

## GREENBRIER aka SARSAPARILLA aka SMILAX BONA-NOX



Stems



Tips

**IDENTIFICATION:** Greenbrier is a climbing thin vine type bush. Some call it a vine, some call it a shrub. The tips which are edible resemble tiny fresh Asparagus. The stems have thorns and are winding and tangled. Berries are produced in the fall or late summer.

**TIME OF YEAR:** Starts putting on shoots in February. Seeds germinate after a freeze.

**ENVIRONMENT:** This grows in temperate, swampy and warm areas and is a favorite for the deer. It grows best in moist woodlands, but can tolerate a lot of dry and is often seen climbing trees. It is a brambly shrub. Thicket provides protection for birds.

**METHOD OF PREPARATION:** Snap off the edible tips and eat whole or put them in salad. To eat part of the vine run your fingers up the vine toward the tip, and at the place where the vine can snap and break is the part you can eat. Roots can be used in soups or stews, and berries can be eaten both raw and cooked, usually are chewed like gum (avoid the large seed.) lbs. of roots to pounds of flour is a 10 to 1 if adding to a recipe. It has an anti-inflammatory effect and helps digestion. American settlers made a real root beer from this plant. They would mix root pulp with molasses and parched corn then allowed it to ferment. Also, add sassafras root chips to give a soft drink root beer flavor.

**NUTRITION** unknown

Information retrieved 5/27/2014 from <http://www.eattheweeds.com/smilax-a-brier-and-that%E2%80%99s-no-bull/>; and <http://40acrewoods.com/?s=smilax>