

HOLISTIC HERBALISM FOUNDATIONS PROGRAM MATERIA MEDICA

Common Name	Burdock	
Latin	Arctium lappa, A. minus	
Family	Asteraceae	
Other Known Names	Great Burdock	
Energy	Cool, moist	
Taste	Sweet, Salty	
Part Used	Root	
Location	It is a common plant throughout temperate regions of the world. Native to temperate regions in Europe and Asia, naturalized in North America.	
Gathering	Collect the root in the autumn of the first year plant or the very early spring of the 2 nd year as the leaflets start to sprout.	
Cultivation	It is a large, weedy perennial. It grows in average soil and partial to full sun. It prefers average garden soil and full sun, but will grow in a wide variety of conditions	
HERBAL ACTION	TISSUE AFFINITY	MAJOR CONSTITUENTS
Alterative/Antidyscratic	Immune System	Phenolic acids:
Anti-inflammatory	Lymph	Caffeic acid-antioxidant, antimutagen
Antimutagen	Blood/Xue - (mild)	Chlorogenic acid-anti-inflammatory
Antioxidant	Pancreas	Arctic acid (acetylenic acid)
Aperient	Large Intestine	Inulin (FOS) up to 45%-prebiotic
Cholagogue (mild)	Liver	Nonhydroxy acids
Demulcent (slightly)		Polyacetylenes
Hepatoprotective (mild)		Mucilage -demulcent
Lymph tonic		

SPECIFIC INDICATIONS

Clears blood heat/alterative, lymph tonic

Lymphatic congestion with enlarged nodes that are tender to the touch.

A mild alterative for cancer, skin conditions and arthritis.

BOTANICAL DESCRIPTION

A stout handsome plant, with large, wavy leaves and round heads of purple flowers. It is enclosed in a globular involucre of long stiff scales with hooked tips, the scales being also often interwoven with a white, cottony substance.

The whole plant is a dull, pale green, the stem about 3 to 4 feet and branched, rising from a biennial root. The lower leaves are very large, on long, solid foot-stalks, furrowed above, frequently more than a foot long heart-shaped and of a grey colour on their under surfaces from the mass of fine down with which they are covered. The upper leaves are much smaller, more egg-shaped in form and not so densely clothed beneath with the grey down.

The plant varies considerably in appearance, and by some botanists various subspecies, or even separate species, have been described, the variations being according to the size of the flower-heads and of the whole plant, the abundance of the whitish cottonlike substance that is sometimes found on the involucre, or the absence of it, the length of the flower-stalks, etc.

The flower-heads are found expanded during the latter part of the summer and well into the autumn: all the florets are tubular, the stamens dark purple and the styles whitish. The plant owes its dissemination greatly to the little hooked prickles of its involucre, which adhere to everything with which they come in contact, and by attaching themselves to coats of animals are often carried to a distance.

TRADITIONAL & CONTEMPORARY USE

- Burdock root is a gentle-acting medicinal plant as well as a food used in Europe, the Americas and Asia.
- Burdock root is an effective treatment for lymphatic congestion with enlarged nodes that are tender to the touch.
- Burdock root is an alterative and antimutagen, traditionally used in cancer formulas (Hoxsey formula: see Preparations) especially for breast and lymphatic cancers.
- Burdock root is often employed to address osteoarthritis, gout and gouty arthritis, enhancing uric acid excretion.
- Alterative herbs such as Burdock are also frequently used for inflammatory skin conditions such as atopic eczema or psoriasis.
- Burdock root contains inulin, a rich source of fructo-oligosaccharides (FOS), which can help to promote the growth of normal, healthy bowel flora.
- Burdock root also is soothing to the GI tract and can be useful as part of a protocol for treating leaky gut syndrome, gastritis, gastric ulcers, ileitis and IBS.
- Burdock root has mild hepatoprotective activity and is used as a liver tonic, especially for liver stagnation with greasy skin and frequent pimples.
- The leaf is an effective antibacterial poultice for fire poison symptoms such as inflamed sores or boils (it inhibits *Staphylococcus aureus*) as well as for bruises and rashes.
- For skin conditions that are red and hot, combine *Arctium* root with Sarsaparilla and/or Gotu Kola.
- To address liver stagnation with greasy skin and frequent pimples combine Burdock root with Oregon Grape root and Yellow Dock.

DOSAGE

Tea (Decoction): 5 gram. dried, root, 500 ml. water, decoct 10 - 15 minutes, steep 45 minutes, take 100 ml 3x/day

Tincture (1:4), 30% ETOH Dose: 25 mL (60 - 100 gtt.) QID

Capsules: 2 capsules (00) BID / TID

PREPARATION GUIDELINES & SUGGESTIONS

The original recipe for the Hoxsey formula: Each 5cc contains Potassium Iodide (150 mg), Licorice (20 mg), Red Clover (20 mg), Burdock root (10 mg), *Stillingia* (10 mg), Oregon Grape Root (10 mg), Poke root (10 mg), Cascara Amarga (5 mg), Prickly Ash (5 mg), Buckthorn bark (20 mg). Dose: 1 tsp. after meals and at bedtime.

CONTRAINDICATIONS & DRUG INTERACTIONS

Avoid use for people on a FODMAP diet due to Burdock root's inulin content.

There are several reports of Burdock Root having been adulterated with *Belladonna* root in the past 20 years.

Jeremy Ross indicates: *Arctium* is one of a small group of alterative herbs that may aggravate skin disease or arthritis. It should be given in very small initial dosages and the dosage should be gradually increased to avoid hyperreactions. It can be combined with hepatoprotective anti-inflammatories (Turmeric) to moderate the adverse alterative reactions.

SPECIAL NOTES OF CONSIDERATION

The young root, known as gobo in Japan, is edible and is usually cooked in soups or stir fries, and the peeled main stalk is a pleasant edible raw vegetable.

The leaves are useful for pit cooking to wrap food and they can be burned to smoke brain-tanned leather.

In Russian heritage the roots were infused in oil to create a hair oil called Repeinoe Maslo and was used as a hair tonic to encourage growth of new hair. It was effective as long as the follicle were dormant and had not been completely destroyed.

Arctium tomentosum / Woolly Burdock, introduced species, is more commonly found in the prairies / plains.

For more information on Burdock seed see Burdock Seed / Nui Bang Zi monograph.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

AHPA Botanical Safety Handbook, CRC Press, 2nd ed., 2013

Bone, Kerry, A Clinical Guide to Blending Liquid Herbs, Elsevier Press, 2003.

Botanical Description retrieved here: <https://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/b/burdoc87.html>

Criollo, Julieta, Medicinal Herbs Quick Reference Guide, Revision 7, Published by Author, 2017

David Winston's Centre for Herbal Studies (DWCHS) Clinical Herbalist Training. [Performance]. Clinical Herbalist Training Program

Holmes, Peter The Energetics of Western Herbs: A Materia Medica Integrating Western and Chinese Herbal Therapeutics, Volume I, Fourth Edition 2007

Hutchens, Alma R. Indian Herbology of North America, National Library of Ottawa, 1969.

M. Marciano, Botanical Medicine, Pro Health Systems, Canada, 2020

Moore, Micheal, Medicinal Plants of the Mountain West, Museum of New Mexico Press, 2003.

Ross, Jeremy, Combining Western Herbs and Chinese Medicine: A Clinical Materia Medica, Greenfields Press 2010

Stansbury, Jillian Herbal Formularies For Health Professionals Vol 3 and 4, Chelsea Green Publishing 2019/2020

Tilgner, Sharol, Herbal ABC's the Foundation of Herbal Medicine, Wise Acres LLC 2018

Tilford, Gregory L. Edible and Medicinal Plants of the West, Mountain Press, Montana, 1997

Tilford, Gregory L. From Earth to Herbalist, Mountain Press, Montana, 1998

Willard, Terry, Edible and Medicinal Plants of the Rocky Mountains and Neighbouring Territories, WRC 1992

Winston D. Herbal Resources Library: <https://herbalstudies.net/resources>

Burdock Root ***Arctium lappa* / *A. minus*** **Greater Burdock**

Energy: Cool / Moist

Taste: Sweet / Salty

Parts Used: Root (Leaves)

It is a common plant throughout temperate regions of the world. Native to temperate regions in Europe and Asia, naturalized in North America.

- Clears blood heat/alterative, lymph tonic
- Lymphatic congestion with enlarged nodes that are tender to the touch.
- A mild alterative for cancer, skin conditions and arthritis.
- Also of benefit for arthritis and inflammatory skin conditions.
- Root is a source of FOS which promotes healthy bowel flora as well as healing gut mucosa.
- Mild hepatoprotective agent and liver tonic used for greasy skin with frequent pimples.

