

Alfalfa

Latin Name: *Medicago sativa*

Also known as: Buffalo Herb, Buffalo Grass, Lucerne, Lucerne Grass, Chilean Clover, Father of All Foods, Purple Medic

This herb is known as Lucerne in the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, and as Lucerne Grass in South Asia.

Scientific Classification

Family: Fabaceae – legume, pea family

Genus: Medicago – alfalfa

Species: *M. sativa* – alfalfa

Influence on the Body	(PRINCIPAL ACTIONS are listed in CAPITAL LETTERS)
<i>Autoimmune</i>	ARTHRITIS • RHEUMATISM • systemic lupus
<i>Blood and Circulatory System</i>	BLOOD PURIFIER • ANEMIA (supplies iron) • thin blood • BLOOD CLOTTING NORMALIZATION • HEMORRHAGE • hemophilia • scurvy • nosebleeds • high blood pressure • hypertension • heart • heart disease • varicose veins • vascular system
<i>Blood Sugar</i>	DIABETES • HYPOGLYCEMIA
<i>Body System</i>	ACIDITY • toxemia • counteracts toxins • body building • chronic weakness • endurance • energy • vitality • tonic (increases energy and strength throughout the body)
<i>Bones and Teeth</i>	teeth • TOOTH DECAY • tooth surgery • fractures
<i>Cancer</i>	COLON CANCER PREVENTION • tumor regression
<i>Cleansing</i>	BLOOD PURIFIER • depurative (cleanses blood by promoting eliminative functions) • kidney cleanser • toxemia • DEODORANT (for breath and body odors)
<i>Digestive Tract</i>	NUTRITIVE (full of nutrients for the body) • IMPROVES APPETITE • DIGESTIVE DISORDERS • NAUSEA • stomachic (strengthens stomach function) • stomach inflammation • PEPTIC ULCERS • colon • sluggish bowels • constipation • INTESTINAL SCRUB • hemorrhoids

<i>Endocrine System</i>	hormone imbalance • PITUITARY GLAND • Cushing's disease (adrenal gland disorder)
<i>First Aid</i>	wounds
<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	ALLERGIES • hay fever • colds • whooping cough • fever • tonsillitis • bacterial infections • flu • fungal infections • yeast infections
<i>Inflammation</i>	inflammation • stomach inflammation • joint inflammation/ swelling • ARTHRITIS • RHEUMATISM • BURSITIS • GOUT • uric acid retention
<i>Liver</i>	liver conditions • hepatitis • jaundice • alcoholic liver
<i>Lungs and Respiratory System</i>	NASAL DOUCHE • sinus • ASTHMA • whooping cough
<i>Mouth and Throat</i>	pyorrhea (gum disease) • gargle • tonsillitis
<i>Muscles</i>	muscle spasms • muscle tone • physical FATIGUE
<i>Nervous System</i>	nerves • nervousness • mental FATIGUE • BELL'S PALSY (facial nerve paralysis) • stroke • senility
<i>Pain</i>	minor pain • headache
<i>Reproductive System</i>	<i>Female</i> • uterus • vaginal douche • MENSTRUATION • MORNING SICKNESS • NURSING • LACTATION (increases quality and quantity of mother's milk)
<i>Skin, Tissues & Hair</i>	acne • skin • tissue repair • boils
<i>Sleep</i>	insomnia
<i>Urinary Tract</i>	kidneys • kidney stones • kidney cleanser • bladder • dysuria (painful urination) • diuretic (increases urine flow)
<i>Weight</i>	normalizes weight (gain or loss, as needed)

Key Properties:

- BLOOD CLEANSER • BLOOD BUILDER
- DIGESTIVE AID – increases appetite, supplies bulk, stabilizes blood sugar
- NUTRITIVE – full of nutrients for the body, improves lactation

Primarily affecting: BLOOD • DIGESTION

<p>History</p>	<p>Alfalfa was discovered by the Arabs, who called it the 'Father of All Foods.' The herb is also known as the 'King of Plants' because it is extremely rich in vitamins, minerals and other nutrients.</p> <p>Darius, King of Persia, reportedly brought alfalfa to Greece when he was in a battle over Athens. In early Chinese medicines, physicians used young alfalfa leaves to treat disorders related to the digestive tract and the kidneys. In Hindu societies, Ayurvedic physicians used the leaves for treating poor digestion and for pain relief brought to arthritic patients. They also made a cooling poultice from the seeds for boils.</p> <p>The Columbians used alfalfa for coughs, while the Costanoan Indians applied it as a poultice for earaches. As early as 1597, the English herbalist John Gerard, recommended alfalfa for upset stomachs.</p> <p>Native North Americans adapted alfalfa quickly for human use, as well as for animals. Early Americans also found it useful for treating scurvy, urinary problems, and menstrual symptoms. Frank Bouer, noted author and biologist, discovered that the leaves of alfalfa contain all eight essential amino acids.</p> <p>As long as I can remember, my Mom has had jars of sprouts in her kitchen window sill. It was an inexpensive and effective way to get good nutrients into us kids. I appreciate her wisdom and thriftiness now that I am a mother.</p> <p>If you were to ask me if there was one herb that was most important to take on a daily basis, it would have to be alfalfa grass. The nutrients are off the chart in this little plant. People notice the biggest difference in their health when they begin or increase the amount of chlorophyll-rich plants like alfalfa grass and barley grass they consume.</p>
<p>Attributes</p>	<p>Alfalfa contains all the known vitamins and minerals for life, some in trace amounts, yet many in substantial quantities. Alfalfa permits rapid absorption of plant elements into the body. This is one of the reasons alfalfa is used as a base in many herb combinations and vitamin formulas.</p>
<p>Nutrients</p>	<p>Key Components (including, but not limited to):</p>
<p><i>Vitamins</i></p>	<p><u>A</u> • <u>B1</u> (thiamine) • <u>B2</u> (riboflavin) • <u>B3</u> (niacin) • <u>B5</u> (pantothenic acid) • <u>B6</u> (pyridoxine) • <u>B9</u> (folic acid) • B12</p>

	<p>(cobalamin - a rich source) • <u>Biotin</u> • <u>Choline</u> • <u>Inositol</u> • <u>PABA</u> (Para-Amino Benzoic Acid) • <u>C</u> (four times that found in citrus juice) • <u>D</u> • <u>E</u> • <u>K</u> (found in high quantities. Vitamin K is a clotting factor and a friend to women suffering from morning sickness)</p>
<i>Minerals</i>	<p><u>Calcium</u> (the ashes of alfalfa leaves are 99 percent pure calcium) • <u>Fluorine</u> (Helps prevent tooth decay and strengthens bones naturally. It should be noted that the fluorine in alfalfa is not the same as the artificially made 'sodium fluoride' found in some community water treatments. Sodium fluoride is an aluminum manufacturing by-product that can be toxic to the body) • <u>Iron</u> • <u>Magnesium</u> • <u>Phosphorus</u> • <u>Potassium</u> • <u>Silicon</u> • <u>Sodium</u> • <u>Sulfur</u> • other <u>Trace Minerals</u></p> <p>Minerals figure in the formation and function of all body enzymes and keep the proper alkaline electrical charge in all body cells, guarding them against acidic degeneration and invasion from harmful microbes that live on acidic substances in the body.</p>
<i>Chlorophyll</i>	<p>Alfalfa has one of the highest concentrations in a plant known to man and accounts for many of the health benefits attributed to alfalfa. Among other things, chlorophyll helps regulate and maintain calcium levels in the blood.)</p>
<i>Other Components</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High in <u>Fiber</u> (provides bulk which carries intestinal wastes out of the body) • High <u>Enzyme</u> content of fresh, freeze-dried and sprouted alfalfa. Enzymes help the body balance its systems, ward off infectious diseases and restore the immune system's ability to defeat many degenerative diseases such as cancer and arthritis. • All eight <u>Essential Amino Acids</u> • <u>Saponins</u> • <u>Isoflavins</u> • <u>Sugars</u> • <u>Sterols</u> • <u>Coumarins</u> • <u>Alkaloids</u> • <u>Porphyrins</u>
<i>Digestion</i>	<p>The chlorophyll and enzymes in alfalfa stimulate the appetite and aid in the digestion and absorption of proteins, fats and carbohydrates. Very ill patients often need foods that are rich in nutrients which the body can easily assimilate. Alfalfa may be used for debilitated and weak individuals.</p>
<i>Ulcers</i>	<p>Alfalfa promotes digestive health and the healing of a damaged and ulcerated stomach and intestinal lining. The chlorophyll in the herb helps neutralize acids in the body which produce putrefaction in the bowel. Enzymes aid food</p>

digestion, relieving the damaged tissues of the stomach and intestines. Less acid is needed to break down food in the stomach. Chlorophyll lubricates the ileocecal valve (between the small and large intestines) and keeps it functioning properly.

Bioflavonoids found in alfalfa build capillary strength and reduce inflammation of the digestive tract lining. Chlorophyll accelerates the replacement of damaged bowel tissue and helps to eliminate mucus. It also destroys toxins and disease-causing bacteria. Nutrients in alfalfa help heal and maintain the entire digestive tract.

Cleansing

Chlorophyll in alfalfa is a natural healer and cleanser for chronic conditions both internally and externally. It acts as a detergent in the body. Using chlorophyll in a cleansing diet progressively cleans the blood, cells, tissues and organs while providing nutrients for new cell life. It has been called 'liquid sunshine' because it absorbs energy from the sun.

Taking greens deodorizes the bowel and is a natural antiseptic to the intestinal tract. Chlorophyll neutralizes acid and poisons and is an excellent blood purifier. It has even been used to remove toxic metals from children and stops the growth and development of toxic bacteria. Disease-causing bacteria find it difficult to live in the presence of chlorophyll. Fewer bacteria results in fewer odors. Chlorophyll is a natural deodorizer eliminating bad breath, smelly feet, and body odors of all types, because it works at the cellular level.

Liver

Greens help purify the liver and eliminate stored drug deposits, old toxic material, chemical sprays on food, artificial flavoring, colors and coal tar buildup. Bile function and elimination is also enhanced.

Fights Infection

Alfalfa is a natural infection fighter, largely due to its high level of Vitamin A. It inhibits the metabolic action of carcinogens (cancer causing elements).

When used topically, the herb acts as an astringent. It has been used to heal infections at surgery wound sites and infected bed sores. Chlorophyll is a great gargle for tonsillitis and helps to reduce fevers.

Tooth Decay

Alfalfa contains a natural fluoride and helps prevent tooth decay, even rebuilding decayed teeth.

<i>Pituitary Gland</i>	The herb has a natural ability to stimulate and feed the pituitary gland which has a major role in the regulation of many endocrine functions.
<i>Diabetes and Hypoglycemia</i>	Alfalfa helps the body normalize blood sugar problems in diabetics and hypoglycemics. The condition of people with diabetes who fail to respond to insulin has been shown to greatly improve when they take alfalfa and manganese. (1)
<i>Blood</i>	<p>The green pigment 'chlorophyll' is found in most plants. Its molecular structure is almost exactly the same as human red blood cell 'hemoglobin.' The only difference is the substitution of a magnesium molecule in place of the iron found in the heme group making up hemoglobin.</p> <p>Chlorophyll in the blood has the same effect as iron, making it a natural blood builder and cleanser. This strengthens and may temporarily thicken the blood. As the body adjusts to the nutrients and cleanses the body of toxins and wastes, the blood ultimately thins to its natural level.</p>
<i>Cholesterol</i>	Saponins found in alfalfa help lower blood cholesterol by impeding intestinal absorption, without affecting heart-healthy HDL (high-density lipoproteins) cholesterol. It effectively slows the progress of atherosclerosis and begins to reverse the plaque buildup already lining arterial walls. (2)
<i>Skin and Tissue</i>	Chlorophyll accelerates healing of damaged tissues by cleansing out dead cell matter and providing nutrients to the cells, increasing cell activity and the re-growth of cells. Chlorophyll has been applied topically in salves and ointments for this purpose.
<i>Women</i>	<p><i>Menstruation:</i> Due to alfalfa's numerous estrogenic qualities, women over the years have used the herb to relieve discomfort and other symptoms associated with hormonal imbalance. Alfalfa, like other leguminous crops, is a known source of phyto-estrogens (plant derived estrogens). These provide a gentle substitute for estrogen after menopause. (3)</p> <p>Alfalfa contains plant-world equivalents of human estrogens, so a woman, whether she is going through menopause or breastfeeding a baby, may derive some benefit from it. (4)</p> <p><i>Female Cancers:</i> Hot flashes and other menopausal symptoms are rare among women who consume a lot of legumes (such as</p>

	<p>black beans, mung beans, soybeans and alfalfa) which have mild estrogenic activity.</p> <p>In addition to acting like estrogen in women whose own sex hormone production has declined, phytoestrogens also appear to reduce the risk of estrogen-linked cancers such as breast cancer. Laboratory experiments show that phytoestrogens are effective in preventing tumors in breast tissue. (1)</p> <p><i>Osteoporosis:</i> Clinical studies in Japan have found that Vitamin K (found in alfalfa and in green leafy vegetables such as kale and spinach) can help prevent some bone loss caused by estrogen deficiency. Vitamin K interacts with Vitamin D to increase the formation of new bone. The combination is not sufficient, however, to completely compensate for osteoporosis caused by estrogen-depleting medications. (1)</p> <p><i>Lactation:</i> Chlorophyll increases iron in the milk of nursing mothers.</p>
<p>Herb Parts Used</p>	<p>The above-ground parts are used medicinally, including the leaves, flowers, and stems. The sprouted seeds may also be eaten.</p>
<p>Preparations and Remedies</p> <p><i>Vitamin and Mineral Supplement</i></p> <p><i>Tea</i></p> <p><i>Liquid Chlorophyll</i></p> <p><i>Green Drink</i></p>	<p>The leaves can be dried, powdered and put into capsules.</p> <p>Four to twelve capsules (or one tablespoon) taken daily are recommended as one of the best vitamin, mineral and health supplements you can buy.</p> <p><i>Cholesterol:</i> For cholesterol or diabetes, take four capsules (or one teaspoon) of alfalfa powder with each meal.</p> <p>The cut and sifted form of this herb is a popular tea, having a very soft, delicate flavor. It is often prepared with mint and lemon. Use one to two teaspoons dried alfalfa leaves in a cup of boiling water.</p> <p>Liquid chlorophyll may be purchased as a prepared supplement usually derived from alfalfa. It is often extracted in a way that makes it high in copper content. In my opinion, taking green young alfalfa grass in a whole form whenever possible is superior in health-giving results.</p> <p>One tablespoon powdered alfalfa or barley grass to one cup</p>

of water, or one tablespoon liquid chlorophyll taken straight or in water or juice - makes a nutritious green drink.

Gargle for tonsillitis

One teaspoon chlorophyll in a half cup of water

Alfalfa Sprouts

All the energy and life of a plant goes toward making seeds. Each seed holds vitamins, minerals, proteins, fats, and carbohydrates (starches) in reserve, waiting for a suitable environment to begin growing. When the seed germinates (begins to sprout), an incredible flow of energy is released. Enzymes are produced to convert the concentrated nutrients into those needed by the growing plant.

As the sprouting process continues, carbohydrates, proteins and fats are broken down into sugars, amino acids and fatty acids. Vitamins are produced and additional minerals are pulled from the water used in the germinating process. Sprouting alfalfa seeds provides a highly digestible, live food that aids digestion and absorption of nutrients.

Some scientists believe that the highest potency of nutrients in sprouts is released just before the seed germinates completely and produces chlorophyll (the green part of the leaf on the sprout itself). Vitamin C and other vitamins found only in trace amounts in the seed, are produced in larger quantities during the sprouting process.

Nutrients in Sprouts

Key Components (including, but not limited to):

Vitamins A (in the form of carotene) • B-complex vitamins are abundant • B1 (thiamine) • B2 (riboflavin) • B3 (Niacin) • C • E • K • Calcium • Magnesium • Potassium • Iron (a good source) • Selenium • Zinc (an especially rich source) (Zinc is essential for the synthesis of protein, for many liver functions, and in the healing of cuts and wounds.)

In addition to the minerals found in the seeds, sprouts absorb minerals from the water used to grow and rinse them, becoming bound to amino acids that are easily assimilated by the human body. (5)

Chlorophyll: When sprouting seeds in sunlight, chlorophyll is developed. Direct sun will wither tender sprouts and destroy enzymes. Indirect light is sufficient for chlorophyll production.

Enzymes: Minutes after seeds are placed in water to soak, enzymes begin making the young sprouts into easy-to-digest food. These same enzymes can assist food digestion in the

	body.
<i>Sprout Use</i>	<p>Use fresh sprouts in salads, sandwiches, green drinks, soups, and sprout loaves. Heating or drying sprouts over 105° F will destroy their living enzymes.</p> <p>Young alfalfa grass may be juiced for a fresh wholesome green drink, or the chlorophyll extracted. The plant may be dried, powdered and put into capsules, and the seeds germinated and eaten as sprouts.</p> <p><i>Infections:</i> Use blender to liquefy raw alfalfa sprouts and drink four to six ounces or apply directly to the site of the infection.</p>
Sprouting Seeds	Seeds and beans may be sprouted in jars, sprout bags, trays, or automatic sprouting appliances. Whichever method you select, the basic steps are the same: Wash, initial soak, drain, rinse periodically, and harvest.
<i>Choosing and Preparing the Seeds</i>	Alfalfa seeds are small, about the size of a pinhead, and tan in color. Not all seeds are created equal. Organically grown alfalfa seed is easily found in most natural food stores. When choosing seeds for sprouting, look for uniformity of shape, color and perfection. Avoid broken, chipped or damaged seeds. Organically grown seeds will often look less clean and polished, but a quick wash before sprouting will remove any grime on them. Remove any sticks, stones or dirt from the seeds.
<i>The Jar Method</i>	<p>Small seeds like alfalfa should just cover the bottom of the jar (larger seeds and beans can fill the jar one-eighth to one-quarter full). Cover the jar with cheesecloth or screen, then fill jar halfway with water. Allow seeds to soak four to six hours for smaller seeds, and twelve hours for larger seeds and beans, then drain. Place jar at a 45-degree angle, mouth down, in a place where it can drain and air can circulate freely.</p> <p>For best results, rinse the sprouts 2-3 times each day. Rinsing removes waste produced by the sprouts. The water coming out may appear a little foamy. After rinsing, replace the jar of sprouts again to a 45-degree angle to drain excess water. Place in light to develop chlorophyll the last couple of days before harvesting.</p> <p>Harvest when sprouts are one to one and a half inches long. After four to six days, they are ready to eat or store.</p>

<p><i>Sprout Storage</i></p>	<p>Removing the hulls may improve the taste, but is not necessary with lentils like alfalfa, as the hulls are soft and do not readily detach from the seeds.</p> <p>Keep thoroughly drained sprouts in a glass jar or sealable plastic bag and store in the refrigerator for up to seven to ten days. Alfalfa sprouts will expand up to eight times the initial size of the seeds.</p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p>No health hazards or adverse side effects are known.</p> <p>Taking alfalfa greens may temporarily alter blood thickness as the body adjusts to available nutrients and blood cleansing actions. Dosage requirements for individuals taking blood thinning medications may be affected. Contact your health care professional to correctly monitor blood thickness and adjust medications if needed.</p>
<p>Plant Profile</p> <p><i>Description</i></p>	<p><i>Natural Habitat:</i> Indigenous to the Mediterranean region, alfalfa has been widely cultivated elsewhere for thousands of years and now is grown worldwide. Spanish explorers brought alfalfa to the New World, and gold prospectors carried it from South America into California.</p> <p>Alfalfa is hardy and easy to grow. It thrives in varied climates throughout the world from the temperate agricultural regions of the Mediterranean to the extremes of very cold northern plains, high mountain valleys, and searing hot deserts.</p> <p>Alfalfa is a green, herbaceous legume living for three to twelve years, depending on the seed variety and environmental conditions. It has bluish-purple or yellow flowers that grow from a tall, erect and smooth stem. The seed pods appear spiraled. Alfalfa is usually harvested in the summertime once it has grown one to three feet.</p> <p>As one of the earliest cultivated plants, alfalfa has been used for centuries for feeding livestock. The cattle readily digest the nutritious high-protein fodder. However, the human digestive tract cannot break down the fiber in the alfalfa plant as animals do, making it less appealing as a viable food source. The nutrient and medicinal benefits we derive from the plant are made available to us when prepared as an herb remedy as described above.</p> <p><i>Deep Roots:</i> Alfalfa has an extensive and deep root system, stretching up</p>

to 50 feet. This makes it very resilient, especially to droughts. It also accounts for the abundance of minerals, vitamins and nutrients found in the herb. In the right conditions, alfalfa roots can pull and absorb valuable nutrients from surrounding soil up to 125 feet below the earth's surface. Alfalfa draws on nitrogen from the air, yielding a high-protein plant that literally feeds the soil nitrogen. Alfalfa exhibits auto-toxicity and resists reseeding in existing alfalfa fields, so plant rotation is required to maintain a consistent yield.