



NORTHERN LIGHT

*By Amanda Anderson, Coast Magazine
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In the morning, the world was still right, but completely altered; at the foot of the garden was not shining water, but a shimmering forest of seaweed, the tide having moved three or four-hundred yards off shore. It was a scene ripe for adventure; luckily, one of Sooke Harbour's unique experiences is a tour with Diane Bernard, founder of Outer Coast Seaweeds, who make her living harvesting these highly nutritious slippery botanicals for restaurant and spa use. She met us in the lobby, handed us some knee-high rubber boots and walking sticks, and took us out to forage. Who knew seaweed was so fascinating? Bernard made a point of explaining that what we commonly know as seaweed, that which is washed up on the beach, is really the ocean's compost pile, and you should never judge a garden's produce by its compost. Further out into the soggy garden, she picked up and fed us (yes fed us, right out of B.C.'s clean ocean) a variety of crunchy, tasty seaweeds; like a wine connoisseur she could detect from among the alaria, egregia, rainbow seaweed, sea cabbage, and rockweed the subtleties in texture and flavor (one cucumber-y, one crunchy like jicama, one sweet) and had us fancying we could tell the difference too.