

# Yellow Dock

Latin Name: *Rumex crispus*

Also known as: Curled Dock, Narrow Dock, Sour Dock, Rumex, Garden Patience

## Scientific Classification

There are about 200 species in the *Rumex* genus, consisting principally of docks and sorrels. Yellow Dock is considered to be one of the most therapeutic variety of the dock species, although there are at least three other varieties of dock that may be used medicinally: *Rumex aquaticus* (great water dock), *R. britannica* (water dock), and *R. obtusifolius* (blunt-leaved dock).

**Family:** Polygonaceae – buckwheat family

**Genus:** *Rumex* – dock

Docks were formerly placed in the genus *Lapathum*, a name derived from the Greek, *lapazein*, meaning 'to cleanse'

**Species:** *R. crispus* – curly dock

Influence on the Body	(PRINCIPAL ACTIONS are listed in CAPITAL LETTERS)
<i>Blood and Circulatory System</i>	ANEMIA • IRON DEFICIENCY • CHLOROSIS (type of anemia chiefly affecting girls and young women) • ALTERATIVE (purifies the blood, cleanses, and induces efficient removal of waste products) • BLOOD CLEANSER • BLOOD PURIFIER • depurative (cleanses blood by promoting eliminative functions) • BLOOD DISORDERS • hemorrhage • bleeding • SCURVY (Vitamin C deficiency disease with symptoms of anemia, weakness, bleeding gums, etc.) • varicose veins • lymphatic system • spleen
<i>Body System</i>	energy • tonic • endurance • stamina • lack of vitality • fatigue • mucus • expels mucus • anti-catarrh (eliminates mucous inflammation and congestion) • ASTRINGENT (increases the tone and firmness of tissues, reduces mucous discharge from the nose, intestines, draining sores, etc.)
<i>Cancer</i>	CANCER • glandular tumors • leukemia
<i>Digestive Tract</i>	bitter • nutritive • digestive disorders • sour stomach • ulcers • bowel regulator and normalizer • dysentery (bowel inflammation) • constipation • laxative • cathartic (strong laxative, causing rapid evacuation) • diarrhea • expels worms • external hemorrhoids • bleeding hemorrhoids
<i>Ears and Eyes</i>	ear infections • earache • ULCERATED EYELIDS

<i>Endocrine System</i>	swollen glands • pancreas • pituitary gland • thyroid glands
<i>First Aid</i>	SORES • muscle strains • swellings • wounds • fractures • poison ivy • poison oak
<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	COUGH • flu • fever • hay fever • scarlet fever • chicken pox • athlete's foot • scrofula (tuberculosis inflammation of lymph nodes of the neck in children) • leprosy
<i>Inflammation</i>	inflammation • gout • arthritis • RHEUMATISM
<i>Liver</i>	LIVER CONGESTION • jaundice • hepatitis • cholagogue (promotes the flow of bile) • gallbladder
<i>Lungs and Respiratory System</i>	chronic bronchitis • lungs
<i>Nervous System</i>	pain • mental fatigue • paralysis
<i>Reproductive System</i>	syphilis • venereal disease <i>Female:</i> • IRON SUPPLEMENT FOR PREGNANCY • leucorrhea (vaginal discharge due to infection) • vaginal infections
<i>Skin, Tissues &amp; Hair</i>	acne • chafed skin • BOILS • HIVES • ITCHING • eczema • psoriasis • SKIN ERUPTIONS • SKIN DISEASES • CHICKEN POX ITCH
<i>Mouth, Nose &amp; Throat</i>	mouth sores • laryngitis
<i>Urinary Tract</i>	bladder

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**Key Properties:**

- TONIC – builds, tones, and strengthens the entire system resulting in general sense of well-being
- EXCELLENT IRON SOURCE – provides components for red blood cells and builds the blood, the iron and other nutrients in yellow dock are easily digested and assimilated by the body
- ALTERATIVE - BLOOD PURIFIER – cleanses toxins from the blood and strengthens eliminative organs to rid the body of wastes

**Primarily affecting: BLOOD • SKIN • LIVER**

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**History**

The genus name 'Rumex', is derived from Latin meaning 'a lance', referring to the shape of its leaves. The species name 'crispus' is the Latin word for 'crisped', referring to its leaves being crisped (wavy) at the edges. The plant's root is yellow and was used as a dye at one time. The name dock is applied to the plant family of similar broad-leaved, wayside weeds that have roots with astringent qualities.

The ancients celebrated yellow dock as a cure for scurvy and diseases of the skin. The young leaves were eaten like spinach.

The herb was a favorite of Native Americans, old-time doctors, early settlers, and herbal practitioners. Native Americans applied crushed leaves as a poultice to boils and pounded the root into a compress for cuts and wounds.

Around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, American Eclectic physicians (practiced with a philosophy of 'alignment with nature') prescribed yellow dock preparations to purify the blood, to rejuvenate the liver, to relieve upset stomachs, to help heal skin disorders, and as a laxative.

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**Attributes**

**Key Components: (including, but not limited to)**

*Nutrients*

Vitamins A • C (good source) • Iron (excellent source) • Manganese • Potassium • other Trace Minerals  
Antraquinone glycosides • Tannins • Oxalates (in the leaves) • Bitter

Antraquinones can arrest the growth of ringworms and other fungi, stimulate bile flow, and induce toxin elimination.

Oxalates are mild diuretics found in the fresh leaves of yellow dock and spinach. They help control bleeding and assist in healing skin ailments.

*Tonic*

Yellow dock tones the entire body and increases energy, strength and endurance through its astringent purification of the circulatory and glandular systems. It also helps tighten and heal varicose veins.

*Blood Builder*

The roots of yellow dock have been found to contain as much as 40 percent iron compounds, making yellow dock one of the best sources of iron in nature. The roots take up the iron present in the soil and fix it into organic iron compounds that are easily absorbed in the body without

causing constipation. They readily enrich the blood.

Iron is an essential component of red blood cells. Women lose iron during menstruation, and pregnancy exacts a toll on mothers to build a blood supply for the growing fetus. Midwives often suggest pregnant women use yellow dock to keep their bowels regular and improve their red blood cell count.

Yellow dock is recommended in all cases of anemia and iron deficiency. It also helps nourish and strengthen the spleen. Using yellow dock as an iron supplement will not cause constipation as when taking synthetic iron.

*Cleansing*

Yellow dock increases the ability of the liver and related organs to filter and purify the blood, glands and lymph system. It is used to nourish, strengthen and heal the liver, gallbladder and glands. Yellow dock helps dissolve mucus and move it through the kidneys.

The skin is sensitive to toxins and waste in the blood. When the skin breaks out in rashes, eruptions, acne, itchy patches, boils, or disease, it indicates that the liver is backed up or compromised and unable to adequately filter and cleanse the blood. Yellow dock helps cleanse the body inside and out. For skin problems and wounds, it should be taken internally and used externally with a wash, bath or as a salve.

*Cancer*

When accumulated waste matter progresses to swelling or tumors, use yellow dock both internally and externally. It helps dissolve glandular and other tumors. It builds the immune system and kills parasites which contribute to cancer.

*Digestive Tract*

The root is a magnificent bowel balancer and helps to heal ulcers and bleeding hemorrhoids. Add yellow dock to formulas to help cleanse parasites and worms from the intestines and to perk up the appetite.

The herb can act as a digestive laxative because it stimulates the flow of bile. Yellow dock may loosen bowels when taken in greater amounts or relieve diarrhea if used in smaller quantities. Individuals can benefit from the herb if they have either constipation or loose stools.

<b>Herb Parts Used</b>	Roots dug during dormancy and dried. Fresh leaves for poulticing and as a tonic.
<p data-bbox="321 369 540 436"><b>Preparations and Remedies</b></p> <p data-bbox="378 510 540 541"><i>Decoctions</i></p>	<p data-bbox="581 369 1385 474"><i>Fresh:</i> The young leaves are edible and may be used as a tonic and nutritive.</p> <p data-bbox="581 510 1425 800">Tough roots, like yellow dock, need to be processed longer than simple teas before they release their healing constituents. The most common method for doing this is heating the root infusion for a longer period of time (usually simmering, not boiling), and letting the roots remain soaking in the water for a period of time (eight hours or more). Additional simmering will concentrate the medicinal potency by evaporating the water of the infusion.</p> <p data-bbox="581 842 1442 1131">The following decoction is adapted from <i>Polly Block's Birth Book</i>. I discovered it while apprenticing to be a midwife. After using all types of herbs to try and get women's iron levels to rise to normal, I found Polly's formula. It is by far the most effective for raising iron hematocrit levels. I also have found it effective in rejuvenating anyone that has a loss of vitality and strength or just wants to renew their liver quickly. Tastes bad, works GREAT!</p> <p data-bbox="581 1167 1019 1314"><i>Yellow Dock Decoction:</i> 2 ounces Yellow Dock root, cut 1 quart Distilled Water Honey, if desired</p> <p data-bbox="581 1350 1433 1682">Put yellow dock root in a glass quart jar and cover with boiling distilled water. Cap the jar and allow to sit overnight. In the morning, empty the contents into a clean pan and using low heat, simmer uncovered. Reduce liquid to about one and a half cups. Strain and squeeze through a prepared broad cloth (pre-rinse new cloth in hot water to get rid of commercial stiffening agents). Two tablespoons of honey may be added (although I don't notice it helps the taste that much - yellow dock has a strong flavor). Refrigerate.</p> <p data-bbox="581 1717 1425 1896">Take one tablespoon per day (two tablespoons if symptoms are severe). This formula builds blood and restores healthy iron levels. Doctors and midwives have double-checked the Iron count on patients as week by week they watch it normalize.</p>

	<p>Yellow dock is also used to cleanse the blood of impurities, support the liver, and improve acne and skin disorders. Women use it during menstruation and pregnancy to raise anemic iron levels to normal.</p>
<i>Gargle</i>	Use the decoction as a gargle and drink the tea internally for cough, laryngeal irritation and catarrh.
<i>Externally</i>	Apply a yellow dock ointment topically or use the tea as a wash or bath for skin ulcers, hard tumors, eruptive skin diseases, burns, and reducing skin inflammation caused by insect bites or allergies.
<i>Wash</i>	<i>Plantain and Yellow Dock Wash:</i> Make a strong tea of equal parts plantain and yellow dock. Bathe the affected area frequently as a wash.
<i>Fomentation</i>	Saturate a natural fiber cloth in a strong decoction, wring out excess liquid, and apply a fomentation for glandular tumors and inflammations.
<i>Poultice</i>	Apply fresh leaves that are bruised or mashed to oily skin, swellings, cuts, and scrapes. Use yellow dock topically as a poultice for cleansing, astringent action and pain relief.
<i>Ointments</i>	The root simmered in oil makes an excellent ointment for scrofulous disorders (tuberculosis type infections), itching, and indolent glandular tumors. Olive oil is commonly used as the base oil. To make a rectal suppository, use coconut oil for the base, as it hardens when cold.
<b>Safety</b>	<p>No health hazard or adverse side effects are known with proper dosages. For delicate stomachs, give the infusion in smaller amounts, gradually increasing dosages to tolerance.</p> <p>Yellow dock root is beneficial during pregnancy, as it aids iron assimilation and will help to prevent infant jaundice.</p> <p>Abstain from coffee, black or Chinese teas, as these are incompatible with iron tonics.</p> <p>The root of yellow dock does not contain oxalate compounds and most herbal preparations use the root of the plant. However, it should be noted that if extremely large amounts of the leaves are consumed in a short amount of time, oxalates, found in the leaves, may cause oxalate poisoning.</p>

<b>Plant Profile</b>	<p><i>Natural Habitat:</i> Yellow dock is native to Europe and Africa and is now common to the United States and many regions of the world. It grows in waste areas, in cultivated soils, and along roadsides. The plant thrives wherever iron is present.</p>
<i>Description</i>	<p>Yellow dock has fleshy, leathery leaves that form a rosette at the base of the plant in its first year. It then develops a large taproot and sends up a tall stem (1-4 feet high). From this central point come long wavy leaves (6-14 inches long, decreasing in size towards the top), that are crisped along the edges. The leaves and stalk have a sour taste.</p> <p>The plant's tall spike is covered with pale green, drooping flowers that are interspersed with leaves along the stalk. Flowers appear June through August and turn into masses of rust-brown, three-winged seed capsules in the fall. The plant produces triangular, brown-black nuts, enclosed by the wing-like capsules. Each plant produces 3,000-4,000 seeds.</p> <p>Yellow dock has a perennial (plant grows back from a persistent rootstock in the spring), spindle-shaped root (8-12 inches long) that is somewhat twisted. The root is yellowish-brown on the outside and dusty and fibrous internally. Once dried and ground, the powdered root is brownish. Yellow dock has little or no odor, and has a rather bitter, astringent taste.</p>
<i>Growing Yellow Dock</i>	<p>Yellow dock needs full sun and thrives despite poor soil and neglect. It freely self-propagates and can take over a garden if growth is not controlled. It keeps other kinds of plants from crowding its space by releasing inhibitory substances into the soil or air.</p>
<i>Planting</i>	<p>Yellow dock can be propagated by seed or by division. Sow seeds in shallow beds in the spring, then thin plants to six inches apart.</p>
<i>Harvesting and Storage</i>	<p>Dig roots in spring or fall. Clean and slice the roots lengthwise before drying in the sun or artificially with another controlled low-heat source. Leaves are picked when young and used fresh or dried. Store in tightly sealed containers.</p>