

Spring recipes (As featured in Thrive Magazine)

Before you begin it is important to identify plants correctly, if you are ever unsure do not eat or use the plant medicinally.

Traditional spring tonics



Traditional spring tonics were country remedies that were used to cleanse the blood and replenish vital nutrients following a harsh winter diet. They often consisted of whatever new green growth first came through, but the following plants were top of the list.

- **Nettle** – well known for containing iron, but it also contains beta carotene, silica, selenium, magnesium, zinc and vitamins A, C, D, E, F, K, P and B6. It is also a very high source of protein.
- **Cleavers** – contains vitamins B3 and C, silica and calcium.
- **Dandelion** – well known for containing potassium, but it also contains calcium, iron, and vitamins A and C.
- **Watercress** – contains beta carotene, Vitamins A, C and K, calcium, zinc, potassium, selenium and magnesium.



Cleavers spring tonic water

Take a bottle of spring water and insert a 40cm length of fresh cleavers (washed and with no roots or dead bits). Leave the bottle in a warm place for at least 30 minutes and then drink throughout the day (leaving the cleavers in the bottle). You can also add slices of lemon or orange.

Wild garlic, nettle and cleavers pesto

Wild garlic, nettle and cleavers are just three herbs known as spring greens or spring tonic herbs. They help to replace the nutrients that the body loses naturally in the winter, and have their own medicinal qualities to tone tissues and organs.



Take a handful of wild garlic, two large nettle leaves (from the top of the plant if possible) and two medium sized stalks of cleavers.

Remove any woody parts and add to a blender and blitz to a rough paste. Add two cloves of peeled garlic, a tablespoon of seeds or nuts of your choice, 10g of a hard cheese of your choice, and a tablespoon of olive oil. Blitz together until you have a pesto consistency (add more olive oil if required).

If kept in the fridge this pesto will last for several weeks, but add more oil (to cover the mixture inside) and it will last for several months.

Spring green smoothie

100g fresh spinach
100g fresh dandelion leaves
100g kale
100g watercress
450ml water
2 cored and chopped green apples
½ avocado (flesh only)
1 banana (peeled)

Blend together and sprinkle with crushed toasted pumpkin seeds.

Please note Laura Carpenter is not liable for any use of medicinal plants that occurs outside of a designated herb walk or workshop.