



Dandelions : Every Part Of This Weed
Is Good For You
Part 3

More Health Benefits From Dandelions

Many of the health benefits attributed to dandelion leaves, flowers and roots are likely the result of the high nutritional content of the plant. An analysis of dandelion extract shows appreciable concentrations of vitamins A, B complex, C and E.

One cup of chopped dandelion leaves has 24.7 calories, 535% of your daily recommended amount of vitamin K and 112% of vitamin A. The plant is also high in calcium, iron, manganese and choline. The plant is rich in phytochemicals, which may account for the description as a “nontoxic herb with exceptional biological activity.”

Dandelion extract also demonstrates broad-spectrum activity against a variety of pathogenic fungi and bacteria tested in the lab. There has been considerable interest in analyzing natural antimicrobial agents in the face of multiple drug-resistant pathogenic organisms that have developed in the past 10 years in response to the indiscriminate use of antibiotics.

Dandelion extract is one of those natural remedies that has demonstrated effective antimicrobial properties. The plant is also rich in antioxidants, which may be one of the reasons it has such broad applications for health and wellness. It's also rich in beta-carotene and polyphenols, which are found in the greatest concentration in the flower.

Many of these vitamins and antioxidants play a role in protecting your skin against damage. It has been used in folk medicine for boils, sore throats and fever. In one study, dandelion leaf and flower extracts were applied just prior to or immediately after being exposed to UVB radiation, and demonstrated the ability to protect the skin from sun damage.

Interestingly, the extract produced from the root was not as effective. As discussed above, the fall harvest of dandelions is high in inulin, which helps protect the health of your gut microbiome and the bodily systems it impacts.

How to Use Dandelions at Home

If you are on medication, work with your health care provider to add dandelion to your health regimen as it may change your medication requirements. If you're foraging for dandelions, be sure you are looking in areas that have not been sprayed with pesticides.

It is best to avoid roadsides, railroad areas and agricultural areas as these have likely been sprayed with herbicides and pesticides that can make you sick. It is also important to note that there are many look-alike plants with similar leaves. Be sure you're picking dandelion leaves, which are hairless and toothed.

Dandelion flowers taste best before they've opened. You can pick them right off the stem, remove the base petals and pop them in a salad. Dandelion leaves have the best taste in spring and early summer and are paired well in a salad.

However, the older leaves can also be steamed and added to stir fry or soups. The heating process can reduce the bitter flavor. Dandelion tea and coffee are a relaxing way of enjoying the health benefits. Tea can be made with a fresh or dried root or the flowers of the plant and coffee is made by drying the root and grinding it into a powder.

Farming Secrets says: Foraging For Dandelions Is An Extremely Rewarding Activity

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