

Each season we include one wild green in the CSA share to highlight the culinary and nutritional benefits of some of the plants that grow wild in New England (Those who participated in the spring CSA surely remember the nutritious nettles that started the season off). Although we do not include purslane in our crop plan or seed it in the field, it grows everywhere! So it makes sense to harvest it and share it with all of you at least once. The succulent leaves have a mild lemon, peppery flavor, which is good in salads or lightly sautéed. In recent years this ubiquitous plant has acquired a following among local chefs and foodies, who join the people of many cultures that have long enjoyed cooking and eating the succulent greens. I remember a group of Haitian women that visited Brookwood last summer who were thrilled to have the opportunity to harvest purslane from our fields and receive it in the weekly produce donation to their church. I also read an article in the Boston Globe about restaurants who incorporate purslane in their menus during the summer months. One serves a warm salad of fresh purslane with braised artichokes and muscles as an appetizer. Another folds purslane leaves into summer vegetable risotto at the end of cooking, and a third uses purslane in summer salads (such as one with grilled peaches, summer squash, corn and purple basil) to provide a lemony accent.

My friend Murtha, who lives in San Luis, Costa Rica, sent me this note about purslane: "Mmmm purslane, we have started eating that in Costa Rica as well. It is a great mimic for cactus paddles, which are a Mexican staple, believe it or not -- and easier since you don't have to de-spine them! We make a salad by steaming the purslane (like you would spinach) and cutting it up bite size then mixing with tomatoes, onions, cilantro, lemon juice, olive oil, salt, pepper -- great salad." Another purslane reference comes from my sister Beth, who visited Turkey this past spring and encountered numerous, massive heads of purslane everywhere. She sent me a photo of purslane on display in the outdoor markets of Istanbul to prove it.

So, be inspired and enjoy your purslane!

• *Purslane & Parsley Salad* •

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1 tablespoon finely chopped shallot

1/2 pound cherry tomatoes, halved or quartered if large

6 cups packed tender purslane sprigs and leaves (from a 1-pound bunch)

4 cups packed flat-leaf parsley leaves (from 2 large bunches)

Whisk together oil, lemon juice, shallot, and 1/4 teaspoon each of salt and pepper in a large bowl.

Add tomatoes, purslane, and parsley, gently tossing to coat