CLEANSING WITH Common Weeds

Rob MacDonald

Although cleansing is an ancient tradition, the necessity of doing so is more important today than ever before. We are exposed to thousands of chemical substances that didn’t exist 100 years ago: insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, chemical fertilizers, air pollution, preservatives, artificial colours, artificial flavours and sweeteners, automobile exhaust, electromagnetic fields, radioactivity, water pollution, toxic materials in the home and at work, cigarette smoke, and alcohol and drug toxicity.

We unwittingly consume three pounds of artificial chemicals every year. This puts a huge stress on our organs of elimination: the liver, kidneys, skin, bowels and lungs, which become overburdened to the point where they can no longer perform their functions effectively. All this toxicity leads to a weakened immune system, fatigue and poor health.

Since we cannot escape the hazards of our environment, routinely cleansing the body with the use of herbal medicine is increasingly important. Traditionally, spring is a time of renewal and growth, and it is the optimal time to do a cleanse because nature’s most potent detoxifying herbs are readily available. You need look no farther than your own backyard, neighbourhood park, local fields or health food store to find the herbs needed to do your own herbal detoxification.

Rural remedies

Known principally as a weed, dandelion (Taraxacum officinale) has an astonishing range of health benefits. The roots of two-year-old plants are mildly bitter and act as a gentle laxative, which aids in the removal of toxins through the bowel. Dandelion root is one of the most effective detoxifying herbs, acting as a cleansing tonic for the liver, gallbladder and digestive tract. It can also be employed as a blood cleanser and diuretic. It has major therapeutic benefits for many conditions including constipation, skin problems such as acne, eczema and psoriasis, and rheumatic conditions, including arthritis and gout. The highly nutritive leaves, which are picked in the spring, can be eaten in salads as a wonderful tonic. The leaves, a powerful diuretic, flush out water-soluble toxins and excess fluids. They can be juiced, eaten raw or dried for use in herbal preparations such as teas or tinctures.

Cleavers or bedstraw (Galium aparine) can be found growing along roadsides and in gardens and is gathered just before flowering in late spring or early summer. Cleavers cleanses the kidneys, blood and lymphatics, and it helps rid the liver, pancreas and spleen of toxic wastes. Cleavers is a gentle, non-toxic medicine that is best used fresh as an infusion or juice, as drying destroys most of its medicinal properties.

Burdock root (Arctium lappa) is one of the foremost detoxifying herbs in both western and Chinese herbal medicine. It is used to treat conditions caused by an overload of toxins, such as infections, boils, rashes and chronic skin problems. Burdock is an effective medicinal that cleanses the liver and kidneys, ridding the
body of toxic waste materials and heavy metals. It acts as a strengthening herb for poor kidney function, thereby increasing urine output and decreasing uric acid levels in the blood that can lead to gout. Burdock root can also be eaten as a vegetable, as it is in Japan and France. Because it is the root that is used for medicine, it is best taken as a decoction or tincture. Capsules are not as effective because part of the medicinal action is provided by the bitter taste.

Nettles (*Urtica dioica*), well known for their sting, have long been appreciated for their medicinal uses. Nettle leaves can be cooked like a vegetable, dried to make tea or taken as a tincture. For maximum benefit, this herb should be juiced (see box). This is a plant that can be consumed in any quantity, the more the better. The key use of nettles is as a cleansing and detoxifying herb, helping to cleanse the body of accumulated wastes. Like most fast-growing weeds, nettles have abundant nutrients such as iron and vitamin C. This makes it a rejuvenating tonic for anemia and other similar debilitated states. In general, it is valuable to consider nettles as a fortifying remedy.

**Signs of Toxic Overload**

- allergies
- arthritis
- bad breath
- chronic bronchial or sinus congestion
- chronic constipation
- chronic diarrhea
- dark circles under the eyes
- depression
- fatigue
- food sensitivities
- gas
- hay fever
- headaches
- irritable bowel syndrome
- leaky gut syndrome
- low-back pain
- memory impairment
- poor complexion
- poor digestion
- serious illness such as cancer
- slow metabolism
- ulcers
- unpleasant body odour
- weight gain

**Simply Nettles**

In addition to being a powerful organ cleanser, fresh nettle juice (as with other herbal juices) provides a broad array of vitamins, minerals, chlorophyll and enzymes that are easily digested and assimilated by the body. Herbal juices are obtained by placing the herbs in a high-speed juicer, such as a centrifugal or masticating juicer, but not a blender. You can obtain up to 100 millilitres of nettle juice from less than half a pound of freshly picked stinging nettles. A cleansing herbal tea can also be made by infusing one teaspoon (five milligrams) dried nettles or one tablespoon (15 mg) fresh nettles in one cup (250 ml) of boiling water for 15 minutes. Strain and enjoy!
Time to get absolutely lean
Weight Loss Reduces Health Risks Associated with Obesity

Brad J. King, MS, MFS

It has now been confirmed that waist measurements are a reliable indicator of weight related illnesses, like heart disease and diabetes. Research published by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other experts in the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition suggest that "Waist Circumference" (WC) should be used to assess health risks, and that WC is a more reliable indicator than Body Mass Index (BMI).

Time to Get Absolutely Lean!
In order to specifically address this abdominal fat, the makers of greens+,
North America's most award-winning supplement, are pleased to introduce a weight loss product that is based entirely on scientific evidence. By taking abs+ , along with a properly devised dietary and exercise program (as in Fat Wars: Action Planner), in 90 days or less you can expect to see a decrease in your waist size of 1 to 2 inches and an accompanying weight loss of 4 to 7% coming from excess body fat stores.

Absolutely Effective
Clinical research has shown that conjugated linoleic acid (CLA) and green tea extract can specifically assist in the burning of abdominal fat as fuel, thus reducing waist size. The standardized green tea in abs+ works along with the CLA to safely enhance your metabolic rate, further increasing the use of fat as an energy source and decreasing the fat cell size.

CLA is a naturally occurring derivative of the Omega-6 essential fatty acid, linoleic acid, and is naturally found in a number of foods, but most specifically in beef, whole milk and butter. However, dietary levels of CLA are not likely to induce weight loss because to achieve the amount of CLA required for weight loss through the diet alone, one would also have to consume a large number of calories (and other unhealthy fats) that promote weight gain. In addition, the amount of CLA in dairy products and meats has declined in recent years due to changes in rearing and feeding practices.

The good news is that CLA extracted from the linolenic acid in sunflower or safflower oil can now easily be taken in supplement form in abs+. Animal studies have been published in a number of different journals indicating that CLA can decrease the size of fat cells, decrease abdominal fat and lead to overall reductions in weight (Journal of Nutrition 2000, American Journal of Physiology 1999, Journal of the American College of Nutrition 2000, Journal of Animal Science 2001, Lipids 1999 to name a few). And the CLA research has not been confined to animals - a number of high quality, controlled human studies have shown that CLA can reduce body fat. These results have also been published in prestigious medical journals such as the Journal of Nutritional Biochemistry.

Yellow dock (Rumex crispus) has valuable cleansing properties and is useful for skin problems. The root of this weed is a buried treasure, one of the best-known blood purifiers in herbal medicine. It is a gentle laxative good for mild constipation. The root has a slightly bitter taste that stimulates bile production and helps tone the liver. Yellow dock root is harvested in autumn when the spikes of the small, red, woody fruit are visible. It can be found growing in dumps, roadsides and in ditches throughout Canada. Like burdock root and dandelion root, yellow dock improves digestion and the assimilation of nutrients, stimulates the elimination of toxins and gradually restores normal body function.
Cleansing with herbs is an invaluable and simple tool that you can employ every year to improve your health and aid in coping with the environmental stresses we all experience. It gives the body a chance to catch up on its “spring cleansing” by removing toxins and wastes and aiding cellular growth and repair.

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