

A HOME & GARDEN

Home Guide

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Dressing can spice up greens

By Arthur O. Tucker

When we first moved to Delmarva, we found a small, idyllic cabin in the middle of the woods. One day, on arriving home, I saw the landlord in the farm field across from us walking back and forth.

I hollered out, "Hey Mr. T., what are you looking for?" Well, in my defense, the wind was blowing, and he was far away, but I was sure that he said "greasy jeans."

A few days later Mr. T. offered us some freshly picked greens that I knew as upland cress (*Barbarea verna*).

"Here're some creasy greens for you," he said. Well, I learned a new common name! Now, my mother often served us a "spring tonic" of freshly picked dandelion leaves, chicory, and creasy greens in a hot bacon dressing.

The dressing was hot enough to wilt the early spring greens, and she usually served them over peeled and boiled new potatoes cut into chunks that my father would smash with his fork.

Here's my mother's Pennsylvania Dutch recipe that she learned



Delaware State University/Dr. Susan Yost

Dandelion greens, like creasy greens, are excellent with hot bacon dressing if harvested early, before the flower buds appear. Experts say to be sure your greens have not been sprayed and are not growing near streets or walkways.

from her mother in Lancaster County.

Caution: (1) Be sure that you know what you are picking (the Claude E. Phillips Herbarium can aid you if you are not sure), (2) be sure to get your greens from un-

Hot Bacon Dressing

- 1 ½ cups water
- 2 tbs sugar
- 2 tbs cider vinegar
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 egg, beaten
- 4 strips bacon, diced
- ¼ cup flour

Combine water, sugar, vinegar, salt, and egg and set aside. Fry bacon slowly in a large skillet until crisp. Pour off most of the bacon grease but retain just enough to combine with the flour; add flour and stir until blended. Pour in egg mixture and stir until thickened. Serve immediately over freshly picked, new dandelion greens, creasy greens, endive, chicory, or lettuce, or use as a "gravy" over boiled or mashed potatoes.

Editor's note: On the campus of Delaware State University, the Claude E. Phillips Herbarium is Delaware's center for research, education, and outreach about plant identifications, locations, and uses. Call 302-857-6452 (Dr. Susan Yost) to arrange a tour of the Herbarium, and call 302-857-6408 (Dr. Arthur Tucker) for more information about this article.

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sprayed areas far away from the roadsides, and (3) pick the greens early (if picked too late in the season, they will be bitter).