



Grassroots Herbalism talks about the Dandelion

Dandelion: The root of its existence



Dandelions are everywhere. And people hate them. Yet hating dandelions is not a natural state. Have you ever had an enthusiastic five year old bring you a bouquet of bright yellow dandelion blossoms? Children who haven't yet learned to judge, instinctively know the virtues of this innocent plant. Alas, somewhere along life's path we start to believe that dandelions are an enemy.

But I have a different theory. I believe that the dandelion has a job to do, and we are making it very difficult for dandelion to fulfill its destiny. The dandelion is here to help us heal ... and it isn't about to give up on us. Have you noticed that no matter how much we curse, poison or dig out this plant, it just keeps reappearing ... everywhere!

I invite you to take a journey with me to discover just how simple it is to cooperate with the dandelion and help it do its job. So grab a pitch fork and find yourself a dandelion patch in a chemical free bit of ground, preferably away from roads and highways. If you are unsure how to identify the dandelion plant, do a Google Image Search for '*Taraxacum officinale*', (dandelion's botanical name).

Dandelion is one of those plants with a very long tap root that is able to push its way down past the topsoil and into the hardpan, accessing minerals and nutrients otherwise unavailable to us. This strong tap root is also part of what makes dandelion's personality a little challenging for the impatient ... its not easy to dig out a complete dandelion root.

For medicinal purposes, we want the roots that have some meat to them. Two year old roots are ideal. But don't worry; you don't have to keep track of what plants are last years, and what belong to the year before. Dandelion is generous in its offerings ... its unlikely you will run out of plants to dig.

I find that a pitch fork works best as it's less likely to break the root. But a shovel will do the job just as well. Dig down as far as you can until the soil is loosened around the root, then gently tug until it lets go of its cozy home.

When you start to get bored with the digging process, you have probably gathered enough roots for today. There will be always be more dandelions patiently waiting their turn to be able to serve you with their health enriching goodness, so don't feel you have to harvest them all at once.

Next step is to remove the tops and wash off the soil. Use a bucket of water to wash the soil off the roots, and then dump the muddy water onto the compost. A final rinse with the hose and then you can step back and admire these beauties.



Those shiny, fresh, vital roots represent **improved digestive health, nourishment for 'good' intestinal bacteria, gentle liver and kidney support, antioxidants, soluble fiber** and a **source of micro-nutrients**.

All that without any capsules, pills, or plastic bottles!

For today's project, we're going to prepare the roots for use as a beverage. So, the next step is to cut the roots into small pieces so they can dry more evenly. First slice each root lengthwise, then dice into bits.

As you are working at this task, nibble on a small piece of root. Taste the subtle sweet and bitter flavour. Savour the fresh juicy crunch. Connect with the vital earth energy that the root brought with it from its home below the surface. This is the food of our ancestors.

Once they are all sliced up, place on a cookie sheet and put into a low temperature (150F) oven for a few hours. Turn the roots once or twice to ensure they are drying evenly. You will know they are ready when there is a gentle sweet smell in the kitchen and the root pieces snap easily. Let the roots cool, then use a clean coffee grinder or blender to reduce the roasted roots into a powder. Don't worry if you can't get the pieces ground into a really fine powder, small chunks will work as well.

To enjoy dandelion's offering, put 1 teaspoon of the ground, roasted roots into a coffee cup and fill with boiling water. Remember to use a spoon to get at the solid bits at the bottom of your cup. After all you wouldn't leave vegetables at the bottom of your soup bowl; so don't leave dandelion goodness at the bottom of your cup.

Limit yourself to one cup of dandelion root tea per day. That's all you need year round to benefit from dandelion's enhealthening properties.

Getting to the root of dandelion's existence wasn't so hard. All it takes is an open mind, a pitch fork and a willingness to accept enhealthment from the abundance of nature.

Now that you know dandelion's secret, you'll notice those sunny flowers winking at you; and you will feel compelled to respond with a nod of thanks for its perseverance in trying to get our attention.

For more information about Grassroots Herbalism, Dandelions and other botanical remedies visit **www.enhealthment.com** or email **jeananne@enhealthment.com**

