Dandelions: Weeds of Feed?
Herbal and Edible Series
Presented by Bree Lewis
BACKGROUND

- AmeriCorps at UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center and Sequoia Riverlands Trust

- Graduated from University of Colorado, Boulder 2012 with degree in Environmental Science

- From an earthy crunchy family

- Love foraging and cooking
UC DAVIS TAHOE ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH CENTER (TERC)

Tahoe Science Center

Tahoe City Field Station – Historic Hatchery and Demonstration Garden
WHY CARE?
The name dandelion came from the French, dent de lion, or tooth of the lion, referring to the toothed leaves.

Other common names lion’s tooth, priest’s crown, Irish daisy, monk’s dead and blowball.

It’s scientific name is *Taraxacum officinale*.

*Officinale* means it was sold in state-designated Roman shops for food or medicine.

The flowering period is from late Spring to early Summer.
They have many minerals such as potassium, calcium, magnesium, iron, manganese, phosphorus, zinc, and copper.

They contain many vitamins like thiamin, folic acid, riboflavin, pyridoxine, niacin, folate, and Vitamins A, E, K, C, & B6.

Contains many antioxidants.

They are rich in nutrients including protein.
100g of this herb has RDA (recommended daily allowance) of:

- 9% of dietary fiber,
- 19% of vitamin B-6 (pyridoxine),
- 20% of Riboflavin,
- 58% of vitamin C,
- 338% of vitamin A,
- 649% of vitamin K,
- 39% of iron and
- 19% of calcium.
DANDELION ANATOMY

Basic Plant Anatomy: The Dandelion

- Round seed head
- Flower
- Hollow stem
- Jagged leaves
- Long taproot
Before the flower starts to bloom, early spring
No yellow showing
Remove ramps, green leaves
Can pickle/ caper
Put in raw salads and sandwiches for mild flavor
- Remove ramp if using fresh
- Remove petals from base
- Can use in baking, salves, infusions, drinks, food, etc.
- Mild in flavor
LEAVES

- Collect before plant flowers, early spring
- Strong, tart flavor
- Wash thoroughly
- Dry, sauté, steam or freeze
Roots are stout, fusiform and have fleshy taproots

- Pulp is dark-brown and white
- Early Spring, more bitter but have optimal digestive stimulant and Autumn, sweeter and higher in insulin (carbohydrate-good for diabetes)
- Can also be cooked like a carrot
**BENEFITS - DIGESTION, DIABETES, DIURETIC**

- **Constipation** - high levels of dietary fiber aid digestion and proper intestinal health
- **Stimulates healthy bowel movements** by adding bulk to stool and reduces changes of constipation and diarrhea
- **Slightly bitter in taste** - lowers sugar levels in blood, as all bitter substances do
- **Can also stimulate appetite** following trauma or surgery
- **Diabetes Type II** - helps production of insulin from the pancreas, thereby keeping the blood sugar level low
- **Natural diuretic** - increase urination in diabetes patients, remove excess sugar
- **Help eliminate deposits of toxic substances** in the kidney and urinary tract
Cancer preventative - has antioxidants, reduce free radicals in the body, thereby reducing risk of cancer

Detoxifies the body, further reducing risk of development of tumors and various cancers

Luteolin actually poisons essential components of cancer cells when it binds to them, rendering them ineffective and unable to reproduce

Weight loss - urine contains 4% fat, more urinate more water and fats are lost from the body, it helps lose “water weight” without causing side effects

Dandelions are low in calories ~25 calories/cup, huge amount of beneficial side effects
Liver - antioxidants keep liver functioning, other compounds treat hemorrhaging in the liver. It aids digestion and fights underlying viral infection.

Improves liver health, regulates bile production, and promotes urination where excess bile can be eliminated.

Jaundice - a primary disorder of the liver in which the organ starts overproducing bile, which ultimately enters the bloodstream and wreaks havoc on the body’s metabolism.

Gall bladder disorder - improve general functioning protects from ill effects of oxidants and infections, regulates the various secretions.
BENEFITS - ANEMIA, LOWERS BLOOD PRESSURE, STRENGTHENS BONES

- Anemia - high in iron, vitamins, and protein content
- High blood pressure - high fiber content reduces cholesterol, large amounts of potassium replacing sodium and urination
- Bone-rich in calcium, rich in antioxidants like vitamin-C and Luteolin, which protect bones from age-related damage
HARVESTING

- Roots - best in fall after a couple light frosts
- When using roots, try to keep intact
- Greens - before the plant flowers
- Buds - no yellow petals showing
- Flowers - early morning, eat from fresh or dry
- Make sure no sprays are used in area, if not sure don’t use
- Make sure right plants - circular shape and jagged leaves
IDENTIFICATION

- Many look-alike plants have similar leaves, but dandelion leaves are hairless.
- They generally have toothed edges.
- Leaves and hollow flower stems grow directly from the rootstock. There is only one flower per stem, verses other branching look-alike plants.
- Root, leaves and stem all exude a milky white sap.
- The fruits form “wish balls.”
- It is in the sunflower or composite family.
IDENTIFICATION
PREPPING
DRYING
STORAGE
- Pickled buds
- Pancakes/ waffles
- Smoothie
- Syrup
- Jelly
- Salads greens
- Sautéed greens
- Soup
- Pesto
- Fried
- Veggie burgers
- Vinegars- salad
- Cookies/ biscuits
- Bread
- Cupcakes
- Etc.
DRINKS

- Tea
- Coffee
- Cordial
- Wine
- Lemonade
MEDICINAL USES

- Oil – massage oil, sore muscles
- Salves – sore muscles, achy & arthritic joints, rough/ chapped skin
- Vinegar
- Tinctures
apple cider vinegar

morning detox tea

1 cup warm water
2 tbsp ACV
2 tbsp lemon juice
1 tbsp raw honey
1 tsp cinnamon
dash of cayenne

Dr. Oz's Swimsuit Slimdown Drink

1 cup grapefruit or orange or pineapple juice
2 tsp apple cider vinegar
1 tsp honey

Drink before each meal ... breaks down fat cells faster than anything else.
Dandelions, Weed or Feed? - 8/17 TDG 5:30 p.m.

Transforming Transportation, Finally: How Three Transportation Revolutions Are Starting to Disrupt Transportation As We Know It - 8/11 TERC 5:30 p.m.

Children’s Environmental Science Day - 8/20 Commons Beach 1 p.m.

Science of Wine - 8/24 TERC 5:30 p.m.

Science of Gratitude - 9/1 TERC 5:30 p.m.

State of Innovation - 9/15 TERC 5:30 p.m.

A Gut Feeling How Intestinal Microbes Modulate Mood and Behavior - 9/22 TERC 5:30 p.m.

Simply Splendid Science and the Best of Beverages (and beer tasting) - 10/13 TERC 5:30 p.m.
FOLLOW UP

- Root removal in the fall!
- PowerPoint available online: http://terc.ucdavis.edu/education-outreach/eriksson/garden.html
- Questions?