

## Japanese Foods Near You

### — Natural Foods That Grow in Fields and Mountains —

When sunlight begins to feel warmer by the day and snow starts to melt, tree buds gradually swell and grass shoots sprout, to herald the coming of spring. The fields and mountains gradually fill with *tsukushi* (horsetail), *fukinoto* (butterbur buds), *seri* (Japanese parsley), and *yomogi* (mugwort), and invite people to come outside and enjoy picking herbs and edible wild plants.

People pick and eat the buds and leaves of edible plants that have withstood the cold winter, with hopes of partaking of their vitality. Doing so also fills them with a feeling of reverence toward the powers of nature.

*Tsukushi* are mixed in loosely scrambled eggs after removing their husks, *fukinoto* are made into tempura, and *seri* is lightly boiled. Such homemade dishes adorn the dinner table and are eaten by the entire family, with thanks for the blessings of nature.

Picking herbs and wild plants requires careful precautions, however, because there are poisonous plants that are difficult to distinguish from their edible counterparts, such as the poisonous *seri* and edible *seri*, and also because there are increasing cases of plants being contaminated with agricultural chemicals.

As spring deepens, wild plants such as *yama-udo* (Japanese spikenard), *fuki* (bog rhubarb), *warabi* (bracken), and *zenmai* (flowering fern) come into season, and bring an air of light-hearted excitement to the fields and mountains. You might want to grab a basket and head to a field or mountain near you with your lifestyle advisor. You might also take delight in seeing clusters of small flowers scattered throughout the landscape.

## 身近にある日本の食物

### — 野山に生える自然の食物 —

日射が少しずつ暖かく感じられるようになり雪解けが始まると、木の芽、草の芽もだんだんと膨らんで春到来を告げてくれます。野山には、「ツクシ」「フキノトウ」「セリ」「ヨモギ」も生えてきます。人も戸外に出ていき、草摘みや山菜採りを楽しめるようになります。

人は冬の寒さに耐えてきた植物の芽や葉を摘んで食すことで、その生命力にあやかりたいという思いを抱きます。自然の力に畏敬の念を抱きます。



摘んできたツクシは袴を取ってから卵とじに、フキノトウは天ぷらに、セリはおひたしにと、母親の手料理が食卓を飾って、家族全員で自然の恵みに感謝しながら食べます。

山菜には、毒ゼリのように区別のつきにくいものや、最近では農薬がかかっていたりすることもあり、草摘みや山菜採りには、十分気を付けないといけなくなりました。



春がどんどんやってくれば、「ヤマウド」「フキ」「ワラビ」「ゼンマイ」などが旬を迎え、野山はますます楽しい季節になってきます。皆さんもカゴを持って近くの野山に、生活指導員の方と一緒に出かけしてみたいかたがででしょうか。小さな草花もたくさん咲いていると思いますよ。

