

Hop

HUMULUS LUPULUS



HABITAT

Hedgerows, thickets, woodland. Prefers loamy soils.

PARTS USED

Young leaves, shoots and foliage.

Hops generally end up in beer but in fact parts of the plant are edible at certain times of year. Indeed, in the hop growing areas of the south east of Britain, and in other parts of Europe where hops were grown commercially, the use of hops as a foodstuff was quite common.

Hop is a climber and its tendrils can be found intertwined among hedgerow shrubs and bushes. It is these young tendrils tips and very young leaf material in the spring which are edible. Very young tendrils are tender enough to supply you with an uncooked hedgerow nibble, having a soft consistency.

As the plant gets older however, the leaves and vines become very rough and abrasive, such that tugging at the rough vines can cause skin abrasions and cuts.

Simply cook (steam or boil as you wish) the young parts, or add the raw tendril tops to salads.

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 USING 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' - ISBN 0 9544158 2 5]

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' - ISBN 0 9544158 0 9]

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