

# The Wonder of The Everyday





A man and a young child are sitting on a large, flat rock, looking out over a vast, green field. The man is on the right, wearing a dark jacket, and the child is on the left, wearing a red shirt and black arm warmers. They are both looking away from the camera towards the horizon. A large, leafy tree is on the left side of the frame, and its branches hang over the scene. The background shows a line of trees under a bright sky. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

A doting dandelion dedication.

For anyone who can see the exceptional  
in the everyday things around us.

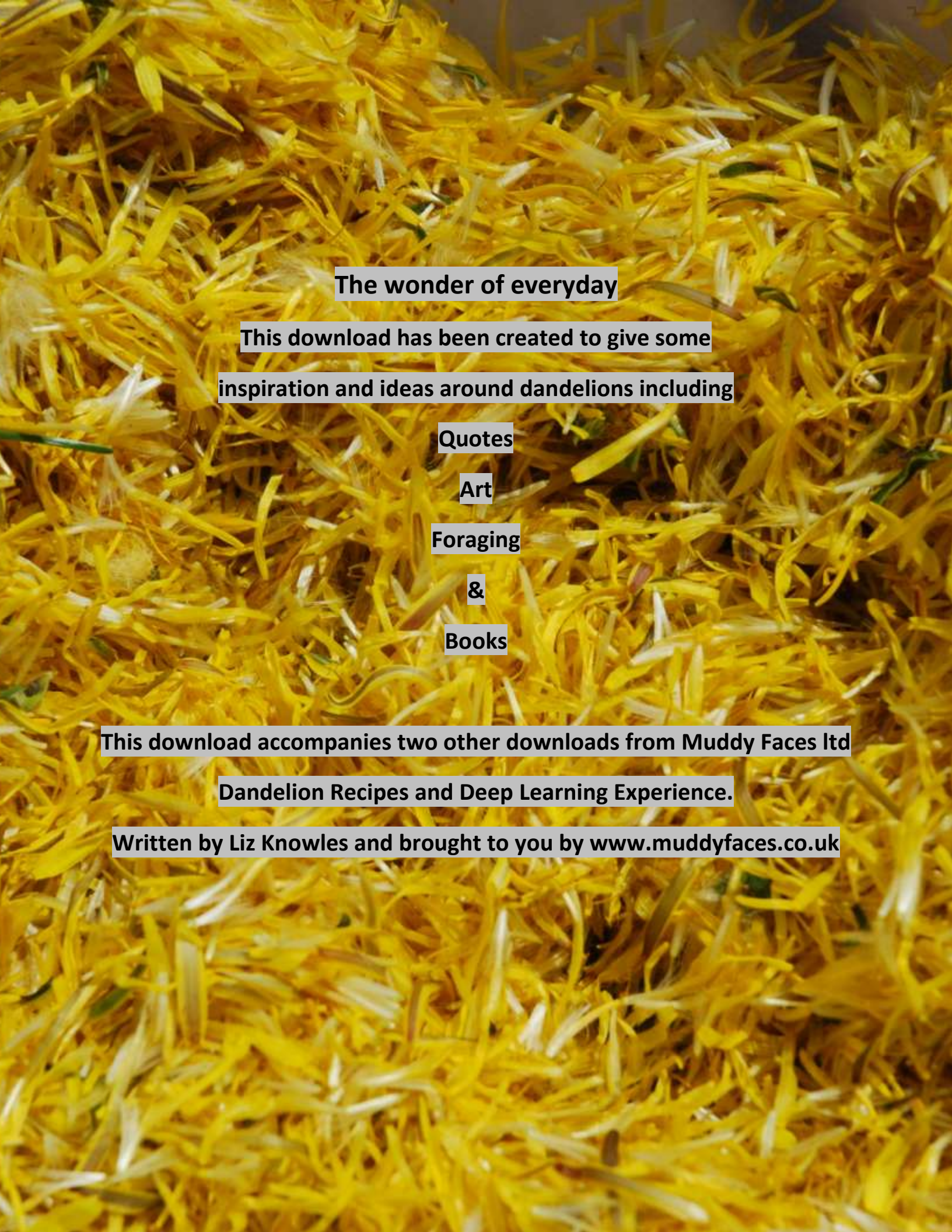
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**The wonder of everyday**

**This download has been created to give some  
inspiration and ideas around dandelions including**

**Quotes**

**Art**

**Foraging**

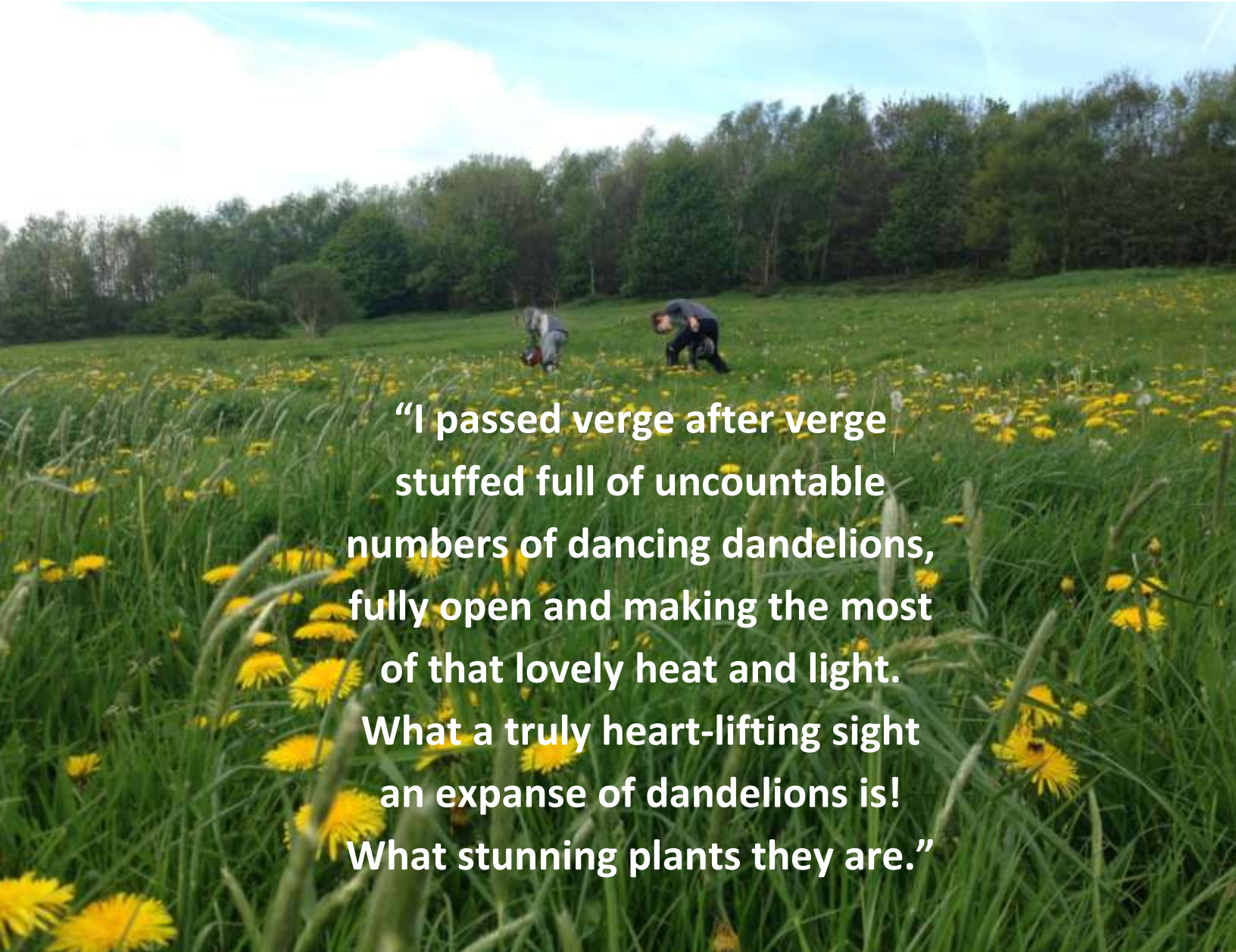
**&**

**Books**

**This download accompanies two other downloads from Muddy Faces Ltd  
Dandelion Recipes and Deep Learning Experience.**

**Written by Liz Knowles and brought to you by [www.muddyfaces.co.uk](http://www.muddyfaces.co.uk)**





**"I passed verge after verge  
stuffed full of uncountable  
numbers of dancing dandelions,  
fully open and making the most  
of that lovely heat and light.  
What a truly heart-lifting sight  
an expanse of dandelions is!  
What stunning plants they are."**



**\* Celebrating Dandelions for Earth Day  
[janwhitenaturalplay.wordpress.com](http://janwhitenaturalplay.wordpress.com)**





Wire sculptures  
by  
[www.fantasywire.co.uk](http://www.fantasywire.co.uk)





## A little bit about Dandelions

The name *dandelion* comes from the French, *dent-de-lion*, "lion's tooth". This name refers to the sharp lobes of the leaves rather than the spiky yellow petals of the flower.

Dandelions are from the plant family Asteraceae. This family name is derived from the genus Aster and refers to the star-shaped flower heads. Other members of this family include daisy, lettuce, chicory, globe artichoke, safflower, chrysanthemums, ragwort, and sunflower. The bright yellow flower head opens in the daytime but closes at night.

Dandelions have been well known for their nutritional and medicinal qualities for centuries. Consumed as a leafy vegetable, whether cooked or raw (such as in salads or soup), and dandelion flower heads are used to make wine and jam. Medicinally, dandelion has been used and still is used for a variety of treatments.

Dandelions are often perceived as a weed: their leaves spread outwards, pressing down the surrounding vegetation, killing it by cutting off the sunlight. Its ability to grow back from just a little of a tap root means that it is tricky to get rid of if unwanted.

### Picking Wildflowers

According to Dominic Price of wild plant protection charity Plantlife, "it is not normally an offence to pick the 'Four Fs' – fruit, foliage, fungi or flowers – if the plants are growing wild and it is for your personal use and not for sale." Dozens of rare or endangered plants – from the lady's slipper orchid and adder's tongue, to threadmoss and sandwort – are, however, protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. It is illegal to uproot any wild plant.

Cultivated flowers growing in council parks, roundabouts or verges are legally off-limits. The same goes for any gardens planted by a particular organisation (ie community gardens), and nature reserves or protected land.

## **Collecting dandelions**

**With the abundance of dandelions and the perception of the plant as a weed, it is almost a unique opportunity to collect a wonderful vibrant coloured flower without upsetting anyone or more importantly committing a crime.**

**Environmental impact - If every school, nursery and parent went out collecting dandelions, there would not be many left for the insects. This is not going to happen, even though the problem would be a nice one to have: 'Headline - Too many kids outdoors interacting with nature!' That being said, it is very important to collect considerately, picking a few from areas with abundance and making sure you do not clear areas. When we collected ours, we wandered across a field filled with dandelions collecting a few here and a few there.**

**The main aspect to consider is whose land you are on and whether they would be upset by you collecting dandelions. The easiest way if you have concerns would be to ask for permission from the land owner.**

**Suggested Link - Comprehensive dandelion information and foraging**  
**<http://www.wildmanstevebrill.com/Plants.Folder/Dandelion.html>**

### **TIPS**

**Ensure the dandelions have not been chemically sprayed and if picking dandelions by the roadside, be aware that they might have absorbed chemicals from petrol fumes.**

**Leaves should be gathered before the plant blooms as they will become increasingly bitter and tough.**

**Pick in the sunshine when they are fully open.**

**Celebrate the approach of summer with some lovely dandelion recipes such as Jam or fritters**





Having read that young leaves from plants that haven't bloomed are the most palatable, I carefully picked some and we gave it a go. It was a resounding 'thumbs down' on taste but a big 'thumbs up' for giving it a try. Raw leaves can have a bitter taste. Dandelion leaves can be eaten cooked or raw in various forms, such as in soup or salad. The young leaves are eaten raw in salads, while older leaves are cooked, often boiled twice to extract the bitterness.



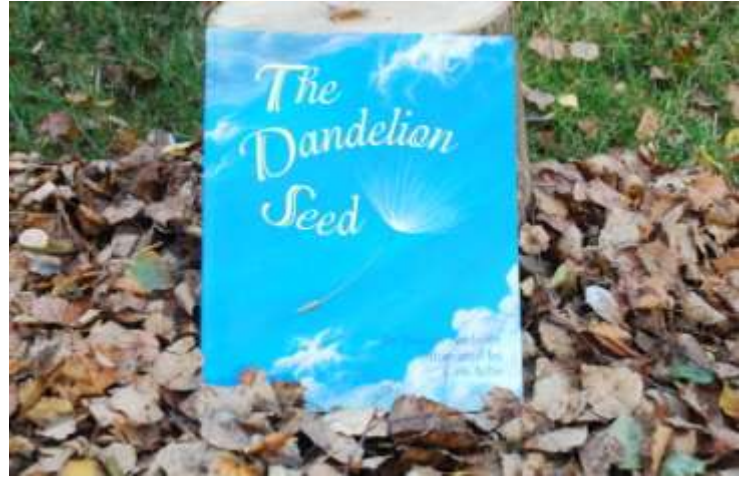


## Publications

All these books can be found in [www.muddyfaces.co.uk](http://www.muddyfaces.co.uk) publications section.

Last year after my son's dandelion exploration, I made a big effort to find some dandelion inspired books and resources. There wasn't much about at all but I did manage to find this delightful book.

‘The humble dandelion. By roadside or mountainside, it flowers every month of the year throughout the world, a fitting symbol of life. Its journey is our journey filled with challenge, wonder and beauty. Its story is a mystery too great to fathom.’



**Foraging books:** I've highlighted a couple of books below. None of them have dandelion jam recipes, but all are handy books to help you forage, identify and cook.

**The Forager handbook: A Guide to the Edible Plants of Great Britain**  
by Miles Irving £30.00

Miles Irving makes his living out of foraging, and supplies wild food to some of the country's top restaurants. In this unique, authentic guide, he reveals the how, why, what and where of this lost art. A way of life that is becoming increasingly popular as more and more of us pursue an eco friendly and sustainable lifestyle. This ground breaking handbook tells you how to recognise the rich possibilities that surround us whether in city or countryside.



This is a lovely book with a hard cover. In the dandelion section there are facts such as “In Lebanon gathering and preparing dandelion leaves in the spring is something of a festivity, with everyone out picking, then making salads and little pasties with the leaves”

It also gives suggestions for uses of the roots - including fried with bacon, and to substitute. Then using the leaves for salads and stews with brief recipes: Smoked salmon salad.

**Food for Free by Richard Mabey £12.99**

Beautifully illustrated, Food for Free helps you identify 240 wild foods, including fungi, seaweed, shellfish, root vegetables, herbs, spices, flowers, fruits and nuts. It suggests the best ways to cook and eat them in order to discover their delicious and often exotic flavours and aromas



**Little Gem Food for Free by Richard Mabey £4.99**

A pocket sized edition of Food for Free. A guide to over 100 edible plants, berries, mushrooms, seaweed and shellfish.





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