

Tincture: Fresh Dandelion Root



Although Dandelion Root has many benefits, on a personal level I was most interested in its properties as a tonic, a digestive aid, a liver cleanser, and overall body detoxifier. So I grabbed my handy dandelion digger tool and a five-gallon bucket and headed out to the garden to collect the herbs I had been growing all summer. It may have been the fact that there were so many other weeds, much bigger and taller, which garnered my attention all summer that the dandelions seemed much more innocuous at the time. In any case, I don't like to think that I "missed" them while weeding, rather I prefer to think that I intentionally grew them. Maybe in some ways, I did.



Fresh Dandelion Root & 100 proof Vodka Tincture Preparation

To begin with I dug the Dandelion roots and gave them a good rinse to remove most of the clumps of dirt and wood chips. I also cut off the leaves at the crown. Next, the roots were scrubbed with a brush under water to get the remaining dirt out of the crevices and root-hairs. Then they were rinsed again and laid on a dehydrator tray to air dry. Once the roots were dry they were chopped into small bits and placed in the quart canning jar pictured above. One hundred proof Vodka was poured over the chopped Dandelion roots until they were all covered.

From here, the contents of the quart jar were poured into a blender to triturate. Then the pulverized root/Vodka mixture was returned to the quart jar. The process was repeated with the fresh chopped dandelion roots and Vodka until the quart jar was full. Before placing the rubber canning lid on the jar, a layer of waxed paper was set down just under the lid to protect the contents of the quart jar then secured with a screw band.

Now a label was filled out and affixed to the jar:

Name: Dandelion Root/Taraxacum officinale
Menstruum: 100 Proof Vodka
End: 11/9/14

The jar was placed in a cupboard to macerate. The next day, when I took out the jar to give it a shake, the herb/vodka mixture would not budge. The pulverized dandelion root had absorbed the vodka and swelled. By removing about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the mixture and adding more vodka the mixture remained saturated, yet had enough room in the solvent for the solids to move when shaken.

Each day for fourteen days, at least once a day the dandelion tincture was removed from the cabinet, given a good shake, and then replaced. After being allowed to just "sit" on the fifteenth day, the day came for straining and pressing the tincture.

I removed the macerated tincture from the cupboard one last time. Poured it through a stainless steel strainer into a glass bowl. Then placed the mark (it took two batches to process all of the mark) into a muslin cloth and set it into the tincture press. I pressed again and added the remaining liquid to the previously strained tincture in the glass bowl. The tincture at this point was a light beige color, just like a fresh-scrubbed dandelion root.

Now came the tedious part. I began to pour the tincture through a stainless steel strainer lined with an unbleached coffee filter. In all, I ran the tincture through four separate filtrations utilizing the paper filters. On the first attempt, I found the filters gummed up quickly with the tiny fibrous plant particles. They seemed to take forever to drain. When the fourth filtration began, the tincture ran through the filters in a small, but steady stream. The color had changed from the original light beige to a brown, "apple cider" color.

When I began, I used $17\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of vodka in the quart jar on the day that I made the tincture (including the next day when I removed some of the thickened tincture and added a bit more of the solvent.) I ended up with slightly more than 14 ounces of dandelion tincture. Although the mark pressed out well, most of the loss was in the mixture removed from the quart jar along with what was absorbed into the coffee filters that I expressed gently with my fingers.



The tincture was funneled into a dark green glass jar and stored in a closet after the final label was filled out and affixed to the jar:

Name: Dandelion Root/Taraxacum officinale
Menstruum: 100 Proof Vodka
Date: 11/2014

An appropriate dosage of this tincture would be 20-30 drops with meals. There are no notable precautions or side effects of dandelion root tincture.

In the past, when I made tinctures, I finely chopped up the herb and allowed the tincture to set (with daily shaking) for six weeks. Utilizing the method of pulverizing with a 14-day maceration as described by James Green in "The Herbal Medicine Maker's Handbook," I learned that it is necessary to allow more room in the jar for expansion during macerating, i.e. I wouldn't fill the jar quite so high with the herb and I would cover the herb a bit higher with the solvent.

Lastly, another thing I would do differently, is to filter the tincture through stainless steel strainers with progressively finer meshes before using the paper filters. This would speed up the filtering process, create less loss of valuable tincture because the stainless steel is not absorbent, and in the long run save money by utilizing a smaller quantity of replacement filters. I went ahead and put a stainless steel fine mesh reusable filter on order.

Now to begin planning another tincture!

