



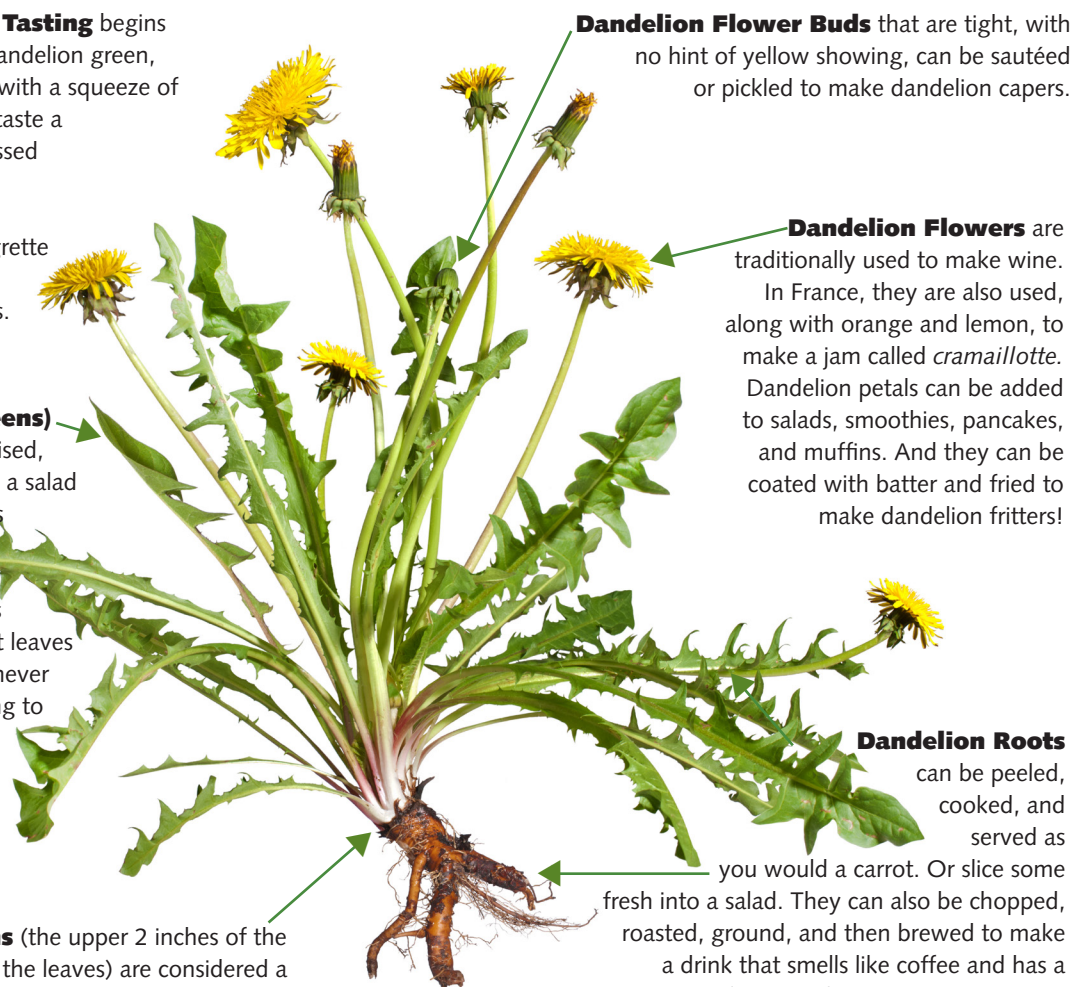
# Connecting New Jersey Farms to Local Schools

## Dandelion Greens are the featured item in our Garden State on Your Plate tastings!

**Our Dandelion Greens Tasting** begins with a small piece of raw dandelion green, which the students season with a squeeze of lemon and salt. They then taste a dandelion greens salad dressed with lemon vinaigrette. Students are asked to pay attention to how the vinaigrette changes the flavor and texture of dandelion greens.

**Dandelion Leaves (Greens)** can be boiled, sautéed, braised, blanched, and eaten raw in a salad or pesto. The tastiest leaves grow in early spring, getting progressively more bitter as they get older. To cook, put leaves into boiling salted water—never into cold water as, according to one author, that “sets the bitterness.” Change the water when cooking to further reduce bitterness.

**Dandelion Leaf Crowns** (the upper 2 inches of the root plus the white base of the leaves) are considered a delicacy by many. Clean well, and serve raw in salads or sautéed with garlic or steamed and tossed in butter.



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**NEVER EAT DANDELIONS FROM A LAWN THAT HAS BEEN TREATED WITH PESTICIDES!**

See Garden State on Your Plate photos on Facebook and Instagram

## Dandelion Greens Salad

Serves 6 to 8

Consider this recipe as a starting point for your dandelion salad. Begin by tasting your dandelion greens. Are they very bitter? If so, you might want to combine them with lettuce to lessen the bitterness of the salad. Or you might want to add honey to your salad dressing. Use the list of ingredients that go well with dandelion greens (below) to get ideas for other things that you can add to your salad, such as goat cheese or bacon.

2 tablespoons fresh-squeezed lemon juice	1 teaspoon honey, optional	8 cups dandelion greens or
1 teaspoon Dijon mustard	Sea salt, to taste	4 cups dandelion + 4 cups lettuce
1 to 2 cloves garlic, minced	6 tablespoons olive oil	

In a small bowl, whisk together lemon juice, mustard, garlic, honey, and a pinch of salt. Continue to whisk as you slowly pour in the olive oil in a thin stream. Taste, add salt, retaste, and continue to add small amounts of salt until the dressing is balanced.

Wash dandelion greens well to remove any grit. Spin or shake off excess water. Tear into bite-sized pieces. Toss leaves with vinaigrette until leaves are lightly coated. Taste and season.

### Ingredients that Go Well with Dandelion Greens

almonds • anchovies • apples • bacon • blue cheese • butter  
carrots • chickpeas • chives • dill • eggs • endive • fennel • garlic  
ginger • goat cheese • greens • hazelnuts • lemon • mushrooms  
mustard • olive oil • onions • Parmesan cheese • pasta • pine nuts  
salt pork • scallions • shallots • strawberries • tomatoes • vinegar

### Words that Describe the Flavor, Color, and Texture of Dandelion Greens

acidic • biting • bitter • blanched • bright green  
earthy • fleshy • jagged • nutty • pepper  
pleasant • pungent • sawtoothed • sour  
spicy • tangy • tender-crisp • tough • vegetal

#### GARDEN STATE ON YOUR PLATE DANDELION GREENS FACTS

The name dandelion comes from *dent de lion*, which means lion's tooth in French. This refers to the jagged edges of dandelion leaves. Other names for dandelions include Swine's Snout, Doonheadclock, Priest's Crown, and Irish Daisy.

Dandelion greens are best when picked in early spring before the flowers form. Young, bright green dandelion leaves are tender and make a delicious addition to a salad. Larger, older leaves are best when cooked.

Dandelion greens are an excellent source of vitamins C and K. They are also a good source of vitamin A, iron, and calcium.

Dandelions grow in the wild where they are often considered a weed—even though they've been gathered and eaten since ancient times. Dandelions began to be cultivated as a crop in Britain and France in the mid-1800s. Cultivated varieties are bred to produce large leaves that are less bitter than wild dandelions.

Dandelion seeds can survive very cold temperatures. If you plant dandelions in the fall, you can begin harvesting the leaves by mid-spring. Or they can be planted in the spring and harvested in 45 to 55 days.

Dandelions are perennial herbs that belong to the Asteraceae family. They are used as a food plant and a medicinal herb.

Dandelions grown in the shade or covered with sand, straw, or a bucket or terra cotta pot will be milder and more tender than leaves grown in the full sun.

Former Mayor Patrick Fiorilli declared Vineland, New Jersey, "the dandelion capital of the United States" because he believed the farmers there grew more dandelion greens than anywhere else in the nation. Since 1974, Vineland has held an annual banquet featuring dishes made with dandelions!

Before you collect dandelion greens, flowers, or roots from your lawn, make sure that no pesticides have been used. Wash your greens very carefully to remove sand and dirt.

Dandelions have strong roots that grow deep into the soil, helping to loosen and aerate hard-packed soil. They also bring minerals up to the surface from deep down in the soil, making them available to shallow-rooted plants.



**Garden State on Your Plate** is a series of four school-wide produce tasting in each of the Princeton elementary schools. The emphasis is on a New Jersey produce item, the different ways it can be prepared, and how the flavor can be altered by the chef and the students. Children learn about farming and cooking, and gain flavor power—the ability to personalize their item using salt and citrus. In support of the tastings, children will learn about each farm item through a variety of classroom- and garden-based lessons.



Founded in 2006, Princeton School Gardens Cooperative fosters garden- and food-based education in the classroom, cafeteria and community • PSGCOOP.ORG