

Dandelion

Taraxacum officinale
Asteraceae, Sunflower family

Introduced and widely naturalized.

Identifying Characteristics:

Plant: erect, perennial, 2"-12" tall forb with milky juice

Flower: head 1"-2" wide with only yellow ray flowers; inflorescence a single head on a long hollow stalk from the base of the plant; blooms April-Nov.

Fruit: brown, dry seed on fluffy pappus

Leaf: basal, pinnately-divided, long and narrow, end lobe usually larger than the others; midrib on back is smooth and hairless

Known plant constituents: aluminum, calcium, chromium, cobalt, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potash, potassium, silica, sodium, sulphur, tin, zinc, riboflavin, thiamine, niacin, choline, carotenes, vitamin C, vitamin D, protein, inulin, phytosterols, taraxacin

Parts of the plants used for food and/or medicine: leaves, roots, flowers, and sap.

Actions: leaves are nutritive, alkalizer, tonic, galactagogue, stomachic, cholagogue, aperient, diuretic, depurative, mild detergent, vulnerary, anodyne, slight narcotic. Roots are hepatic, cholagogue, lithotriptic, tonic, nutritive, galactagogue, digestive stimulant, stomachic, aperient, laxative, diuretic, deobstruent, bactericide, fungicide, astringent, hypnotic, sedative. Flowers are emollient, anodyne, vulnerary, hepatic, calmative, cardio-tonic. Sap is discutient, anodyne, keratolytic, fungistatic, bacteriostatic.

Body system/s affected: all of them!

Taste: bitter

Uses/Applications

- Liver tonic

- Gallbladder tonic

- Digestive tonic

- Lowers cholesterol

- Reduces blood pressure

- Stabilizes blood sugar

- Stimulates circulation of blood and lymph

- Useful for kidney and urinary problems

- Fresh root in tincture.

- Dried root in infusion.

- Fresh leaves in tincture.

- Fresh leaves in salads and cooked as a potherb

- Fresh flowers in tea and made into wine.

- Fresh sap used directly on warts, corns, calluses.

Dandelion Italiano

1 lb. dandelion leaves
2 Tbs. tamari
3-4 cloves garlic, finely minced
½ cup olive oil

Cut leaves into 1-inch pieces and boil in water until fairly soft, about 20-30 minutes. Add tamari, garlic, olive oil, and stir.

Most information is from *Healing Wise* by Susun Weed. Recipe from Susun Weed's e-newsletter.

Spring Greens Pie

top and bottom crust for a 9-inch pie
4 cups dandelion leaves, torn into 2-inch pieces
3 Tbs. sesame oil
1 cup sliced onions
½ cup grated carrot
1 cup sliced shiitake or oyster mushrooms
1 Tbs. dry red wine or chicken broth
1 tsp. tamari

Preheat oven to 400°. Heat oil in a heavy skillet. Sauté onions until soft but not browned, then add carrot, mushrooms and dandelion. Sauté until mushrooms are very soft. Add wine or broth and tamari. Cook 2 minutes. Taste for seasoning. Pour into prepared pie crust. Place second crust on top and crimp edges. Slash steam holes into crust. Bake for 35 minutes, or until crust is brown and flaky. Serves 6-8.

Adapted from a recipe in *Vegetarian Times*.