



Created by Lauren Roberts

Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Pasture ID Sheet- Student taste notes
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Before foraging

- Please ensure that plants are ID correctly, so they are safe!
- Make sure that the area is not near the road as there is a higher chance of heavy metal accumulation from car exhaust.
- Make sure that area has not been sprayed recently.
- Avoid foraging plants that are next to animal poop or that look unwell.
- Many of the species can be found in the garden, you do not have to go to a farm.

Before the 1930's many farms used mixed pastures, and there are species that are considered weeds in a commercial farming operation but can be used and consumed by humans at home. There are now a lot of good foraging books around and foraging groups, so if students are interested more information is readily available.

Notes of different pasture species

Clover: Part of the legume family so high in nitrogen which acts as a natural fertiliser to surrounding plants. It is also high in protein, got a smooth texture, high feed conversion rates which makes it a favourite to stock. Clover is also a nutritious option for humans and the leaves and flowers can be added to salad.

Plantain: A herb that was mentioned by Shakespeare and has a long record of consumption by both humans and animals. Originally large populations appearing in pastures was a sign that the pasture is "run down", needs renewal, a sign of poor fertility (due to its tolerance of low fertility conditions) and low feed production when compared to a ryegrass clover mix.

There has been greater interest in it due to its affects of decreasing nitrogen leaching and its low requirements for fertiliser. Unfortunately it is often outcompeted by the ryegrass in 2-3 years and disappears from the paddock.

Leaves can be made into tea, finely chopped into salads added to soups, stews and smoothies. If you come into contact with stinging nettle or have an itchy bite, a plantain leaf applied to the area helps relieve the sting/ itch. If the seedhead has started to emerge you can eat it and it tastes a bit like mushrooms.

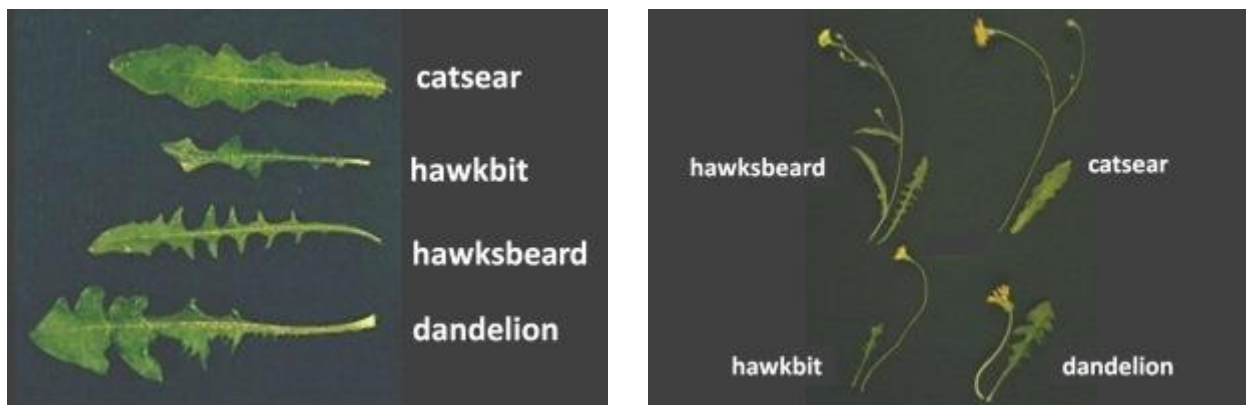
Catsear: Native to Morrocco and part of the flatweed family, it is a common weed in pastures and lawns. It doesn't do any harm to sheep or cows and can be consumed by humans. In fact, most animals like eating catsear and with its deep tap-root it can grow in dry conditions and in areas with poor nutrient levels. If the populations of catsear and other flat weeds become prolific then the productive grass and clover species get out competed and it a sign that the pasture needs renewal.

Catsear has a hairy leaf and a wider leaf down to the base. It has branched flowers off the one stem. Use cats ear like dandelion and add to salads, soups and stews (cooking it diminishes the bitterness).

Dandelion: Can be eaten by stock and humans with a high mineral content of phosphorous, magnesium, sodium, copper, zinc and boron which could provide benefits to those that eat it. Despite stock eating it, it is not a highly desired species in the pasture because it produces less leaf material than perennial ryegrass plants would. Dandelion plants can tolerate fairly low soil fertility and will take advantage of open spaces in the pastures which have low plant numbers.

Leaves and flowers can be eaten raw in salads (leaves can be a bit bitter), the leaves can be cooked and used like spinach or made into tea. The roots can be roasted and made into a caffeine-free coffee which is available in supermarkets.

“Leaves radiating out from the stems close to the ground. If you have leaves popping out of the stems, it's not a Dandelion. Flowers grow singly on tall, hollow stems. So if you have multiple flowers per stem, or branching stems, it's not a Dandelion. The base of the leaves often turn a reddish purplish speckled color & are highly toothed. The 'teeth' always point downwards, not upwards. The leaf is bright green & shiny, not hairy.” = <https://www.homegrownbotanica.co.nz/>



Source: <https://www.massey.ac.nz/massey/learning/colleges/college-of-sciences/clinics-and-services/weeds-database/catsear.cfm>

Yarrow: It isn't considered a weed in pastures but more of an unwanted plant in conventional farming but purposefully introduced in organic farming systems due to the high mineral content, its ability to tolerate dry conditions and attract beneficial insects. It can be hard to establish crops in paddocks that have yarrow because their rhizomes system survives cultivation so it can regrow and outcompete the emerging crop.

When crushed it should produce no amara and the white seedhead is a common feature of the New Zealand landscape. It does have a strong flavour and highly recommend adding it to potato soup. It can be used in salads (not too much or it is overpowering) and as a tea (look up its affects) or as a compost activator.

Mellow: Animals don't like eating mallow as it is slightly toxic to them, so they tend to leave it alone. For humans it can be consumed in a variety of ways but has almost no flavour which doesn't make it attractive.

Usually found in areas with bare soil including waste areas, stockyards, stock camps, gateways, and roadsides. It can become established in lucerne crops because it is tolerant of most of the herbicides that can be used in lucerne.

Mellow leaves and purple flowers can be consumed in salads. If the leaves are soaked in the hot water it acts as a thickener for soups, or you can use the water to create mellow white meringues (similar to chickpea juice aquafaba).

Pasture Foraging

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Clover



Plantain



Catsear



Dandelion



Yarrow



Mallow



Pasture Reflection

1. Pasture species name

= _____

2. How tough/ fibrous is it?

Very tough	Some fibre/ texture	Some texture	Very soft
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3. How bitter is the pasture

Very bitter	Bitter	Mild/ little flavour	Sweet
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4. Describe the taste and texture of the pasture species.

5. Other notes about the plant.

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