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Dandelion: A Potent Healer



By Julia Chiappetta

Remember those little yellow flowers that used to dot the lawn when we were kids? Dandelions! I loved them and had no idea what potent healers they are until years later. My grandmother made dandelion tea for us when we had a stomachache, and it worked—but the taste was not pleasant. Ha-ha. She also threw the leaves in salads and ate the flowers in one bite. It occurs to me that she was what we call an herbalist today, utilizing all the plants, roots and flowers in her garden to promote healing. And guess what? The leaves, roots and flowers of the dandelion plant all have healing properties and are edible (organic lawns, please).

The word dandelion derives from the French “dent de lion,” or tooth of the lion. Dandelions are native to Europe, Asia, and North America, and are edible in their entirety. The dandelion is a member of the Asteraceae family of flowering plants (along with marigolds, daisies, dahlias and zinnias, among others) and is typified by its small flowers collected together into a composite flower head; each single flower in a head is called a floret.

I read about dandelions’ medicinal and anti-inflammatory properties when

I began my quest for knowledge after being diagnosed with breast cancer, and have used it to reduce inflammation and the detoxing of my liver. Since ancient times, the dandelion has been used for a variety of health benefits, but what caught my attention was its potential to kill cancerous cells. This discovery had led to a good amount of research by medical researchers.

According to Dr. John Reeves (on his “Get Cancer Cure” website, November 2016), “traditional herbalists, both in the East and the West, have utilized the properties of the dandelion for liver support and as a blood purifier. It is this blood purifying action that intrigued Canadian researchers at the University of Windsor to pursue whether dandelion roots could be effective for individuals suffering from end stage blood cancer. The team experimented by applying dandelion root extract into petri dishes on blood drawn from a leukemia patient and lab rats. They discovered that the ‘dandelion root extract was effective in inducing apoptosis, or cell suicide, in tumor cells, while leaving healthy cells alone.’”

According to a practicing physician at the Windsor Regional Cancer Centre in Ontario, the dandelion is quite effective. Dr. Carolyn Hamm states “dandelion root extract is the only viable option when it comes to treating chronic myelomonocytic leukemia.” This particular type of cancer usually affects the elderly. According to studies, cancerous cells begin disintegrating less than 48 hours after coming into contact with dandelion extract. As a response to the disintegration, the body happily replaces these

cells with healthy new ones. Further studies concluded that the dandelion extract has anti-cancerous benefits for breast, liver, colon, lung, and prostate cancer.

Drinking dandelion tea offers many health benefits, even if you do not have cancer. Try adding some lemon or a pinch of honey to help with the taste. If you are about to embark on a cleanse then dandelions are your friend.

Here are some of the top benefits of dandelions, taken from the Health Hub website.

Digestive aid: Dandelion acts as a mild laxative that promotes digestion, stimulates appetite and balances the natural and beneficial bacteria in the intestines. It can increase the release of stomach acid and bile to aid digestion, especially of fats.

Kidney: This weed-like superfood is a diuretic that helps the kidneys clear out waste, salt, and excess water by increasing urine production. Dandelion also replaces some of the potassium lost in the process.

Liver: Dandelion has been shown to improve liver function by removing toxins and reestablishing hydration and electrolyte balance. It also increases the release of bile.

Antioxidants: Every part of the dandelion plant is rich in antioxidants that prevent free-radical damage to cells and DNA, slowing down the aging process in our cells. It is rich in vitamin C and vitamin A as beta-carotene and increases the liver’s production of superoxide dismutase.

Cancer: The ability to combat cancer is not a claim made lightly, but dandelion seems to show promise in study after study. Dandelion may slow cancer’s growth and

prevent it from spreading. The leaves are especially rich in the antioxidants and phytonutrients that combat cancer.

Diabetes: Recent animal studies show dandelion helps regulate blood sugar and insulin levels. Most of this is done through its ability to control lipid levels.

High blood pressure: As a diuretic, dandelion increases urination which then lowers blood pressure. The fiber and potassium in dandelion also help regulate blood.

Cholesterol: Animal studies have shown how dandelion lowers and controls cholesterol levels while improving cholesterol ratios by raising HDL.

Gallbladder: Dandelion increases bile production and reduces inflammation to help with gallbladder problems and blockages.

Inflammation: Dandelion contains essential fatty acids, antioxidants, and phytonutrients that all reduce inflammation throughout the body. This can relieve pain and swelling.

Immune system: Studies also show that dandelion boosts immune function and fights off microbes and fungi.

As always, eat something green as you take in the gift of this day, the blessings at hand, the beauty of a sunrise or sunset, a brisk morning walk and a good chat with a friend or God. Please strive to live each day eating healthy, being thankful, feeling positive and helping someone else.

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