

FREE SEEDS TO SOW NOW!

WATERWISE VEG

Homegrown Kitchen

www.homegrownkitchen.co.uk

Sow, grow and eat something delicious

6 OF THE BEST
FRUIT-PICKERS

**DELICIOUS
SEASONAL
RECIPES**

**PERFECT
PLUMS**

**Raspberry
Sweet
Treats**

**A KITCHEN
GARDEN FIT
FOR A LORD**



**AN
APOTHECARY
GARDEN BY
THE SEA**

the healing
powers of an
Orkney patch



BARBARA SEGALL ON GROWING GARLIC SUBSTITUTES



Barbara's Homegrown Larder

No garlic? No fear. This month our regular columnist Barbara Segall turns her attention to substitutes which pack just as much flavour



Garlic or Chinese chives



Strappy leaves of garlic chives

Most of us will have grown a wonderful harvest of garlic bulbs to use and store that will give all the garlicky flavour we need in the kitchen for months to come. But there are other plants that offer a similar garlic flavour that you can use in many different ways to enhance salads and cooked dishes for the table.

Chinese chives or garlic chives (*Allium tuberosum*)

One of those herbs that offers leaves, flower stems, flower buds and flowers for the kitchen. In addition, I like the flowers as they make a good show in summer and if you let them go to seed, you have a seemingly endless supply of seed for the next season.

Although it is in the allium/onion tribe it has a more garlic than onion flavour. I enjoy using its long, flat, strap-like leaves,



Garlic chives foliage

chopped, in omelettes where they offer a subtle garlic flavour, less intense than that of chopped or crushed garlic cloves.

The wonderful kitchen gardener and garden writer Joy Larckom, who used to live near to me in Suffolk, is one of my food and garden writer heroes. I use her book *Oriental Vegetables*, the complete guide for the gardening cook, as a basic bible for growing and using the many wonderful leafy greens that keep my salad colander full even in winter (although the garlic chives are perennial plants they die back or I cut them back to the ground in winter in the UK).

In China and Japan garlic chive stems and buds are sold bunched and often blanched to a golden-green shade. Joy mentions that the flowers are ground and salted to make a savoury spice. I am going



Wild garlic in Barbara's garden

to try this next year, but I am going to experiment and oven-dry a batch or two of the ground flowers before combining them with salt.

Apart from using the strappy leaves chopped in omelettes and salads I also use them in stir-fries and chop the just-opened flowers into salads as well.

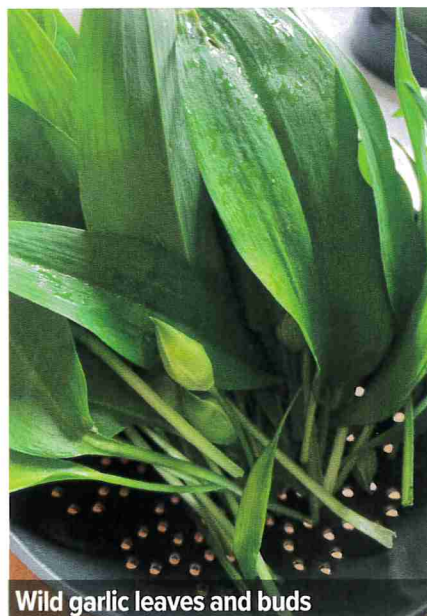
Garlic chive plants do best in well-drained soil in a sunny site and are pollinator magnets. They don't need to be lifted and divided, but as I harvest them intensively, I do divide clumps every other year.

Wild garlic, ramsons or ramps (*Allium ursinum*)

One of the joys of spring walks in the countryside is coming across a stretch of wild garlic. The pungent aroma of garlic greets you nose on. The large slightly oval leaves are the first source of a garlic substitute, followed by the buds

and then the flowers. It is always good practice to have permission of the landowner if you are foraging in bulk for wild garlic.

So that I could grow it at home I bought several pots of wild garlic from Pennard Plants (www.pennardplants.com). I planted one in a shady, moist part of the



Wild garlic leaves and buds

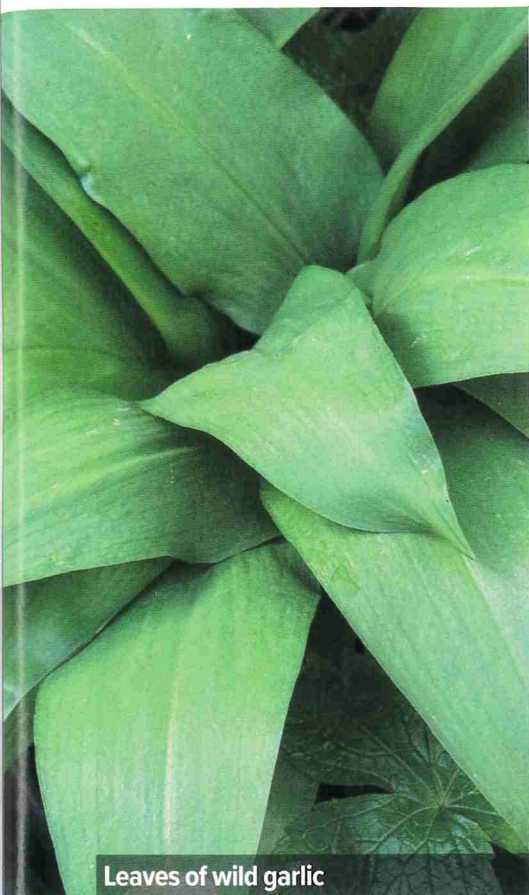
garden and the rest along a path, and one plant in a container. They are known to spread in a wild and thuggish way but so far are keeping to the unwritten rules of my garden.

If you are new to using wild garlic I recommend Jenny Linford's book *Garlic* (Ryland & Peters) where there are several recipes using wild garlic (and plenty more using cultivated garlic).

I use the foliage of wild garlic to make soup, pesto and to add to salads. And the bonus with wild garlic is that it doesn't give you 'garlic breath' (or so they say...) but it does give you the flavour in the food!

Garlic cress (*Peltaria alliacea*)

Garlic cress is a great garlic substitute especially in late autumn and early spring. It is a perennial hardy plant in the



Leaves of wild garlic

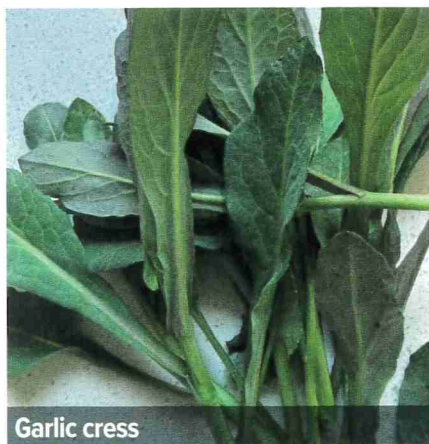


Wild garlic soup

Brassica family. I cut the plants back after flowering. The basal rosettes of foliage purple-green leaves start growing strongly at the end of winter and are great to use in autumn, winter and early spring before they flower. I use the leaves in winter and spring salads and to make a pesto variation. In May to July stems carrying small white flowers rise above the foliage. They are also tasty and decorative in salads.

The plants are easy to divide as they make runners and produce small plants around the main plant, so if you grow them in the ground they are likely to spread. I grow mine in a container and so far I haven't split them but I can see that the container is getting a little crowded so I will divide the plants this autumn.

You can buy garlic cress plants from various suppliers as well as find it as seed. ■



Garlic cress

"The bonus with wild garlic is that it doesn't give you 'garlic breath'..."



Garlic cress growing in the ground