

Dandelion healing ©

This short info sheet has been prompted by several recent online posts about the benefits of dandelions for healing and also the fact that they've taken over my back lawn. The daisies and violets are still there amid a sea of yellow. So, here's a few ideas for using dandelion for natural healing.

What are dandelions good for?

OK, well first thing to remember is that dandelions are both food and great for healing – as they contain the following elements:

- Potassium
- Iron
- Calcium
- Sodium
- Magnesium
- Zinc
- Phosphorus.

As a food?

Dandelions are also rich in protein and vitamins A, B, C and D. As a food, you can eat or drink them. All parts of the plant are edible, ie the roots, leaves and flowers, though new leaves are slightly less bitter. Cooking reduces any bitter twangs in the leaves or roots.

I would say that people should be alert to allergy risks – if you're allergic to plants like daisies, marigolds or chrysanthemums, it's probably better to avoid eating dandelions. This caveat also applies to those in pregnancy or taking loads of prescription medicines – check with a doctor first. Apart from that, dandelions can be used in:

- ✚ Soups.
- ✚ As a coffee alternative.
- ✚ Both the flowers and roots can be made into a tea.
- ✚ Salads.
- ✚ Jams.
- ✚ Beer (from the roots).

For those of you who are a little hesitant about just eating dandelion leaves, here's a suggestion for a spring salad. Any or all of the following [leaves](#) are edible: chives, dandelion, daisy, primrose, rocket and chicory. Wash the leaves and add a dressing made from lemon juice and sunflower oil, plus pepper and salt to taste if you wish. To add a bit of colour, calendula or viola flowers can be added too.

Using dandelion as a herbal medicine

Let's start with the **flower infusion**, which is great for all sorts of circulatory problems, eg reduction of blood sugars, lower blood pressure and reduction of cholesterol. It's also a natural diuretic, just like peppermint tea. What you need to do is choose about 8 healthy flowers for two cups of tea. Pour boiling water over the flowers and leave for about 5 minutes. If you want, just add a bit of honey or slice of lemon for flavour.

It's also possible to make a **dandelion root tincture**, either by itself or with another plant such as gentian or burdock. This helps with blood circulation, soothes any depression and detoxes your system. Basically, what you do to make a tincture, is to select about 200g of dried roots and add them to about one litre of vodka in a sealed jar. Ensure that the herbs are covered completely by the alcohol and leave the jar for about two weeks in a cupboard, away from any sunshine. Then you strain the mixture (eg muslin) and filter it again through a new coffee filter. I'd suggest pouring the mixture into a sterile, dark glass bottle, labelling it and storing away.

OK, I've thought about a summary of dandelion medicinal benefits and here's a list.

1. As an **infused oil**, dandelions are good for rashes, dry or chapped skin, sore muscles and eczema.
2. For **digestion**, as mentioned, it's diuretic and helps with acid reflux or excess fluid retention.
3. It helps the **liver** to function properly by removing toxic substances and improving bile. Linked to this, is the dandelion's beneficial effect on the reduction of inflammations in the gallbladder.
4. All parts of dandelions are full of **anti-oxidants**, which help to prevent cell damage and DNA-related problems. Some research studies appear to show that dandelion leaves may slow down the spread of cancer.
5. The tea recipe above refers to the effects on **blood disorders**. Dandelions control lipid levels (useful for those with diabetes), regulate blood pressure, lowers and controls cholesterol levels.
6. All dandelion medicines improve the body's **immune system**.
7. As a **first aid remedy**, dandelion salve can be used to treat swellings, burns, sunburn, cuts, grazes and insect bites.

