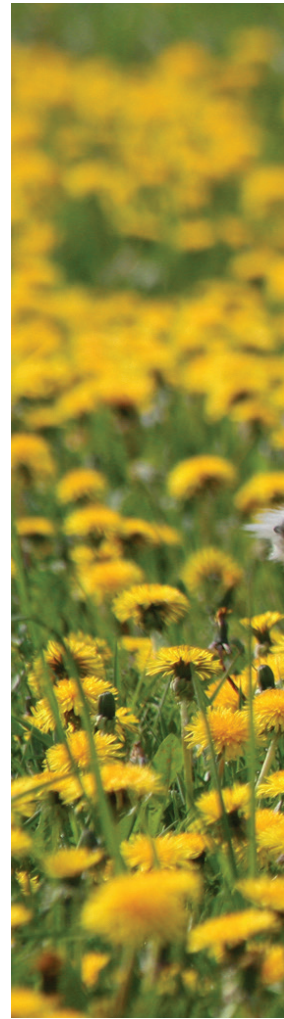


# THE BEST WEED IN TOWN

Many gardeners consider dandelions a weed to be eliminated from the yard; but dandelions have many valuable properties, and you may want to stop and reconsider before you yank them out of the ground.



*Since beginning her holistically oriented veterinary practice over 25 years ago, Deva Khalsa VMD has been incorporating homeopathy, acupuncture, Chinese herbs, nutritional advice, allergy elimination techniques such as NAET and also JMT into her approach. Today her work is a blend of sophisticated holistic techniques and traditional veterinary medicine designed to best enhance the natural strengths and attributes of her patients.*



**D**andelion's roots sink deep into history. They've been around for 30 million years; there are dandelion fossils! The plant was well known in ancient times. The Egyptians, Greeks, and Chinese cultures used dandelions for just about every ailment. Dandelions were first mentioned in Chinese medicine in the seventh century but they were likely used long before that. The Chinese use the entire plant, while Western herbal medicine tends to use either the root or leaf. In the Middle Ages almost every monastery had a physic garden - an herb garden with medicinal plants, which contained the herbs they needed for cooking and healing. The powerfully healing dandelion plant was certainly one of them.

Before the days of lawns, dandelion's leaves and flowers were praised as a bounty of medicine. Gardeners would actually weed out the grass to make room for the

dandelions. Dandelions were world-famous for their beauty and cherished as decorative plants. They were beloved garden flowers in Europe and in the New World, a sweet reminder of home. In Japan, horticultural societies developed exciting new varieties for gardeners. Today, dandelions are sprayed with herbicides and considered unwanted guests. Only in the 20th century have humans decided that the dandelion is a weed.

Dandelions are actually good for your lawn. Their wide-spreading roots loosen hard-packed soil, aerate the earth and help reduce erosion while the deep taproot pulls nutrients such as calcium from deep in the soil and makes them available to other plants. Dandelions fertilize the grass. They are resistant to disease, bugs, heat, cold, wind, rain, and human beings. To this day, herbalists hail the dandelion as the perfect plant medicine.

Dandelion tonics have been used and are still used to clean and tone the liver and remove toxins from the bloodstream. Rather than being troubled about all those dandelions on your lawn, you can use them to make a healthy tea infusion and detoxify your dog's liver. Dandelion reduces congestion in the liver and can even help with jaundice. Both the root and the leaves can be used for medicinal purposes. The leaves work as a digestive and liver tonic. The roots is used as a cleansing tonic for gallstones, jaundice and constipation.

Dandelion leaves are also specific medicine for the kidneys as they flush and tone these organs. Dandelion increases gastric secretions to aid in digestion. Dandelions have been used successfully for dandruff, toothache, sores, fevers, and rotting gums.

Dandelion is a wonderful example of how a complete herb works. It is a very pow-



erful diuretic and is also one of the best sources of potassium. While pharmaceutical diuretics drain potassium out of the body and deplete potassium reserves, the dandelion root works as a very powerful diuretic, removing excess fluid from the body, and replacing potassium that is lost in the process.

Dandelions are more nutritious than most of the vegetables in your garden. You can enjoy a complete meal, from salad greens to dandelion wine. If you overindulge, a cup of dandelion tea is the perfect remedy, since dandelions help the liver flush hangover-inducing toxins from the body. And in the morning when you wake up you can have a coffee substitute made from the toasted, ground roots.

A few fresh leaves can be chopped and added to a tasty meal for your dog. They can taste bitter, so begin to add them

sparingly at first. Use the young tenderest shoots of unsprayed plants. The best way to start with them is to chop up a few young leaves and sauté them in butter. Then beat up a few eggs and make dandelion scrambled eggs for your dog.

You can also make a healing tea for your dog by placing two to three tablespoons of the leaves into one cup of water and bringing to a boil. Simmer gently for 15 minutes and let cool. An infusion or tea can also be made by pouring hot water over the leaves and allowing the mixture to steep for five to 30 minutes. Give one tablespoon of the liquid three times a day to a medium sized dog.

So the next time a young child brings you a bouquet of dandelions as a special gift, just pretend you are living a few hundred years ago and it will seem as precious to you as it does to her. 🐾

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