

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

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Dandelion-Yvonne L. Salcido MH

Dandelion or *Taraxacum officinale* by its botanical name is an amazing plant. Although today it is seen as a noxious weed, most herbalists know it as a spring tonic and much more. This plant has so many benefits that it is considered one of the top four foods to have in your diet and should be incorporated into the diet year round if possible. Those of you that live in a temperate climate should take advantage of the wonderful health benefits of this plant!

- Dandelion has the highest amount of beta- carotene (which the liver converts to vitamin A) of any leafy green vegetable! Vitamin A is a wonderful antioxidant which promotes wound healing and aids in fighting infection. It is also very beneficial for eye health, especially for improved night vision. This antioxidant is important in fighting cancer since it helps cells to reproduce normally.
- High in pectin and vitamin C which rid the body of heavy metals. This attributes to the plant being known as a great blood purifier. Vitamin C also aids in reducing the stress hormone cortisol and is another powerful antioxidant.
- High content of vitamin K, which aids in blood clotting and also glycogen formation to help the body meet the energy needs of exercise. It helps the liver function properly and is an important vitamin to increase vitality and the longevity of life.
- Contains vitamin D, an important aid in the assimilation of the phosphorus that is required in bone formation. Vitamin D enhances the immune system and also contributes to blood cell formation and cell reproduction.
- Vitamin E is one of the phytonutrients in dandelion. Vitamin E is essential in the functioning of cellular respiration that takes place in the muscles. Vitamin E is a powerful antioxidant! Studies have shown that it reduces the risk of heart attack and it protects LDL cholesterol from oxidation.
- B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, B6, and folic acid). These B's are considered the anti-stress vitamins! They are essential in making neurotransmitters. If someone is deficient in B vitamins they will be depressed.
- Minerals, just to name a few. Calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, sodium, zinc, copper, manganese, selenium, choline.
- Dandelions also have inulin which is wonderful in balancing blood sugar levels, phytochemicals that help with digestive problems, are a great diuretic and anti-spasmodic, are highly anti-fungal, and protects and strengthens the liver.



Dandelion is one of my favorite plants and it tastes great. Use it in salads, on a sandwich for an extra bite or throw a handful in some fresh vegetable juice. A wonderful beverage with dandelion is the Aroma Express by Dr. Christopher. The combination of herbs in this formula is extremely nutritive, relaxing, and soothing. It is a great beverage for cold winter nights that will boost your immune system too!

When picking your own dandelions make sure they have not been sprayed or buy organic at the health food store!

Yvonne Lunt Salcido is a Student Advisor for and a Master Herbalist Graduate of the School of Natural Healing. She is a current student at Utah Valley University majoring in Health and Wellness Education.