

DANDELIONS: DIURETICS AND CAR TYRES

DANDELIONS' MEDICINAL USES

The French name for dandelion is pissenlit ('wet the bed') from their supposed ability to act as a diuretic, increasing production of urine. Research attributes this to several diuretic compounds, but evidence for the effect is mixed. Dandelions' high potassium content helps replace potassium lost through urine.

Potassium content of dandelion leaves versus bananas



Dandelion leaves

397 mg per 100g

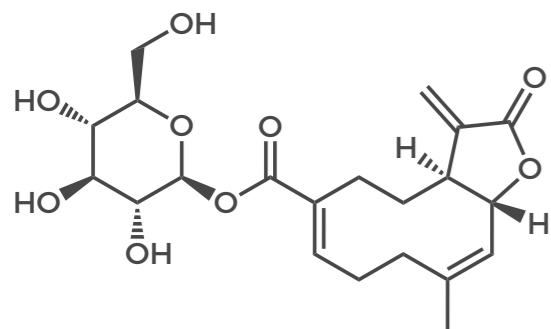


Bananas

358 mg per 100g

Source: US Department of Agriculture - FoodData Central

Studies show dandelion extracts or compounds have anti-inflammatory, anti-carcinogenic and anti-oxidative actions. These effects are mostly due to polyphenols and sesquiterpenes, also responsible for the bitter flavour of the leaves.



**Taraxinic acid
β-D-glucopyranoside**

A sesquiterpene lactone in dandelion, also thought to be a contact allergen.



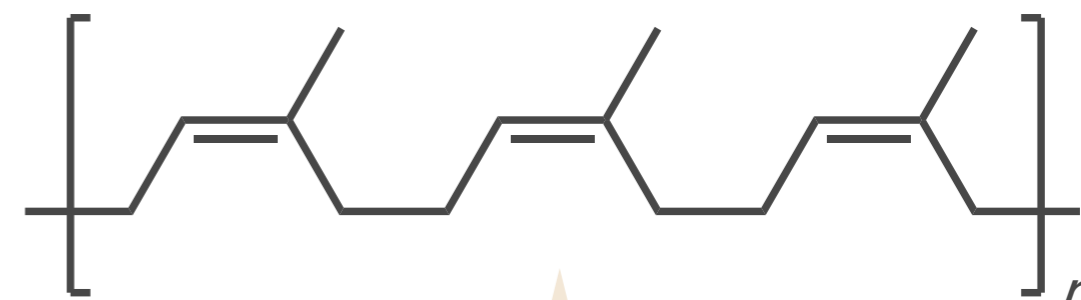
RUBBER FROM DANDELIONS

The sticky white liquid that seeps out from dandelion stems when they're picked contains natural latex, which can be turned into rubber. The roots of Russian dandelions (*Taraxacum kok-saghyz*) contain a particularly high percentage of latex, making them ideal for rubber production.



1941 30%

Percentage of the USSR's rubber provided by the Russian dandelion during rubber shortages in World War II.



cis-1,4-polyisoprene (main constituent of rubber)

In the past decade, tyre manufacturers have been developing dandelion rubber tyres. Currently bike tyres made from dandelion rubber are commercially available and tyres for cars and trucks will be available within ten years.

