



Dock

Rumex crispus, *Rumex obtusifolius*

Known as Curly Dock, Narrow Leaf Dock or Yellow Dock, this plant will show up in the overgrown areas of yards with a hardy rosette of large leaves with wavy edges that botanical author John Eastman calls “resembling the lolling tongues of dogs.”

The very young leaves and stems of Dock are edible but quickly turn bitter with age and are high in oxalic acid, which is reduced by changing the water 2-3 times when cooking. The root, which has a radish-like taste and odor is the part used most frequently in herbal medicine.

Dock is a good source for Thiamine, Vitamin C, and Iron.

A poultice of Dock leaves or mashed root is used for ulcers, burns, skin diseases and was historically used for tumors and swellings. A folk remedy saying, “Nettle in, Dock out,” was once famous as it told that rubbing Dock leaves would instantly ease the burn from Stinging Nettle. One source mentioned that it can be useful for rashes caused by parasites.

Dock has been used throughout the ages as a “blood purifier.” It was believed that its bitters cleanse the liver and eliminate toxins in the body. A review confirms that some *Rumex* species show promise for treatment of inflammation, cancer, and different bacterial infections. Another study showed that a water extract of *Rumex crispus* root may be effective against osteoporosis. An active compound found in Dock, nepodin, has antimalarial properties.

Bitter Dock, *Rumex obtusifolius*, has broader leaves and the central rib is often reddish tinted. In research, an extract from Bitter Dock showed a significant effect on hyperglycemia, improving glucose tolerance, and increasing liver glycogen content. The extract reduced total cholesterol, LDL cholesterol levels, and vice versa increased HDL levels. It also decreased liver enzymes levels compared with the untreated group. The study shows that Bitter Dock may have beneficial effects as an herbal remedy in the treatment of Diabetes Mellitus.



An extract of the Dock seed has antioxidant properties. The ripened seeds are brown in late Summer and Fall. They can be ground to make a flour. Or why not try it for an exfoliating, antioxidant body scrub?