Krauser Ampfer, Rumex crispus.
Letter from the Publisher

Yellow dock is a friend of mine. I often pass it while hiking along infertile soil where only the most tenacious mint will grow. Its roots are thick and deep, and a pain to wild harvest. Its deep, thick, stubborn roots remind me of its ability to loosen up and get things moving in the body. It is a favorite laxative of mine, that I often give to clients who have constipation due to prescription drug side effects.

Some remedies are best for addressing acute, shallow problems, and some excel at deep-seated, chronic issues. I believe yellow dock is a deep, nourishing, and moving remedy. Not only is it useful as a gentle-but-effective laxative, it is a fantastic ally for deep conditions that manifest on the skin. Its liver stimulating and supporting actions make it useful for people who have skin conditions like eczema, psoriasis, and acne. I also find it is helpful for people with chronic medication use, or who have chronic pain from conditions like fibromyalgia, to help the body deal with excess stress hormones and support a healthy liver.

This weedy medicinal is easy to find in the wild, in dry waste lands. It is conditioning the soil for other species to move in and set up shop. In a similar way, it is helping us clean up the toxins from our body, and support healthy, balanced function.

I hope you enjoy this issue, and learn a great deal about the benefits of yellow dock.

Green Blessings,

- Amanda
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Yellow Dock Herbal Monograph

*Nina Judith Katz*

**Latin name:** *Rumex crispus*

**Common names:** yellow dock, dock, curly dock, curled dock, narrow-leaf dock

**Family:** Polygonaceae

**Part Used:** root

**Chemical Constituents:** aluminum, anthraquinones, ash, calcium, fat, fixed oil, iron, magnesium, manganese, nepodin, niacin, oxalic acid, phosphorus, protein, quercitrin, resin, riboflavin, ruminicin, selenium, tannins, thiamine, tin, Vitamin A, and Vitamin C
**Actions:** alterative, astringent, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antiscorbutic, cholagogue, decongestant, gently laxative, tonic

**Energetics:** bitter, cooling, astringent, drying, moving

**Affinities/Tropism:** Liver meridian, Spleen meridian, Metal element, intestines, liver, gall bladder, skin, blood, pancreas, kidneys, lymph

“All Docks are under Jupiter,” wrote Nicholas Culpepper in 1653. He continued:

...but the yellow Dock-root is best to be taken when either the blood or liver is affected by choler. All of them have a kind of cooling (but not all alike) drying quality... The roots boiled in vinegar help the itch, scabs, and breaking out of the skin, if it be bathed therewith. The distilled water of the herb and roots have the same virtue, and cleanses the skin from freckles, morphews, and other spots and discolorings therein.

All Docks being boiled with meat, make it boil the sooner.

Traditional herbalism uses yellow dock primarily for the liver and gall bladder, the digestive tract, and the skin. As a bitter, it activates the liver and gall bladder, clearing liver congestion and jaundice and aiding in the digestion of fats. Because yellow dock is gently moving as well as drying, it simultaneously activates and calms the entire digestive tract, helping with sluggish digestion, constipation and abdominal distention, but also with diarrhea and dysentery. It can treat hemorrhoids when they accompany constipation. It is also useful for esophageal reflux, heartburn, and excessive production of hydrochloric acid.¹,²

Yellow dock is also good for inflammation and ulcers in the gastrointestinal tract, the skin, and the mouth; as an energetically cooling remedy, it’s good for the kind of red, sore, “angry” conditions traditionally associated with heat. Similarly, it treats
various kinds of red skin conditions, including rashes, eczema, acne, psoriasis, and stinging nettle rash. If the word “angry” comes to mind for a skin condition, yellow dock is indicated.\textsuperscript{1,2,3} Mashed and decocted, the root can work directly on the skin as a poultice or a compress, or one may take it internally in tincture or decoction form. One may also prepare a short decoction of the leaves for external use.\textsuperscript{3}

As a metal element remedy, yellow dock helps the throat as well as the guts; it's good for sore throats, chronic coughs, laryngitis, and even bronchitis. In addition, it can help with swollen glands.

For years, herbalists have recommended yellow dock for those with low iron. Rosemary Gladstar recommends it especially for chronically fatigued and stressed-out young women whom extra iron may help.\textsuperscript{4} While yellow dock contains iron, however, it doesn't contain such a significant amount as this seems to imply. Instead, yellow dock works by improving iron absorption, and is therefore best combined with remedies higher in iron, such as nettle and seaweed. Since yellow dock, nettle, and seaweed are all energetically cooling, unless this combination is for someone with a heat condition, it would work best taken with ginger, which is both warming and harmonizing.

This ability to improve human absorption of iron may relate to the effect of yellow dock on the soil where it grows. When it grows in dryland, yellow dock increases the amount of iron and some other elements in the soil nearest its roots. When it grows in wetland, it increases these element concentrations in the soil even more, both immediately above the roots, and in the 3 millimeters below them.\textsuperscript{5}

Yellow dock also bioaccumulates heavy metals, notably lead, cadmium, copper, and zinc, and researchers are exploring its
potential use in bioremediation of polluted soil. For the forager and herbalist, this means we need to pay close attention to the state of the soil from which we harvest yellow dock or from which it is sourced, so as to avoid using yellow dock from soil rich in heavy metals.

Yellow dock root is also a good source of Vitamin A, phosphorus, and manganese, and while it has slightly less vitamin C, it still has enough to be antiscorbutic.

Yellow dock is also a remedy for rheumatism and gout, urinary stones, dysmenorrhea, and PMS. The French herbalist Maurice Mességué recommended the docks generally for fevers, suppressed appetite, and a sluggish urinary tract, in addition to the indications already mentioned.

Considering the traditional use of yellow dock to treat the intestines, it is interesting that there are now studies suggest that yellow dock may be helpful in treating colorectal cancer. A 2012 study examined methanol extracts of yellow dock root for DNA and protein protection, free radical scavenging, metal chelation, and inhibiting enzymes that aggravate the production of glucose. The study concluded that the 80% methanol yellow dock root extracts “are anti-diabetic, anticancerous, free radical scavengers and also have ability to protect DNA and protein contents of the proliferating cells.” The study compared 100% and 80% extracts and found the 80% extracts more effective.

Of course, a methanol extract in vitro isn't the same as an ethanol extract, or a standard herbal tincture, in vivo or in the body, but these studies are still encouraging, the more so since there are also two studies, one looking at yellow dock fruit extract and the other
at an extract made from the aerial parts more generally, confirmed that yellow dock has high antioxidant potential.\textsuperscript{10,11}

Another use for yellow dock explored in a recent study is as a malaria remedy. Malaria symptoms include diarrhea, fever, and hot and dry skin. Fever and hot, dry skin are classic signs of heat in traditional medicine, so yellow dock is appropriate for them, as it is for diarrhea, and yellow dock is, in fact, a traditional remedy for malaria. A recent study suggests that yellow dock may be useful as an anti-malarial medicine; the study particularly identified the compound nepodin, which yellow dock contains, as anti-malarial.\textsuperscript{12}

The rinsed and cooked young leaves make a good addition to soups, in my experience. “Wildman” Steve Brill recommends the peeled flower stalks, either raw or cooked, harvested in mid-spring.\textsuperscript{13}

Yellow dock is native to North Africa, the whole of Europe, and most of Asia. European settlers introduced it to North America, where it now grows freely throughout the continent. This may change soon, however; researchers projecting likely scenarios for climate change expect yellow dock to lose most of its habitat and possibly face extinction as climate change continues.\textsuperscript{14}

**Dose**

- Tincture of root: take 5–75 drops, 2–3 times per day. Take before and/or after meals to aid digestion.
- Root decoction: 1 pinch–1 Tbsp dried root in 1½ C – 1 quart water. Consume over the course of a day as needed.
- Leaf decoction (topical): 2 large handfuls of leaves to one liter of water.\textsuperscript{3}
Contraindications

Use caution when consuming the leaves; the young leaves are high in chrysophanic acid, which can irritate the mouth, but can be washed off with water. The leaves are also generally high in oxalic acid, which binds calcium. This simply means that they should form part of a meal, not the entire meal.

In the traditional energetic classification, this is a cooling remedy, so it is not suitable for energetically cold conditions unless combined with warming herbs.
Yellow Dock Wildcrafting and Recipes

Gina Gibbons

A member of the buckwheat family (Polygonaceae), *Rumex crispis* is a highly valued medicinal plant that we can generally find in the wild with ease. It is a powerful ally to have in the medicine cabinet and a tasty wild food to add to daily life.

How to Identify Yellow Dock

Growing freely along roadsides, open fields, disturbed areas, pastures and many backyards in North America and Europe, we can find numerous species of dock. In the wild, it seems to actually prefer soil that has been disturbed by human activity, where it can find soft soil in which to germinate. There are reportedly 25 species of dock in North America.¹ *Rumex* genus plants can be identified by
their characteristically tall post-flowering seed stalks, which are the color of rust and are covered in tiny seed pods.

If there is no remaining stalk from the previous season, as there often isn’t after a cold winter, it can be identified by its arrow- or lance-shaped leaf. These leaves, which typically have tiny brown splotches along them, are some of the first wild edibles to appear in the spring. Often, they will be ribbed or curly along the edges, hence the name curly dock. There is little to no smell in the leaves, but they taste slightly bitter and tangy. Characteristic to all true docks, the new leaves near the plant crown are full of mucilage, similar to aloe vera.

There is also a reddish stalk connecting the leaves, that comes right out of the ground. If it’s the root you are going for, it will be about 8 to 12 inches long and about 1/2 inch wide. The root is not forked. When you cut into it, it will have a brilliant earthy yellow color that radiates with life and medicinal value.

Yellow/curly dock is often mistaken for bitter dock (Rumex obtusifolius). The best way to distinguish between the two is by the shape of their leaves. Yellow dock has what we could refer to as ruffles across the leaf itself and along the edges. Furthermore,
bitter dock has broad leaves as opposed to the lance-shaped leaf of yellow cock. Another distinguishing characteristic to tell the two apart is that the wings of the yellow dock fruit (or seeds) are smooth, whereas they are sharp and pointed, almost like spines, on bitter dock. The two species are both commonly referred to as yellow dock and can be used interchangeably, but it’s always nice to know exactly who you are working with!

Harvesting Yellow Dock

The young leaves can be collected in early spring, and the larger leaves throughout the summer. After a full season or two of growth, the roots can be collected for medicine. When harvesting the root, you will want to wait until the entire plant has turned to a rusty brown color. This ensures that the root is completely mature and the seeds are ready to be scattered after or while you harvest. Because it is a perennial, the longer you wait, the bigger the root will get. The roots tend to branch out, so it will be easiest to harvest them using a shovel, digging fork, or digging stick.

Once you have freed the roots from the earth, cut the top of the plant off just under the crown. You may want to breathe in the incredible aroma of this fresh and powerful root. Gently wash away the dirt, making sure to get into the nooks and crannies. It is best to chop them right away because if you wait, the roots will harden and become very difficult to chop once they are dried.
To harvest the seeds, wait until they have turned brown and rusty. Simply chop down a seed stalk and place into a paper bag. Many bugs and creatures appreciate these heart shaped seeds and make their homes amongst the paper calyces. Rosalee de la Foret suggests leaving the bag outside overnight on its side to encourage these creatures to leave in a peaceful way. The next day, you can sift through your stash, removing the stalk, leaves, and any debris. You can grind the seeds into a flour (see recipe, page 17) with a mortar and pestle, spice grinder, or food processor. Interesting trivia: It is said that unground seeds, if stored properly, can be viable for up to 80 years!

Yellow Dock’s Medicine

Yellow dock is known broadly as a facilitator of detoxification and a mild laxative. Its characteristics are bitter, astringent, and cooling. The root is typically the part of the plant that is used medicinally, although the leaves also have medicinal properties when used externally on the skin and as an overall bitter tonic.

The roots are a great remedy for what herbalist Matthew Wood refers to as “an excess of badger energy,” which is described as “too much fire in the stomach, too much appetite and too much emotional energy.” Whenever there is heat in the digestive tract, yellow dock can help. It can help strengthen bowel muscles and the colon.

Herbalist Guido Mase uses yellow dock to help people who have been reliant on over-the-counter laxatives for months or even years. Over time, their bowels lose the ability to move on their own without the stimulus of a laxative. A gentle and slow way to help considerably is to transition them to a diet higher in fiber that
includes bitter greens such as yellow dock leaves, and supplementing with yellow dock root tincture. He says, “with a little patience, you can retrain the colon to respond to the stretching of its wall as it fills with stool, and the dependence on artificial sources of stimulation can successfully be broken.”

Yellow dock works upon many systems. It helps support lymphatic tissues as well as circulate blood. There are accounts of many Native American tribes using a decoction of the root as a blood purifier, including the Delaware, Iroquois, Mohegan and Paiute. It can help improve digestion and balance the appetite. The Paiute boiled seeds and ate them alone or in a compound for diarrhea. They also used a decoction of the root for stomach disorders including cramping, pain, constipation and kidney troubles.

Many tribes also used the plant externally for skin conditions such as swellings, ulcers, boils, wounds, and to draw out pus. Using yellow dock as “Love Medicine,” the Iroquois made a wash out of decocted roots and washed their hands, face and clothes.

The Cherokee fed beaten roots to horses that had sick stomachs. It is often recommended to make a decoction of the roots, but this is strong-tasting and is not always palatable for people, even in small doses.

One of the simplest and most effective ways to use the medicine of the roots is in the form of a tincture. To make a tincture, simply cover cleaned and minced fresh or dried roots in 100-proof spirits and allow it to steep in a covered glass jar for about 4 weeks. Once it is ready, strain out the plant material and you have a go-to remedy for mild constipation.
Dosage

Mase suggests using yellow dock tincture for sluggish bowel during pregnancy, or with the irregularity that often accompanies travel. It is a wonderful remedy because of its gentleness and the fact that it is non habit-forming. It can even be administered to children. For adults, Mase recommends half a teaspoon before the evening meal or twice a day if necessary. For children, the dose depends on the age. For those over 18 months, 30 to 45 drops a day is recommended. Once they reach their teens, the dose can be increased to an adult dose. He suggests that, although it can be used long term, it is usually only administered for 2–3 weeks at most.

Yellow Dock as Wild Food

The leaves of yellow dock are a delicious and lovely spring green to add to daily cooking. Use it as you would spinach. Just a cautionary note: Both spinach and yellow dock are high in oxalic acid, which we do not want to over consume, especially if there are kidney or liver issues. This can easily be neutralized though by cooking it and simply not eating too many of the raw leaves. Many First Nations ate the raw greens. The Mohegan combined dock, pigweed (Amaranthus spp.), mustard (Sinapis spp.), plantain (Plantago spp.) and nettle (Urtica dioica) and ate them as mixed greens. You can cook the leaves into soups, quiches, omelets, frittatas, curries or simply sauté them with garlic, olive oil, and lemon juice or vinegar. Herbalist Ryan Drum suggests powdering the root and adding it to curry powder.

Yellow Dock Lasagna Recipe

One of my earliest teachers and mentors, Frank Cook, can be seen on Youtube talking about his love of yellow dock in lasagna. He
describes the cooked consistency of the leaves as silky and tender, so soft you can cut it with a fork. He recommends piling a bunch of leaves together, removing the inner rib (it can be a bit tough), and using the dock leaves in place of spinach. Here is a traditional recipe for inspiration.

**Ingredients**
- 20 lasagna noodles
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 C chopped fresh mushrooms
- 1 C chopped onion
- 1 Tbsp minced garlic
- 2 C fresh dock leaves, chopped, ribs removed
- 3 C ricotta cheese
- \( \frac{2}{3} \) C grated Romano cheese
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp dried basil leaves
- \( \frac{1}{2} \) tsp ground black pepper
- 1 egg
- 3 C shredded mozzarella cheese
- 3 C tomato pasta sauce
- 1 C grated Parmesan cheese

**Directions**
1. First, preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
2. In a large pot, bring salted water to a boil.
3. Once boiling, add the lasagna noodles and cook them according to the package instructions.
4. On medium-high heat, sauté mushrooms, onions, and garlic in olive oil until the onions are tender.
5. Drain any excess liquid and allow to cool.
6. Steam the dock leaves for 5 minutes.
7. Drain the cooked dock leaves and squeeze out excess liquid.
8. Combine ricotta cheese, Romano cheese, oregano, basil, pepper, and egg in a bowl.
9. Next, add the cooled mushroom mixture. Mix very well, using an electric mixer if you wish.
10. Lay 5 of the lasagna noodles on the bottom of a 9x13-inch baking dish.
11. Spread a third of the cheese mixture over the noodles.
12. Layer a third of the dock on top of this.
13. Sprinkle 1 C mozzarella cheese and $\frac{1}{3}$ C Parmesan cheese on top.
14. Spread 1 C red pasta sauce over the cheese.
15. Repeat this process of layering 2 more times.
16. Top the lasagna with any remaining cheese.
17. Cover the baking dish with aluminum foil and bake for 1 hour.
18. Allow to cool 15 minutes before serving.

**Yellow Dock Seed Crackers**

The seeds can be ground into a highly nutritious flour. Here is a recipe for inspiration, which I got from Jennifer Mansell’s blog, Prairie Herbcraft. You can play with it as you would any other flour.

**Ingredients**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ C yellow dock seeds, coarsely ground
- 1½ C oat flour (or any type of flour you choose)
• ½ tsp paprika
• 1 tsp onion powder
• 1 tsp garlic powder
• ½ C butter
• ⅓ C kefir (or substitute yogurt or buttermilk, adjusting for thickness)
• Optional: cumin, or other herbs and spices

Directions
1. Mix together the flours and spices.
2. Add or cut in the butter.
3. Add the kefir and stir.
4. Turn the mixture out on a floured surface and knead until the dough is well mixed.
5. Place in a covered bowl and refrigerate for an hour or so.
6. When you’re almost ready to bake, preheat the oven to 400.
7. Using a rolling pin, roll out the dough on a floured surface and make it as thin as possible while still easy to handle.
8. Cut it into squares using a pizza or cookie cutter and place the pieces on a parchment-paper-lined baking sheet.
9. Bake 10-12 minutes.
10. Remove from oven and allow the crackers to cool.

Yellow Dock is a multifaceted giver that can be easily incorporated into our daily lives in numerous ways. Come springtime, be sure to collect the fresh leaves, and then watch as it grows into a tall and majestic plant filled with heart shaped seeds, rooted in deep Yellow magic. May yellow dock inspire the medicine maker and wild forager in us all.
Yellow Dock’s Versatile History

Stephany Hoffelt

The herb yellow dock has a long and interesting history of use that might actually surprise some people who only use the root, but I first want to explain that when you start looking into this history, it can be a bit confusing. For example, Chin-ch’iao-mai is sometimes given as the Chinese name for yellow dock, but this name is also used to refer to Fagopyrum cymosum (golden buckwheat).¹ This seems to be a regional difference with at least one source mentioning “at Peking this is Rumex crispus.”² This confusion continues to occur in modern times. Here in Iowa, you frequently hear old-timers calling Rumex crispus “sour dock” despite Maud
Grieves’ assertion that sour dock was a name reserved for sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*).

Historically, the name dock seems to apply broadly to various member of the *Rumex* species including *Rumex obtusifolius* (broad dock) *Rumex verticillatus* (swamp dock) and *Rumex crispus* (yellow dock). For example, the Anglo Saxon manuscripts mention dock, but which species this refers to is unclear. ³ The Greek Dioscorides didn’t specifically mention a curly-leafed dock in *De Materia Medica*, although his entry on “lapathum” mentions four different kinds of *Rumex* including one that resembles plantain. ⁴ It seems likely that these docks were used somewhat interchangeably throughout history. In fact, William Cook writes in the Physio-Medical Dispensatory “the roots of these several species are of the same general characters, though that of the *crispus* is decidedly the most effective and least astringent.”⁵

If you are searching specifically for *Rumex crispus* in sources from the UK you will want to look for the common names of “curled dock,” “curly dock,” or “narrow-leaf dock.” In Irish, *Rumex crispus* is also *copóg chatch* which again means “curled dock,” ⁶ and in Scotland, it is called simply docken or *copag*.⁷ One herbal historian mentions that children in northern England would draw dock stalks through their fingers to “milk” out the sap and call the plant “curly-cows,” leading one to believe they were speaking specifically of the curly leaves of yellow dock.

**A Tonic Root**

In *On Regimen in Acute Disease*, Hippocrates noted that people who have skipped lunch are unlikely to be able to digest their dinner and recommended that “Such persons should take less supper than they
are wont, and a pudding of barley-meal more moist than usual instead of bread, and of potherbs the dock, or mallow.” This advice makes sense, given yellow dock’s actions in improving digestion which you can read more about in the article on Yellow Dock syrup on page 39.

Culpeper was a fan of all of the docks (he seemed partial to herbs ruled by Jupiter) but asserted that yellow dock was best for those whose “blood or liver was affected by choler,” meaning that it countered excess yellow bile due to its cooling properties. According to Greek medicine, yellow bile was a bodily substance that was hot and dry in nature and when present in excess resulted in hot conditions such as fever or irritability. Many modern herbalists take this to mean that yellow dock cools liver heat. He suggested boiling meat with any dock root to make it boil sooner and strengthen the liver but then complained that women wouldn’t add dock to food because it “makes the pottage black.”

Culpeper was by no means the only herbalist to embrace the root as a liver tonic. Centuries later, the physiomedical physicians such as Cook and the eclectic physicians such as King, Scudder, and Fyfe, classified yellow dock as an alterative which was “especially valuable in cases in which there is evidence of bad blood.” The root was also prescribed by eclectic physicians for a peculiar malady called “melancholia dependent on brain anemia.” This condition, asserted some, was brought on by excessive activity of the mind and excessive excretion of phosphorous resulting in “a diminution of the mental capacities.”

Specific Indications

In the days before antibiotics, the dried root was frequently included in formulas that were meant to address specific
complaints—most likely because of the root’s perceived ability to cleanse the blood. By 1890, Park, Davis & Company in the US was producing and marketing many different preparations of the root including a fluid extract, a solid extract, and a rumicin concentrate. Yellow dock root was also an ingredient in two of their compound formulas—one being a syrup that contained a few other interesting herbs, including bittersweet nightshade and Virginia creeper:

- Yellow Dock (*Rumex crispus*) 60 grams
- Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*) 30 grams
- Virginia Creeper (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) 15 grams
- Figwort (*Scrophularia nodosa*) 15 grams
- Cinnamon (*Cinnamomum verum*) 60 grams

This formula and others like it were widely used to relieve symptoms of scrofula or skin diseases associated with syphilis. Yellow dock preparations were also mentioned as being specifically useful to those who had a hereditary predisposition to glandular swellings, referred to as strumous diathesis.¹³

**More than Just Root Medicine**

Yellow dock probably springs to most herbalists’ minds as a root remedy, however that is really selling this plant short. Dioscorides mentioned the seed of lapathum as being useful against dysentery and other gastrointestinal complaints.¹⁴ Culpeper agrees, saying the seeds “stay lasks and fluxes of all sorts,” and “is helpful for those that spit blood.”¹⁵ Maud Grieves confirms the seeds are useful against dysentery.¹⁶ Given the prolific number of seeds this plant produces, modern herbalists should investigate these uses. Just keep in mind that the seeds are useful due to astringency, so don’t overdo it.
Another very interesting use of the seeds mentioned in the Anglo Saxon manuscript *The Lacnunga* is mixing dock seeds and Irish wax and, after a short ritual, placing it on the wounds of a horse that has been elf-shot. This term was used to explain many different illnesses that set on suddenly in both Anglo Saxon and Norse lore. In this particular case the term likely refers to a horse suddenly going lame for some reason.

*Bald’s Leechbook* also mentions dock as being a remedy for water-elf sickness a term that was used during medieval times to refer various illnesses that were accompanied by skin eruptions chicken pox, measles and possibly St. Anthony’s fire, the vernacular name for ergotism. The following elf-charm was to be recited after applying the remedy:

"I have wreathed round the wounds the best of healing wreaths, so the baneful sores may neither burn nor burst, nor find their way further, nor turn foul and fallow, nor thump and throb on, nor be wicked wounds, nor dig deeply down; but he himself may hold in a way to health. Let it ache thee o more than ear in earth acheth.

Sing also this many times, "May earth bear on you with all her might and main." These galdor a man may sing over a wound.

More frequently though, the Anglo Saxon manuscripts mentioned dock leaves for addressing swellings such as boils or as a remedy for burns and nettle stings. This practice carried on in the UK.

The leaves were commonly used as poultices or plasters for various conditions in the early 1900’s. Gabrielle Hatfield’s ethnographic survey of East Anglia revealed that people in that area used the leaf frequently. One respondent sharing “Another remedy I remember was the cure for all bumps, cuts and bruises, was the dock leaf, these too were applied to the wound like plasters, and stopped the bleeding and brought down the bump.”
In Ireland, the juice of the leaves would be squeezed onto a cloth and used as compress for bruises.\textsuperscript{22}

**Healing Ointments**

The plant also has a long history of being included as an ingredient in healing salves. English sources report “the poultice made from narrow-leaved dock ‘has been known to cure a growth on a man’s hand.’”\textsuperscript{23} Scottish healers also made a healing ointment by boiling the root until it was soft and mixing it with fresh butter.\textsuperscript{24} Grieve\textsuperscript{s} recommends boiling the root in vinegar and then mixing the pulp in lard. The leaves are also useful in salves, herbalist Ryan Drum still includes yellow dock leaves in the recipe for Dr. Drum’s All-Purpose Healing Salve.\textsuperscript{25}

**Dock in Nettles Out**

Many healing charms in the UK involve taking a bit of dock and rubbing it on nettle stings to relieve the pain. This is an ancient practice first mentioned in the Anglo Saxon *Leechbook*. In Cornwall, a common healing charm “Dock leaf, dock leaf, you go in; sting nettle, sting nettle, you come out,”\textsuperscript{26} while in other areas of England, you might hear: “Out nettle in dock; Dock shall have a new smock.”\textsuperscript{27} One old-timer explained to a researcher that most people didn’t do this right, saying: “The real cure was where a new leaf was growing down at the ground, there was a drop of liquid in it, and this liquid rubbed on the sting cured it.”\textsuperscript{28} I have to admit that I had used dock somewhat unsuccessfully on nettle stings until trying this trick and I find that it does seem more effective.
Dock in Folklore

In many Irish folktales, you see the phrase *bán ag dul ar scáth na copóige*, referring to a bright moonlit night. It is a shortened version of a longer Irish saying which translates to, “the moon seeking the shade of the dock and the dock receding from it.” Dock also figures prominently in Scottish tales, which credit the plant with being able to break a fairy’s hold over a child. Possession by fairies was a frequent theme in Gaelic lore.

The stories sometimes passed along practical knowledge as well. Hans Christian Anderson’s tale “The Happy Family” talks of the dock forest planted by the people who lived in the manor house as a home for the snails, which probably speaks to a once common practice of using docks as shelter plants in heliciculture, the farming of edible terrestrial snails.
Smooth Digestion through Yellow Dock

Amanda Klenner

Constipation is an issue that many Americans face, but few discuss openly. According to the National Institute of Health,¹ constipation is defined as a person who experiences less than three bowel movements a week, and bowel movements that are hard, dry, and painful or hard to pass. It is the most common gastro-intestinal complaint doctors receive, affecting about 41 million people in the United States every year.¹ I really like to see people having 1-2 healthy BMs a day for optimal health and vitality. First, let’s look at poop—what is normal and what is not.
As you can see, there is a wide range of stool types. The Bristol Stool Chart (BSC) is a medical scale used to track bowel movement health. Type 3 and 4 are examples of healthy stool (especially if there aren’t large, undigested chunks of food in it). Types 1 and 2 are the types I am talking about when I discuss constipation.

There are many causes of constipation, and most of them have a simple resolution. A few common causes are:

- **Hormonal imbalance:** Women who are pregnant, or have recently given birth have a high rate of constipation. The post-partum constipation can be caused by the use of epidurals or other pain medications given during labor.
- **Medication use:** Many prescription and over-the-counter medications can cause constipation, including pain killers, paralytics, anesthesia, antacids, calcium channel blockers,
diuretics, iron supplements, and anti-depressant drugs (just to name a few).

- Low fiber diet.
- Lack of exercise and movement.
- Changes in routine like traveling, changing jobs, etc.
- GI inflammation.

Thankfully, we have herbs like yellow dock, and good nutrition, which are both allies in battling constipation and helping to support healthy liver and bowel function.

**Digestive Transit Time**

Transit time is a term used by herbalists when we discuss how long it takes food to go from the mouth to the other end. Someone can have a slow transit time, but may not necessarily be constipated. A slow transit time indicates sluggishness of the digestive system, and a lack of good digestive enzymes helping to break down food, or a decrease in peristalsis in the gut. We will be discussing herbs to help relieve constipation and improve transit time.

Ways to ease constipation and reduce transit time:

- Eat a healthy diet high in whole foods. I tell my clients to be sure every meal they eat (even breakfast) is at least 50% vegetables, to help improve bulk fiber in the bowels. Grains can be inflammatory to the digestive system and often are a food that causes problems, so I prefer 50% of the meal to be bulked up instead by nice veggies. 10% of the meal can be fruit, which generally have a laxative effect (use with caution if you have uncontrolled diabetes). The rest of the meal can consist of whole grains, and pasture raised or organic protein.
• Go for a walk or three every day. Try to get up and move for at least 15 minutes 2–3 times a day. That means if you work a desk job, spend your breaks walking, and go for a walk in the evening. This way you are preventing constipation while also improving your health and vitality in many other ways.

• Herbal bitters: The bitter flavor helps to support proper digestion. Bitters increase the time that food stays in the stomach being broken down by stomach acid, increases the quantity of bile released from the gall bladder and liver, and speeds up transit time in the bowels while improving nutrient absorption.

• Support liver health! Not only are bitters good for the liver, but there are other herbs that are supportive to liver health too. St. John’s wort (as long as there are no medications involved), milk thistle seed, dandelion root, burdock root, yellow dock root, and other liver-supporting herbs help us clear out and balance excess hormones, while supporting healthy elimination and bile production.

• Herbal laxatives. There are two types of laxatives, gentle and cathartic. I try to stick with gentle laxatives with all but the most persistent cases of constipation.

Detox and Assimilation

I want to focus on two important factors here, in regards to yellow dock. 1) It is supportive of healthy liver detoxification and helps the body more readily eliminate toxins and body wastes. 2) If a person is nutrient deficient, it can support better assimilation of nutrients, which improves peristalsis in the small and large intestines. Yellow dock is gentle, not harsh, and works as many gentle herbs do, to help nudge the body to function the way it is supposed to.
As a cholagogue and a bitter, the root of this tough “weed” spurs the release of bile from the liver and gall bladder, which also supports a healthy digestive process. We have become so used to enjoying the flavors of fat, salt, and sugar, that we have forgotten the fundamental and health-essential flavor of bitter, one of the five key flavors in Traditional Chinese Medicine: sweet, sour, salty, bitter, and pungent. It is said that each meal should contain each flavor for balance and optimal health. In natural health practices, we do everything we can to balance the body and bring it to a constant state of vitality.

**Yellow Dock Bitters Recipe**

Bitters are a tried-and-true remedy for helping along healthy digestion. I like to combine gentle bitters like yellow dock, with aromatic bitters like ginger to encourage movement, reduce inflammation, and disperse stagnation. This bitters recipe was inspired by a client whose sluggish digestion was made worse by chronic inflammation of the digestive tract. This person had a very cold constitution, and constipation is generally a cold condition. This recipe, because it contains a number of warming aromatics, may irritate people with a hot/pitta type constitution. Overall, though, it has quickly become a favorite of mine. (All parts are by weight.)

**Ingredients**

- 2 parts yellow dock root
- 2 parts turmeric root (fresh if possible)
- 1 part ginger root (fresh if possible)
- ½ part cinnamon
- ¼ part black pepper
- 2 parts honey (optional)
• Alcohol (preferably about 75% alcohol to extract the resins), or apple cider vinegar for those who avoid alcohol

**Directions**
1. Chop up roots as small as possible, and grind up your dry ingredients to a coarse grind.
2. Place all plant ingredients into a jar.
3. Add honey (optional) and alcohol or vinegar.
4. Tightly put a lid on the jar and let it sit for 4–6 weeks.
5. Strain out the herbs, bottle the bitters, and label the bottle well.
6. Use 20–40 drops as needed for some potent, anti-inflammatory digestive assistance.

**Note:** If you use cinnamon powder, it can get mucilaginous (read: slimy). This is just fine. The digestive system loves slime, and needs it to soothe and coat the mucous membranes.

**Move-it-Along Tea**
This tea is a recipe I created for a client who has IBS. It helps gently encourage the digestive system to do its job and soothe and coat the inflamed, irritated tissues. It is great for anyone suffering from constipation or other digestive stagnation, and gentle enough not to create the opposite problem. (All parts are by weight.)

**Ingredients**
• 1 part yellow dock root
• 1 part turmeric root
• 1 part fennel seed
• 1 part marshmallow root
• 1 part cinnamon bark chips
• ½ part anise seed
• ½ part black pepper

**Directions**
1. Combine all ingredients and store in a cool dry place.
2. To use: Decoct 1 tablespoon per 2 cups of water for 10-15 minutes.
3. Let cool! This is important, because as the tea cools, the fennel, marshmallow, and cinnamon will release mucilage which can soothe and coat the intestines.
4. Once the tea is room temperature, it can be re-heated as desired. Honey can be added as well, but lay off of the refined sugar, which just contributes to the constipation problem.

Enjoy 1-2 times a day as needed.
Women’s Health and Yellow Dock

Angela Justis

The vivacious, strong yellow dock is a wonderful ally for women. Beneficial to the liver and high in nutrients including iron, this weedy, abundantly available plant is a true treasure trove for women to use in nourishing a healthy body.

Iron deficiency anemia and accompanying exhaustion is often an issue for women, with heavy menstrual cycles and resulting iron loss being the main cause for many women. Yellow dock is a resplendent source of iron that is easily digested, providing essential iron during the menstrual years.\(^1\) In addition to providing iron, it may also help the body better absorb iron and release iron stored in the liver.\(^2,3\)
Yellow dock is also known to help relieve constipation, unlike most iron supplements, which often have to side effect of causing uncomfortable constipation. Also, due to its ability to nourish the liver, along with the presence of abundant bioavailable iron, yellow dock is known by herbalists as a rejuvenating herb. It is particularly indicated in cases of exhaustion, irritability, headache, and lethargy.\(^4\) (Iron absorption is enhanced by vitamin C, so be sure to enjoy vitamin-C-rich foods and herbs along with yellow dock or take a vitamin C supplement.)

Yellow dock’s alterative and liver-building actions can be of help for issues that relate to hormonal imbalances from liver congestion and poor fat digestion. Fibrocystic breasts, uterine fibroids and menstrual issues such as PMS, dysmenorrhea, amenorrhea, menorrhagia, and menstrual headaches may all be helped with yellow dock.\(^4,6\)

For young women just entering adolescence, yellow dock’s ability to help nourish the liver can assist the body in regulating the new influx of hormones and hormonal production by the liver.\(^1\) In particular, adolescent girls experiencing persistent acne may find relief with yellow dock. It combines well with burdock, sarsaparilla, and echinacea in cases of menstrual acne.\(^7\)

Indications for yellow dock’s use in women include:

- Menstrual issues with constipation and poor digestion
- Iron-deficiency anemia
- Menstruation-related acne
- Chronic exhaustion and stress\(^1\)
- Difficulty losing weight due to “sluggish elimination”\(^1\)
**Simple Syrup of Yellow Dock**

This syrup can be taken to help increase usable iron. You can easily play with the recipe by adding other herbs such as raspberry leaf, dandelion root, burdock root, and nettle leaf. See Stephany’s recipe for Yellow Dock Syrup on page 39.

**Nourishing Tea**

Drink this to enjoy the nourishing benefits of yellow dock and increase daily iron.

**Ingredients**

- 1 part dried yellow dock root
- 1 part dried dandelion root
- 1 part dried raspberry leaf
- 1 part dried rose hips

**Directions**

1. Mix all of your herbs together and store them in a dry jar until ready to use.
2. Use 1 to 2 tablespoons of herb mixture per cup of water.
3. Boil the water and cover the herbs.
4. Let steep for at least 15 minutes.
5. Strain and enjoy!
I think one of the more common uses of yellow dock we hear about, as modern herbalists, is to make a decoction from the dried root and add enough blackstrap molasses to make a syrup. Many herbalists make this recommendation as a means of supporting an anemic client. This isn’t a particularly old practice by my standards. It isn’t mentioned in the Trotula and I’ve never run across it in any other medieval manuscripts. The practice may have started with folk midwives.

Somewhere along the line, it seems that someone got the idea that yellow dock’s ability to improve hemoglobin levels was due to the iron content of the plant. Goodness knows you read that on the
Internet frequently. Unfortunately, this is pretty easily debunked and lots of naysayers had fun doing so.

Yellow dock root itself is not particularly high in iron, containing only 760 ppm.\(^1\) In fact, any appreciable amounts of nutrients present in yellow dock occur in the stem and in the leaves.\(^2\) This probably accounts for its reputation as a potherb in the days of Hippocrates. This amount of iron in the leaves may be a bit higher if the dock grows in soil which contains more iron.\(^3\)

Soon after I figured this out, I heard it explained that yellow dock helps the body to assimilate the “high” levels of iron in the molasses. I accepted this for a while because I learned it from a fairly reputable source. I now view that as one of my early lessons in critical thinking and doing my own research.

While making gingerbread men with my three-year-old daughter one day, I read that a one tablespoon serving of molasses only contains somewhere between 0.9\(^4\) and 1.6 mg\(^5\) of iron, depending on the type. So a tablespoon of syrup is nowhere near the adult female requirement of 18 mg/day and certainly not close to the pregnancy RDA of 27 mg.

Even if a tablespoon does contain 15% of your RDA, unless you are taking large amounts of the syrup daily (7+ tablespoons) there is little hope that you can take in enough iron counter a deficiency. I can also tell you from experience, that particular practice may not be advisable due to the laxative effects of large amounts of anthraquinones. Despite the mild effect many texts claim this herb has, I have seen a lot of different reactions. Some people just can’t take that much.

Still, over the years I have heard many herbal practitioners insist that decoctions and extracts of this herb were effective at
countering anemia. Many midwives recommend the molasses-dock syrup during pregnancy as well. I used it myself with good results when I was pregnant.

Unfortunately, there are very few studies on the subject, despite some historical references. In 1908, one physician explained, “Here it [yellow dock] may be given for long periods without deleterious effects ... as proven by the increase in hemoglobin, in clinical studies under drug indications.” I’d like to get my hands on the clinical studies Forbush mentions, but those seem lost to history. Deciding that many healers just can’t be all wrong, I went digging around in my old texts for an explanation that satisfied my curiosity.

The answer I arrived at is that yellow dock, as a bitter, provides really effective digestive support. Scudder determined, “the general action of yellow dock is to increase waste and nutrition. It is employed with great advantage in various forms of anemia,” explaining that this happens because yellow dock, “increases the appetite and favors normal activity of the nutritive processes.”

Keep in mind that back in the days of the eclectic physicians, they felt many nutritional deficiencies caused anemia. Along with iron-deficiency anemia and pernicious (B-12 deficiency) anemia which are still well-known today, there was an anemia of the brain that was thought to occur due to a lack of phosphorous, as well as other types. So I knew that when Scudder said, “various forms of anemia,” he was speaking to multiple nutritional deficiencies and to the idea that the fluid extract of the root improves digestion and assimilation of more nutrients than just iron.

It also explains why the iron doesn’t have to come entirely from the syrup to boost serum iron levels. It comes from all of the food you eat in a day. Molasses is just a more nutritious mechanism of
delivery than sugar. This means that the syrup could be useful for those with B-12 deficiencies as well as people who just generally seem to have poor assimilation.

**Yellow Dock Syrup**

Many herbalists report working with clients who are eating great and supplementing with very discouraging results. It is quite possible that yellow dock can help. I might even go so far as to theorize that daily use of the following yellow dock syrup could turn that situation around.

**Ingredients**

- ½ ounce dried yellow dock root
- 2 C water
- ½ C organic black strap molasses
- ½ tsp digestive bitters

**Directions**

1. Simmer yellow dock root in water until it is reduced by half.
2. Strain the decoction.
3. Add the molasses and digestive bitters.
4. Bottle this and store it in the refrigerator. It is not shelf-stable.
5. Take 1 tablespoon twice a day.

Understanding where the iron comes from also opens up doors to being able to play with ingredients a little bit more, which is of course, my favorite thing to do. If you are looking for a more local alternative to molasses, honey could be substituted, although I might opt for the dark maple syrup formally sold as “Grade B” which contains more nutrients than lighter honey because it has to be
boiled longer and is more concentrated. My favorite “tweak” is to substitute ¼ cup molasses and ¼ cup tart cherry juice concentrate for ½ cup of molasses, and add a ½ teaspoon of my chocolate cherry bitters. Tart cherry juice has some iron and adds healthy amounts of vitamins A and C to the syrup.

As always, you have to match the energetics of the herb to the client, remembering that yellow dock is cooling and drying in nature. Perhaps if you tweak the recipe, you can another herb such as burdock root that might balance that a bit.

As a final thought, even though I always want to know “why,” I have to reluctantly admit that some things just work because they do. We don’t know a fraction of what we would like to know about synergy and the way different constituents of plants interact. Maybe someone will devise a study that more clearly determines the mechanisms by which this syrup works, but until then, we can use our own good common sense and keep learning as much as possible from our own case studies.
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Monograph

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**Wildcrafting and Recipes**


**History**


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12 Waldo Forbush, “*Rumex crispus,*” *Journal of Therapeutics and Dietetics II.* (1908) p 169.

13 George S. Davis, *Organic Materia Medica: Including the Standard Remedies of the Leading Pharmacopoeas as Well as Those Articles of the Newer Materia Medica ... and of the Preparations Made Therefrom, 2nd ed.*, Park, Davis & Company (1890).


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Smooth Digestion


Women’s Health


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5 The nutritional information on black strap molasses labels of 15–20% of the RDA of iron is based on adult male requirement of 8 mg/day.


A Glossary of Herbalism

Nina Katz

Do you feel befuddled by all of those terms? Are you curious about what a menstruum might be, or a nervine? Wondering what the exact difference is between an infusion and a decoction? Or what it means to macerate? Read on; the herbalist lexicographer will reveal it all!

**Adaptogen** n.  An herb that enhances one's ability to thrive despite stress. Eleuthero, or Siberian Ginseng (*Eleutherococcus senticosus*) is a well-known adaptogen.

**Aerial parts** n. pl.  The parts of a plant that grow above ground. Stems, leaves, and flowers are all aerial parts, in contrast to roots and rhizomes.

**Alterative** n.  An herb that restores the body to health gradually and sustainably by strengthening one or more of the body's systems, such as the digestive or lymphatic system, or one or more of the vital organs, such as the liver or kidneys. Burdock (*Arctium lappa*) is an alternative.

adj.  Restoring health gradually, as by strengthening one or more of the body's systems or vital organs.

**Anthelmintic** n.  A substance that eliminates intestinal worms.

**Anthelmin** adj.  Being of or concerning a substance that eliminates intestinal worms.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-catarrhal</strong></td>
<td>n. A substance that reduces or slows down the production of phlegm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Being of or concerning a substance that reduces or slows down the production of phlegm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-emetic</strong></td>
<td>n. A substance that treats nausea. Ginger (<em>Zingiber officinale</em>) is anti-emetic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Being of or concerning a substance that treats nausea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Anti-microbial</strong></td>
<td>n. An herb or a preparation that helps the body fight off microbial infections, whether viral, bacterial, fungal, or parasitic. Herbal anti-microbials may do this by killing the microbes directly, but more often achieve this by enhancing immune function and helping the body to fight off disease and restore balance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Being of or concerning an herb or a preparation that helps the body fight off microbial infections.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aperient</strong></td>
<td>n. A gentle laxative, such as seaweed, plantain seeds (<em>Plantago spp.</em>), or ripe bananas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Being of or concerning a gentle laxative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aphrodisiac</strong></td>
<td>n. A substance that enhances sexual interest or desire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Being of or relating to a substance that enhances sexual interest or desire.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Astringent</strong></td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj</td>
<td>Causing tissues to constrict, and thereby helping to stop excessive loss of body fluids.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Bitter** | n. | A food, herb, or preparation that stimulates the liver and digestive organs through its bitter flavor. Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) and Gentian (*Gentiana lutea*) are both bitters. Also called digestive bitter. |

| **Carminative** | n. | A food, herb, or preparation that reduces the buildup or facilitates the release of intestinal gases. Cardamom (*Amomum spp. and Elettaria spp*) and Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) are carminatives. |
| adj | Characterized as reducing the buildup or facilitating the release of intestinal gases. |

| **Carrier Oil** | n. | A non-medicinal oil, such as olive or sesame oil, used to dilute an essential oil. |

| **Catarrh** | n. | An inflammation of the mucous membranes resulting in an overproduction of phlegm. |

<p>| <strong>Compound</strong> | v. | To create a medicinal formula using two or more components. |
| n. | An herbal preparation consisting of two or more herbs. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compress n.</th>
<th>A topical preparation consisting of a cloth soaked in a liquid herbal extract, such as an infusion or decoction, and applied, usually warm or hot, to the body. A washcloth soaked in a hot ginger decoction and applied to a sore muscle is a compress.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decoct v.</td>
<td>To prepare by simmering in water, usually for at least 20 minutes. One usually decocts barks, roots, <em>rhizomes</em>, hard seeds, twigs, and nuts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decoction n.</td>
<td>An herbal preparation made by simmering the plant parts in water, usually for at least 20 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demulcent n.</td>
<td>An herb with a smooth, slippery texture soothing to the mucous membranes, i.e. the tissues lining the respiratory and digestive tracts. Slippery elm (<em>Ulmus rubra</em>), marshmallow root (<em>Althaea officinalis</em>), and sassafras (<em>Sassafras albidum, Sassafras officinale</em>) are all demulcents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Having a smooth, slippery texture that soothes the mucous membranes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diaphoretic n.</td>
<td>An herb or preparation that opens the pores of the skin, facilitates sweat, and thereby lowers fevers. In Chinese medicine, diaphoretics are said to “release the exterior.” Yarrow (<em>Achillea millefolium</em>) is a diaphoretic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Opening the pores, facilitating sweat, and thereby lowering fevers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digestive</td>
<td>n.</td>
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<tr>
<td>adj. 1</td>
<td>Concerning or being part of the bodily system responsible for the breakdown, assimilation, and elimination of food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj. 2</td>
<td>Promoting the healthy breakdown, assimilation, and/or elimination of food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diuretic</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Facilitating or increasing urination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emmenagogue</td>
<td>n.</td>
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<tr>
<td>adj.</td>
<td>Facilitating or increasing menstrual flow.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essential Oil</td>
<td>n.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
n. 1 A preparation made by chemically removing the soluble parts of a substance into a solvent or menstruum. Herbalists often make extracts using water, alcohol, glycerin, vinegar, oil, or combinations of these. Infusions, medicinal vinegars, tinctures, decoctions, and medicinal oils are all extracts.

n. 2 A tincture.

**Extract** v. To remove the soluble parts of a substance into a solvent or menstruum by chemical means.

**Febrifuge** n. An herb or preparation that lowers fevers. Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), ginger (*Zingiber officinale*), and boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*) are all febrifuges.

**Galactagogue** n. A substance that increases the production or flow of milk; a remedy that aids lactation. Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and hops (*Humulus lupulus*) are galactagogues.

**Glandular** n. A substance that treats the adrenal, thyroid, or other glands. Nettle seeds (*Urtica dioica*) are a glandular for the adrenals.

adj. Relating to or treating the adrenal, thyroid, or other glands.

**Hepatic** n. A substance that treats the liver. Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is a hepatic.

**Hypnotic** n. An herb or preparation that induces sleep. Chamomile (*Matricaria recutita*) and valerian (*Valeriana officinalis*) are both hypnotics.

adj. Inducing sleep.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Infuse</strong> v.</th>
<th>To prepare by steeping in water, especially hot water, straining, and squeezing the marc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Infusion</strong> n.</td>
<td>A preparation made by first steeping one or more plants or plant parts in water, most often hot water, and then straining the plant material, usually while squeezing the marc. An infusion extracts the flavor, aroma, and water-soluble nutritional and medicinal constituents into the water.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Long Infusion</strong> n.</td>
<td>An infusion that steeped for three or more hours. Long infusions often steep overnight.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lymphatic</strong> n.</td>
<td>A substance that stimulates the circulation of lymph or <em>tonifies</em> the vessels or organs involved in the circulation or storage of lymph.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Macerate</strong> v.</td>
<td>To soak a plant or plant parts in a <em>menstruum</em> so as to extract the medicinal constituents chemically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marc</strong> n.</td>
<td>The plant material left after straining a preparation made by steeping, simmering, or macerating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Menstruum</strong> n.</td>
<td><em>(Plural, <em>menstrua</em> or <em>menstruums.</em>)</em> The solvent used to extract the medicinal and/or nutritional constituents from a plant. Water, alcohol, vinegar, and glycerin are among the more common menstrua.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mucilage</strong> n.</td>
<td>A thick, slippery, <em>demulcent</em> substance produced by a plant or microorganism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Word</strong></td>
<td><strong>Meaning</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mucilaginous</strong> n.</td>
<td>Having or producing mucilage; <em>demulcent</em>. Okra, marshmallow root ( <em>Althaea officinalis</em> ), sassafras ( <em>Sassafras albidum, Sassafras officinale</em> ), and slippery elm ( <em>Ulmus rubra</em> ) are all mucilaginous.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nervine</strong> n.</td>
<td>An herb or preparation that helps with problems traditionally associated with the nerves, such as mental health issues, insomnia, and pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>adj.</strong></td>
<td>Helping with problems traditionally associated with the nerves, such as mental health issues, insomnia, and pain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pectoral</strong> n.</td>
<td>A substance that treats the lungs or the respiratory system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poultice</strong> n.</td>
<td>A mass of plant material or other substances, usually mashed, gnashed, moistened, or heated, and placed directly on the skin. Sometimes covered by a cloth or adhesive. A plantain ( <em>Plantago spp.</em> ) poultice can draw splinters out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rhizome</strong> n.</td>
<td>A usually horizontal stem that grows underground, is marked by nodes from which roots grow down, and branches out to produce a network of new plants growing up from the nodes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salve</strong> [sæv] n.</td>
<td>A soothing ointment prepared from beeswax combined with oil, usually medicinal oil, and used in topical applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Short Infusion</strong> n.</td>
<td>An <em>infusion</em> that steeps for a relatively short period of time, usually 5-30 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedative</td>
<td>A substance that calms and facilitates sleep. Valerian (<em>Valeriana officinale</em>) is a sedative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sedative</td>
<td>adj. Calming and facilitating sleep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple</td>
<td>n. An herbal preparation, such as a tincture or decoction, made from one herb alone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simpler</td>
<td>n. An herbalist who prepares and recommends primarily <em>simples</em> rather than compounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spp.</td>
<td>abbr. n.pl. Species. <em>Used to indicate more than one species in the same botanical family.</em> <em>Echinacea spp.</em> includes both <em>Echinacea purpurea</em> and <em>Echinacea angustifolium</em>, among other species. <em>Plantago spp.</em> includes both <em>Plantago major</em> and <em>Plantago lanceolata</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stimulant</td>
<td>n. An herb or preparation that increases the activity level in an organ or body system. <em>Echinacea</em> (<em>Echinacea spp.</em>) is an immunostimulant; it stimulates the immune system. <em>Cayenne</em> (<em>Capsicum spp.</em>) is a circulatory stimulant. <em>Rosemary</em> is a stimulant to the nervous, digestive, and circulatory systems.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sudorific</td>
<td>adj. Increasing sweat or facilitating the release of sweat; cf. <em>diaphoretic</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Syrup</td>
<td>n. A sweet liquid preparation, often made by adding honey or sugar to a decoction.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tea</td>
<td>n. A drink made by steeping a plant or plant parts, especially <em>Camellia sinensis</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tisane</strong></td>
<td>n.</td>
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<td><strong>Tincture</strong></td>
<td>n.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tonic</strong></td>
<td>n.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tonify</strong></td>
<td>v.</td>
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<td><strong>Volatile Oil</strong></td>
<td>n.</td>
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<td><strong>Vulnerary</strong></td>
<td>n.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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