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BURDOCK BOOST

by **Edible East Bay** on October 14, 2015 in **Newsletter**

Berkeley's [Ohlone Herbal Center](#) is a place for study and practice of traditional Western herbalism. With this brief article and recipe, core faculty member Kelsey Barrett provides a glimpse into this field with an introduction to an important root harvested at this time of year.

Burdock: Edible Medicinal Power for your Fall Pantry by Kelsey Barrett

As autumn's cooling weather arrives, we look to our kitchens as places of warmth and nourishment. It's also when the energy in many plants moves from the leaves down into the roots. This is when we harvest those root veggies from the garden and dig up wild medicinals for winter storage.

One staple edible medicinal we look for now is burdock, a root that's harvested in its first year while it's still tenderly edible. Although not native to North America, burdock was naturalized to this area in the 1600s and was quickly adopted into Native Americans' medicine chests. It's traditionally used to clear the skin and clean blood, mainly through its support of the liver. As we add more meats, oils, stews, and generally richer food to our diets in fall, our livers need support to complete the many tasks of digesting the fats and hormones in animal products, as well as cleansing our intestinal blood of toxins. As the liver heats up with seasonal janitorial work, burdock cools it down, cleans the liver tissue of congested fat and oil, and systemically clears the skin of eruptions.

This herbal root is becoming more generally accessible, so if you're not growing burdock in your garden or don't live near a wild patch, you'll still find it available at many health food stores and Asian markets.

Ohlone Herbal Center medicine maker Tony Siefert offers this recipe for a flavorful Burdock Salad.

Burdock Salad

2 cups burdock root, julienned

1 cup carrot, julienned
 1 tablespoon fresh ginger
 1 tablespoon fresh garlic
 1 tablespoon sesame seed
 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
 1 tablespoon sake
 1 tablespoon sesame oil
 1 teaspoon coconut palm sugar (optional)
 Salt to taste
 Dried red chili flakes to taste

Scrub the burdock root and the carrot. (Scrubbing rather than peeling preserves much of the burdock's nutritional and medicinal properties.) Cut the burdock root and carrot into long thin strips with julienne peeler, place in a steamer, and cook to al dente texture, then remove from the steamer and set aside.

Lightly toast the sesame seeds in a frying pan. Combine rice vinegar, sake, sesame oil, and coconut palm sugar in a mixing bowl, and whisk until blended.

Combine the dressing with the steamed burdock and carrots, and add salt to taste. Stir in the ginger, garlic, toasted sesame seeds, and dried chilies, then allow to rest for 15 minutes to let the flavors blend. Combine the dressing with the burdock and carrots and serve.



Burdock is a key ingredient in this healthful and delicious autumn salad.

Photo courtesy of
 Ohlone Herbal Center.

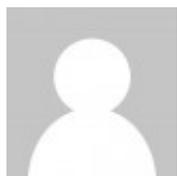
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