

## I'll Have a Large Milkweed, with Everything

**R**USSELL Cohen

finds his dinner in unconventional spots — the Boston Common, a Cambridge sidewalk, the roof of a downtown parking garage.

A self-taught naturalist and rivers advocate at the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife, Cohen knows all about edible plants and can spot a tasty morsel just about anywhere. Every summer and fall, he leads up to 250 fellow nature-food buffs on stroll-and-snack tours through the wilds of Boston and elsewhere. One Sunday afternoon last November he found 36 edible foods on a harvest walk around his Cambridge neighborhood — burdock (he says it tastes

like artichokes), dandelions, curled dock, rose hips, fox grapes, Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, and milkweed, which he says is “great for pizza.”

— ALEX WRIGHT

Cohen  
the weed  
eater.



UConn condor

## I Was a Teenage Condor

**M**EET VEEDOR, the only tame, free-flying Andean condor in New England. Veedor lives in Sharon, Connecticut, with John McNeely. There are only 1,000 condors in the world, mostly in South America, though Connecticut had lots of them before the end of the Ice Age. Veedor occasionally visits the Museum of Natural History at the University of Connecticut in Storrs, where he shows children (and adults) just what an Andean condor looks and acts like. During such an exhibition Veedor prances around on a stage while his friends McNeely, Martha Boll, and Robin Brace hold on to his beak, lest he nibble on things like stage curtains. Veedor, who has an over-nine-foot wingspan, is then taken outside for a flight. He runs along the ground until he has enough speed to get airborne. Though he could fly away if he wanted to (in the wild, condors fly up to 24,000 feet high at 50 miles per hour), Veedor has decided there's no place like home, and after hopping around a few rooftops at the UConn Quad, he always returns.

Now seven years old, Veedor weighs about 28 pounds and is sexually mature. Though there are no female Andean condors around to entice the “increasingly handsome” Veedor to alter his behavior, this could be a challenge to his human friends — like male adolescents of other species we could name, maturing condors tend to be aggressive, arrogant, and sullen and to ignore anyone who speaks to them. Veedor's “sitters” at the museum are hoping he'll retain his sweet and curious nature.