

# Foragers Almanac January 2025

As the mild winter mornings flush out the coldest rain of the year, our local ecosystems begin to fall into balance. The calm sunny breaks begin to stimulate photosynthesis and dry out fungal diseases that thrive in these wet cool environments. This unique interplay between moisture and sunlight drives seasonal changes in growth and productivity which creates many distinct micro climates within our islands that last throughout the year.

## What To Forage This January 2025

**Siberian Miner's Lettuce:** (*Claytonia sibirica*) This incredible plant is available all year and thrives in cool, wet conditions with filtered and direct light. Look for it next to running water in the forest. These plants will currently have two leaves on them and a bulb at the base that can sometimes be brightly coloured. The easiest way to harvest them is gently lifting them out of the moss, soil or rocks using a spoon.

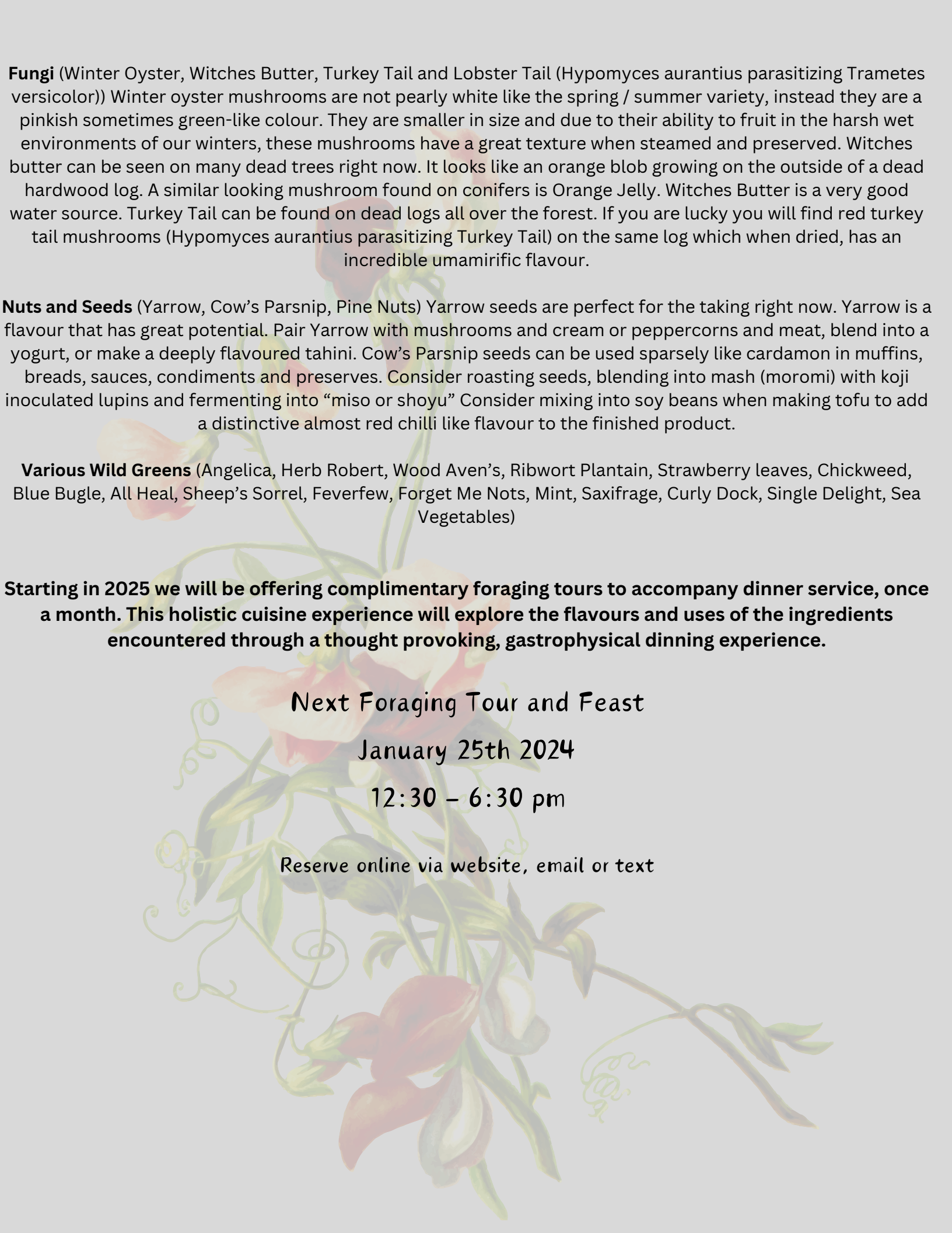
**Woodruff** (*Galium odoratum*) This spectacular herb is very flavourful and aromatic. It can be used like vanilla to make ice creams or like tarragon or chervil for sauces and seasonings. Once dried the flavours of woodruff are intensified. A woodruff alder soda would be an incredible venture.

**The Asteraceae Family:** (Dandelion, English Daisy, Cat Ears, Western Fleabane, Ragweed, Wall Lettuce, Bull Thistle) These very common plants can be found overwintering all over Haida Gwaii. Consider harvesting the roots of some of these species for roasting or turning into teas. Many of these plants lacto ferment at 2% salt into nice texturized krauts with full bodied brines. Consider using brines to activate yogurts, cheeses, gluten free starters.

**Mustard** (Wintercress, Uplandcress, Bittercress, Wild Mustard) Leaves as well as florets can currently be harvested off different varieties of mustards. Our local Wintercress (wild Brassica) is at its peak of flavour. If you can learn to understand this plant family than a whole new world of condiments, sauces, dressings, wild wasabi flavours begin to present themselves. The flowers dry very well and can be used to make incredible yellow sauces, teas, garnishes stuffings etc.

**Bulbs, Roots and Moss** (Burdock, Wild Lily, Bracken Fern) These edible roots are all unique in flavour as well as uses. Burdock has a more rose like flavour similar to Quince fruit, whereas lily bulbs are mild, delicious and starchy (related to onions). Bracken fern root opens up a whole new dimension of culinary wizardry. Consider making Bracken ramen noodles, crackers or mochi, pickled lily bulbs, burdock marmalade. These bulbs also allow us to forage carbohydrates from the forest that can be fermented into wines, raw vinegars, vodka and other spirits. Icelandic moss (that grows all over Haida Gwaii) has large amount of carbohydrates as well and can be used to in the same way.

**Berries and Fruits** (Frog Berries; *Maianthemum dilatatum*, Rose Hips) Frog Berries are round tart, cranberry like fruits that are bright red and usually found in clusters. They have a significant seed inside and lingonberry like flavour. Consider using for baking, condiments (ketchup), jams and jellies, sauces, dressings or wet rub for fish, mignonette for shellfish with a raw Cow's Parsnip vinegar.



**Fungi** (Winter Oyster, Witches Butter, Turkey Tail and Lobster Tail (Hypomyces aurantius parasitizing Trametes versicolor)) Winter oyster mushrooms are not pearly white like the spring / summer variety, instead they are a pinkish sometimes green-like colour. They are smaller in size and due to their ability to fruit in the harsh wet environments of our winters, these mushrooms have a great texture when steamed and preserved. Witches butter can be seen on many dead trees right now. It looks like an orange blob growing on the outside of a dead hardwood log. A similar looking mushroom found on conifers is Orange Jelly. Witches Butter is a very good water source. Turkey Tail can be found on dead logs all over the forest. If you are lucky you will find red turkey tail mushrooms (Hypomyces aurantius parasitizing Turkey Tail) on the same log which when dried, has an incredible umamirific flavour.

**Nuts and Seeds** (Yarrow, Cow's Parsnip, Pine Nuts) Yarrow seeds are perfect for the taking right now. Yarrow is a flavour that has great potential. Pair Yarrow with mushrooms and cream or peppercorns and meat, blend into a yogurt, or make a deeply flavoured tahini. Cow's Parsnip seeds can be used sparsely like cardamon in muffins, breads, sauces, condiments and preserves. Consider roasting seeds, blending into mash (moromi) with koji inoculated lupins and fermenting into "miso or shoyu" Consider mixing into soy beans when making tofu to add a distinctive almost red chilli like flavour to the finished product.

**Various Wild Greens** (Angelica, Herb Robert, Wood Aven's, Ribwort Plantain, Strawberry leaves, Chickweed, Blue Bugle, All Heal, Sheep's Sorrel, Feverfew, Forget Me Nots, Mint, Saxifrage, Curly Dock, Single Delight, Sea Vegetables)

**Starting in 2025 we will be offering complimentary foraging tours to accompany dinner service, once a month. This holistic cuisine experience will explore the flavours and uses of the ingredients encountered through a thought provoking, gastrophysical dinning experience.**

**Next Foraging Tour and Feast**

**January 25th 2024**

**12:30 – 6:30 pm**

**Reserve online via website, email or text**