

Spring Tonic and Memories

Hey Ethel! It's time for our spring tonic. The only thing is that Ethel passed away after over 50 years of marriage in 2006. It's still hard to disregard so many springs together. Is it right to remember the special family people who started this spring tonic habit years ago? Is it right to elevate a very well known "weed" to such a prominence? In this twenty first century the wrong weed might come to mind. I doubt that most readers have now guessed the correct weed. If you want to identify it just look from your window in search of the first yellow spring flower you see. Yes, I'm referring to the dandelion.



Many hate it for invading their gardens and hay fields and pastures. Can anyone not take notice of a field covered with that beautiful yellow color? Those dandelions that grow over much of North America have helped sustain life in man, bird and beast through the years. It seems almost universal that the older folks hereabouts knew and used these rather bitter greens. Let me tell you how I first heard about and tasted the spring tonic of dandelions.

It seems I still hear grandpa Ben say: "I'm going out and dig a mess of dandelions. I have to do it soon to be really good because the greens have to be gathered long before the flowers mature." That is how grandpa's mess of dandelions are. Mother cooked them as usual mixed with small bites of egg and bacon. Mother has also been gone since 1987.

Fast forward to 2013; this writer gathered his first spring greens. He has never been much of a cook but he can boil these up in a small amount of water. Ah! They are done. Now to add some vinegar. It is for the reader to decide if the tonic effect, if there is one, or the memories of special people now long gone beyond the sunset is most important. I was reminded by my grandson, another Ben, that even fancy restaurants of our present day make use of these wild weeds. Thanks Ben for shocking me back to the present.

Skip Barshied, Stone Arabia, April 28, 2013, my grandfather Benjamin Garlock's 136th birthday.