



Botanical name: *Arctium lappa*

Family: Compositae/Asteraceae [in the aster/Sunflower family, includes asters, thistle, chicory, dandelion, safflower, yarrow, zinnias]

Common name: Burdock

More names: Niúbàng [Chinese dialect], gobō [Japanese dialect] u-eong [Korean dialect] burdock [Yoruba, Hmong daw+], bardana [Spanish/Portuguese], Bardana, Bear Grabber, Beggar's Buttons, Burr Seed, Clo-Bur, Cockle Buttons, Cocklebur, Fox's Clote, Great Burr, Great burdock, Happy Major, Hardock, Hareburr, Lappa, Bat Weed, Love Leaves, Personata, Philanthropinum, Thorny Burr, Poor Man's Potatoes

Parts of the plant used: roots; leaves + seeds

When to harvest: roots can be harvested with consent on the fall of the first year of growth or the spring of their second year before flowering; the plant will have large green top leaves, grayish underneath

Herbal actions:

alterative, diuretic, diaphoretic, nutritive, antirheumatic, antibiotic, antibacterial, antifungal, diuretic, mild laxative, diaphoretic; leaves: diuretic, mild laxative; seeds: anti-inflammatory, hypoglycemic effect, prevents fever

Active constituents:

roots/leaves: calcium, potassium, phosphorous, amino acids, fibers, glycosides (lactucopicrin), flavonoids (arctiin—a known smooth muscle relaxant), tannins, volatile oil including sesquiterpene lactones, polyacetylenes (have antibiotic effect), resin, mucilage, inulin (up to 45%), alkaloids, essential oil, phytosterols, caffeic acid derivatives; seeds: essential fatty acids, vitamins A and B2

Habitat + ecology:

Burdock is native to so called Europe + Asia, now naturalized and grows in temperate environments, including those found on Turtle Island, and in some subtropical regions, including so called South Africa. They make their homes wherever they can including areas that have been disturbed like roadsides, ditch banks + old fields.

Planet: Venus

Energy: Cool

Element: Earth

Taste: Bitter, Slightly Sweet

Meridians/Organs affected: lungs, stomach, kidney, liver

Ethnobotany (People + the plant ancestor):

- The Iroquois harvest and dry the roots to serve as a source of food in winter. In Japan, young burdock taproots are as common in the marketplace as potatoes are in the West. In Japanese [*kinpira gobō*], Chinese + Korean cuisine young taproots + leaves are used as a root vegetable, resembling the taste of artichokes.
- In Southern Appalachia slave plantations, folk healers used burdock as a blood purifier, to treat snake bites, and for caring for cramps.
- In Micmac nation buds and roots are used for sores, bites.
- In Ojibwe nation roots are used as a blood medicine (purification + detoxification).
- In Traditional Chinese Medicine, the seeds are known as niupangzi (or Niu Bang Zi) and are used to expel



wind-heat that accompanies cough, fever, sore throat, arthritis, rheumatism, anorexia nervosa, and various gastrointestinal disorders. Similarly in ayurveda, bandana also supports a variety of maladies, hair loss, gout, arthritis + kidney stones

- Native Americans depended on the entire plant for its healing powers and nutritional value, and sometimes boiled the stems in maple syrup to create a sweet treat. Dried roots could be stored all winter.

Plant magick:

- Turns worries into warriors
- Helps the heart ground
- Connects us to the fertility of earth
- Cleansing the body + spirit [Ojibway]
- In TCM used to prevent excess yang or fires
- In the ayurveda, considered balancing for pitta and kapha constitutions
- Cleansing + protective
 - Used as brew with rosemary, broom corn + lemon to clean the home [Hoodoo]
 - Roots added to medicine bundle or worn
 - Roots can be hung on the south door/window of the home to protect from misdirected energies
- Clearing emotions that feel stuck
- Connected to the underworld, where we accept duality + make peace
- Associated with planet Venus + Orisha Oshun

Form: spirit, incense, roots/leaves, essential oil*

Medicinal uses:

- Nourishing + restorative to the skin, lymph, liver, kidneys, gallbladder
- Strengthens immunity by opening the channels to receive nutrients
- Nourishes + treats the skin/tissues
 - Effective wash for treating various skin conditions, including acne, sores, eczema, psoriasis, athlete's foot + fungal infections[decoction]
 - Stimulating cellular regeneration, detoxification and cleansing -> natural hair growth
 - Skin sores and leg ulcers [poultices]
 - Improves hair growth, tonifies skin + eliminates water weight
- Antimicrobial properties of the tea also benefit those suffering from colds, flu, and inflammatory disorders, including fluid retention [roots, seeds]
- Supportive to gastrointestinal imbalances [root + leaves] including kidney stones, urinary tract infections, indigestion, bloating, constipation, cramping, or to stimulate digestion taken before meals [infusion]
 - Detoxifies the liver, supporting them in processing toxins quicker
- Supports with waste elimination, both metabolic + environmentally accumulated
- Regulates blood pressure, helping to relieve tension in the cardiovascular system
- Offers relief for arthritis [root tincture]
- Infused oil made by hot infusion method for varicose veins [leaves]
- In Russia and India, the herb is a popular cancer treatment.
- Regulates the balance of insulin + glucose in the body, reducing the development + severity of diabetes
- Promotes hormone balance, especially estrogen

***Contraindications:** Caution is using heart medication (including antiplatelet), in conditions that are exacerbated by GI stimulation (ie. Gastritis, hyperchlorhydria, GERD, biliary obstruction, acute cholelithiasis).

Recipes + Allies

Purifying: bay leaf, dandelion, nettle, coriander, milk thistle

Preparing burdock shoots

- Cut off the leaves + chop the stalks into smallish chunks

Power oil

- Sampson snake root
- Solomon seal root
- Lodestone or citrine



Immune support: elderberry, echinacea, cat's claw, licorice root, ginger, oregano, garlic, medicinal mushrooms

Skin imbalances: sassafras bark, sarsaparilla, dandelion root, yellow dock, licorice, red clover, buckthorn, American ginseng, poleroot, echinacea

Preparation:

food, decoction, tincture, powder, oil [known as bur oil]

- Steam in a little water with some salt and sugar until tender (no longer than 10 minutes).
- Add shoots to broth!

- Sandalwood essential oil
- Lemon essential oil or lemon rinds
- Frankincense Essential oil or resin

Recommended dose:

10-30 drops/ ½-1 dropperful 1x a day

Crude herb as food



Photos of the plant ancestor:

