

Healthful Spring Salads

By Eleanor M. Lucas

THE tired feeling which we are so apt to have at this season of the year would not be so prevalent if the consumption of fresh vegetables and herbs were more common. At this time of the year the liver is apt to be torpid and the blood sluggish, and many persons fly to the medicine-closet for these ills, when a change to green foods is all that is needed to put the system in good order. Yet in early spring Southern-grown vegetables are costly in the Northern markets, and not at all obtainable in country places. But the country woman of the North need not be without early vegetables if she will exercise a little forethought at the proper season. There are a few hardy vegetables that after once being planted will almost care for themselves, and supply the table with crisp salads when they are most needed.

THE best known is the dandelion. At this season large quantities of dandelion leaves are gathered and sold in the markets. The dandelion is a native plant of our higher mountains; but the dandelions of our lawns and pastures have been brought, like many other common weeds, from Europe. In Paris dandelions are eaten as a salad, green or blanched. When employed as a pot-herb the water in which they are boiled should be changed twice during the process of cooking.

The cultivated dandelion is broad-leaved, crisp and tender, and when planted in rich soil the strong roots yield an abundance of wide, long leaves. Tuck the seeds in anywhere, around the sides of the garden walks or back of the shrubbery, and they will care for themselves. But to have extra early plants sow by the south side of the house or barn. If the heart is not cut off, simply the leaves, the root will continue to send out a new supply of leaves all season.

The dandelion is as hardy as an oak, and once planted one may be sure of the succulent leaves every spring. A small plot two feet square will furnish all an ordinary sized family will care for. Seeds may be sown in the spring or fall, and if the plants are to be blanched cover with a flower-pot, saucer or a piece of board when the leaves appear.

THE common garden purslane, more commonly known as "pusley," occurs as a weed in almost every garden in the United States, yet one rarely meets with a person who has ever eaten it, or who knows its usefulness as a pot-herb. The plant is a native of India, where it has been cultivated from the earliest times, and was such an early accompaniment of civilization as to have a Sanskrit name. It was carried Westward to Europe, and has there been in use for centuries as a salad or pot-herb. In fact, several varieties are now known in cultivation. As a pot-herb it is very palatable, retaining when cooked a slight acid taste.

The black mustard plant, from which the condiment is chiefly derived, has long been cultivated in Europe for its young leaves. It was introduced into the United States many years ago by the same sort of accident that has brought such a variety of foreign plants to this country. Here it is known only as a weed, but its young leaves make a piquant salad. In the garden it will care for itself when once sown, and if not allowed to seed will be a source of delight to the lover of a crisp salad.

WATERCRESS is at its best in the early spring and that, too, in cold climates. It is a delicious salad plant that never requires to be protected or forced, but it will not stand cooking—indeed heat of any kind is fatal to the beauty of crisp green leafage. Wash it thoroughly and place it in the coldest spot you can find; then bring it to the table and dress it. It makes an ideal salad to serve with roasts, and the simplest dressing suits it best.

After watercress comes the garden cress or pepper grass, a plant that grows readily from seed and gives a constant supply of crisp foliage. It does particularly well in a sandy soil kept moist, and will give good results for a time if sown in a bed of moss.

Corn salad—the German *Lammer Salat*—is often a plague of the farmer's life, growing in grain and wheat fields. It is now being extensively cultivated (and has been much improved in size and flavor thereby) because epicures have recognized its excellence when served in the form of a salad.

During the fall when you see the waysides lined with the ragged blue flowers of the wild chicory dig a few roots and tuck them in rich earth on the south side of the house. In the spring they will push up tender, crisp leaves that may be blanched like dandelions, and you can revel in crisp salad even before the snow has melted. It also possesses all the essential qualities to make it a good pot-herb.

A MOST delicious dressing for these green salads is made by putting one tablespoonful of lime juice in a bowl, adding a teaspoonful of celery salt, saltspoonful of white pepper and a dash of cayenne. Mix in, a little at a time, alternately, three table-spoonfuls of oil and two of lime juice. Stir all the time, or the ingredients will separate. Add a table-spoonful of finely cut chives, or an equal amount of chervil or fresh tarragon leaves.

Herbs for use in making salads will flourish all winter on a sunlit kitchen shelf, and this tiny garden will fulfill its mission in giving many an added flavor not only to salads, but also to fish, fowl and fowl.

Then, when the tiny green onions appear in the market, often not thicker than a lead pencil, try cooking and serving them like asparagus.

Wash well, cut off part of the tops and the roots tie in bunches, and drop in boiling salted water and cook for ten minutes. This time allowance is for very young onions. A longer time must be allowed