

5 Things To Do With Wild Fireweed

Wild Fireweed grows *everywhere* here. It lines the roads and fills the valleys, bringing a vibrant splash of color in an otherwise green temperate rainforest. Also called Willowherb, Wild Fireweed is not only edible, it has some minor medicinal uses, too. Learn more about this wonderful wild edible and increase your foraging knowledge!



Wild Fireweed is a gorgeous plants that produces bright pink/magenta colored flowers. The more common variety has an odd quirk in how the flowers bloom and die off, too! They bloom and die from the bottom to the top, not the other way around! Here in Southeast Alaska (and many other places, I'm sure), we use it as a gauge to tell how much more summer is left. I've found it to be a much more accurate way of telling when we've gone around the bend, seasonally speaking. When the flowers dying off hit the middle of the plant, you know you're running out of time to get things done!

Here are 5 different things to do with Wild Fireweed!

Fresh

Young shoots and leaves are delicious greens that you can add to a salad, sauté up with other greens, or just nibble on while out hiking around. As the plant gets older, the leaves get more bitter and once it has begun to flower, the leaves aren't very tasty at all.

But wait, *there's more!* The flowers themselves are edible and have a delicious sweet taste. Also, as the plant gets larger, they tend to get thick stalks on them that can also be eaten. **NOTE:** If eating the stalks/stems, you don't want to eat the outer part – very bitter! Instead, you eat the meat out of the middle! Slice it open and enjoy a bright, clean tasting green that will also help hydrate you some. Enjoy the vitamins A and C you're getting from it, too!

Jelly

Making Fireweed Jelly is a lot of fun, and easy! There are many recipes out there and people tend to have their own preferences. Some use red and white clover, others don't. There are recipes that use *only* wildflowers, too, like [this one](#).

Syrup

Making syrup isn't too much different than making jelly is and also very easy. If you have the flowers available, a batch doesn't take very long, either. Use it over pancakes and waffles, of course, but don't forget oatmeal or drizzled over vanilla ice cream!

Tea

The flowers can be dried and stored to be used in making teas later on. The flowers are added not only for the sweetness they give, but also for the medicinal purposes of indigestion. It's believed that fireweed helps maintain your gut health.

“Honey“

I was surprised what I found out when I first looked up fireweed honey. It seems there are several things sold as “wild fireweed honey.” Each one is different and it really makes me wonder if the overpriced ‘honey’ I’ve bought wasn’t just some thick, fireweed flavored sugar syrup.

- Honey from bees that fed on wild fireweed
- A variation of ‘honey’ made with sugar and flower blossoms
- Flowers pressed to extract the ‘honey oil’

No matter which way you slice it, all are pretty darn tasty! Personally, I enjoy the honey from bees who’ve been playing in the fireweed patch over the others. It is my sincere hope to someday have a couple bee hives so I can harvest my own fireweed honey!

Bonus – Want more?! Here’s a [wonderful information sheet](#) with *recipes included* from the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the Cooperative Extension office.

Comment below with any questions or other ideas of things to do and make with Wild Fireweed!

Sources

[Medicinal Uses of Fireweed](#)

When Alaska Hands You Fireweed