

# Foragers Almanac March 2025

In March, Haida Gwaii experiences a transition from the mild winter conditions toward the onset of spring. The temperature during this time gradually rises, with daytime highs ranging from 5°C to 14°C, while cooler nights hover just above freezing. This shift in temperature, combined with increased humidity, creates an environment that is conducive to growth and renewal in the local ecosystem.

Frequent rainfall is essential for replenishing the soil and supporting the lush vegetation that Haida Gwaii is known for. This rainfall, along with the moist, mild air, promotes the growth of mosses, ferns, and other plants that thrive in the damp conditions. The combination of moisture and warming temperatures also begins to stir the soil, helping to kickstart the seasonal growth of trees and shrubs, such as the towering cedar and spruce that dominate the landscape.

Sunlight becomes more prevalent as the days grow longer, and this light, paired with the moisture in the air, stimulates photosynthesis in the local flora. The sunlight helps dry out the fungal diseases that can take hold in the cooler, wetter months, which allows for healthier plant growth. This interaction between rain, sun, and moderate temperatures creates a thriving, balanced ecosystem, fostering a variety of microclimates where different plants and animals can thrive throughout the year.

## What To Forage This March 2025

### Vegetables and Herbs

#### **Stinging Nettle** (*Urtica dioica*)

Medicinal: Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) has been used for centuries in herbal medicine to treat a variety of conditions. Arthritis: Used to treat painful joints and muscles. Eczema: Used to treat the dry, itchy rash. Benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH): Used to treat urinary problems associated with an enlarged prostate. Urinary tract infections (UTIs): Used to treat UTIs. Hay fever: Used to treat allergic rhinitis. Joint pain: Used in compresses or creams to treat joint pain, sprains, and strains. Insect bites: Used in compresses or creams to treat insect bites.

Culinary: Can be used like spinach or kale. Stinging nettle pickles wonderfully, lacto ferments at 2% salt to produce small brine with a big flavour (needs attention to maintain full brine coverage). Nettle is hard to turn into a raw vinegar but we have fermented a few raw nettle vinegars/ wines.

#### **Hedge Nettles** (*Stachys chamissonis* var. *cooleyae*)

Medicinal: Poultices of heated leaves for earaches and infected sores. They also used decoctions of roots used as a gargle for sore throats and internally for stomachaches.

Culinary: Can be used like celery for its brightness in flavour, spinach or kale for texture. Consider using like celery in a mirepoix for a base to sauces and soups.

### **Wild Mint** (*Agastache urticifolia*)

**Medicinal:** Wild mint has many traditional medicinal uses, including for digestion, pain relief, and other health benefits. However, more research is needed to confirm its health benefits. *Digestion:* Helps with gas, heartburn, ulcers, and colic. Breaks down food and relieves bloating. *Pain relief:* Can be used to make an ointment to relieve aches and pains. Peppermint oil can be applied topically to relieve itching, muscle pain, and headaches. *Other health benefits:* may help decrease breastfeeding pain, may subjectively improve cold symptoms, may mask bad breath, and may improve brain function.

**Culinary:** Mint has a strong flavour and can be used in many culinary dishes, including salads, sauces, teas, and desserts. *Salads:* Add mint to salads for a refreshing flavour. *Sauces:* Use mint in sauces, dressings, jellies and dips. *Teas:* Make hot or iced tea with mint leaves, fresh or dried. *Desserts:* Use mint in ice cream, chocolate, or mint jello. *Savory dishes:* Add mint to ground meat, roasts, or as a topping for toast. *Cocktails:* Use mint in mojitos or other cocktails

### **Siberian Miner's Lettuce** (*Claytonia sibirica*)

**Medicinal:** Siberian miner's lettuce (*Claytonia sibirica*) has been used in herbal medicine for digestive issues, skin irritations, and rheumatism. *Digestive health:* High fiber content helps with constipation and promotes regular bowel movements. *Indigenous peoples* used it as a staple in their diet to maintain gut health. *Skin irritations:* The leaves can be mashed to create a poultice to apply to burns, minor skin irritations, and inflamed joints. The juice of the plant has been used as eye drops for sore red eyes. *Rheumatism:* A poultice of the mashed plants has been applied to rheumatic joints. *Other uses:* The plant is diuretic, a cold infusion of the stems has been used as an antidandruff wash for the hair. *Indigenous peoples and herbalists* have been known to juice Claytonia leaves as a gentle laxative, invigorating spring tonic, or diuretic

**Culinary:** Siberian miner's lettuce can be used in many dishes, including salads, soups, and stir-fries. It can also be used as a garnish.

### **Winter-cress** (*Barbarea vulgaris*)

**Medicinal:** Wintercress has many medicinal uses, including treating wounds, coughs, and scurvy, and as an aphrodisiac. It's also used to treat rheumatism, chronic diarrhea, and respiratory illnesses. *Wounds:* The leaves were used as a poultice to treat wounds. *Coughs:* Native populations used the plant to soothe coughs. *Scurvy:* Wintercress is a good source of vitamin C and was used to prevent scurvy. *Aphrodisiac:* The Greeks and Romans used wintercress as an aphrodisiac. *Appetite:* Wintercress is used to enhance appetite. *Rheumatism:* Wintercress is used to treat rheumatism. *Chronic diarrhea:* Wintercress is used to help with chronic diarrhea. *Respiratory illnesses:* In parts of rural Italy, a broth made from the plant is used to treat respiratory illnesses

**Culinary:** Can be used like kale, mustard or broccoli

### **Sheep's Sorrel** (*Rumex acetosella*)

**Medicinal:** Sheep's sorrel was used traditionally to treat inflammation, diarrhea, and other conditions. It's also a key ingredient in the alternative cancer treatment Essiac tea.

**Kitchen:** Can be used like lemon due to the oxalic acid. Sorrel can also be used like spinach. Consider making a sorrelade, sorrel soup, sorrel jam, sorrel picatta, marinades etc.

### **Woodruff (*Galium odoratum*)**

**Medicinal:** Sweet woodruff contains chemicals that might help heal wounds and burns. People use sweet woodruff for high blood pressure, insomnia, migraine headache, wound healing.

**Culinary Uses:** Woodruff has many culinary uses, including flavoring ice cream, tea, cocktails, and more. *Tea:* Steep dried leaves in boiling water. *Ice cream, sorbet, and sherbet:* Use extracts or infusions made by steeping the leaves in cream. *Cocktails, sparkling water, or sparkling wine:* Add syrup made from the leaves. *Simple syrup:* Combine sugar, water, and dried leaves. *Syrups and jellies:* Use dried leaves. *Infuse creams, alcohols, and vinegars:* *Cheese making:* Use dried leaves. *Fruit salads:* Add raw or cooked leaves. *May wine:* Flavour with dried leaves. *Waldmeister syrup:* Flavour with dried leaves. *Other uses:* *Perfume:* The aromatic compound coumarin is used as a fixative. *Moth repellent:* The scent of dried leaves is thought to repel moths. *Potpourris, sachets, and wreaths:* Use dried leaves. *Herbal medicine:* Used as an anti-inflammatory, diuretic, and sedative

### **Chickweed (*Stellaria media*)**

**Medicinal:** People take chickweed for constipation, stomach and bowel problems, blood disorders, asthma and other lung diseases, obesity, a vitamin C deficiency disease called scurvy, a skin condition called psoriasis, rabies, itching, and muscle and joint pain. Can also be used to make salve.

**Culinary:** Chickweed can be used in many ways in cooking, including in salads, soups, and pesto. *Salads:* Toss raw chickweed into salads. Combine with more pungent flavours like dandelion greens or chicory. *Soups and stews:* Add chopped chickweed to soups and stews towards the end of cooking so it doesn't overcook. *Pesto and sauces:* Blend chickweed into pesto or hummus. Use chickweed in sauce gribiche or gremolata. *Egg dishes:* Add chopped chickweed to frittatas or savory pancakes. Use chickweed in omelets or quiches. *Sandwiches:* Use chickweed as a sandwich filling, grill cheese filling.

### **Saxifrage (*Saxifragaceae*)**

**Medicinal:** Saxifrages and burnet saxifrages have been used for a variety of medicinal purposes, including treating wounds, respiratory issues, and digestion. Used to treat boils, abscesses, snakebites, convulsions, and otitis media

*Saxifraga:* The Latin name saxifraga means "stone-breaker", and it's sometimes thought to treat kidney stones. Used to treat wounds, kidney and urinary diseases, and respiratory complaints. The leaves and root are astringent, antispasmodic, and carminative. The young leaves and shoots can be eaten raw or added to salads. The plant can be used to add flavour to beer. *Other uses:* The oil and resin from saxifrages can relieve indigestion. Chewing the fresh root can help with toothaches and tongue paralysis. A decoction of saxifrages can be used as a gargle for hoarseness and throat infections. Saxifrages can be used in asthma and dropsy.

**Culinary:** The leaves, flowers, and stems of various saxifrage plants can be eaten, and some are used in salads and teas. The flower shoots are crispy raw. The flowers have a sweet taste and are eaten in Nunavut, Canada. The leaves and stems can be brewed as a tea. *Opposite-leaved Golden Saxifrage:* This small plant adds crunch to salads. *Other uses:*

The oil and resin in saxifrage can relieve flatulent indigestion. The fresh root chewed is good for toothache and paralysis of the tongue. A decoction of saxifrage is said to remove freckles. Meadow saxifrage's bulbils were used to break up gall stones and kidney stones.

### **All Heal (*Prunella vulgaris*)**

Medicinal: Heal-all is a plant with many traditional medicinal uses, including treating wounds, sore throats, and diarrhea. Topical uses: Apply to the skin to treat minor cuts, wounds, and burns. Apply to relieve hemorrhoids.

Apply to treat vaginal discharge. Oral uses: Relieve diarrhea, hemorrhoids, and sore throats. Relieve inflammatory bowel disease. Other uses: Gargle or rinse to relieve sore throats and mouth irritation. Make a compress of bruised leaves and vinegar to help with headaches. Potential health benefits: May help prevent complications associated with diabetes, May have anticancer effects, May help fight inflammation, May lower blood pressure, and May stimulate liver and gall bladder.

Culinary: This plant is reputed to have a range of powerful medicinal uses, and is edible in its entirety, with the young leaves, flowers and stems commonly used raw in salads, cooked in soups and stews, boiled as a pot herb or used to make teas or infusions.

### **Angelica (*Angelica lucida*)**

Medicinal: Angelica has many medicinal uses, including treating respiratory issues, pain, and digestive issues. It's also used to treat menstrual and menopausal symptoms. Respiratory issues: Common cold, Angelica is used to treat respiratory diseases like the common cold and nasal congestion Coughing and wheezing: Angelica is used to treat chronic lung and phlegm conditions. Bronchial issues: Angelica is used to support the lungs and bronchial system. Pain Headaches and toothaches: Angelica is used to treat pain like headaches and toothaches. Rheumatism: Angelica is used to treat rheumatism. Migraines: Angelica is used to treat migraines. Digestive issues Diarrhea: Angelica is used to treat diarrhea and digestive spasms: Weak stomach: Angelica is used to treat a weak stomach or digestive system. Menstrual and menopausal symptoms, Dysmenorrhea: Angelica is used to treat painful menstruation. Hot flashes: Angelica is used to treat hot flashes. Other uses: Angelica is used to treat acne, ulcers, and carbuncles.

Arthritis, gout, reduce water retention and to relieve nocturia.

Culinary: Angelica is a sweet, pale green herb with many culinary uses, including flavoring, baking, and making jams and preserves. Flavoring :Add to drinks, gin, and sweet wines. Flavor fruit salad and ice cream. Use in omelettes and pair with trout. Baking: Use the roots in baking. Use candied angelica to decorate cakes and desserts jams and preserves. Steam the stems and eat like a vegetable. Add fresh leaves to soups and stews. Cook rhubarb or gooseberries with young Angelica leaves. Simmer the young tender springtime shoots and then store in sugar to make candied Angelica. Angelica is part of the parsley family and is also known as the "herb of the angels". It has a muscatel flavor and an aromatic odour that has been compared to musk and juniper.

### **Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*)**

Medicinal: Feverfew is an herb that has been used for centuries for a variety of medicinal purposes. It's a member of the daisy family and is native to Asia Minor and the Balkans. Migraines: Feverfew is most commonly used to prevent migraines and reduce their frequency and severity, 1-4 leaves a day. Menstrual cramps: Feverfew may help ease menstrual cramps by reducing prostaglandin production. Headaches: Feverfew may help with minor headaches, such as tension headaches. Feverfew may help with Arthritis, asthma, toothaches and insect bites. Feverfew can also be used as an air purifier.

Culinary: Feverfew and its flowers have a strong flavour. They can be used like many other small leaves in salads, soups and sauces but be careful as the flavour can easily overwhelm and make a dish less palatable .

## The Asteraceae Family

(Dandelion, English Daisy, Cat Ears, Western Fleabane, Ragweed, Wall Lettuce, Bull Thistle)

**Bulbs, Roots and Moss** (Burdock, Wild Lily, Bracken Fern, Wood Aven) These edible roots are all unique in flavour as well as uses. Burdock has a more rose like flavour similar to Quince fruit, whereas lily bulbs are mild, delicious and starchy (related to onions). Bracken fern root opens up a whole new dimension of culinary wizardry. Consider making Bracken ramen noodles, crackers or mochi, pickled lily bulbs, burdock marmalade. These bulbs also allow us to forage carbohydrates from the forest that can be fermented into wines, raw vinegars, vodka and other spirits. Icelandic moss (that grows all over Haida Gwaii) has large amount of carbohydrates as well and can be used to in the same way. Wood Aven roots were collected in medieval times for their medicinal properties on March 25th every year.

**Berries and Fruits** (Frog Berries; Maianthemum dilatatum, Rose Hips) Frog Berries are round tart, cranberry like fruits that are bright red and usually found in clusters. They have a significant seed inside and lingonberry like flavour. Consider using for baking, condiments (ketchup), jams and jellies, sauces, dressings or wet rub for fish, mignonette for shellfish with a raw Cow's Parsnip vinegar.

**Fungi** Turkey Tail and Lobster Tail (Hypomyces aurantius parasitizing Trametes versicolor) Turkey Tail can be found on dead logs all over the forest. If you are lucky you will find red turkey tail mushrooms (Hypomyces aurantius parasitizing Turkey Tail) on the same log which when dried, has an incredible umamirific flavour.

**Nuts and Seeds** (Alder catkins, Yarrow, Cow's Parsnip, Pine Nuts)

Alder catkins, also known as alder pepper or dune pepper, can be used as a seasoning in many dishes.

Alder catkins can be used to season meat, fish, and roasted vegetables. Ground alder catkins can be used in chocolate desserts and five-spice mixes for cakes. Alder catkins can also be used to smoke fish and meat. Yarrow seeds are perfect for the taking right now. Yarrow is a flavour that has great potential. Pair Yarrow with mushrooms and cream or peppercorns and meat, blend into a yogurt, or make a deeply flavoured tahini. Cow's Parsnip seeds can be used sparsely like cardamon in muffins, breads, sauces, condiments and preserves. Consider roasting seeds, blending into mash (moromi) with koji inoculated lupins and fermenting into "miso or shoyu" Consider mixing into soy beans when making tofu to add a distinctive almost red chilli like flavour to the finished product.



## Next Foraging Tour and Feast Schedule

March 29th  
12:30 - 6:30 pm

April 26th  
12:30 - 6:30 pm

May 31st  
12:30 - 6:30 pm