

# meadows + more



INTO THE WEEDS:  
How to Garden like a Forager

# WHAT IS FORAGING: the myth of the hunter gatherer; the myth of the Wild





# Wherever there is the “wild” people around the world are enjoying and managing these plants

- Global cultures enjoy wild fruits and herbs
- Japan: nanakusa
- Italy: preboggian wild fennel, mustards
- NOMA
- England: hedgerows



**Reconnecting with our past  
and making them delicious  
today.**

**When is peak? What parts?  
How to prepare?**

**orange daylily.**

**Shoots Flavor = mild leeks x French beans.**

**Buds Flavor = Crunchy asparagus like.**



© Thomas Schauer





Today we “forage”  
mostly in the aisles of  
the supermarket or  
convenience store



# SO what?

- Fragility of food system to climate change and disease
- Environmental monocultures
- Health: most people eat only 25 vegetables
- FOUR crops are 60% of modern diet: corn, soybean, wheat and rice





In our pursuit of yield, sweetness and shelf life we have bred out much of the nutrients and flavor



henbit.  
Flavor = nutty.

# Plants that experience “stress”

- Plants under stress are especially nutritionally dense, particularly leafy greens
- Xenohormetic molecules (Harvard Medical School)
- The chemistry of wild plants
- Primary metabolites
- Secondary metabolites



Insect holes



# "Eat food. Not too much. Mostly Plants"

- Michael Pollan: top two are lambsquarters and purslane
- Avoid: "edible food-like substances"
- Small amounts of plants, in diversity
- Freezing, blanching, drying





# Lambsquarters





# Purslane



Omega 3; also component of traditional Chinese medicine

# What is wild? What is a garden?

## OUT:



- Design; people centered style
- Planting
- High maintenance
- All or nothing: all natives, all pink flowers, or all lawn
- ALL ABOUT CONTROL and where and what to plant

## IN:



- Nature's Design and Asymmetrical Rhythms
- Free range , diversity of plants
- Multi-purpose: food, arrangements, refuge, upcycling
- ALL about DANCING with what is there, on a unique place on earth



# A Planted Garden Design





# Backyard





# A Wild Backyard





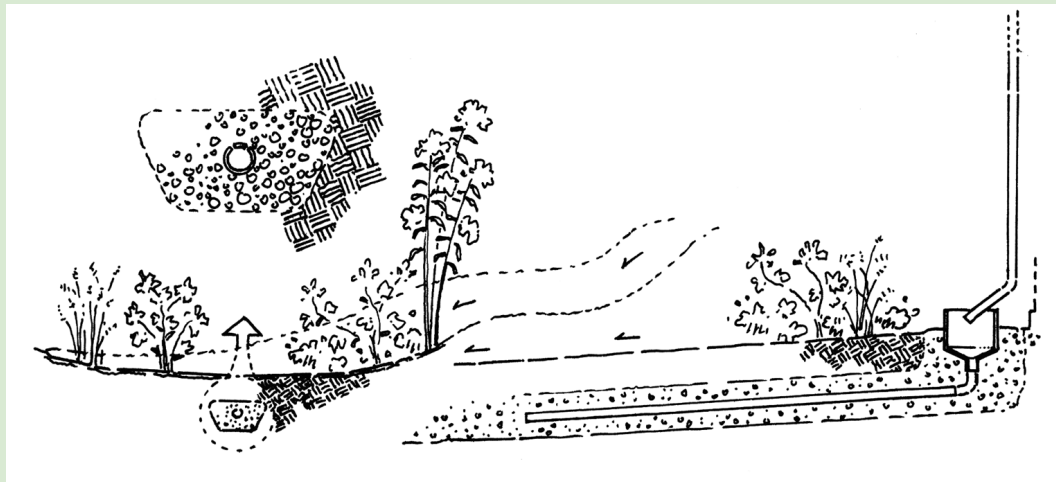
# Forager's Garden: A Holistic Approach





# Nature's Design elements for gardening in the anthropocene

- Water
- Light
- Wind
- Soil:
- Plants



See handout and website: [www.MeadowsAndMore.com](http://www.MeadowsAndMore.com)

# The wild plants that come up tell the story of your time and place

Singular and unique

Soft rush (*Juncus effusus*) = OBL = wet  
99%

Local biodiversity

Native? Nonnative or  
adventist?

Floristic Quality  
Assessment Index (FQAI)

What community grows  
there





# How to start?

## *Making a Wildish Patch*

### 1) MARK A plant or FALLOW PATCH

- You can find patches of wild here and there
- Not too wet or too dry
- Avoid spaces covered with invasives such as honeysuckle, mugwort, or knotweed.

### 2) DO NOTHING

- Pause this spring
- Observe what comes up

### 3) MARK & ENCLOSE

- Mark plants that come up
- Make temporary enclosure with fallen logs





**FIND THE PLANTS  
WHERE THEY  
WANT TO GROW:**  
If they don't "fit" in  
the bed, pick them  
from outside the  
bed, or make an  
"ANNEX"



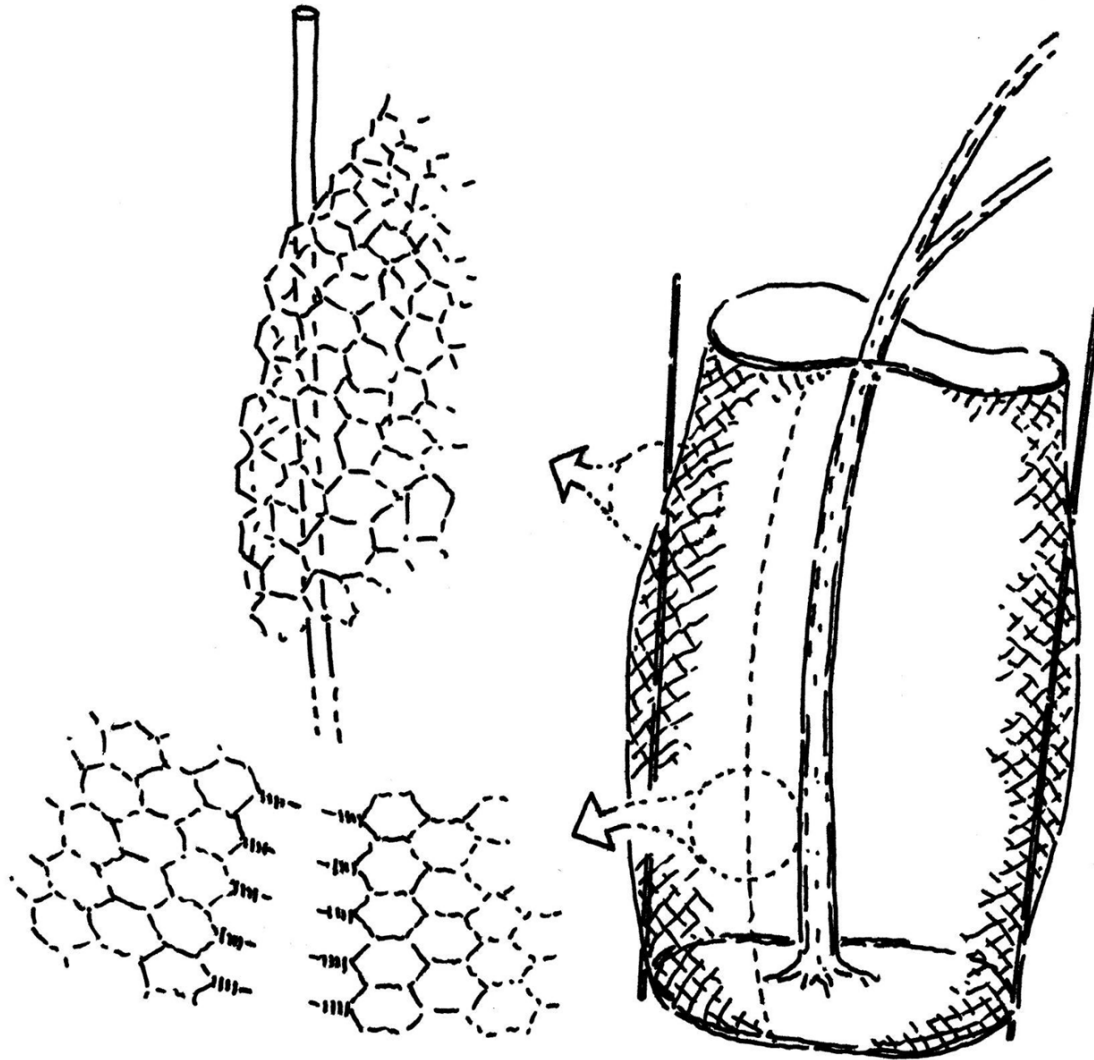


# Mark Deadwood Standing

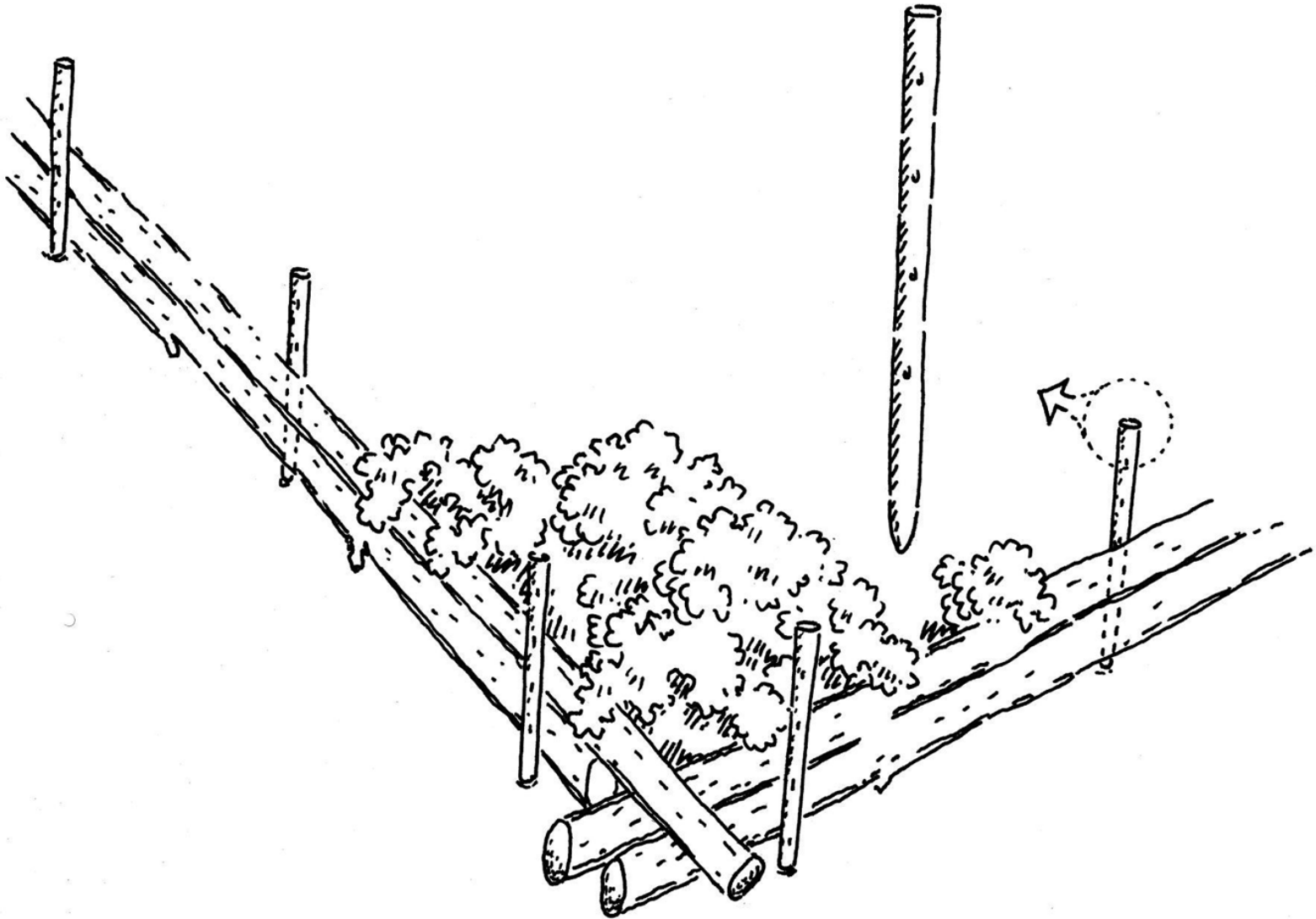
- Leave dead wood
- Mark it with wrapping (ex-Shimenawa)
- Be intentional, not neglectful



# Chicken Wire Cage



# Enclosing a Wildish Patch







# Gardens of the Anthropocene

- Plants are some of the most adaptable and resilient, chemically
- Plant based gardens always change. Some only bloom once in several years. Some will spread, others will wink out.
- As change accelerates we strive towards balance, diversity and resilience. We cannot control but we can steward

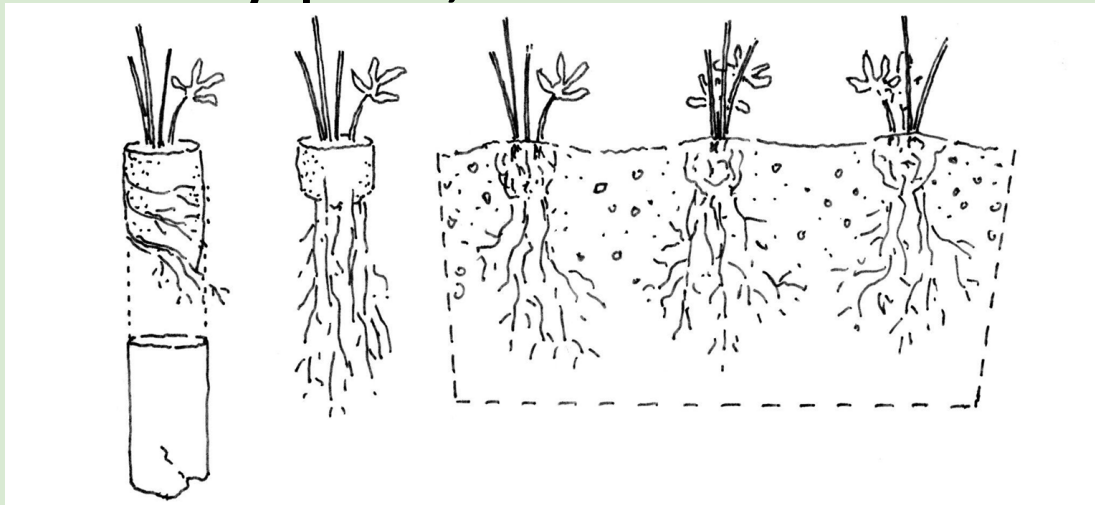




# To plant or not to plant?

*“Let nature do the planting and learn how much of what she plants is food, medicine or both.”*

- Let standing method
- Kickstart by planting (pocket meadow or trench planting) but let nature fill in
- Don't overly plan, nature isn't a row of emojis



# Weeds are part of the future

- Survivors
- Flavor dense
- Nutrient dense
- Available
- Delicious
- Sturdy
- No inputs: irrigation, fertilizer, soil amendments





# Thousands of edible plants around us

- Delicious (top ten)
- Tastes good but too much trouble
- Edible but tastes like cardboard
- Neither edible nor toxic
- Toxic
- Poisonous



# Sustainability Code

- ◆ Invasive (includes ornamentals)
- ◆ Nonnative (includes vegetables)
- ◆ Native: generalists
- ◆ Native: specialists

Based on the ecological behavior of the species in the landscape. All green plants are not the same. Some thrive on and are indicators of disturbance.



# Managing (and Harvesting) Invasive Species

- Learn how the plant spreads:  
burning or cutting to the ground  
can invigorate underground  
rhizomes (mugwort)
- Cutting vines using the window method
- Prolific seeders (garlic mustard) cut off tops before in full flower.
- Eat those wineberries and autumn olives!
- Avoid digging and cutting at nodes
- Weed Warriors



# Garlic Mustard Pesto

(recipe on Food52.com)

## Ingredients

- **11 cups** lightly packed LIGHT GREEN garlic mustard leaves and tips, loosely chopped
- **1/4 cup** pine nuts or pecans
- **1/3 cup** grated parmesan cheese
- **1 cup** extra virgin olive oil
- **1/2 teaspoon** salt
- **1/2 teaspoon** sugar
- **2 squeezes** lemon juice



## Directions

1. In a blender, grind the pine nuts and parmesan.
2. Add the garlic mustard.
3. While blending, pour in a steady stream of the olive oil for 1 minutes, or until smooth.
4. Add salt, sugar, lemon juice and pulse until mixed.

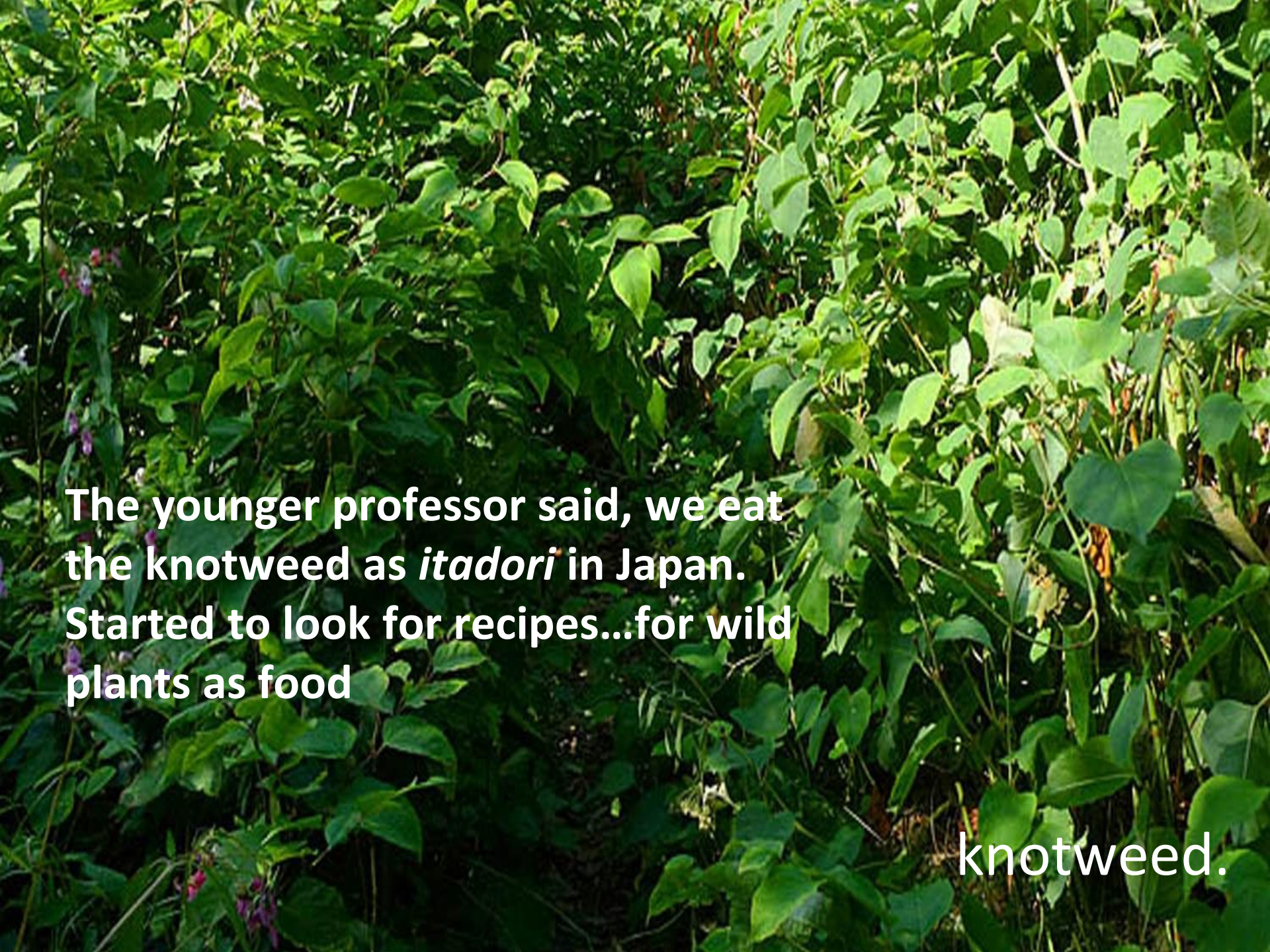




**Noxious weed of the world: Japanese knotweed**

**knotweed.**  
**Flavor = Rhubarb**



A dense thicket of green knotweed plants. The leaves are bright green and heart-shaped. Some purple flowers are visible on the left side. The background is a solid wall of green foliage.

The younger professor said, we eat  
the knotweed as *itadori* in Japan.  
Started to look for recipes...for wild  
plants as food

knotweed.



# Cutting at the internode











# Aralia elata: another decapitation control method





# Aralia response to mowing



# Aralia foraging in Japan





# Mugwort (*Artemisia*) ◆



- Invasive: spreads mainly by rhizome
- Medicinal from antimalarial to wormwood
- Korea: mugwort wellbeing spa

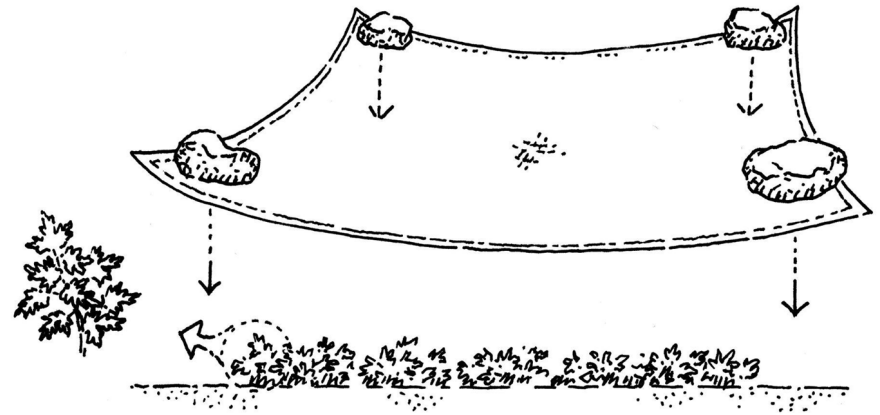
Table 4

Differences in the composition of essential oils from the herb of *A. vulgaris* of various origins.

Origin of Plants	Main Components	References
Brazil	caryophyllene (37.45%)	[67]
	germacrene D (16.17%)	
	humulene (13.66%)	
	borneol (6.80%)	
	caryophyllene oxide (5.67%)	
France	camphor (1–13%)	[73]
	1,8-cineole (1–23%)	
	terpinen-4-ol (1–19%)	
Germany	sabinene (16%)	[74]
	myrcene (14%)	
	1,8-cineole (10%)	
India	$\alpha$ -thujone and thujone isomer ( $\beta$ -thujone)	[75]
	camphor	
Italy	camphor (47%)	[77]
	camphor (2–20%)	
	myrcene (9–70%)	
	1,8-cineole (1–27%)	
	borneol (3–18%)	
Lithuania (North part)	sabinene (0–8.4%)	[62]
	$\beta$ -pinene (0.1–12.9%)	
	1,8-cineole (2.6–17.6%)	
	cis-thujone (0–12.9%)	
	trans-thujone (0–20.2%)	
	chrysanthenyl acetate (0–23.6%)	
	caryophyllene (2.5–12.2%)	
germacrene D (5.3–15.1%)		
Morocco	thujone/isothujone	[78]
	camphor	
Vietnam	$\beta$ -caryophyllene (24%)	[79]
	$\beta$ -cubebene (12%)	
	$\beta$ -clemene (6%)	
	1,8-cineole	
	camphor	[80]



# Mugwort Control



# Martha Stewart's Mugwort Soup (young mild leaves)







# Japanese honeysuckle

*(Lonicera japonica)* ◆

- Native to East Asia, culinary susukusa (the honey from the flower) and common Chinese medicinal properties: jinyinhua (means gold/silver flower) (flowers just before blooming)
- In the United States, invasive east of the Mississippi
- Growth habit a vine: Covers the forest floor, climbs and strangles trees

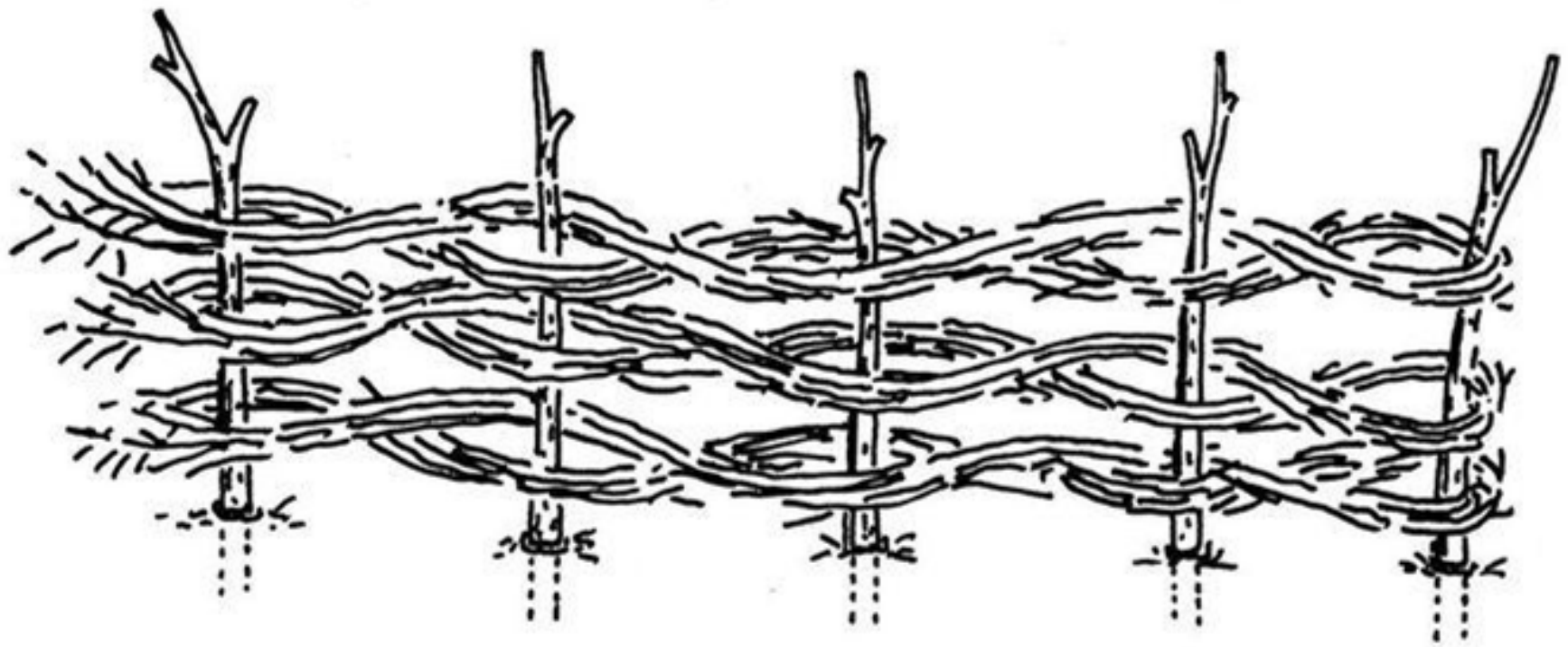




# Japanese honeysuckle ◆



# Honeysuckle fencing





# Lesser celandine ◆





# Stinging nettles





# Weed Warrior Pilot Program

- Maryland Parks 12,000 hours
- Level One: online education module and field training and supervision. Start with vines and window method
- Level Two: supervisors: more species. Organized groups
- Record keeping and data gathering



Weed Warriors Pilot Program  
Mercer and Hunterdon County sign up:  
[meadowsandmore.com](http://meadowsandmore.com)

# Besides eating we can Upcycle weeds, branches

- Arrangements
- Firestarters from dead juniper branches
- Pine and evergreens
- Smudge sticks
- Citrus leaves
- Fig leaves

























**Respect the plants and restore the earth. Eat well.**

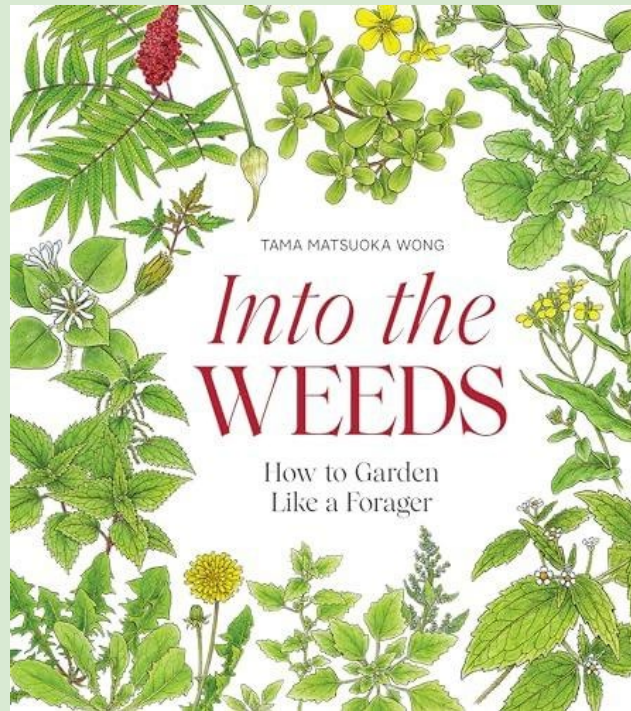




**“THIS ELOQUENT WORK MOVES SEAMLESSLY BETWEEN THE PRACTICAL AND THE EXPERIENTIAL. IT IS A MUST READ FOR ANYONE WHO SEEKS TO BECOME MORE INTIMATE WITH THE LAND ON WHICH THEY LIVE.”**

**Larry Weaner**

***co-author of Garden Revolution: How Our Landscapes Can be a Source of Environmental Change***



**“I LOVE THIS BOOK. AFTER READING THIS I SAW MY GARDEN IN A COMPLETELY NEW LIGHT AND BEGAN TO SEE THE BOUNTY THE LAND IS OFFERING AND THE INVITATION FOR ME TO ENGAGE MORE DEEPLY THAN I HAVE BEFORE.”**

**Bryan Thompson-Nowak**

***Director of Education, Morris Arboretum, University of Pennsylvania***

