

Burdock

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Burdock root is considered powerful medicine in both Eastern and Western herbal traditions. In the East burdock is considered bitter and cool. It drains dampness and clears excess heat (or toxins) from the body. In the West burdock is traditionally used to cleanse the blood, and is thought to be useful in situations such as:

- exposure to environmental toxins such as cigarette smoke or air pollution
- parasites in the blood
- heavy metals such as mercury, lead or arsenic in the blood
- chronic bacterial or viral infections, such as chronic fatigue or Lyme disease

The dried root of the burdock species of plants is used to make an herbal remedy known simply as "the burdock". This remedy is actually made from the dried first year root of the great burdock - botanical name: *Arctium lappa* L., or from the roots of the common burdock - botanical name: *Arctium minus* of the plant family Asteraceae found in the temperate regions of the world.

The great burdock is not grown widely in the United States and has been naturalized in many parts of the country while it is found to be growing in the wild in continental Europe - to which it is native. The common burdock is the main source of the root for the preparation of the herbal remedy in America.



It has many medicinal qualities and has been used in many herbal remedies. The root is sweet to the taste and has a gummy consistency. Traditionally, burdock has been used as a remedy for measles, arthritis, tonsillitis, viruses like colds, throat pain, and as a diuretic. In modern times, burdock is also used in oncology and to treat many other serious health problems.

Historically, the seeds of the burdock plants were compressed to make a mixture that was effective in cleansing the bloodstream, easing pain from arthritis, and treating gout, rheumatism, ulcers, acne, eczema, and psoriasis. Its alleged cancer-treating properties were also utilized in Russia and India. The Chinese used it as an aphrodisiac, and found it effective in treating barrenness and impotence.

Burdock's active ingredients are arcigen, calcium, chlorogenic acid, essential oil, flavonoids, iron, inulin (a carbohydrate), lactone, mucilage, polyacetylenes, potassium, resin, tannin, and taraxosterol. The seeds of the plant contain beneficial fatty acids. The oil from the seeds can be used as a diaphoretic, which increases perspiration, which is essential in cleansing the body of toxins or harmful elements. According to traditional healers, diaphoretics are essential to treating influenza, gallbladder or liver disorders, and to aid the kidneys.

Burdock is a favorite among herbalists to treat acne. It has been used to clear skin redness and blemishes.

In Japan and some parts of Europe, burdock is eaten as vegetable. Burdock contains inulin, a natural dietary fiber, and has also been used traditionally to improve digestion. In fact, recent studies confirm that burdock has prebiotic properties that could improve health. It has many nutrients like iron, and beneficial oils. Also, burdock can be used as a gentle laxative and help eradicate uric acid. Some of the active ingredients of burdock are polyacetylenes, which are known to be effective antibacterials and antifungals. Burdock may enhance the performance of many of the organs, which purify the body and eliminate toxins or waste (like the kidneys, liver, colon, etc). This may help with overall health and helps correct disorders.

Despite the fact that burdock has been used for centuries to treat a variety of conditions, very few scientific studies have examined burdock's effects. It has been applied externally as well as internally to relieve eczema and psoriasis.



Burdock root oil extract, also called Bur oil, is popular in Europe as a scalp treatment applied to improve hair strength, shine and body, help reverse scalp conditions such as dandruff, and combat hair loss. Modern studies indicate that burdock root oil extract is rich in phytosterols and essential fatty acids (including rare long-chain EFAs), the nutrients required to maintain a healthy scalp and promote natural hair growth. It combines an immediate relieving effect with nutritional support of normal functions of sebaceous glands and hair follicles. According to some European herbalists, combining burdock root oil with a nettle root oil and massaging these two oils into the scalp every day has a greater effect than Bur oil alone.

Burdock leaves are used by some burn care workers for pain management and to speed healing time in natural burn treatment. Burn care workers hold that it eases dressing changes and appears to impede bacterial growth on the wound site and that it also provides a great moisture barrier.

Pregnant or nursing women should avoid burdock as it may cause damage to the fetus.

If you are sensitive to daisies, chrysanthemums, or ragweed, you may also experience an allergic reaction to burdock.



Be sure to try NSP's Burdock

References

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Yours in Good Health!

Sincerely,

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