowers, leaves, fern, mosses, lichen and more. They created albums and books to record the natural world. They wrote location, time and date of collection! Lots of these books are stored at the British Library and at Royal College of Physicians (London). As part of our Voices of the Earth Project, young people had the opportunity to see them!

How to press flowers and leaves

- Gather different leaves and flowers from gardens, parks or even from the roadside. Ideally when the weather is dry.
- Do the pressing as soon as you can after collecting.
- Put the flower/leaf, laid out flat, between two pieces of paper, ideally recycled and with a blank side.
- Then stick your flower and papers under a weight. You can do this by using an old or unwanted book. If you are pressing more than one flower, make sure to leave a gap of about 2 cm between each layer of pressing.
- Then leave the material pressed for a month or two depending on how thick the leaves are.
- After a month, it should all be flat and dry and ready to be used. You can decorate a letter or a card, or you can add your pressed leaves or flowers to pictures. Our young people have used them in a photography exhibition last summer.



This is a picture of a book of pressed flowers from 1821, you can find it in the British Library! This photo was taken by Lucy, one of our fellows, for the Voices of the Earth project.

ACTIVITIES

Leaf rubbing: A magic artwork

You will need:

- Lots of different leaves (dandelion leaves work really well)
- White paper or also baking paper
- Crayons

Method:

- 1** Look for lots of different leaves with different shapes and sizes.
- 2** Put your leaf with bottom-side up on a table and place your paper on top of it.
- 3** Now it is time to rub your crayon over the paper and magically watch the leaf and its pattern appear.
- 4** You can do this with one leaf or you can use lots (under the same piece of paper) so you can create a collage.
- 5** Your artwork is ready but you can have fun by adding things to it: what about adding legs or hairs or eyes to make it into a unbe-leaf-able creature!

This leaf rubbing was made by 5 year old Aida for the Wild Cards art and poetry competition from Why Conserve and she won!

ACTIVITIES

Make a recycled plant



This activity calls on you to use your imagination to create an exciting new plant, but you can always start by looking around at plants in your house, garden or local area for inspiration.

Or have a look at the Seed Is Sleepy book by Dianna Hutts Aston to help you ideas grow.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_vElnekJzl

DESIGN:

Think about their long winding stems, do they have one or more?

Are their petals flat or curvy?

Does your plant produce seeds that float on water, fly through air, or stick to passers by?

Have a go at designing your plant on paper first!



CREATE:

Use materials you find around or might usually throw away to create your plant. Roll up and tape newspaper for a stem, or cut long winding petals

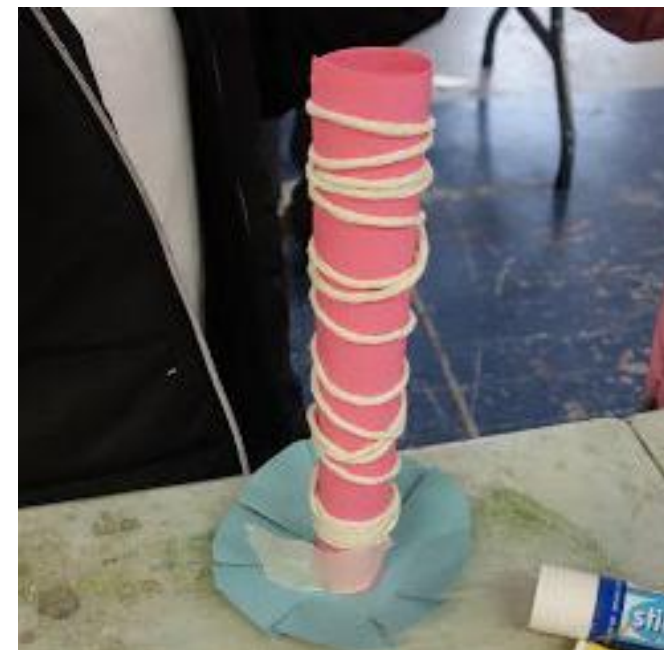


BE INSPIRED:

Have a look at some of the creations by Paper Garden visitors here.

Paper Garden Generator Victoria and her brother Emil made some beautiful flowers like the one below.

This activity has been done by Emma with children at the Paper Garden, as well as in online sessions!



/ CHALLENGE you....

Local discovery hunt

The photo opposite was taken by one of our Voices of the Earth fellows, Ellie

Scientists are often excited about finding rare plants in rainforests and wild mountains. But often we don't know what plants are growing in our cities, right by our doorstep! I challenge you and your families to be scientists and find out what is growing in Camden, Islington and Southwark (the London boroughs where Global Generation's gardens are) ... or in your own local area.

We want you to take pictures on your phone of five plants that you find close to home. You don't need to know the names of the plants you have found.

Send them to kiloran@globalgeneration.org.uk and let us know what area you live in..

We will collect all these images and identify every plant if you are not sure.

Plants tell us stories. They may have travelled from all over the world, attached to a sleeve or tucked in a shoe, to be here. They may be used as a medicine. One plant may have hundreds of different names because it is loved by so many groups of people. If you have a plant story connected to your culture or your local neighbourhood please share it with us.

This challenge was set by Kiloran, the Story Garden Manager.



CHALLENGE



Spot the plant



How many different plants can you see?

Do you recognise any of the plants, can you remember their names?

Is there a plant in this photo that you remember from our first issue, it likes to stick and cling, what is its name?

There's a look-a-like in this image, looking closely which one is Nettle and which one is Archangel Nettle?



Answers:
Nettle, Archangel Nettle, Cleaver, Bramble (blackberry) - who is hiding in the top left corner and you can see one branch with thorns!

CHALLENGE



Plant powered poetry

We are going to be writing a Haiku (pronounced High-Koo) which is a Japanese style of poetry that typically celebrates nature.

Let yourself be inspired by the plant kingdom. Once your gaze has rested on something you enjoy write down all the words that come to you ...

For example, my gaze has rested on a dandelion and I write without stopping or thinking

Moon, wind, blowing, seeds, wishes, adventure, take me with you, unknown, fairies, singing, night time, mystery.

Now we have our inspiration, the next step is to write a Haiku.

Traditionally Haiku uses a few words to capture a moment and create a picture in the reader's mind. They are traditionally made up of just 3 lines.

The first line has 5 syllables

The second 7 syllables

And the last line back to 5.

This challenge was set by Judy, our Assistant Director, who likes writing poetry.

Here is an example:

A Dandelion,
Wind blown seeds fly all around
And stick in my hair

I like to clap out the sounds of the syllables so I can count each sound they make. Give it a go clapping along with each sound you pronounce.

A Dan-de-li-on
This is 5 sounds and 5 claps

Wind blown seeds fly all a-round
7 sounds and 7 claps

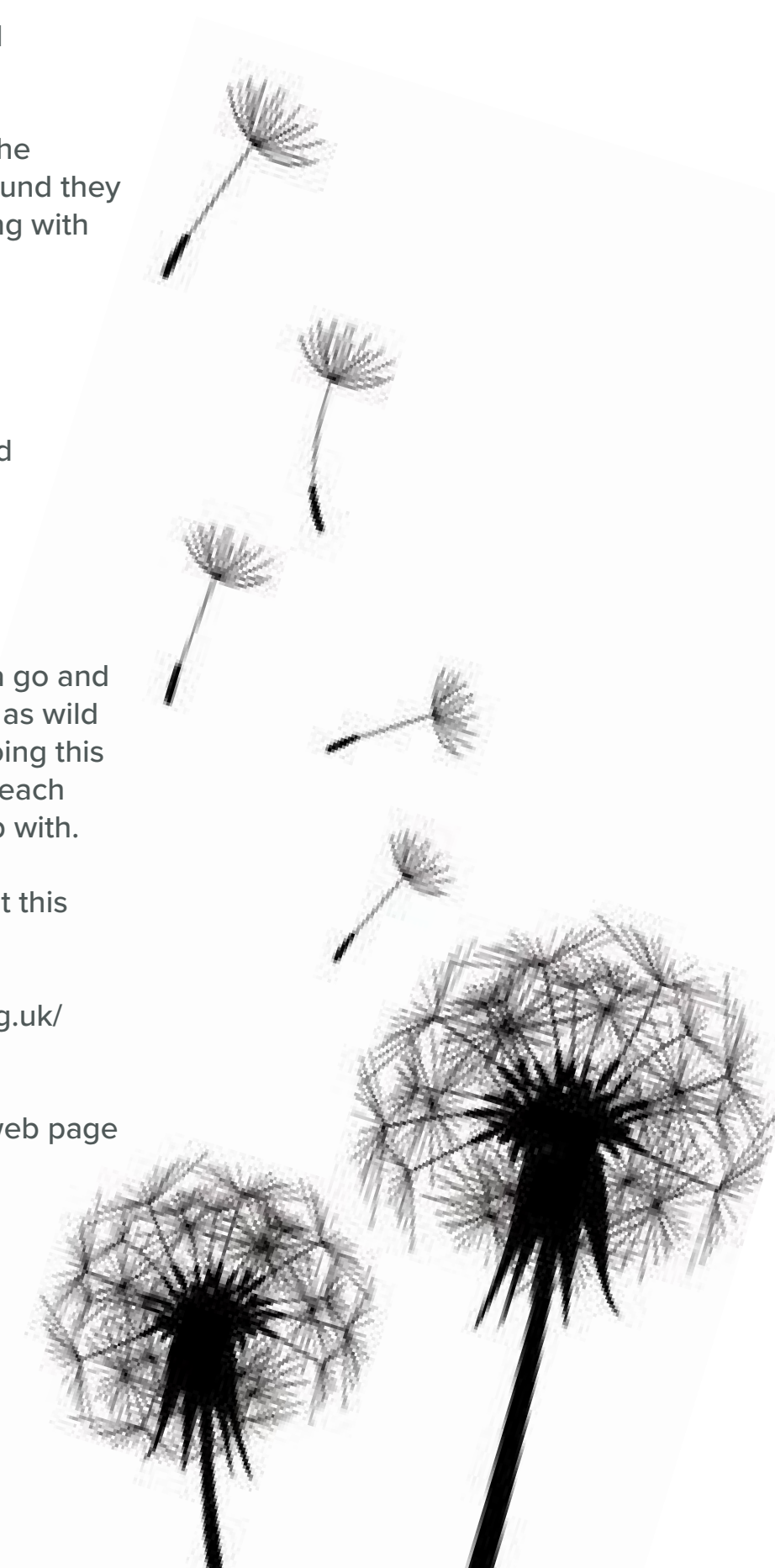
And stick in my hair
5 sounds and 5 claps

Give this plant powered Haiku a go and see what you come up with. Be as wild and free as you like. If you're doing this together you might like to read each other the Haiku you've come up with.

And one last thing Check out this Haiku Generator

<https://www.poem-generator.org.uk/haiku/>

Be as silly as you like and this web page will create a Haiku just for you!



Fun RECIPES

to keep you healthy...



This foraging guide has been written by Charlotte who regularly picks wild plants to add to her food.

Safety first: How to identify and harvest

Wild edible plants are free and abundant but guidelines are needed to make sure we are keeping ourselves and others safe. You may be surprised to know there are many poisonous plants that are just as common as our favourite edible species. So rules as follows.....

Know who you're picking, you need to be 150% certain you know this plant is edible, why? Because plants look like each other, some are edible and some are not. If in doubt - leave it out!!

When Identifying plants use the whole plant to help you correctly I.D. Look at the shape of their stems, the shape of the leaf, any flowers, bark or perhaps you know this plant from a strong smell.

When foraging in the city try to pick away from main roads as fumes from cars can be absorbed by plants (this is contested but it makes sense to me).

Be mindful of where dogs wee - is where you're picking a likely place for this?



Only collect plants from plentiful populations, be mindful - perhaps if you continue to walk down the road you'll find a spot with more plants growing.

Leave a fifth of the plant still growing.

I like to get to know plants like I would a person, build a relationship, see what they look like in spring, summer and winter. Notice their changes and soon you will be 150% sure you know this plant!

Hopefully this doesn't sound too scary, the key is to know who you're picking and that comes from spending time with them!

**Disclaimer:*

Although a food source these plants are also used for their medicinal properties. Interactions are rare but are possible so avoid if pregnant, breastfeeding, on heavy medication or have just come out of surgery. Be inspired and do some research to find out if these plants are appropriate for long term use for you!



RECIPES

How to identify: Elderflower

*Elderflowers come from the famous Elder tree *Sambucus nigra*. This tree has been said to be the grandmother of herbal medicine in the UK, think of her as the wise old woman, the crone, the witch and the healer. Her wise old ways infuse the forest, there are many legends and much folklore surrounding this tree. It was said if you were in the company of Elder on midsummer night you would see the fairy king. Elder is often found in British history, it is one of the old ones and well known for its medicine.*

The bark and berries can bring on a fever whilst the flowers support colds and flu and make delicious drinks and deserts. Do some research and be surprised by its properties both magical and scientific.

Elderflowers are just blooming at the start of summer and are so much fun to harvest. They are sweet and aromatic and once you recognise this tree you'll be seeing them everywhere and grateful for it's abundance of fragrant flowers.

First step is to identify Elder.



Bark:

The easiest way to identify Elder is by its amazing bark, no other tree looks like this. It has a very distinctive pattern and you can see the new shoots have not formed it's tough outer bark and the old branches have lost this outer layer.

Elder tends to grow without a central trunk, instead with many trunks both small and large, they grow in a more higgledy piggledy fashion, often looking bent over. Their canopies are an array of tangles and branches.



Flowers:

Close up of flowers - this is the bit you want to pick!



Tree:

Elder in Bloom



Leaves:

The leaves have a distinct shape and grow with 7 on a stem.

Now you know who Elder is, you'll be amazed at where she pops up.



RECIPES



Elderflower lemonade



We're making a base for our lemonade so the recipe below is going to be diluted.

**If you don't want to use sugar just make Elderflower tea, it's so easy. Just pour boiling water over the flowers and leave to infuse for a few minutes and that's it! Easy and delicious. Elderflower goes great with Mint too. I like adding mint and elderflower to cold water and drinking this throughout the day.*

Ingredients:

- 12 Stalks of Elderflower
- 500ml boiling water
- 4 tablespoons cane or brown sugar
- Juice from 1 lemon
- Water or fizzy water to dilute



Method:



- 1** Harvest around 12 stalks of elderflower making sure you have identified them correctly. They should have a lovely strong sweet smell. Now is the perfect time for picking as they are just opening on the tree.
*Don't harvest them if they smell sour and some of the flowers have turned brown (they should stay fresh and pickable until the end of may!)
- 2** Lay out your flowers on a tea towel to let all the bugs crawl out - don't wash them as you'll wash out the pollen which is where the flavour and scent is! I leave mine for an evening but a few hours is good enough
- 3** Boil the kettle and pour roughly 500ml over the flowers, add 4 tablespoons of cane or brown sugar, stir and then leave for around 4-6 hours.
- 4** Strain the liquid, I like to use a J cloth if you don't have any muslin, this will make sure any bugs who were left don't go into the lemonade.
- 5** Squeeze the juice of one lemon into the jug.
- 6** Now the lemonade is ready!
- 7** Pour a small glass half with the lemonade mixture and dilute this with water, half lemonade and half water. You may like to use fizzy water or something else to dilute it.
- 8** This mixture keeps for a few days in the fridge or pour them into ice cube trays and pop in the freezer to drink them as you please!



RECIPES



How to identify: Nettle

Becoming friends with Nettle...

Stinging Nettle is often one of the first plants people pick from the wild. Well known throughout history for being edible and medicinal and is one of the plants that grows year round making it an excellent plant to befriend.

Traditionally Nettles are gathered in Spring - think clearing and cleansing to the body. Waking us up from a winter slumber. Now is a great time to gather Nettles before the height of summer when they become tough and the seeds are gathered instead. Traditionally Nettles aren't eaten when the seeds form because their mineral content is too high in the leaves.

If you don't know the famous nettle, here they are:



Nettles that are great to eat, see how fresh they look.



Not good Nettle pickings:
You can see they look a lot older and can see tiny tiny flowers that look like seeds on stems coming off there. You don't want to eat them when they are this old.

How to pick Nettle:

- The sting in Nettle is due to the tiny hairs on the stem which act like tiny needles injecting histamine into skin
- A good rule for nettle is picking ones that are bright green and fresh looking, exactly like you would when choosing your veggies, be picky!!
- You can use gloves or scissors if you don't want to get stung
- If you clasp the nettle by the stem or leaf tightly they don't tend to sting, it's when you brush against them softly they sting. Be brave and try to gather them by hand and be willing to get stung a little!
- Only pick the tops of the nettle, the top 2-4 leaf section. Like the photo opposite.



How to cook with Nettles:

- When chopping them up, you may like to use a glove or a tea towel to protect your hands. I like to roll them into a 'parcel' and then chopping them up finely as their stems can be tough.
- Treat this just as you would spinach, kale or any other deep leafy green.
- They need heat to break down the sting and they also break down in a blender.
- Add them to curry, Dahl or pasta sauce, at the end of making your dish chop up nettle and stir them in.
- Add them to scrambled eggs
- Make them into Pesto!!

RECIPES



Nettle and feta filo pie

This is an easy fun recipe, it's a great one for eating nettles for the first time. The first thing you'll need to do is go hunting for Nettles, pick nice bright green leaves and remember to say thanks!

Ingredients:

- 4 large handfuls or a large bowl of greens (Nettles/Kale/Spinach/Spring greens - try half Nettles and half store bought green)
- Feta
- Filo Pastry
- 4 regular sized onions
- 1 large sweet potato or half a squash or half a large cauliflower
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp turmeric
- ½ tsp garam masala

Method:

- 1** Preheat oven to 180°C
- 2** Slice your onions finely and pop them in a pan with a glug of oil (if you don't have oil, just use a little water), add the spices and fry the onions on a med/high heat until they're translucent and a little caramelized.

- 3** Slice your sweet potato/ potato / squash or cauliflower into thinnish slices and add them to the pan. Season everything with salt and pepper.
- 4** Put a lid on the pan and turn down the heat, add a little water if everything is sticking to the bottom.
you could also do this in the oven, rather than on the stove if you wanted to. If so just chuck onions, spices and roots in the oven with oil salt and pepper for 20mins on a high heat
- 5** Find a roasting tin or a tray to make your filo pie, I used a medium sized rectangle one!
- 6** Wash your greens and nettles with care and have fun chopping them up trying not to get stung.
- 7** Grease the bottom of your tray with oil and put 4 sheets of filo down on top of each other.
- 8** Put half of your onion and root mixture on the filo and spread half of your greens on top. Sprinkle this with a generous portion of feta, you may want to add more salt and pepper here or even some chilli flakes!
- 9** Place another 4 sheets of filo on top and press down a bit to squish the layer.
- 10** Repeat step 8, onions, greens, feta.
- 11** Place another 4 sheets of filo on top (so each layer is 4 sheets thick, if you've made a bigger pie you may need more than 4 sheets or a smaller pie you may need less!)
- 12** Brush the top with a little bit of oil and put in the oven for 30mins.
- 13** Test to see if it's ready by putting a knife in and seeing if it's soft all the way through.

Happy Eating!!



RECIPES

How to identify: Chickweed



The English name "Chickweed" comes from the fact it was used as feed for chickens and cage-birds.

This wild plant is very delicious and healthy and the best thing is that all the parts of the plant can be eaten. It is most tasty when tender and young and you will know this if the stem snaps crisply. You can harvest it anytime after its first green appearance in the cool spring weather (from early March). When you notice the plant colour fade to a lighter green and the plant becomes leggy, you can start to collect the seeds as well.



Things to look out for:

- A line of very small hairs along the stem, which alternates between the joints
- Clear sap, not milky or sticky
- Paired, opposite leaves
- Small white flowers with divided petals (each petal looks like two instead of one)
- Low, ankle-high mats of dense greens.



This great information on Chickweed was provided by Constanza Vascotto from the British Library



RECIPES



Chickweed egg-mayonnaise Sandwich

Most often used as a decoration, chickweed can be eaten raw, as a herb in pesto, salads, sandwiches. When cooked it is a good substitute for spinach and can be added to omelettes, soups and stews.

Ingredients:

- 1 egg
- a dash of vinegar
- a dollop of mayonnaise (optional)
- a handful of chickweed (freshly picked, washed and patted dry)
- 2 slices buttered bread
- pepper and salt

Method:

- 1** Make a hard boiled egg
- 2** Crack and peel the egg shell off. Put the peeled egg in a bowl. Mash with a fork. You can add a dollop of mayonnaise if you prefer.
- 3** Fold in the fresh chickweed and sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste. Butter the bread, then spoon the egg and chickweed mixture onto one slice. Put the second slice on the top and cut in half and...enjoy!



RECIPES

How to identify: Dandelion



Ah the infamous Dandelion Taraxacum officinale.

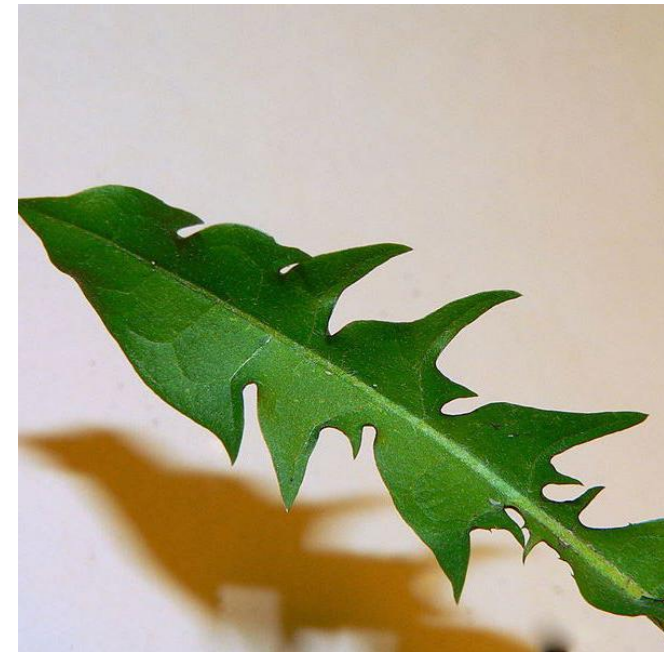
Did you know you can eat the leaves? The petals are sweet and fragrant can be used for making wine and syrup and the root can be roasted and ground into coffee! The bees and insects love them and it is a favourite amongst many plant lovers for its sunshine and brightness.

How to I.D Dandelion:



Plant:

Dandelions grow in a rosette, meaning they grow in a circular shape from one singular point. Can you see all the leaves and flower stems growing out of the middle?



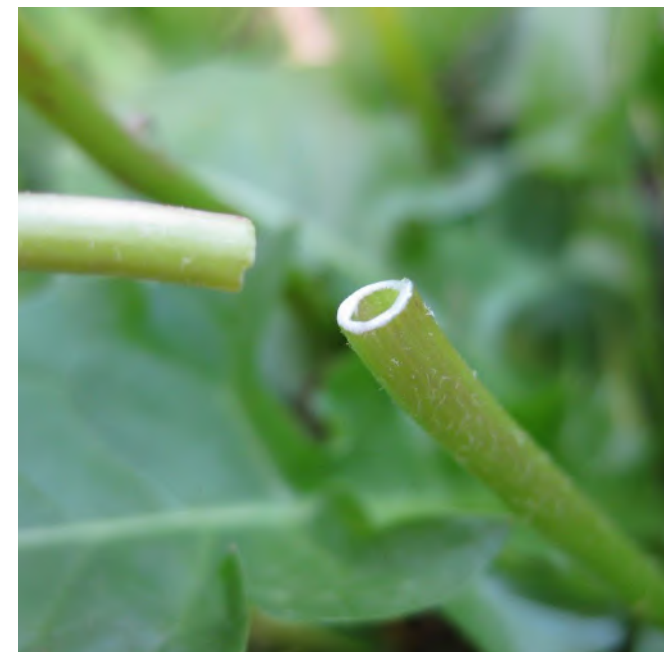
Leaves:

Can you see the shape of the leaves? They are jagged and tooth like, sometimes they can be rounder or more jagged.



Flowers:

There are a few other plants who have similar flowers to the Dandy so look closely and you won't mistake them.



Stem:

This is the stem of the flower. Can you see it's hollow. This is an excellent clue to I.D, if it's not hollow and doesn't grow in a rosette then it is not a Dandelion!

Can you also see the white sap coming out of the stem?

If you break one of the leaves or the stem you will see this white sap, it's actually latex and is extremely bitter. It's an acquired taste but once liked you'll soon love it!

RECIPES



Dandelion leaf dipping sauce

About Dandelion Greens: contains vitamin A, purifies the blood, excellent as a natural diuretic (makes you go to the toilet), contains calcium and iron.

Ingredients:

- 8 organic dandelion green leaves
- 1 cup cashews or almonds (or use peanut butter)
- 1/2 cup sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice (fresh squeezed)
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric powder
- 1 and 1/2 garlic clove
- 1/2 - 1 teaspoon salt

Silvia has been making this yummy sauce after her foraging walks with her daughter

Method:

- 1 Add all the ingredients to a blender and mix until smooth and creamy
- 2 This recipe is adaptable. Experiment with other ingredients. You can make it into a pesto sauce by adding grated cheese for example



STORIES

from the natural world... 

How do dandelions grow

Jane's idea for this story comes from the indigenous North American Ojibway (Chippewa) people. Jane has been telling a longer version of this story as part of Global Generation's Voices of the Earth project, as well as in online sessions.

Long, long ago, the plants had a huge argument about which of them was the most beautiful, the most special and the most loved of all. It got so bad they knew they needed help and they called on the wisdom of Crow.

Crow visited all of the plants with a question that set all of the plants dreaming about what they might be ... First Crow visited a beautiful red rose. Where would you most like to live? Said Crow

Rose thought long hard and then she said in a bold voice, "I would love to live up high, so I could see all around me." And Crow flew on to a place where brightly coloured tulips grew. Where would you most like to live? Said Crow.

Without hesitation Tulip replied; "Oh, I want to live in a public garden, where every day people would come and admire my wonderful colours and see how straight and tall I stand."

And Crow flew on into the middle of a wood where a small purple flower grew. Where would you most like to live? Said Crow.

"Oh" said violet quietly, "I like it just here, in the woods, where I am hidden away ... the brook cools my feet, and the trees keep the warm sun from spoiling my beautiful colour."

And Crow flew on, across a meadow and there she saw a thousand tiny suns, bright yellow flowers with long sticky

stems and jagged leaves that clung close to the earth ..." who are you and where would you like to live?", said Crow.

"I am dandelion ... tooth of the lion and I would like to grow anywhere where children play, in the long grasses, even in the cracks in the concrete and I would like to travel far and wide"

Well Crow thought this was the best answer of all and she said from now on Dandelion you shall grow and flower everywhere from spring till fall. You shall grow long roots so the earth can nourish you.

So the wind can spread your seeds, you shall surround them in tiny silken sails. That is why dandelion comes so early and pushes her head up everywhere—by hedge, field, hut, and wall; and has such a long, sweet life. And that is why Dandelion is known everywhere as the children's flower.

This beautiful drawing of a dandelion was done by Emma



STORIES

Sky Woman and the birth of Turtle Island

by.. Hikari Michi

In this time honoured creation story from the Hadenosaunee people, we learn how Sky Woman was helped by the animals of the sea to create land and grow the seeds for the plants which became her medicine.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jaejb8mTFVw>



CALMING

our bodies and minds...



Tree kung: Standing like a tree

This chi kung (qi-gong) exercise is a simplified version for beginners.

Begin slowly, and take it at your own pace, never pushing movements beyond what's comfortable, and start with just few minutes each time.

As you get used to the moves you can extend how long you hold them for.

Don't focus on your breath, just breathe normally, inhaling and exhaling gently through the nose, the mouth remains closed.

You can warm up beforehand by shaking and stretching the body gently.

Wu chi - 'emptiness posture'

1. Start by standing with feet shoulder width apart.

Let your eyes look forward, and slightly downward.

Your arms hang loosely, drop the shoulders, and relax your muscles.

Let the bottom of your spine unfold downward, neither belly nor bottom stick out.



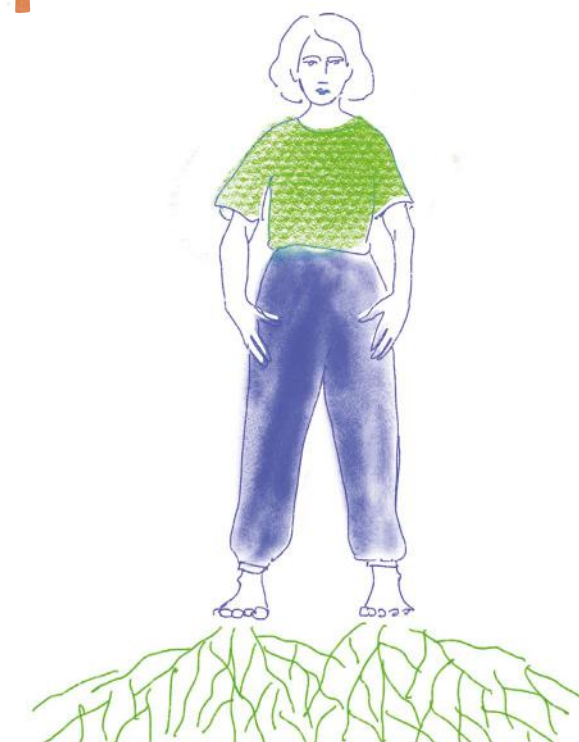
Scan the body, releasing tension, always relaxing and letting energy fall down.

As your feet spread on the surface of the ground, feel your roots extending down into the earth.

Let any unwanted emotions, feelings, thoughts and pain drip down into the earth.

The earth supports us, and transforms everything into new life and energy

1



2. When you are ready, and only if you want, bend the knees slightly and gently allow your arms to raise up. As they rise, feel the stretch in the side of your body.

Once your arms are up, turn the palms to face outwards, connecting with the energy of the sky. Allow energy to flow down through the body.

As it flows, the energy washes through aches and pains, knots of emotion, tension and stiffness.

When you are ready, slowly bring your arms down, and rest them loosely at your sides, returning to wu chi - the beginning

2



CALMING



Jane
has been
doing this
meditation in her
local park as a
way of starting
the day.



Connecting through our senses

This is a great thing to do in the early morning or at dusk, especially now when the air in London is so clear, the bird song so loud and the colours so bright.

Find a comfortable spot to sit, ideally outside and if not perhaps near your favourite indoor plant.

Let your body relax and be still, become aware of your breathing ... in and out, in and out.

As your attention settles and becomes wide and open, feel or imagine the pulsating earth beneath you and the breathing in and out of all of the plants and animals.

Pay attention to the different sounds you hear ... the birds, the insects, the wind passing through the leaves.

Feel the warmth of the sun or the coolness of the wind on your face, appreciate very subtle changes in temperature.

Notice what you smell, are there different fragrances?

Now let your eyes settle on the shape of a leaf or a flower, hold your attention there, really see what you see ... the veins, the tiny hairs, the thickening of the margins.

What are the repeated patterns?

How does the leaf move in the wind ?

How does it make you feel?

In the background of everything we can hear, smell and see is the vast field of our awareness; notice the part of you that is noticing and spend time there.

You might choose to stay with just one sense or cycle your attention through all of them several times. The main thing is to go slow, be still, be relaxed and be awake.



INSPIRING links...

Click for more...

To help you find more inspiring resources we've put together some useful links:

More fun activities about plants:

<https://www.dkfindout.com/uk/animals-and-nature/plants/>
<https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/blog/2020/03/tree-id-kids/>
<https://theherbalacademy.com/introduction-to-herbs-for-kids-meet-my-friend-herb/>

More information for picking wild plants in the city:

<https://www.eatweeds.co.uk/>
A lovely forager and guide Robin Harfood

<https://www.wildfooduk.com/wild-plant-guide/>
A great list with pictures and information on edible and poisonous plants

<http://www.hedgeherbs.org.uk/>
Rasheeqa, a community herbalist in Walthamstow who often has free foraging events

<https://thekidshouldseethis.com/>
A great selection of informative videos and lots about nature and plants



Don't forget to message us with what you've enjoyed, what you'd like to see next and to share your stories and creations!



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