

# Essiac Herbs

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***Essiac Tea contains the following four herbs. All herbs in our Essiac Tea are organically grown or ethically wild crafted.***

## **BURDOCK** (*Arctium lappa*)

Burdock is a perennial that grows throughout the world. The entire plant – seeds, leaves, stems and roots – has both culinary and medicinal uses. It is commonly recognized for its globular flower heads that turn into distinctive burrs during July and August.

Burdock root has been used historically as a cleansing agent for both the blood and the bowels. Today it is still considered a superior herb for its blood purifying properties. North American Indians used the root as a decoction for skin ailments and varicose veins. The Chinese used burdock to lower blood sugar levels and for respiratory ailments. Some of the most impressive health benefits of burdock include its ability to aid digestion, detoxify the liver, balance hormones, improve skin health, reduce inflammation, and lower blood pressure.

More recent studies have established that burdock has anti-tumor properties and an anti-mutation factor, resistant to both heat and protein-digesting enzymes, called the “burdock factor” by scientists at Kawasaki Medical School in Okayama, Japan.

## **SHEEP SORREL** (*Rumex acetosella*)

Sheep sorrel is a perennial which is commonly known as

Sourgrass or Dog-eared sorrel in North America due to the sour taste of its leaves. It is native to Europe where it was used as a preventative for the plague. Sheep sorrel is now found all over the world, arriving with the Europeans who settled in climates similar to northern Europe.

The particular variety of Sheep sorrel found in Canada is the same subspecies that is predominant in France, leading researchers to conclude that the French settlers were responsible for introducing the plant to this continent. The Native Americans quickly caught onto the value of this plant, using it in cooking as well as for its anti-carcinogenic properties.

Along with other sorrels, Sheep sorrel has been used as a folk remedy in salads and soups to add a tangy almost astringent flavor and for its medicinal properties. Its action is cooling, inducing perspiration and increasing the secretion and flow of urine. The plant has been specifically used in the treatment of ulcers and hemorrhages. But today Sheep sorrel is venerated primarily for its direct effect on cancerous tumors.

It should be noted that true Sheep sorrel is one of the main ingredients in Rene Caisse's formula known today as Essiac. According to Sheila Snow and Mali Klein: "Particularly in the 1990s there was a widespread commercial practice of substituting Sheep sorrel with one of the other cheaper dock plants. Consequently, there were reports of goiter conditions improving when sheep sorrel was present and deteriorating when the herb had been substituted with one of the docks."

**NOTE:** Rene Caisse specified that a minimum of 10% of the sheep sorrel plant used in her Essiac formula must come from the roots. The roots contain important additional elements in comparison to the aerial parts of the plant and must be included in as great a quantity as possible.

**SLIPPERY ELM (*Ulmus rubra* [now] and *Ulmus fulva* [past])**

Slippery Elm inner bark has been used as an herbal remedy in North America for hundreds of years. This particular deciduous Elm tree is native to our continent, growing mostly in the Appalachian Mountains and the damp forests of eastern North America and southeastern Canada.

Slippery Elm contains a substance called mucilage, which is a polysaccharide that becomes a gel when mixed with water. The mucilage comes from the inner bark of the tree and is a bit slippery and slimy, hence the name "Slippery Elm".

Native Americans used Slippery Elm to create salves to heal wounds, burns, ulcers, psoriasis and other skin conditions. They also used it orally to soothe sore throats, relieve coughs, and help with diarrhea and stomach/digestion issues.

According to American herbalist Dr. John R. Christopher, "the inner bark of Slippery Elm is so nutritious that it will sustain life itself! ... Slippery elm is high in protein...It can be made into a...gruel with honey and fed to infants as their first food. It is a demulcent herb – [meaning] this is one that is very soothing to inflamed mucus membranes. This herb is quieting to irritated bowels, urinary tracts, and sore throats. We have used it to heal ulcers and bedsores. The tea has a pleasantly sweet [maple-syrup-like] taste."

### **TURKEY RHUBARB** (*Rheum palmatum*)

Turkey Rhubarb, also called Chinese rhubarb, is a perennial that originated in the mountains of western China and Tibet but has since been grown as an ornamental and medicinal plant throughout North America and Europe. All parts of the plant except for the roots are considered toxic – and it is the roots that are used medicinally.

Dr. John R. Christopher used turkey rhubarb in his lower bowel formula in very small amounts and it has been used traditionally by other herbalists in their laxative formulas. When prepared by itself as an infusion, extremely small doses

are taken since it is a powerful peristaltic and purgative herb. But given in small doses, it is a fabulous stomach tonic, stimulating the salivary glands and the flow of gastric juices while improving the appetite. Dr. Christopher knew the value of turkey rhubarb root for aiding anyone who had digestive complaints with resulting constipation – even for small children.

“Here in this great healing herb, you have a most valuable and reliable organic friend for stimulating, cleansing, and toning the vital alimentary and intestinal areas”. ~Dr. John R. Christopher, *School of Natural Healing*

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\*Essiac Tea is made as a decoction, or concentrated tea. Complete instructions for making Essiac Tea decoction are included with purchase. Each two oz. packet makes about one gallon of concentrated tea that will last approximately one month if taken twice a day per instructions.