



Dandelion Root

Dandelion has been called the "free health food pharmacy" that grows everywhere! Both leaves and roots are considered to be a *superior natural diuretic, fine blood cleanser and excellent tonic* that can help *detoxify the system, especially the liver and gallbladder*. It gives an overall feeling of good health and *improved mobility*.

Information: Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong. Consequently, if they are not tailored to your specific needs, they can do more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Botanical: *Taraxacum officinale*

Family: *Compositae* (daisy) - *Asteraceae* (aster)

Other common names: Bitterwort, Pissabed, Lion's Tooth, Priest's Crown, Telltime, Puffball, Cankerwort, Blow Ball, Swine Snout, White Endive, Wild Endive, Irish Daisy, Doonheadclock, Yellow Gowan, Clock Flower, Fortuneteller

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History: Dandelion wins the prize as the world's most famous weed pest when it grows in manicured lawns and gardens, but the botanical name (*Taraxacum officinale*) of this wonderful wildflower means "the official remedy for disorders," and thought to be derived from the Greek words *taraxos*, meaning "disorder" and *akos*, meaning "remedy." The English name, Dandelion, is apparently derived from the French, *dent de leon*, meaning "lion's tooth," because the shape of the leaves resemble the shape of a lion's tooth. The Chinese recorded its use in herbal medicine in A.D. 659 and have been using it in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to treat breast cancer for at least one thousand years. Interestingly, today's research has shown that Dandelion has worked effectively against two malignant growth systems, stimulating macrophage action, and

possibly demonstrating some potential in the area of cancer research - and echoing its use in Traditional Chinese Medicine for this disease during the last thousand years. Arabian physicians of the tenth and eleventh centuries spoke of its nutritive value, and in Europe, it was noted in Welsh medicines of the thirteenth century and mentioned in the *Ortus Sanitatis* of 1485. Dandelion was purposely introduced from Europe into North America by the early colonists who regarded it as an important part of their herbal medicines and diets. Native Americans soon found the flower equally important using it as a tonic and physic (the Mohegan tribe), for heartburn (the Ojibwas) and for chest pains (Meskwakis). Dandelion was included in the *British Pharmaceutical Codex* and *United States Dispensatory* from 1831 through 1926, and in the *National Formulary* until 1965. The dried root of Dandelion is listed in the *United States Pharmacopoeia*. Traditionally, in Europe and America, Dandelion was used as a favorite spring health tonic and is cultivated in India as a liver remedy. In Germany, there is an over-the-counter preparation containing this common weed that has been found effective against gallstones. It is also listed in over-the-counter treatments in Canada,

France and the United Kingdom. Other interesting uses for Dandelion have included the flower in a yellow dye, the leaves in a purple dye, the young leaves in a healthy salad, the flowers in wine and as a garnish in food, and the ground root as a tasty, healthy caffeine-free coffee substitute. Some of Dandelion's chemical constituents include bitter glycosides, carotenoids, terpenoids, inula, choline, lecithin (believed to protect against cirrhosis of the liver), tannins, sterols, essential oil, gluten, gum, saponin and fructose-oligosaccharide inulin (a food fiber that is a sort of sugar-replacing starch, widely distributed in other plants and constituting an important part of the world's diet). Dandelion is a nutritive and a wealth of vitamins A, C, D, several B-vitamins and vitamin P. Rich in iron and other important minerals, including boron, calcium, silicon, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, selenium and zinc, Dandelion is also an exceptional source of potassium salts. The root also includes asparagin.

Beneficial Uses: Dandelion Root is considered a superior and potent diuretic (even to synthetic products) that increases urine flow, rids the body of excess water and helps to relieve bloated feelings. The high level of potassium in Dandelion is important, because large amounts of potassium are lost in the urine and too often flushed from the body when synthetic diuretics are used.

Potassium-rich Dandelion is said to help promote healthy heart function. The potassium works with sodium to regulate the body's water balance and normalize heart rhythms. Dandelion may lower cholesterol and high blood pressure due to its diuretic action in ridding the body of excess fluid, thereby reducing the amount of fluid the heart must pump to circulate blood.

Dandelion Root is considered a fine liver tonic that is also said to promote healthy gallbladder, pancreas and spleen function. It affects all forms of secretion and excretion from the body and is a gentle cleansing agent with almost a specific affinity for the liver and modifies and increases the secretions, removing excess water from the body in edemous conditions that could result from liver problems. Herbal healers use Dandelion to strengthen the liver and treat liver disorders. The herb is thought to promote the flow of bile and ease such conditions as hepatitis, inflammation of the liver, jaundice (caused by excess bile in the blood) and liver enlargement. By promoting the flow of bile from the liver, Dandelion is said to be helpful when used in the first stages of cirrhosis of the liver.

Dandelion Root and Leaves are known for keeping the internal organs clean and clear. Herbalists treat kidney ailments with Dandelion, and it is also thought to improve gallbladder function, possibly even preventing gallstones (in Germany, the over-the-

counter "Hepatichol" is said to be proven effective against gallstones).

As a blood purifier, Dandelion Leaf is considered an excellent tonic that cleanses poisons from the body. Through its action both on the liver and kidneys (as its French name, *pis en lit*, "wet the bed" indicates), it gently eliminates toxic wastes from the body. The natural nutritive salts work to purify the blood and also help to neutralize the acids in the blood.

Dandelion Leaf's powerful blood purifying and liver cleansing properties help to clear skin problems, especially acne. A liver that is not performing at its best can worsen acne, because it cannot break down and clear excess hormones from the body. Furthermore, Dandelion's inulin content also helps to improve the quality of skin by removing bacteria.

Dandelion Root and Leaves are an excellent nutritive and a valuable source of sodium, minerals (especially potassium), large amounts of vitamins A, C and D, B-vitamins and trace elements. The roots are sometimes used as a healthy coffee substitute or as an addition to coffee. In fact, some claim that it acts as an antidote to any of coffee's possible detrimental effects on the body and may be especially helpful in cases of dyspepsia.

European herbalists regard Dandelion as one of the best herbs for building the blood and relieving anemic conditions. Anemia is caused by deficiency of proper nutrients in the blood, and iron-rich Dandelion is one of its oldest, best-known remedies.

For constipation, Dandelion Leaf is considered a mild laxative that stimulates the bowel and is also said to ease the discomforts caused by inflammation of the bowel. Furthermore, its inulin content (a prebiotic fiber) passes undigested to the large intestine and stimulates the growth of gut micro-flora known as *Bifidobacteria* or *Lactobacilli*. These bacteria may crowd out pathogenic bacteria and provide disease resistance in the bowel.

Dandelion Root promotes good digestion by invigorating the functions of the digestive organs and stimulating the circulation of blood to the entire body. This herb tonic is used for problems in the digestive organs and is said to relieve acute stomachaches.

For treating nagging, toxic conditions, including gout, joint inflammations, chronic arthritis, chronic rheumatism, swelling and stiff joints, Dandelion Root is said to be ideal, because it flushes toxins from the system, rids the body of excess water and salt and is believed to reduce uric acid. Dandelion may help reduce stiffness and increase mobility in situations of chronic degenerative joint disease. Moreover, this purifying and flushing action is also believed to help clear skin problems, including acne and psoriasis.

The inulin content in Dandelion Root is thought to be an “immuno-stimulant,” boosting the function of the immune system and stimulating macrophage action to surround and digest invasive infection and serious malignant disease.

Dandelion Root may be helpful in cases of osteoporosis. It is a rich source of boron, which is thought to raise estrogen levels in the blood, thus helping to preserve bone. The herb is also a rich source of calcium and silicon, both of which are also believed to strengthen bone.

Contraindications: Pregnant and nursing women should not use Dandelion Leaf or Root. It is not recommended for people with gallstones or biliary tract (bile duct) obstruction without first consulting a physician. In cases of stomach ulcers, gastritis or irritable bowel, Dandelion should be used cautiously, as it may cause over production of stomach acid. Those who are allergic to daisies or asters should not use Dandelion. Do not take Dandelion without talking to your doctor first if you are taking certain medicines used to treat infection (antibiotics such as Cipro, Tequin, Levaquin, etc., as it may lower efficacy of drug); Potassium supplements for health condition (too much may be harmful); Blood thinning medicine (Coumadin, Plavix, aspirin, etc.).

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