

# Add nourishment with roses and pines

By DIANE HUBEL

"Did you know that many parts of a pine tree are edible?" Television watchers will recognize that question as naturalist Euell Gibbons' opening line for a cereal commercial.

Many Americans are turning to nature and learning that not only the pine tree but also such well-known plants and herbs as the rose, the violet and even nettles are not only edible but highly nutritious.

Cranbrook Institute of Science is offering a course in natural foods which meets on Saturdays during the last two weeks in April and the month of May. The course, which is open to the public, is taught by two Bloomfield Hills residents, Becky Radcliffe and Susan Smith. They will teach class members how to identify and use wild plants.

"It is important that people learn to recognize the edible plants," Mrs. Radcliffe said. "This is one case where a little bit of knowledge can be a dangerous

thing. People who do not know what they are doing could very easily eat the wrong thing and get sick."

**FOR THOSE** who do not have the time or the inclination to take a course there are a variety of books which deal with natural foods, including several by Euell Gibbons.

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The Cranbrook class, which is a

combination of workshops and field trips, also intends to try various recipes including nettle beer. Even the irritating, stinging nettle is an excellent source of vitamin C as well as many other minerals.

According to Gibbons, nettle beer is considered a good beverage for older people because it relieves their rheumatic pains. Since it has a probiotic content it is a drink which can be enjoyed by the whole family.

**IN HIS BOOK** "Stalking the Heathful Herb," Gibbons also offers recipes for cream nettles, purslane nettles and even a nettle pudding.

"I think people appreciate nature a lot more when they understand its uses," Mrs. Radcliffe said. "We want to teach people to appreciate the wild plants and to realize their value."

"Maybe if people would become a little more aware of nature and

its value they would be a little more concerned with saving it."

Nature food lovers say that if used properly a person will not destroy the plants which he uses. If a person knows which parts to use and which to leave behind, the plants can be used and will still flourish.

People using natural foods must be careful about what they pick and where they pick it, however. Many state and national parks are protected areas and people are not allowed to pick any of the plants found in their confines.

**THERE IS** also a danger in using wild weeds found along road sides or plants grown in home gardens. In many cases both are sprayed with poisonous insecticides or weed killers which, of course, cannot be eaten.

The rose is another common plant which has many uses both as a food and as a cosmetic. Although long appreciated for its beauty and fragrance, most people do not realize the rose is also a source of Vi-

tamin A which can be used for rose petal jam by combining it with water, lemon juice, powdered pectin and sugar. Rose petals also can be used in making candy. Gibbons even suggests making rose petal omelettes.

The rose hips also are edible and can be used for soups and in rose hip jam. There are also many commercial cosmetics such as lotions and cold creams which utilize various parts of the rose.

**VIOLETS ALSO** can be used for making a jelly. Gibbons, in "Stalking the Wild Herb," states that he analyzed the violets and found them to be rich in both vitamin C and vitamin A. According to Mrs. Radcliffe, the leaves of the violet can be used without harming the violet since the blossom does not produce the seeds on the violets.

Mrs. Radcliffe said she and Mrs. Smith would like to teach people not only about the edible wild plants but also about the plants and weeds in their own gardens which are edible.

"I think that there is a little bit of the naturalist in all of us," she said. "There is a part of us that does not want to be dependent upon the grocery store and pre-packaged foods. Seeking out natural foods appeals to that part of our nature. While it would be impractical to rely solely on natural foods they are a good supplement to the normal diet."

**IN HIS BOOK** Gibbons points out that if a person were cut off from his source of fresh food for any length of time he could exist on a diet of natural foods and not suffer from malnutrition if he knew what to eat. He further added that the rural poor could be far healthier if they were taught to use the wild life that grows around them as part of their diet.

As for the pine tree, it can be used in various recipes for tea, soups and cough medicines or candy, although, according to Gibbons, while rich in vitamins the taste of most pine foods leaves much to be desired.

## Smart city-side farmer will save by planting soon

By CHRISTINE WALDEN

Rising food costs and desiring to be outside has led many people from the supermarket into the backyard. There vegetable patches and complete gardens can flourish. If gardeners do everything right.

According to Gregory Patchan, Michigan State University Extension Horticulturist, both veteran and beginning gardeners must follow basic steps to produce a healthy vegetable crop.

**A PROPER SITE** is essential. Patchan advised "picking an area with as much sun as possible and it should have good drainage. If the water stands there for a day every time it rains then it won't be very good."

Healthy soil is also important. However, "Fertility can be corrected by using fertilizer," said Patchan.

Once the site is selected and the soil is prepared, decide what to plant and when. "The problem people run into is thinking that all vegetables go in on Memorial Day," he said. "Some vegetables are warm season crops. But many others, like lettuce, are cool season crops and should be growing now or not until mid-summer for a fall crop. If you put cabbage in the first week of June you won't get anything because it's a cool season crop."

Radishes, carrots, onions, brussel sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, peas and lettuce are vegetables that should be planted now.

**INDOOR CULTIVATION** of tomatoes, peppers and eggplants should also be in progress.

Transplanting your indoor plants requires caution. "You have to put them outside during the day at least a week before you transplant them," advised Patchan. "And when they're outside don't water them as much. This procedure toughens the plants. If you put them outside in the wind and cold it will shock the plants."

If your garden is small, be selective in what you grow. A booklet, provided by the MSU extension service, advises growing vegetables you like and those "with a home garden freshness not generally found in stores."

Included in that category are asparagus, beans, broccoli, leaf lettuce, peas, radishes, spinach, sweet corn and tomatoes.

**IF YOU HAVE** a lot of space you should still confine the garden to what you, your family and friends can eat. Don't grow so much that you have to throw it out.

After the plants are growing,

they must be thinned. Thinning is an essential step in eliminating a crop of small, scraggly vegetables. Too many plants compete for nourishment and they all end up losers.

Thinning should be done when plants are small and the soil is wet.

However, weeds can still deprive thinned plants from needed nourishment.

**"WEED CONTROL** is a big problem for most people," said Patchan. "The easiest way to control weeds is the use of mulch. Cover the surface of the soil with grass clippings, straw or even old newspapers to smother the weeds."

Black plastic works well too. It prevents light from getting in and even if weeds start growing they can't get through the plastic.

"And if you mulch you won't have to water as often," he said.

Finally, gardeners must make sure plants are watered properly. When rain is scarce, hose watering is necessary. The garden should be thoroughly soaked at least once a week, wetting the top six inches of the soil.

**IF YOU LIVE** in an apartment or a condominium but have a patio

or balcony you can still reap your own harvest.

"You can raise many things," said Patchan. "Such as patio tomatoes, onions, radishes, lettuce, or dwarf cucumbers. You just have to make sure your container is large enough and that you have a good soil mix."

He said artificial soil is the best for container gardens. The soil is lighter weight and not prone to disease or weeds.

Whatever kind of garden you decide to grow, small, large or container, plan now. Certain seeds are already hard to find as more and more people resort to their own methods of obtaining food.

"I would say the general interest is about four times what it was last year," remarked Patchan. "Part of the reason is that people feel they are going to save money. It's a good family activity that you don't have to drive 250 miles for and it gets you outside. It's just a good chance to feel a part of nature."

People with gardening problems or questions can call the extension service at 858-0880.

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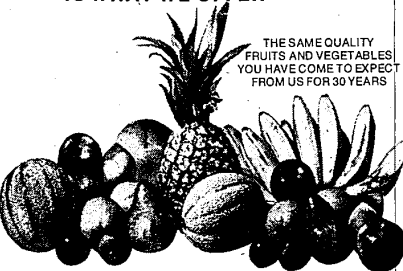
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## Cheese handy for appetizer

Several kinds of cheese are produced in commercial quantities in Michigan, with greatest production in Arenac, Clare, Emmet and Westford counties, according to marketing officials of the Michigan Department of Agriculture. There are 15 cheese factories located throughout the state and cheese made from whole milk totaled 31.8 million pounds in 1972.

If unexpected guests drop in, prepare a hot cheese appetizer on the spot. Trim the crusts from four slices of white bread. Cut into four strips. Brush with one-fourth cup melted butter. Divide one-half cup of grated Cheddar cheese on each strip. Place on a baking sheet and bake in a 350 degree preheated oven from five to seven minutes until bread is toasted and cheese melted. This makes 16 delicious strips.

Hostesses also can prepare an appetizer cheese-roll a day or two in advance. Whip two (three ounce) packages of cream cheese with two cups of shredded Cheddar cheese and one-third cup crumbled blue cheese. Shape into a roll about eight inches long, two inches in diameter. Roll in chopped parsley and wrap tightly. Chill in refrigerator.

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