

Herbs For Healing Newsletter



Dandelion (or Lion's Tooth) has some bite...

During April and May our fields, gardens and paths are aglow with bright yellow dandelion heads.

In French the name means 'tooth of a lion' (dent de lion) due to the indentations along the leaf.

The flowers open as soon as the sun rises and close again late afternoon or when clouds cover the sun.

It is a hardy plant with a long taproot, generally not welcomed by gardeners who consider it a weed.

One man's weed is another man's medicine or food. High in vitamin A, B, C and D, the vitamin A content is greater than that of carrots.



A natural diuretic

Pharmaceutical diuretics ('water tablets') often cause a loss of potassium, which can be harmful to the heart.

Dandelion as a natural diuretic increases urine production by promoting the excretion of salts and water from the kidneys.

Its leaves however have been found to contain a larger amount of potassium than is usual in green plants. After consuming this plant the body gains potassium and loses sodium, which is of benefit to people with high blood pressure.

An aid to digestion

Research suggests that dandelion root may improve the health and function of natural bacteria in the digestive system.



Promotes liver & kidney function

Dandelion is known as the king of the liver and kidney plants with far reaching consequences for the health of the whole body. It is a bitter tasting plant and 'Bitters' have been used for centuries in many countries as a help for digestion, especially after a large meal.

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Promotes liver & kidney function

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These bitter properties stimulate liver and gallbladder by increasing bile production and bile flow. As a result digestion works better, the metabolism is in better shape, the skin looks better.

Promotes insulin production

Dandelion also acts on the pancreas, the gland responsible for sugar metabolism by producing and releasing insulin.

Dandelion root contains inulin, which can lower blood sugar in diabetics.

So how can I take Dandelion?

Infusion: The easiest and straightforward way is to chop up the fresh or dried leaves and infuse them with hot water, one tablespoon to one mug, leave it for 10 minutes and the infusion is ready.

If you want to avoid trips to the loo during the night, do not to drink this late in the evening because dandelion has diuretic properties. Another common name for dandelion is wee-in-the-bed (piss au lit).



Soups and salads: The young leaves picked in Spring are tasty in soups or fresh in salads. In France leaves are served in a salad with vinaigrette and crunchy bacon.

Wine and coffee: The leaves and flowers can be used for dandelion wine. The roots, when dried and roasted, can be used for dandelion coffee.

CAUTION

Dandelion leaf is a diuretic and may increase the excretion of drugs from the body. If you are taking prescription medications, ask your health professional before taking dandelion leaf. People with gallbladder problems and gallstones should consult a health professional before eating dandelion. In some people, dandelion can cause increased stomach acid and heartburn.



Dandelions are a lifesaver for bees

Wildflowers like dandelions are some of the most important bee plants in early spring.

They provide nectar and pollen for the bees, which they collect for their brood.

Without these early yellow flowers the bees would have an even harder time to survive the long winter months.



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