



## The Dreaded Dandelion



Judie Squires © 2006

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It is quite amazing that one of the most despised "weeds" in your garden is also one of the most healing, beneficial herbs. Best of all, it is readily available and requires very little care. Before you discharge dangerous toxic pesticides, consider all that dandelions have to offer.

### **Dandelion for health**

Dandelion root is an excellent liver and kidney tonic, clearing obstructions, reducing congestion, and stimulating the liver to eliminate toxins and reducing kidney stones.

Dandelion promotes bile flow, supporting digestion and it also has a slight laxative effect.

Because dandelion promotes bile it thereby benefits the gall bladder, reducing bile-duct inflammation and gallstone formation. Dandelion root coffee clears obstructions in the spleen, pancreas, kidneys, and bladder, and can help lower blood sugar levels.

Dandelion has a high vitamin and mineral content, this food is higher in minerals than spinach and has almost as much calcium per 100 gram serving as milk. This plant has 28 parts sodium, making it a natural nutritive salt for purifying and destroying acid in the blood making it a natural blood purifier and builder. It is very useful in jaundice, acne, skin diseases, scurvy, eczema, kidney and liver problems, and diabetes. The root is also helpful in lowering blood sugar levels. Dandelion contains anti-microbial properties and has been used quite successful on many fungal and bacterial infections, including yeast infections such as candida.

Other notable conditions that benefit from dandelion include diuretic action for cystitis, nephritis and fluid retention; dandelion leaves replace the potassium that would otherwise be lost when using other diuretics. Dandelions steeped in boiled water can be used a

wash to treat skin conditions such as acne and boils. Dandelion can lower cholesterol; soothe upset stomach, treat high blood pressure, and poor milk flow in nursing mothers. The root has been shown to work against some tumors by macrophage action as well as stimulating the immune system. The milk from the stem is said to be a good treatment for warts if used continually, three times daily, for a couple of weeks. The seeds are used as an antibiotic to treat infections, especially mastitis.

### **Dandelions are delectable**

Many famous chefs around the world consider fresh dandelion greens a sheer delicacy. Dandelion leaves are a great addition to a spring salad, are extremely high in vitamin A, and are a good source of B vitamins, vitamin C and D, potassium, and iron. Try them on sandwiches, steam them with butter as a side dish add some grated nutmeg, garlic or chopped onion for variation. Or just chop them up for mixing with soups and vegetables.

Dried leaves can be sprinkled over the sour cream on a baked potato or used as a nourishing herb for soups and salads. Young flower buds can be boiled for several minutes like a vegetable and served with butter or pickled. Flowers are good dipped in batter and fried and kids love them.

The flowers can also be used for making Dandelion Wine. To make a vintage style wine, Pour one gallon of boiling water over three quarts of dandelion flowers. Let stand twenty-four hours. Strain and add five pounds of light brown sugar, juice and rind of two lemons, juice and rind of two oranges. Let boil ten minutes and strain. When cold, add half a cake of yeast. Put in crock and cover, and put in a warm place for three days. Strain and pour into a secondary fermentation vessel (bottle or jug). Add raisins and fit a fermentation trap to the vessel. Leave until fermentation ceases completely, then rack and add the reserved pint of water and whatever else is required to top up. Refit the airlock and set aside until clear. Rack and bottle. This wine must age six months in the bottle before tasting, but will improve remarkably if allowed a year.

Dandelion can be used as a nutritious replacement practically any spinach recipe.

Always take care to only gather dandelions from pesticide-free areas. To make your dandelion experience more delightful rather than dreadful, try serving this wonderful nutritious green with your next meal.

And don't forget that children love these sunny yellow flowers, picking bouquets for mom, popping heads and blowing dandelion fluff can be sheer enjoyment for a child on a summer's day!

Dandelion coffee is made from dried, roasted and ground dandelion roots. When you dig those dandelions, wash and slice the root and lay them on a screen to dry for a day or two. When dry, roast in the oven on low heat until dark brown, grind to a powder in a coffee grinder and store in a wax-lined bag. This coffee does not contain the caffeine of real coffee and has a stimulating influence on the liver, kidneys and bowels.

### **Dandelion Recipes**

Dandelion salad

2 cups salad greens

1 cup dandelion greens.

1 sliced hard-boiled egg

16 lightly steamed baby beets.

Toss with your favorite salad dressing.

Dandelion-blossom pancakes

Add 1 cup dandelion blossoms to your favorite pancake mix and stir well.

Pour batter in small circles onto hot, oiled griddle. Cook until lightly browned on one side, then flip, and repeat. Serve warm with maple syrup, yogurt or jam.

Dandelion-root coffee

Use 1 teaspoon roasted dandelion root powder per cup, or mix one part roasted roots with

one or two parts coffee in a French press. Add a pinch of cinnamon. Let steep for 5 minutes for a full-bodied, healthy brew that will help to stimulate digestion without irritating the nerves.

#### Sautéed Dandelion side dish

fresh dandelion

fresh garlic

olive oil

salt, pepper, crushed red pepper, garlic powder, onion powder fresh parsley

Brown the garlic and oil. Add the washed dandelion and season with salt and pepper and a pinch each of red pepper and parsley. Sauté lightly. Finish with garlic powder and onion powder.

This can also be used as a dish in itself by adding ½ cup grated cheese, cooked ground sausage and sliced boiled egg.

#### Dandelion Omelette

Beat eggs until fluffy, add a dash of salt and pepper. Add 2 to 4 tablespoons of cooked dandelion per egg. Mix gently. Then heat butter or oil, pour mixture into pan, lower heat immediately and then sprinkle with grated cheese. Flip over for about 1 to 2 minutes.

Then serve hot. Cooked or sautéed mushroom pieces can also be added to the above in the first step-when adding the dandelion-one to 2T of mushrooms per egg.

If you still think that dandelion is not for you then here are some natural methods of ridding them from your lawn. The cheap, easy and non-toxic way!

Corn Gluten meal can be applied early to stop the growth of young dandelions. Corn gluten meal fertilizers are available at many garden centers. Be sure to ALWAYS deadhead dandelions. If you see a flower head, pluck it off when passing by, the flower head will turn to hundreds of seeds, which means many more plants. Spot spray the dandelions with vinegar or you can burn them with a torch. There are also nifty gadgets that you can purchase that really work, like these ones from Lee Valley Tools: This

hardware and gardening catalogue service has many novel weeding tools including a [weed torch](#) (about \$60) and an ingenious [water-powered weeder](#). (about \$40) They also carry a nifty and humane [spider and wasp trapper](#). For more great ideas for the garden, go to their website at [www.leevalley.com](http://www.leevalley.com) or you can call: 1-800-267-8767 to order a catalogue.

Remember to celebrate earth day every day this summer and don't spray toxic pesticides!

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Since 1999, Judie has been aggressively researching a wide range of subjects, particularly those pertaining to human health and environmental issues. Judie has written for local, regional and national publications.