

## 8. *Plantago lanceolata*- Plantain

**Origins:** Native to Europe and North Africa.

**Uses:** Young leaves - raw or cooked. They are rather bitter and very tedious to prepare. The seed can be ground into a powder and added to flours when making bread and cakes.

**Medicinal:** Plantain is an effective treatment for bleeding, it quickly staunches blood flow and encourages the repair of damaged tissue. The leaves are used in the treatment of diarrhea, gastritis, irritable bowel syndrome, haemorrhoids, cystitis, bronchitis, catarrh, sinusitis, asthma and hay fever. They are used externally in treating skin inflammations, malignant ulcers, cuts, stings etc. A distilled water made from the plant makes an excellent eye lotion.



"Lawns use ten times as many chemicals per acre as industrial farmland. These pesticides, fertilizers, and herbicides run off into our groundwater and evaporate into our air, causing widespread pollution and global warming, and greatly increasing our risk of cancer, heart disease, and birth defects. In addition, the pollution emitted from a power mower in just one hour is equal to the amount from a car being driven 350 miles."

by Heather Coburn, *Food Not Lawns* (Chelsea Green 2005)



## 9. *Hypochoeris radicata*- Cat's ear

**Origins:** Eurasia

**Uses:** Young leaves- raw or cooked like spinach. A winter salad, it is rather bitter.

**Medicinal:** Relieves respiratory diseases, a remedy for chest diseases.



# Self-Guided Tour of Whitlam Park Weeds

**Stop Mowing Your Lawns Australia, Eat Them!**



Taraxacum officinalis flowers

This contribution to **Riverworks** aims at presenting the botanical species we dismiss or suppress in a new light. This Self-Guided Tour will showcase 9 of the more common weeds of our gardens. The plants that surround us have co-evolved with, and supported humans in a myriad of ways through the millennia. Legislation and agriculture-specific interventions are aimed at suppressing those species, outlawing them without taking in account the possible benefits we could gain from them.

In addition, within Australia there are countless traditional connections with introduced species, lets re-discover them and stop killing nature, or worse, turn our environment in a monoculture.

### Reference:

Plants For A Future:

[www.pfaf.org](http://www.pfaf.org)

Weeds Australia

[www.weeds.org.au](http://www.weeds.org.au)

Further information and contact

[www.weedyconnection.com](http://www.weedyconnection.com)

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## 1. *Taraxacum officinalis*- Dandelion



**Origins:** Native to Europe and North America.

**Uses:** The all plant is edible, leaves in salads, flowers in fritters and roots as parsnips substitute.

Two years old roots

are also ground to make an excellent and caffeine-free coffee.

**Medicinal:** The dandelion is a commonly used herbal remedy. It is especially effective and valuable as a diuretic because it contains high levels of potassium salts. The plant is used internally in the treatment of gall bladder and urinary disorders, gallstones, jaundice, cirrhosis, dyspepsia with constipation, oedema associated with high blood pressure and heart weakness, chronic joint and skin complaints, gout, eczema and acne. A tea made from the leaves is laxative.

## 2. *Sonchus Oleraceus*- Sowthistle

**Origins:** Uncertain, declared non native in Australia.

**Uses:** Young leaves, raw or cooked, they can be added to salads, cooked like spinach or used in soups etc.

Stems - cooked like asparagus or rhubarb.

The milky sap has been used as a chewing gum by the Maoris of New Zealand.

**Medicinal:** The plant is emmenagogue and hepatic. An infusion has been used to bring on a tardy menstruation and to treat diarrhea. The latex in the sap is used in the treatment of warts. The gum has



been used as a cure for the opium habit. The leaves are applied as a poultice to inflammatory swellings. An infusion of the leaves and roots is febrifuge and tonic.

## 3. *Trifolium repens*- White clover

**Origins:** Europe and Central Asia.

**Uses:** The young leaves are harvested before the plant comes into flower and are used in salads, soups etc. or as vegetable, cooked like spinach. Flowers and seed pods are dried, ground into powder and used as a flour or sprinkled on cooked foods such as boiled rice. Very wholesome and nutritious. Dried flowering heads are a tea substitute.

**Medicinal:** An infusion has been used in the treatment of coughs, colds, fevers and leucorrhoea. A tincture of the leaves is applied as an ointment to gout. An infusion of the flowers has been used as an eyewash.



## 4. *Bidens pilosa*- Cobblers peg

**Origins:** Native of Europe and N. Africa.

**Uses:** Leaves added to salads or added to soups and stews, they can also be dried for later use. A good source of iodine. Young shoot tips are used to make a tea.

**Medicinal:** A juice made from the leaves is used to dress wounds and ulcers. A decoction of the leaves is anti-inflammatory, styptic and alterative. The whole plant is antirheumatic, it is also used in enemas to treat intestinal ailments. Substances isolated from the leaves are bactericidal



and fungicidal, they are used in the treatment of thrush and candida.

## 5. *Portulaca Oleracea*- Pig weed

**Origins:** Cosmopolitan.

**Uses:** Eaten all over the world, the species was well known to the early settlers who often used the juicy leaves in salads and, cooked, as a substitute for spinach.

**Notes:** Pig weed can be found growing in cold climate areas (e.g., Canada) as well as warm areas (e.g., the Caribbean). It has been used in salads and as a medicinal plant for hundreds of years.



## 6. *Pennisetum clandestinum* – Kikuyu



**Origins:** Tropical east Africa

**Uses:** Seed can be used like rice in sweet or savoury dishes, or fermented to make various foods.

**Medicinal:** The plant is appetiser and tonic and is useful in the treatment of heart diseases. The fruits have been rubbed on open facial pimples in order to get rid of them.

## 7. *Oxalis Spp.*- Wood Sorrell

**Origins:** Several species through-out the northern hemisphere and some native too.

**Uses:** Leaves and flowers: raw or cooked. They add a pleasant lemony flavor to salads.

**Medicinal:** none known

