

Eating out: BC3 launches noncredit wild edibles course

17 of 46 fall Lifelong Learning classes new in Lawrence, Mercer counties

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Andrew Palumbo, shown Wednesday, Aug. 8, 2018, near a walnut tree in his hometown of Wampum, will teach students about wild edibles that can be found in backyards or in parks, and used to add fresh flavor to old culinary favorites, in Butler County Community College's "Foraging Essentials: Intro to Wild Edibles" course. The noncredit Lifelong Learning course begins Sept. 17 at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing, New Castle, and will also be held in New Castle parks.

(Butler, PA) Butler County Community College this fall will offer 17 new Lifelong Learning courses among its 46 selections in Lawrence and Mercer counties, including the debut of a class designed to educate students about wild edibles that can be found in backyards or in parks, and used to add fresh flavor to old culinary favorites.

“Foraging Essentials: Intro to Wild Edibles” will appeal to those who enjoy expanding their culinary horizons, said Paul Lucas, director of BC3’s Lifelong Learning division.

“It is a way to find herbs and different plants that you can use in your cooking,” Lucas said. “Students will learn about things that are edible in the wild, and how to eat only those things that are safe to eat.”

Andrew Palumbo, of Wampum, will teach students that chestnuts found near New Castle parks can be ground into flour and kneaded into a flavorful pasta dough reminiscent of that made in eastern Italy, where his family originated.

“If you like to cook, you could get something out of this class forever,” said Palumbo, a 2005 graduate of New Castle Area High School who spent much of his childhood foraging for wild edibles with his mother, Karen Jula, in Gaston and Cascade parks in New Castle.

Ripe sumac berries, Palumbo will tell students, can be used to create a spice mimicking the Middle Eastern za’atar, which “imparts a very lemony scent to cook meats or pasta dishes.”

Shoots on pine tree branches in the spring, Palumbo said, “are soft and edible and make a really good garnish. Or you can pickle them and add them to a salad or a soup or a pasta dish. It adds a lemony flavor to your dish.”

Pine pollen, “which imparts a honey-like flavor,” Palumbo said, “can be used to make bread or vinegar. And it adds a lot of nutrients.”

Students will also learn about edible wild berries, mushrooms and herbs, and drinks or teas that can be made from pine needles, anise roots and birch bark.

“People always have a curiosity,” Lucas said. “And Lifelong Learning is a way to fulfill that curiosity.”

The \$49 “Foraging Essentials: Intro to Wild Edibles” will be held from 5 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Mondays beginning Sept. 17 at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing, New Castle. The second and third sessions will be held in New Castle parks, Palumbo said.

Among BC3’s new courses in Lawrence and Mercer counties this fall are “Authentic Irish Cooking,” which begins Sept. 13 at the Lawrence County Career & Technical Center, New Castle; “Excel 2016: An Introduction,” which starts Sept. 18 at BC3 @ Lawrence Crossing; “Beginner Mosaics,” Oct. 15 at BC3 @ LindenPointe, Hermitage; and “Arthritis Management Series,” Nov. 28, also at BC3 @ LindenPointe.

BC3’s Lifelong Learning division served 546 students in Lawrence and Mercer counties in the 2017-18 academic year, Lucas said.

For more information or to view a complete list of BC3’s fall 2018 Lifelong Learning courses, visit bc3.edu/lifelong-learning or call 724-284-8504.