

Prof. Stewart's Culinary Improvisation Class

Urban Foraging in Prospect Park, Brooklyn

With guide Steve "Wildman" Brill

April 21, 2016



The class met at Prospect Park and the students were all on time, which made me very happy. And even better, it was a beautiful sunny day. Many of the students brought spades and little shovels and they all brought baggies as well. Before long they had commandeered walking sticks and were getting in the spirit.



The class sent me this photo in the morning because I give them a hard time about being late and I said it would be very bad to be meeting our guide and for students to be late. They posted this on Open Lab to tease me and show they were leaving their houses early (class starts at 9.00)



Here they are taking a break after a long stretch of walking.



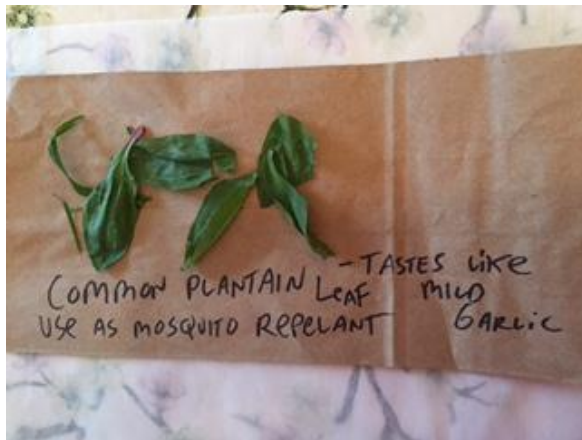
This herb tasted like parsley but the leaves were harder than parsley. The following week students were asked to explain how they would use this in an entrée.



Here the students are digging up roots that can be braised like mustard greens.



This can be eaten raw in a salad or as a garnish or cooked like broccoli rabe.



Everyone was very interested in the idea of a natural mosquito repellent



Our guide said these only bloom about 2 weeks a year so you need to act quickly when they available. He told us that they can be added to muffins or cake and the color does not bleed like berries do. He also said they can be frozen, so many students harvested baggies of them.



The violets were interesting because most of did not know that we can eat the leaves as well.



Several of the students knew about burdock from their native countries but had different names for it. It can be boiled like carrots or parsnips or shaved thin and eaten raw. You can also make tea with it.



Sassafras was a good item for the students to see because they have made gumbo or jambalaya before and they were keen to see that this root is where file powder comes from.

The guide told us this is also called the “root beer tree” because it is used to make root beer.



This was a very strong-tasting leaf and our hands all smelled like garlic when we were done picking it.



The class really liked the idea of using natural skewers. The following week we discussed what items they would use and how they would use the sticks.



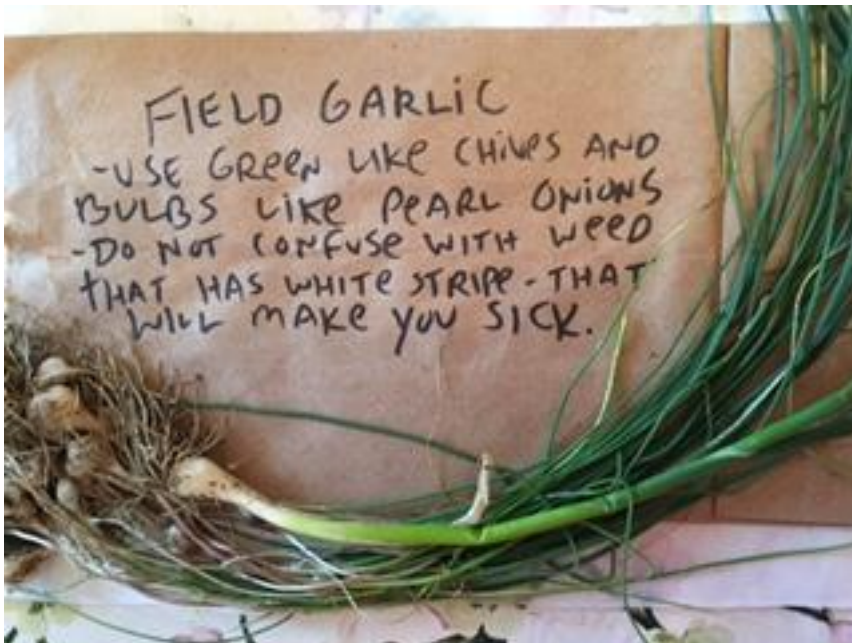
We had to keep moving...there was a lot to see!



This needs to be peeled but has a clean nice flavor like celery.



These beans took time to find. They grow in large pods very high on the tree. We had to hunt for them and the class really dug through the bushes to find this handful. Our guide told us that they should be roasted for 3 hours and then ground. They can be sprinkled on hot coffee or whipped cream and tastes like a cross between chocolate and nutmeg.







We walked all over Prospect Park and the class was very good about not complaining. By this time everyone is getting hungry and it was getting warm also.

The class was required to so a posting on Open Lab and they put up their photos of the trip.

The following are screen shots of the blog the class runs.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/culinary-improv-2016/>. The page has a background image of various kitchen utensils hanging on a metal rack. The main content area includes a red heading **HMG4967CulinaryImprov, 2016** and a sub-heading *Learn to Cook. Cook to Learn.* Below this is a navigation menu with links for [COURSE PROFILE](#), [HOME](#), [ASSIGNMENTS](#), [FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY AND PLATE DESIGN](#), and [NOW WATCH THIS!](#). A large black box contains the quote: **A RECIPE HAS NO SOUL. YOU AS THE COOK MUST BRING SOUL TO THE RECIPE**. Underneath the quote is a post titled **Eggplant and yellow plantain Parmesan** with a [Leave a reply](#) link. Two photographs of the dish are shown side-by-side. The Windows taskbar is visible at the bottom of the screen.



Kentucky Coffee Pods. If you roast these for a few hours, your whole house would smell like coffee.



One of my favorite parts of the trip, Japanese Knot Weed. You can peel and eat these and you will get a taste of green apples.

This entry was posted in [Uncategorized](#) on [May 4, 2016](#) by [Martin Benitez](#). [Edit](#)



All of us gathering Red Buds, but I think my classmate, Veronica wanted to take the whole tree.






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← → <https://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/culinary-improv-2016/> ☆ ☰



In the beginning of our trip, the Wildman was showing his water paintings of the plants we were going to see.



1:47 PM 5/19/2016



Some of the food they made the following week.....

Our urban foraging tour was excellent and I am grateful for the opportunity and for the money given to us in order to make it happen. Thank you so much! –Claire Stewart

Class Participants

Benitez Jr,Martin
Bernard,Devondra Y
Buren,Richard
Espinosa,Jonathan
Hoyte,Candace N
Jang,Hyein
Kamara,Yatta
Kirschner,Veronica L
Martinez,Anthony L
Salcedo,Maria D
Worrell,Tamisha C.

