



Burdock Root Class

Burdock Root



- *Arctium lappa*, or better and more commonly known as burdock root, is a biennial plant that is a member of the Asteraceae family that is most well-known for its many medicinal benefits. This herb can be known by many other names as well including Clotbur, Cockle Buttons, Bardana, gobo, Fox's Clote, Cocklebur, Love Leaves, Lappa, Burr Seed, Thorny Burr, Personata, Happy Major, Bardanae Radix, Great Burdocks, Harebur, and Beggar's Buttons. The genus name *Arctium*, derives from the Greek word "arktos", meaning a bear, and *lappa* means "to seize." Burdock is native to parts of Northern Asia as well as Europe, however it is now also cultivated in North America. The use of burdock root for its medicinal purposes has gone on for centuries. Did you know that burdock was considered sacred by the early Celts and Germanic people? Burdock was considered as sacred to the "heavenly bear", Thor. Thor reigned over summer storms. Burdock was placed on gables to protect them from lightning and giants.
- This biennial herb has a stem that can usually stand about 3 to 4 feet tall. Each stem has multiple branches and the whole plant itself is a pale, dull green color. The lower leaves of the plant are huge, some growing to well over a foot long. These leaves are heart shaped and the bottoms are covered in a fine down giving them a gray color. The leaves towards the top of the plant are much smaller and are more of an egg shape. The stalks of the plant are usually hollow, and the roots are a dark brownish-green or even black in color. The burrs of the plant grow up from the stalk. These burrs are prickly and full of bristles, which make them able to easily catch on clothing. When the plant has blossomed, the flowers are in globular shapes, with the burrs beneath them. Each flower is purple and white in color.
- Did you know that the burrs of the burdock plant were actually the inspiration for Velcro? In the 1940s, a Swiss inventor, George de Mestral, became curious about how the burrs stuck to his dog and his clothing. He looked at the hook system of the burrs under a microscope and realized that that approach could be used for many other uses as well. His studies resulted in Velcro.

Growing Conditions

- Like any other plant, burdock has its own specific conditions needed in which to grow properly. Burdock can survive in almost any kind of soil, however it does prefer to grow in well drained, light soils. These soils make it easiest for the roots to grow. It prefers soils with temperatures ranging from 50 degrees to around 70 degrees Fahrenheit. Burdock is also very adaptable to the amount of light in areas. It can grow in areas with just partial sun exposure, and also thrives in areas with full sun exposure. Each seed should be planted about 18 inches apart to give the roots enough room to grow. Burdock tends to grow wild and can be found along road sides.
- Once each seed has been planted with enough space for the roots to grow, burdock usually takes about 90 days to reach the maturity to be harvested. Some plants may even be ready for harvesting after only 8 weeks. Burdock is normally harvested in late fall time, although it can also be harvested during the spring. While the plant grows, the roots get bigger and stronger. They should be harvested after this 3 month period, because if the roots become fully established, they will make the plant basically impossible to harvest. The roots can be harvested in the first growing season. The flowers of the plant will actually not begin to bloom until the year after first being planted.
- There are some pests and diseases that can affect the burdock plant. Grasshoppers can destroy the plant and some that are grown in greenhouses may be subjected to powdery mildew. There is also a mosaic virus that affect burdock grown in Ontario.



Uses in Industries



Food

- Burdock can be used for some culinary purposes. The root of the plant has a gummy like consistency, a sweet taste, and can be eaten as a root vegetable. Immature flower stalks have a taste similar to artichokes and be peeled and eaten raw or also boiled in water. The leaves of the plant can be eaten when they are soft and the plant is still young. In Japan, in some sushi dishes, burdock can be colored orange and used as an ingredient to resemble a carrot. The root can also be used in pilaf dishes and as an ingredient for soups. There is a traditional drink in the United Kingdom called “dandelion and burdock.” Burdock is a main ingredient in this drink. Burdock even used to be used in Europe as a bittering agent for beer.

Bath and Body Products

- Burdock root can be used for many different industries and products. Besides its culinary purposes, burdock can also be used for soap making, skin care, hair care, bath and body products, and medicinal purposes. When used in homemade cosmetics and the soap making process, burdock brings many nutrients to the skin.
- Common products that can include burdock root are facial toners, creams, ointments, lotions, soaps, bath bombs, scrubs, body wash, massage oils, facial masks, and for liquid soap products.
- There are many wonderful skin care benefits to using burdock root. It is actually considered one of the most important herbs for treating many skin conditions including eczema, psoriasis, sores caused by syphilis, canker sores, sties, acne, boils, carbuncles, skin ulcers, and herpes. Burdock root is even effective for treating dry skin.
- When used for hair care, burdock root helps to stop flaky scalp and is great for conditioning dry scalp. It also promotes new hair growth and fights dandruff.

Uses in Industries Cont.

Medicinal

- There are many wonderful medicinal benefits to using burdock root. It contains many important minerals and nutrients including calcium, iron, flavonoids, tannins, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid, potassium, and vitamins C and E. Burdock root also has many antioxidant, anti-bacterial, antibiotic, purifying, detoxifying, and antifungal properties. Did you know that burdock root can be used to promote sweating?
- In holistic medicine practice, burdock root can be used as a treatment for cancer. It has many purifying properties and has some antitumor effects.
- In traditional Chinese medicine, burdock root is used as treatment for colds, the flu, measles, tonsillitis, and sore throats. Native Americans also used burdock root as a digestive aid.
- Burdock root can also be used to protect the heart from many problems and conditions. It helps to increase good cholesterol levels, lower bad cholesterol levels, and works to keep the blood free from toxins and other free radicals.
- Pregnant women should avoid burdock as it can possibly stimulate contractions and can cause damage to the fetus.
- There are many other conditions that can be treated using burdock root as well such as rheumatism, fevers, liver disorders, gall stones, hepatitis, anorexia, joint pain, bladder infections, gout, and many gastrointestinal problems.
- Burdock root can even be used to increase a persons sex drive, keeps the kidneys healthy and thwarting any possible kidney stones from forming, works as a great diuretic, and can even help to aid in weight loss.



Other Uses



- In the early 1970s, the American composer Christian Wolff composed a piece for many performers called “Burdocks.”
- Native Hawaiians call burdock by its Japanese name, gobo. They credit burdock with being able to increase energy and endurance.
- In the Middle Ages, burdock was braided into hair or hung over doors to ward off evil.
- Nature’s Garden sells [burdock root](#) for external use only. We do not sell it as a food item. The information above talks about how great burdock is for many industries, however we only sell it for external use. We provide this data for educational purposes only. Nothing in this article is to be construed as medical advice. Please consult your doctor before using this product or any of this information for treatment purposes.
- Trying to figure out how to use this amazing product as soon as you can? Well then make sure to try out our free recipe for our [Soothing Facial Mask](#)! Be sure to check out all the rest of our [free recipes and classes](#) as well!

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