

"IF YOU HAVE NEVER TASTED DANDELION HERBAL WINE, IT IS ONE OF THE MOST DELICATELY FRAGRANT FLAVORS IMAGINABLE, THE COLOR PURE LIQUID GOLD." - PAMELA SANES.

The dance between nurturing healthy dandelion ecology in the garden, & your own health, spans an unbroken spectrum of experience. This dance can't be learned from a book. It's entirely personal to you & the dandelion ecology of your own landscape. This dance will grow out of your own direct experiments growing, harvesting & using dandelion through the seasons. Here are some initial pointers to keep in mind.

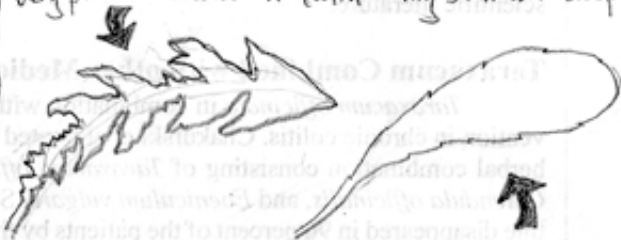
- Peter Gail's dandelion website is a motherlode of knowhow for dandelion as food.
- All parts of dandelion - leaves, roots, flowers, seeds - are edible, used, and safe to eat.
- Use dandelion leaves like spinach: raw, steamed, sautéed, juiced, in quiche... Dandelion leaves are bitter, year round. An old timer tells me spring leaves, before the flowers appear, are the sweetest. Many people think the greens are too bitter to eat at first, even as some cultures prefer to eat them at their most bitter! So, when beginning, try a small amount mixed with other greens. Letting the greens stand in water overnight can reduce the bitterness considerably. Many tasty recipes exist. Keep in mind that dandelion's bitterness & healthfulness are inextricably related. Cascade Anderson Geller: "It's a nice reminder that what we eat should be our medicine." Experiment.
- Dandelion is a forage plant. You don't need to dig the whole plant when harvesting leaves. Harvest leaves considerably, & the plant will keep growing back.
- Many of the plant's most potent medicinal qualities are concentrated in the root. If a portion of the root breaks off & remains in the ground, great! The root piece will regenerate a new plant. Because you are taking the whole plant, be especially sensitive to your impact on plant populations.

IDENTIFYING DANDELION



"Dandelion has no poisonous lookalikes." sez James Green.

Dandelion may be the world's most recognizable plant. Then again, you'll find its form is quite variable. Most of the variability is found in the leaves - even on the same plant. The word 'dandelion' is derived from the French 'dents-de-lion' or 'lion's teeth' which many believe refers to the plant's leaf shape. Very often the leaves do show very pronounced teeth (with many shallow to deep-



-cut lobes) but often the teeth are only slightly in evidence (the leaves are lobeless). Every leaf on every plant is quite different. Reaching in length from 2" - 16", the leaves spring directly from the ground. They feel smooth to the touch. No hairs, warts, or pricks. The flowers are golden 1½" - 2" in diameter & flower almost anytime of the year, but most intensely in the Spring & Fall when they are open most of the time between sunrise & sunset. Dandelion flowers less in the summer heat, with the flowers closing as the day heats up. Flower stems can reach a height of 20"



Dandelion grows from a taproot, about as thick as your little finger, sometimes up to one foot deep, with many branched crowns (that part of the plant between the root, and the leaves & flower stems). All parts of the plant contain a white, milky sap.

Other milky-sapped 'weeds' with fluffy yellow flowers are occasionally mistaken for dandelion, especially cat's ear / cat's paw / false dandelion (*Hypochaeris radicata* & *H. glabra*)

which are safe to eat. But a defining characteristic makes dandelion easy to I.D. - all leaves, and the hollow, unbranched flower stems grow directly out of the crown rosette. If the plant in question has any branched or divided stalks / stems, it is not a dandelion. "One stalk: one flower." •