



We have a large Hazel bush nearby and on Squirrels to pinch them, so at this time of year we have quite a good supply of very big nuts. They are the size of a small Conker this year. Apparently nuts have a demographic status in Chinese Cuisine?..?Peanuts = Everyman - Hazel Nuts = Middle class and thriving - Walnuts = Elite and above?. So with the idea of using Hazel Nuts as a local and free alternative to Water Chestnuts we set about pottering yesterday.

Ingredients:-

A large bowl of foraged Hazel Nuts

A hammer or Nut cracker (I used a hammer on the kitchen floor!!!!)

Bicarbonate of Soda.

Method:-

(1) Preheat the oven to 250c.

(2) Lay the nuts on an oven proof tray in a single layer.

(3) Place in the oven for 20 minutes. Those which explode are the ones with no actual nut inside. Which saves you smacking them later!

(4) Remove the tray and cool enough to be able to handle the roasted nuts.

(5) Crack open and remove the roasted nuts and bin the shells.

(6) Boil a small pan of water with 2 table spoon of Bicarbonate of Soda and simmer the nuts for 10 minutes. Interestingly the water turns a dark purple?..

(7) Drain and cool.

(8) Once cool enough to handle the brown coating will rub away with ease.

Your roasted and cleaned nuts are now good to add at the beginning of a Chinese style stir-fry just after the Onions and Garlic. You can then set them aside and re-add at the end. They really do add a great flavour and crunchy texture.