

# Autumn Wild Edibles & Berries

Marlenea La Shomb



handle the weather here well. This year, I made easy jams and sauces with no added pectin or sugar. Here's now: Mix your berries with dried fruit and put them in the Vitamix blender with a dash of Himalayan salt and hot water. Purée the mixture on high. The dried fruit (raisins, apricots, cherries, etc.) sweetens and thickens your sauce or jam (based on the amount of water used). Some fun combinations are: black currants with dried plums, gooseberries with dried apricots, and red currants with dried mangos or cherries. Process these the same as freezer jam or in a 15-minute hot-water bath, depending on the fruit and the size of your jars. Look it up in your canning books...

## HARVESTING & JAMMING YOUR BERRIES

**T**he bears stayed in the higher elevations of our Montana mountains this year due to the abundance of wild berries. We, too, can take advantage of Mother Nature's bounty—a bumper crop this year, free for the pickin's! Wild elderberries, chokecherries and the like are full of whole-food nutrients. One rosehip has more Vitamin C in it than a whole bag of California oranges, which are picked green, then stored and gassed to make them turn orange—not to mention the processing and pasteurizing of orange juice...

So take a hike! And while enjoying the last of summer and fall weather, pick your berries—avoid pokeberries, wild cherries, holly and other non-edibles. Put your harvest in freezer bags or in glass canning jars. For a delicious fermented drink, cover your berries with homemade kombucha, which you leave on the counter for 2 or 3 days. Your beautiful fermented drink will store longer in the refrigerator. This also works great with crabapples.

In the garden, berries such as red and black currants, gooseberries, raspberries and strawberries all



## PREPARING YOUR GARDEN FOR WINTER TO SPRING

October usually brings some snow and prompts us to get the garden beds ready to winter over and for spring planting. The strawberry beds do well with some bags of mushroom compost. A cover of leaves is always a plus all through the garden. Plant your garlic and onion bulbs, along with your lettuce and spinach seeds, before the ground freezes for earlier and larger harvests. The herbs lemon sorrel and plain sorrel I fall-planted last year were very tasty.

Then stay warm and dream of spring! ■

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