



# Superfoods Fact Sheet

## Burdock Root

### (*Arctium Lappa*)



Parts Used: root

This tenacious plant is considered a weed by farmers, and many gardeners, but it is an absolute boon to those in the natural health field. It does well in any soil, is an aggressive grower and is a large vigorous plant, with big broad leaves and thistle-like flowers, whose burrs were the inspiration for Velcro!

It is safe, tasty and a very effective detoxifying and cleansing herb, treasured in both Western and Traditional Chinese medicine alike.

It does not tend to be cultivated as it grows wild in profusion and is easily picked.

### History and Traditional Use

Burdock has been known and used medicinally for centuries, used for ailments and complaints for the gastrointestinal tract, and to improve digestion, as well as respiratory infections, abscesses and joint pain, to treat tumours, skin conditions, venereal disease, respiratory infections and bladder and kidney problems.

It was also well known to Native Americans where it was used to relieve dry, scaly skin conditions such as psoriasis and eczema. It also formed part of the native American cancer treatment Essiac.

It was used by the medieval herbalist Hildegard of Bingen for tumours, and the 17<sup>th</sup> Century herbalist Culpepper recommended it for gout, and kidney stones.

It is used as a food in Japan, where they call it gobo, and steam the root, and throughout Asia it is eaten as a root vegetable.

In Britain it is probably best known as a constituent of dandelion and burdock beer, which is an easy home brew.

### Nutritional Information

The bitter flavour of burdock is one of the secrets to its efficacy, which has a stimulating effect on the liver and bile production.

Burdock root is high in calcium, potassium, copper, manganese, Sulphur and zinc, as well as amino acids, essential fatty acids, biotin, and Vitamins B1, B6, B12, E and C.

It contains polyphenols which form tannin-iron complexes which give it a distinctive dark, muddy colour, bitter glycosides, flavonoids, sesquiterpenes as well as compounds which have a known anti-cancer effect such as chlorogenic acid, inulin, lignin, caffeic acid, arctigenin, arctiin, beta-eudesmol, and trachelogenin.

It is also mucilaginous which, along with the inulin, explains its soothing effects on the digestive tract.

## Health Benefits of Burdock

### Skin Conditions

Excellent for skin conditions it can be used both externally and internally to treat eczema, psoriasis and skin problems. It is excellent for acne, boils and other hormone and toxin related imbalances. A wash of burdock root is also good for dry, itchy skin.

Studies are also showing the beneficial properties of burdock root to slow ageing. A 2008 study showed how burdock extract improved the metabolism of the dermal extracellular matrix – that's less visible wrinkles to you and me!<sup>1</sup>

### Gastrointestinal Tract and Digestion

A favourite herb for soothing the GI tract, it also helps to promote bile production and improve digestion.

### Liver Tonic/Blood

#### Purifier/Detoxifier

An effective liver tonic for 'liver stress' it is often mixed with dandelion root in either tea or tincture form to increase its efficacy. It also acts to clean the blood and has actives which help to clear heavy metals, as well as promoting blood circulation to the skin.

### Laxative and diuretic

The compound arctiin has been identified as the ingredient which makes burdock root an effective diuretic, and if you have fluid retention try this before resorting to drugs. Burdock root also have a mild laxative effect.

### Anti-Cancer

Scientists are studying burdock roots anticancer, anti-tumour potential as it contains a number of compounds which are known to have anti-cancer activity, and help to prevent angiogenesis, the



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<sup>1</sup> [J Cosmet Dermatol](#). 2008 Dec;7(4):281-9. doi: 10.1111/j.1473-2165.2008.00407.x.Natural Arctium lappa fruit extract improves the clinical signs of aging skin

formation of auxiliary arteries that feed tumours. It is a key ingredient in the famous Essiac cancer remedy and also is the primary ingredient in the famous Hoxsey cancer treatment.

### **Lymphatic System**

Burdock is beneficial to the lymphatic system and helps with lymphatic stagnation or congestion. Several cups of burdock tea daily can help to bring swollen lymph glands down quickly.

### **Blood Sugar Imbalances**

Burdock root can be helpful in re-balancing blood sugar issues and managing blood glucose levels. Its inulin content makes it particularly suitable for diabetes.

### **Arthritic and Rheumatic Complaints**

Its cleansing properties are good for rheumatic problems as well as having anti-inflammatory properties.<sup>2</sup>

## **How To Use Burdock**

Burdock root can either be bought in capsules or as a tincture. It is also available either fresh or dried, and can be used to make a tea, cooked and eaten or made into a tincture. It can also be used to make dandelion and burdock beer.

### **Culinary Usage**

Either include the cleaned, peeled root in stir fries, or steam in lightly for around 3 minutes and sprinkle with toasted sesame oil, or even eat it raw with a little sea salt!



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<sup>2</sup> [Int J Rheum Dis.](#) 2016 Mar;19(3):255-61. doi: 10.1111/1756-185X.12477. Epub 2014 Oct 28. Effects of Arctium lappa L. (Burdock) root tea on inflammatory status and oxidative stress in patients with knee osteoarthritis.