



Hop

HUMULUS LUPULUS



HABITAT

Hedgerows, thickets, woodland. Prefers loamy soils.

PARTS USED

Young leaves, shoots and very young foliage.

Well known for its inclusion in beer the straggly tendrils of the hop can be found in many hedgerows and lurking in overgrown thicketed areas. The stem fibres have been used for making cloth while the young shoots, leaves and foliage are edible. The young shoot tips and male flowers can be used in salad or blanched and used as a pot-herb, and young foliage of the late spring and early summer cooked like asparagus.

Hop roots were mentioned among the plants to be sent with an expedition to Massachusetts Bay in 1628. Quite how they were put to use is anyone's guess... William Cobbett, in 'The American Gardener' [1854], commented: '*To range the Hop amongst Vegetables may appear odd; but, it is a garden-plant in America, and does give you, if you like to have it, a very good dish for the table.*'

[Taken from 'The Really Wild Food Guide' by Johnny Jumbalaya, and supplementary research.]

Consumption of wild plants is at the reader's discretion and own risk. For personal safety do not eat wild plants if you have a medical condition, during pregnancy, or feed to minors.

WHEN TRYING ONE OF THE WILD PLANTS LISTED FOR THE FIRST TIME, TRY TASTING JUST A SMALL AMOUNT OF THE PREPARED PLANT TO CHECK YOUR TOLERANCE. IF YOU HAVE ANY BAD OR ALLERGIC REACTIONS AVOID ANY FURTHER CONSUMPTION. NEVER PUT ANY PLANT INTO YOUR MOUTH UNLESS ABSOLUTELY 100% CERTAIN OF ITS IDENTIFICATION AND EDIBILITY.

HOPS & TAGLIATELLI

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Tagliatelli pasta - cooked | 1 egg - beaten |
| Hop shoots stems | Nutmeg |
| Ricotta [or cottage cheese] | Parmesan cheese - grated |
| Salt and pepper | Butter or oil |

The Italians - folks who know more than a thing or two about food and enjoying life - frequently serve 'pasta primavera' which is essentially pasta with spring greens or asparagus. In this recipe that particular veggie component is replaced by young hop shoots. Try other wild spring greens too.

- Boil the pasta and cook until just al dente - with a 'bite'. • Meanwhile, steam or blanch a handful hop shoots in salted water until almost tender, or simple use raw hop shoots if tender enough. • Drain off the cooking water, then lightly fry the shoots adding some cottage cheese, seasoning and a little fresh water to produce a creamy sauce. • Once a smooth sauce is formed take off the heat and set aside. • Beat the egg.
- Place the al dente pasta in a lightly oiled ovenproof dish. • Pour the sauce over.
- Finally add the beaten egg to the dish and a sprinkling of grated nutmeg and, of course, some grated parmesan. • Place into a preheated moderate oven and bake for 20 to 25 minutes.

[Recipe extract from 'The *Essential* Hedgerow and Wayside Cookbook'.]

HOP SALAD

Hop shoots - young
Butter and oil
Vinegar
Parmesan [optional - but good]

Two different ways to tackle a hop salad here - one hot and one cold...

- Steam, or boil, the young hop shoots until done. • Serve hot with a bit of melted butter drizzled over and a few shavings of parmesan. • Serve cold with a vinaigrette dressing [or even with mayonnaise].

[Recipe extract from 'The *Really* Wild Food Guide'.]

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