

SEEDERS AND WEEDERS NEWSLETTER

October 2025



Armstrong & District Garden Club

WEBSITE <https://armstronggardenclub.com>

FACEBOOK Ken Barr

EXECUTIVE

President – Heather Hayes 250 546-4969

Vice president – Vacant

Secretary – Mary Jackson

Treasurer – Paul Peacock

Membership Secretary - Chris Williams

Past President – Carolyn Farris

Director - Sue Wiebe

Director at large – Linda Meraw

Newsletter Editor – Dianne Lockton

Website Manager - Mary Jane Duford

Sunshine - Dianne Lockton and Heather Hayes

Door Prizes – Sue Rook

GENERAL MEETING

First Tuesday of the month, 6:30 pm, September to June (except January) in St James Anglican Church Hall, Armstrong.

Next meeting 6:30 pm November 4, 2025

GUEST SPEAKER

Our speaker this month was Mikaela Cannon

The following is a copy of information from her presentation.

Bio

Mikaela Cannon has been facilitating classes, workshops and hikes focused on sustainable foraging in the Okanagan for over a decade. Her purpose in life is to protect and care for plants, animals, and their habitats. Mikaela studied to become a wilderness guide in Sweden and lived in a tipi for the duration (2 years). Her studies of ethnobotany and herbal medicine have only deepened her desire to know more about plants and she considers herself a lifetime learner.

In April 2024 she launched her book "Foraging as a Way of Life". It is a year-round field guide to plants and mushrooms and how to identify, harvest and cook them safely and sustainably.

A portion of the sales of the book goes to Splatsin Tsm7aksaltn (Splatsin teaching centre) society.

OCTOBER



Chicory

Cichorium intybus
Asteraceae

Synonyms

Blue Dandelion, Succory, Blue Weed, Blue Sailors, Coffeeweed, Cornflower, Hendibeh, Horsecweed, Ragged Sailors, Wild Endive, Blue Daisy, Wild Bachelor's Buttons, Radicchio, Witloof

Description

Annual or biennial herb. Grows up to 1.5 m. Often flanks the roads or grows in heavy clay soil. Can handle drought fairly well. **Stems** are fibrous and gently ribbed, lower stems are often hairy. Stems are green, with purple at base. **Leaves** are alternate and clasp the stem, becoming smaller the further up the plant you go. They are lanceolate with jagged teeth around the margin, similar to dandelion leaves. Chicory has fine hairs on the bottom midrib of leaf. Lower leaves form a basal rosette. When cut it exudes a **milk-white latex**. **Flowers** (2.5-4 cm across) are sky blue and have 10-20 ray florets. Each ray floret has five teeth on the tip. As it ages the flower fades to white. In the middle of the flower there are blue stamens held around the bifurcated style giving the centre a curled decorative look. Flower closes up overnight or on overcast days. Chicory **seeds** are flattened, ribbed achenes. **Root** is a stout fleshy taproot.

Cichorium comes from the Greek *kichore*, which was the ancient Greeks' common name for chicory. The name *intybus* comes from the Egyptian *tybi* (meaning January) and was the month that chicory was customarily eaten there.

Uses

In the late fall I pick our yearly supply of chicory root. The roots will be bigger as the plant has redirected all its nutrients back into the taproot for storage over winter. The trick is to dig it up before the ground freezes. To make sure that there will be a healthy stand of chicory for years to come I make sure to replant any little root I might unearth as well as plant some seeds in the disturbed soil. I give the root a gentle scrub under water and sometimes remove the inner core if it is too woody. The flesh of the root can be eaten raw, if you appreciate bitter flavours, or it can be added to cooked meals. I like mixing it with potatoes, Jerusalem artichoke, burdock and sweet potato in bakes and soups. Another excellent way to use it is to dry it in small chunks and then roast it. The smell when it is roasting is divine! I like it well roasted (about 20 min), to the point where it is quite darkened and crumbles easily in my hand. I use this powder as a coffee substitute. I like it mixed with some regular coffee and with lots of steamed milk. Chicory has been used all over the world as a coffee substitute and there are some excellent chicory coffee mixtures to be found at the stores.



Chicory chocolate bar (top)
Chicory root (middle)
Basal rosette (bottom)

The roasted chicory root powder can be used in a chocolate bar. Here is a yummy recipe:

Chicory chocolate bar

½ cup roasted chicory root
 3 cups coconut oil
 1 ¼ cups dark chocolate chips
 1 cup puffed quinoa or puffed rice
 ¼ cup finely chopped hazelnuts or walnuts
 Melt chocolate in double boiler, stir in all other ingredients until well mixed. Spread on wax paper and put in fridge to cool. Cut or break into squares. Melts if temperature is too high, keep in cool pantry or fridge until consumed. Tastes great with some chicory/burdock coffee.

Not only is the root excellent food, the leaves are fabulous too. At this time of year you can find second growth of fresh leaves in the basal rosette. That they might have been kissed by frost only enhances them and makes them a little bit sweeter. They taste great eaten fresh or added to cooked greens. I like to gently wilt/fry them in a pan with coconut oil, avocado oil or lard. Add salt to taste and perhaps a gentle sprinkling of parmesan cheese and you have a marvellous side dish that feels wholesome as well as decadent. The leaves can be eaten throughout the year, depending on your climate. Here in the Okanagan they are hard to find in mid-winter when the snow lies thick, but as soon as the snow melts they poke up. I have been able to pick them until December in some years.

The endives that we see in the grocery stores are a species of *Cichorium* and they have often been blanched by being grown in the dark. This makes the leaves white and sweeter. You can do the same with wild chicory. If you cover the plant as it grows the leaves will be lighter. I personally like the bitter flavours of the leaf so I rarely bother with blanching. The flowers can be eaten during late summer. As soon as they are picked they start to lose their extraordinary sky-blue colour and take on the colour of wrung-out old dish cloths, so pick them just before serving. While still blue and radiant they look great in a salad or sprinkled over ice cream or yoghurt. I like to pull the ray petals off the flower structure before eating them as the other flower parts can be hard to chew.

Other uses

The whole plant is filled with beneficial nutrients. It has vitamin A, C, B, K and flavonoids as well as iron, potassium and calcium. The root is particularly good for the liver as it helps it to cleanse the body more effectively. Chicory root is a source of fructose and maltol and it also contains inulin. The root is grown commercially. Chicory root lowers blood sugar and alleviates constipation.

The leaves with their bitter flavour are helpful for production of bile. A healthy bile flow improves digestion. Chicory leaves can with benefit be eaten when you feel bloated and have eaten too many sweets. It helps to balance the body again and can lessen cravings. I find that if I eat a side dish of bitter greens such as chicory, dandelion, yarrow or wild mustards with dinner I am less likely to reach for those cookies for my evening snack.

Chicory has a long history of being used as a medicinal herb. The ancient Greeks and Egyptians used chicory as a liver tonic, as a sedative and as a way to improve appetite.

Syrup of chicory was used as a safe laxative for children. Some modern herbalists use it to reduce cholesterol levels.

Caution

Do not use if pregnant as chicory is an emmenagogue, i.e., it can increase or hasten menstruation.

Can cause diarrhea if eaten in too big quantities. The inulin in the root can cause flatulence. People with known gallbladder problems should consult with their doctor before using.

Similar species/Look-alikes

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) Leaves are very similar. Dandelion leaves usually do not have hair. Leaves grow in a basal rosette, none are attached to the flower stalk. Flower stalk is hollow and not fibrous. Flower is yellow rather than blue. Edible. See page 30.

Prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*) Leaves have barbs on the bottom midrib rather than hairs. Flowers are yellow and smaller. Edible. See page 41.

Sowthistle (*Sonchus* spp.) Leaves have spiky edges and are glossier than chicory. Flowers are yellow rather than blue. Edible.

Showy Blue Lettuce (*Mulgedium pulchellum*)

Formerly *Lactuca pulcellum*. The pale blue flowers are similar to chicory but they are much smaller (1-3 cm across). Flowers are spread out on the plant whereas chicory has its flowers closer along the stem in an almost spike-like fashion. Plant is smaller than chicory. Leaves are lanceolate and have few if any jagged edges. Achenes/seeds have a tuft of hair which chicory lacks. It is a frail looking plant that is not very common. I am personally not familiar with this plant and have gleaned this information from books and internet. Edible.

Spotted Knapweed (*Centaurea maculosa*) Flowers are more purple-pink than blue. Ray florets are skinny. It has overlapping floral bracts with dark edges. Leaves are lacy and deeply lobed. Flowers can be eaten according to some sources, I have not tried this yet.



Comparison: dandelion at top, chicory at bottom



Spotted knapweed



Armstrong And District Garden Club
General Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, Oct. 7, 2025
St. James Anglican Church, Armstrong

1. Call to Order – Heather Hayes called meeting to order at 7:37 pm
2. No formal Agenda to be approved.
3. Approval of Sept. Minutes – Linda Meraw moved to approve Sept. minutes as distributed via email, Carried.
4. Correspondence – Glad Tidings church sent a request for funds for their Lunch Program. A reply has been sent informing them that our funds for this year have already been allocated.
5. Financial Report – Sue Wiebe presented the report as prepared by Paul Peacock. Club is in good financial position. Jackie Walkden moved that report be accepted. Carried
6. Old Business
 - Report from Dona Rockwell that the Recreation Fair was very quiet and the organizers of the event are looking at ways to improve attendance next year.
 - Thanks to Sue Rook for hosting the club social in September. It was well attended with lots of good food and visiting.
7. New Business
 - Club received award from Communities in Bloom/Miracle-Gro Best Garden Selection. Paul Peacock accepted award on behalf of club.
 - Heather Hayes and Chris Williams will keep eye on petunia planters for next few weeks.
 - We must be more careful with cleanup of the venue after meetings as we have received a 2nd complaint. We may lose access to the venue for our meetings if standards are not met.
 - Reminder from Heather Hayes to keep the plant sale in mind as we put our gardens to bed and possibly pot up plants for our annual sale in the spring.
8. Adjournment – Glen made motion to adjourn at 7:55. Adjourned.

September 23rd ADGC members enjoyed a Fall social hosted by Sue and Terry. The group was also treated to a tour of their beautiful gardens.



GARDENING INFORMATION

October is a month for everything pumpkin. Recipes abound for pies, cakes, muffins, cookies, and soups.

It is interesting that what we generally think of as a vegetable is actually a fruit. Pumpkin is a winter squash (family Cucurbitaceae which includes cucumbers and melons).

Pumpkins originated in North America. Seeds found in Mexico date between 7000 – 5550 B.C. They were an important food staple for Native Americans. The seeds were planted along river banks with beans and corn (the Three Sisters Method still used today). The corn stalks provide a growing support for beans to reach sunlight. Beans in turn provide nitrogen for the corn and squash. The squash (pumpkin) leaves provide shade to keep moisture in the soil and control weeds. The pumpkins are heavy feeders and do well in rich soil amended with organic fertilizer.

Seeds from pumpkins can be saved from season to season provided they are isolated from cross-pollination.

Pumpkins are 92% water. They are a good source of potassium, vitamin A and beta-carotene.

The practice of carving Jack-O-Lanterns was brought to North America by Irish immigrants. They used turnips and potatoes in Ireland. When they arrived to North America they changed to pumpkins, as they are easier to carve.

Source: www.universityofcalifornia.edu and www.westcoastseeds.com



Harvest display in Zion United Church Hall

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Next meeting: 6:30 pm November 4, 2025

St James Anglican Church Hall

Members of the Armstrong & District Garden Club receive discounts at a number of local garden centres:

Shepherd's Home Hardware Outdoor Living in Armstrong: 15% Discount on Regularly-Priced Garden Plants

Blue Mountain Nursery in Armstrong: 10% Discount on all products

Swan Lake Market and Garden in Spallumcheen: 10% Discount on plant material
2 - 3% on other store material (except meat and dairy)

*Members must be registered with the store

Nicholas Alexander Nursery in Vernon: 10%-15% Discount on Regularly-Priced Garden Plants

Show your membership card at the till before the cashier rings up the total and kindly request your member discount.