

# Dandelion

Latin Name: *Taraxacum officinale*

Also known as: Lion's Tooth, Priest's Crown, Puffball, Blowball, Cankerwort, Wild Endive

## Scientific Classification

There are more than 50 species in the *Taraxacum* genus, all taprooted biennials or perennials that contain a milky latex.

*Family:* Asteraceae – aster, daisy and sunflower family  
Compositae – in earlier classifications

*Genus:* *Taraxacum* – dandelion

*Species:* *T. officinale* – common dandelion

Influence on the Body	(PRINCIPLE ACTIONS are listed in CAPITAL LETTERS)
<i>Blood and Circulatory System</i>	BLOOD CLEANSER • BLOOD PURIFIER • DEPURATIVE (cleanses blood by promoting eliminative functions) • ANEMIA • lowers cholesterol • HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE • LOW BLOOD PRESSURE • dropsy (edema due to heart insufficiency) • hemorrhage • scurvy • spleen
<i>Blood Sugar</i>	pancreas • diabetes • HYPOGLYCEMIA
<i>Body System</i>	tonic (increases energy and strengthens the muscular and nervous system, while improving digestion and assimilation, resulting in a general sense of well-being) • stimulates metabolism • ENDURANCE • stamina • energy • fatigue • lethargy • aging
<i>Bones and Teeth</i>	fractures
<i>Cancer</i>	cancer • breast cancer • breast tumors
<i>Digestive Tract</i>	nutritive (supplies substantial amount of nutrients and aids in building and toning the body) • APPETITE STIMULANT • bitter (stimulates digestive juices and improves appetite) • heartburn • stomach • digestive disorders • dyspepsia (indigestion) • indigestion • bowel inflammation • ulcers • gas • flatulence (gas) • intestines • constipation • laxative (without purging)
<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	bacterial infections • flu • fevers • yeast infections • abscesses
<i>Inflammation</i>	ARTHRITIS • rheumatism • gout

<i>Liver</i>	LIVER CLEANSER • congestion in the liver portal system • LIVER DISORDERS • HEPATITIS • LIVER TOXICITY • JAUNDICE • CIRRHOSIS • GALL BLADDER • CHOLAGOGUE (promotes the flow of bile) • gallstones
<i>Lungs and Respiratory System</i>	ASTHMA • bronchitis
<i>Muscle</i>	leg cramps
<i>Nervous System</i>	mental fatigue • insomnia • senility
<i>Reproductive System</i>	<i>Female:</i> • female organs • PMS • galactagogue (enhances lactation of nursing mothers)
<i>Skin, Tissues &amp; Hair</i>	SKIN PROBLEMS • skin eruptions • dermatitis • ACNE • ECZEMA • psoriasis • EXTERNAL BLISTERS • boils • corns • warts • sores • AGE SPOTS
<i>Urinary Tract</i>	diuretic • water retention • URINARY TRACT INFECTIONS • KIDNEY INFECTIONS • kidney stones • bladder stones • lithotriptic (dissolves urinary stones) • deobstruent (removes obstructions) • bladder
<i>Weight</i>	WEIGHT LOSS

**Key Properties:**

- HEPATIC – supports and stimulates the liver, gall bladder and spleen, and increases the flow of bile
- DIURETIC – increases the flow of urine without depleting potassium in the body
- STOMACHIC – improves appetite and digestion
- CHOLAGOGUE – increases bile flow
- alterative – purifies the blood, cleanses, and induces efficient removal of waste products, gradually detoxifying the spleen, liver, kidneys and bowels
- nutritive – supplies substantial amount of nutrients and aids in building and toning the body
- tonic – increases energy and strength throughout the body

**Primarily affecting:** LIVER • gall bladder • BLOOD • KIDNEYS • STOMACH • pancreas

<b>History</b>	The Latin genus name Taraxacum is from the Greek 'taraxos', meaning disorder and 'ako', meaning remedy. Dandelions have been purposely cultivated and widely used throughout
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history. The Celts introduced the herb to the Roman legions when Caesar invaded the north. The Anglo-Saxons and the Normans used it to prevent scurvy (a Vitamin C deficiency). In ancient Russia, dandelion was used for yellow spots (liver spots) of the skin, and freckles.

Arabic physicians introduced its use as a medicine to Europe in the 10<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century, and it soon became valued as a medicinal herb. Monastery gardens used dandelion for both food and medicine in the Middle Ages. Herbalists used it for fever, boils, eye problems, diabetes, and diarrhea, and it has been largely cultivated in India as a remedy for liver complaints.

The French called dandelion 'dents de lion', or 'lion's tooth,' in reference to the deeply jagged shape of the plant's leaves. In France, the roots are cooked as a vegetable and added to broth and in Germany they are sliced and used in salads. Germany has approved dandelion for digestive health and the root is used in cases of bile flow disruption and when a diuretic is indicated.

Native Americans used dandelion decoctions to treat kidney disease, swellings, skin problems, heartburn, and indigestion.

Dandelion is still respected today as an expectorant, sedative, and one of the best tonic herbs for blood purifying, liver treatment, jaundice, gallbladder, skin conditions, and digestive disturbances.

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**Attributes**

Key Components: (including, but not limited to)

Vitamins A (containing 7,000 units per ounce of herb) • B1 (thiamine) • B2 (riboflavin) • B3 (niacin) • B5 (pantothenic acid) • B6 (pyridoxine) • B9 (folic acid) • B12 (cobalamin) • Biotin • Choline • Inositol • PABA (Para-Amino Benzoic Acid) • C • Bioflavonoids • D • E

Boron • Calcium (a good source) • Cobalt • Copper • Iron (a good source) • Magnesium (a good source) • Manganese • Phosphorous • Potassium (a rich source) • Silicon • Sodium • Sulfur • Zinc • other Trace Minerals

Sugars • Inulin • Mucilage • Bitter

Dandelion is a high nutrient food and has been used as a valuable survival food. It is high in organic salts and minerals which build the blood, help correct anemia deficiencies, and restore the blood's electrolyte balance. It has also been noted

that dandelions can improve enamel health of teeth.

*General* Dandelion acts as a tonic to the system. It cleanses acids and toxins from the blood, and effectively builds and strengthens the liver and kidneys. The herb is also a mild stimulant for bowel elimination and is especially indicated in helping treat persistent constipation of the elderly.

By cleansing the blood and liver, dandelion is useful in the treatment of various oily and eruptive conditions of the skin, such as acne, eczema, and sebaceous cysts. Dandelion is used for liver disease, jaundice, gallstones, diabetes, allergies and sensitivities, skin problems, water retention, urinary problems, swollen ankles, dropsy, gout, arthritis, and rheumatism.

*Liver and Bile Flow* In Europe, many scientific experiments with the plant have confirmed its traditional use for liver health, and studies confirm that dandelion root stimulates the flow of bile.

The dandelion properties that open-and-cleanse, help rid obstructions of the liver, gallbladder, and spleen. The first stages of cirrhosis of the liver have been known to be alleviated by consistent use of the herb, and dandelion also helps in cases of liver enlargement, hepatitis and jaundice.

*Inulin* Inulin (found in the dandelion root) is currently being studied extensively for its action on the pancreas and blood sugar balance; and for its immune system stimulation properties.

*Diuretic* Dandelion leaves have been found to increase the flow of urine and are useful in kidney formulas. Whereas most conventional diuretics deplete the body of its potassium, it does not generally decrease with dandelion use. Dandelion ideally pairs diuretic properties with an abundance of available potassium.

Dandelion has been used for water retention due to heart problems. It is a specific diuretic in cases of congestive jaundice, and it reduces uric acid in the system.

When overweight individuals are losing weight, they can become over acidic. These acids in the blood are neutralized by dandelion.

*Blood* Dandelion root and cedar berries have an excellent reputation

	<p>for regulating blood sugar levels. Dandelion has been known to reduce serum cholesterol, equalize blood pressure, and build up the blood with nutrients and minerals that help with anemia, energy and endurance. A cup of dandelion tea 30 minutes before meals acts as a tonic to the liver, stomach, blood, pancreas, and spleen.</p> <p>The continued use of dandelion helps detoxify the system, eventually cleansing out toxins and waste products, reducing stiffness in the joints, and increasing mobility. The roots have been shown to be moderately anti-inflammatory, supporting their traditional use for arthritis, rheumatism and gout.</p>
<i>Digestion</i>	<p>The ‘bitter’ component of dandelion helps stimulate digestive juices and improve appetite. In situations of severe vomiting, dandelion restores the gastric balance in patients. It acts as a gentle laxative and is invigorating and strengthening to the body in general.</p>
<i>Skin</i>	<p>Due to dandelion’s blood and liver cleansing properties, the herb has been used effectively to treat skin diseases and eruptions, helping rid the body of accumulated toxins.</p> <p>Burdock and dandelion work especially well together to help cleanse and heal the skin.</p>
<i>Warts</i>	<p>The juice of a broken dandelion stem can be used to treat warts. When used on a daily basis for about a week, it can dry them up. Dandelion juice from the broken stem is also useful to topically treat acne, blisters, corns, and calluses.</p>
<i>Cancer and the Immune System</i>	<p>In testing dandelion against cancer, it has been shown to be active against tumors and in stimulating macrophage (immune system) action. This further validates the historical Chinese use of dandelion for breast cancer and as a strong antibiotic in cases of lung infections for thousands of years.</p>
<i>Women</i>	<p>Dandelion has properties that improve lactation in nursing mothers and strengthen the female organs.</p>
<b>Herb Parts Used</b>	<p>The whole plant is used medicinally, especially the leaves and roots</p>
<b>Preparations and Remedies</b>	<p>The roots are pressed for juice and dried for use in various preparations. Fresh or dried leaves and roots are prepared in capsules, liquid extracts, tablets, and tinctures.</p>
<i>Fresh:</i>	<p>The fresh buds and flowers are a cleansing and fortifying trail-side snack. Dandelion greens can be eaten fresh in green</p>

drinks and salads. The bitter taste is reduced by soaking the greens in salt water for 30 minutes before using as a spicy addition to a salad.

*Wart Juice:*

Rub the fresh juice from a broken dandelion stem on a callus or wart. It might take a while but, with persistence, the juice will work. Use an emery board or pumice stone every day to file off the dried, dead skin.

*Powdered Formula*

*Kidney Formula:* (see JUNIPER preparations)

*Infusions*

*Dandelion Tea:*

Steep 1-2 teaspoons of the cut-and-sifted dried root or leaves in a cup of hot water for 10-15 minutes. Take twice a day, in morning and evening.

*Alkaline Formula:*

This formula can be made into a tea or a tincture as needed. It helps the body regulate stomach acidity and tone the digestive organs.

3 parts Dandelion leaves

3 parts Nettle

1 part Sassafras

1 part Peppermint

1/4 part Ginger

Add a teaspoon of this mixture to 1 cup boiling water. Cover and steep for 20 minutes. Strain and drink. Take up to 3 cups daily to aid the liver and kidneys in ridding the body of excess acid. Also eat plenty of vegetables that contain chlorophyll!

*Liver/ Jaundice Tonic:*

1 part Yellow Dock Root

1 part Barberry root

1 part Wild Yam

2 parts Dandelion Root

2 parts Dandelion Leaves

1/2 part Licorice root

Mix together and simmer one ounce of the herb mix in a quart of water for twenty minutes. Strain and drink four ounces, three times daily.

*Kidney/ Lower Back Tea:* (see UVA URSI preparations)

*System Cleanse Tea:* (see CHAPARRAL preparations)

<p><b>Safety</b></p>	<p>Dandelion root and leaves are believed to be quite safe, with no side effects or likely risks known, other than rare allergic reactions.</p> <p>Dandelion is on the FDA's GRAS (generally recognized as safe) list.</p> <p>While handling the plant, the milky latex in cut stems and leaves of dandelions may cause contact irritation of sensitive individuals.</p>
<p><b>Plant Profile</b></p> <p><i>Description</i></p>	<p><i>Natural Habitat:</i> Native to Greece, dandelions are now found growing abundantly in Europe, the United States, and in most temperate regions of the world.</p> <p>The common dandelion, <i>Taraxacum officinale</i>, is considered by many to be a nuisance weed to lawns and landscapes, but it has redeeming features as a nutritious green for healthy eating and a wonderful medicinal herb.</p> <p>The dandelion is easy to confuse with other plants, such as sow thistle or false dandelion (also found commonly in lawns and gardens). Dandelion is the only one of the three that has single flowering heads on hollow, unbranched stalks and long hairless, jagged-toothed leaves. All three plants exude a milky fluid when they are cut.</p> <p>The long jagged leaves radiate from the base to form a rosette lying close upon the ground. Each grooved leaf is constructed so that all the rain falling on it is conducted straight to the center of the rosette and thus to the root.</p> <p>The small (five to six inches in height) perennial (lives for more than two years), has a stout taproot with bright yellow flowers followed by a spherical multiple-seed plant head. Seeds are light gray-brown and pin-head sized with propeller-like tufts which easily disperse in the wind and weather.</p> <p>Dandelions flower March through September and sporadically throughout the year. The flower opens in the morning and closes in the evening and remains closed all night and in cloudy weather.</p> <p>All parts of the plant contain a milky bitter juice, which exudes when broken or wounded, but the more powerful juice of the root is the part of the plant most used for medicinal purposes. The juice of the root is thin and watery in the spring; milky,</p>

bitter, and tends to coagulate in the latter part of summer and autumn; and sweet and less bitter in the winter when affected by the frost.

*Growing Dandelion*

If newly harvested seeds are planted in the spring, they will come right up. When planting in the fall, or if using last year's seed in the spring greenhouse, then dormancy is a real problem, and the seeds do not readily come up. It may take multiple cycles to germinate. All this has survival advantage for the plant, but is frustrating for growers. The growing cycle for cultivating dandelion is to seed in the spring and harvest the plants the following spring, after a full year's growth.

*Harvesting*

Leaves are harvested before the flowering season and the root is collected when it is mature from July through September. When harvesting the greens and flowers for use throughout the year, leave the roots for new plant growth in the spring.

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