Kimchi is a lacto-fermented Korean food that roughly translates to “pickle.” There are many variations of kimchi and people enjoy eating it as a side dish or condiment, similar to relish, sauerkraut, pickles, etc. You can use pretty much any combination of crunchy fresh vegetables for your kimchi.

This is a recipe that I adapted from the Fermenter’s Club (fermentersclub.com/kimchi/), to incorporate the use of freshly harvested wild leeks. You can find more background information and more recipes on the Fermenter’s Club website.

**Ingredients:**
- 1 lb. freshly picked wild leeks
- 1 large Napa cabbage head
- 2 Quarts filtered water
- 1 Cup shredded carrots
- 1 lb. radishes
- 1 - 3 oz. fresh ginger root
- 1 large jalapeño pepper
- 6 Tbsp kosher salt
- ½ Cup Chili Garlic Sauce (or gochukaru pepper powder)
- 1 Tbsp. fish sauce
- 1 Tbsp. tamari or soy sauce

**Other items:**
- Large fermentation crock
- Food processor
Instructions

Prepare the vegetables for the fermentation crock:
1. Fill a large mixing bowl with the water and stir in the salt until it dissolves. This is the brine solution.
2. Remove the cabbage core and chop the cabbage into 1-inch chunks.
3. Slice the radishes into ¼” slices.
4. Add cabbage, radishes, and shredded carrots to the brine solution. Place a large plate or another large, heavy object on top of the vegetables to ensure they are fully submerged in the brine.
5. Brine the vegetables for about an hour.
6. Drain the vegetables using a colander, reserving one pint of the brine solution. Rinse the vegetables briefly to remove excess salt.

Prepare the kimchi paste:
1. Peel and chop the ginger root. Add to mixing bowl of food processor.
2. Chop the wild leeks into 3-4 equal sized pieces and add to mixing bowl.
3. Slice the jalapeño (remove seeds if you wish to make it less spicy) and add to mixing bowl.
4. Add the chili garlic sauce or gochugaru powder
5. Add the fish sauce
6. Add the tamari or soy sauce
7. Add all kimchi paste ingredients to the food processor and run until a thick paste forms

Prepare for fermentation:
1. Wear latex/protective food handling gloves and mix the kimchi paste into the brined vegetables in a large mixing bowl, ensuring everything gets coated by the paste.
2. Pack the kimchi mixture into a large fermentation crock, ensuring the top surface is even and flat. If your crock has weights, place on top of the mixture
3. Check daily, adding the reserved brine solution if necessary to keep the mixture under the surface of the brine solution in the crock.
4. Let ferment in the crock for 5-7 days. (length of fermentation varies, depending on local conditions (temps, humidity, etc.)
5. Once it gets to your liking, transfer to sanitized canning jars and refrigerate. The kimchi will last several months in the fridge
Chopping vegetables

Chopping the cabbage

Chopping the radishes
Preparing the wild leek kimchi paste

Chopping the wild leeks

Chopping the pepper and ginger

*I only had the chili garlic sauce available, but I prefer to use gochugaru (Korean red pepper flakes) if available*
Mixing the paste and brined veggies

The kimchi paste ready to be mixed with the brined veggies. I usually mix half of the batch at a time to ensure everything gets a good coating of the kimchi paste.
Adding the kimchi to the fermentation crock

Once the paste has been mixed into the veggies, pack everything in a large fermentation crock. If available, place weights on mixture and make sure everything is covered with the brine (use reserved brine solution if necessary. The fermentation process takes 5 – 7 days, but it’s worth taste testing after the 3rd day. Once it’s to your liking, pack into sanitized canning jars and refrigerate. It will last several months in the fridge.