

Foraging Wild Apples

By Nicholl Spence

From as far back as I can remember I have been a crafter. Growing up next door to a beautiful park and creek gave me a wondrous playground to roam and explore. I loved to gather and forage and what I didn't know then was that this passion would stay with me into adulthood.

Recently while walking my dog I happened upon several wild apple trees bursting with fruit lining both my side road and on my rural property. These wild apples are a hybrid. They're delicious, and they're FREE! Most of the apples picked, resembled and tasted similar to a Paula Red or MacIntosh. Not as big or sweet as an apple you'd pick at the orchard or purchase at your local grocer but, almost!

It was thrilling to work with such a simple and abundant natural fruit. Call me frugal, but it also gave me such joy thinking of the money I had saved from foraging from nature around me!

Cooking with Wild Apples

Foraged apples make delicious apple butter and pies, and peeled and cored apples freeze well for later use. As an experiment I was even successful at making apple brandy using only wild apples, raisins and sugar.

Craft more

Craft along with me! Subscribe to my YouTube Channel. @FarmhouseStudioOnFifth

Nicholl Spence is a freelance graphic designer who works from her rural farmhouse home office in Erin.



► Delicious MacIntosh-like wild apple picked along the roadside.



▲ You can cook your wild apple butter on the stovetop in a large Dutch oven.



▲ Alternatively, prepped and spiced wild apples can be cooked in a Crock-Pot.



▲ Wild apple pie and tarts.



▲ Bottled wild apple brandy after being fermented in the cellar for approximately three months.

◀ Just one of several wild apple trees found on the rural roadside. It's easy to miss since the trees are wild and unpruned and therefore blend into the scenery.

CROCK-POT APPLE BUTTER

- Core enough apples to fill your Crock-Pot and add about half a cup of water to help create steam and break down the apples.
Note: I kept the skins on since I prefer a chunkier, chutney-like apple butter.
- Sprinkle to taste cinnamon, nutmeg and clove.
- Add about 1/2 cup of natural sugar. I used maple sugar which I had made in the spring from tapping my Sugar Maple trees.
- Set your Crock-Pot to low and allow the apples to disintegrate. Stir the mixture every hour until the mixture resembles a mush.
- Taste and adjust the sugar to your liking.
- I then preserved most of the apple butter in 250mL canning jars for later use in a delicious spice cake recipe I make or to simply enjoy on homemade sour dough toast.