

## **Garlic: Not Just For Vampire Protection**

Garlic, known by its Latin name of *Allium sativum*, a part of the Lily family, may very well be one of Mother Nature's great gifts to man. While it is legendary for warding off those odd little human-like vampires of legend and myth, it has many great practical and proven uses in natural medicine.

Garlic is mentioned in ancient medical papyri from Egypt as being utilized as medicine. It is written that workers building the pyramids were given garlic each day to help increase their vitality. It is mentioned in ancient Greek and Roman medical texts for a variety of afflictions, including uterine tumors, and wild garlic was used in the United States by various Native American tribes to treat many different ailments. Chinese medicine also shows a long history of use of this powerful herb. Ayurvedic medicine has a place for garlic as a healer as well, dating back at least to ancient Indian manuscripts, for a variety of uses including abdominal tumors.

### **Medicinal Uses of Garlic**

Garlic is a powerful natural antibiotic. It has been shown to stimulate cell growth and activity. It reduces blood pressure in hypertension, and is useful in lowering cholesterol, while at the same time raising the beneficial cholesterol, HDL. A main advantage to using garlic for its antibiotic properties is that it does not destroy the body's natural intestinal bacteria. It is excellent for use in all colds and infections of the body. It is being studied as a possible cancer prevention agent. Garlic protects the liver, kills worms and parasites internally and externally, reduces blood clotting, and provides antioxidant protection to cells. When ingesting the raw cloves, a sprig of parsley chewed immediately after will freshen the breath. Garlic oil is often used to treat earaches and ear infections, especially for infants and children, and topically will clear up various skin problems and infections. It was used as a field wound dressing in World War I. Garlic has also been shown to be an effective treatment for candida and other fungal infections, such as athlete's foot.

The main active constituent in garlic, *allicin*, is destroyed when heated, and is only released from the clove when crushed or bruised. So for most treatments, garlic needs to be consumed raw and crushed. The cooked form is useful also, as it provides the body with a source of sulphur that is much needed for a healthy body, as well as for healthy hair. Garlic is also an important source of selenium. There are at least 9 anti-coagulative constituents within a bulb of this treasure.

Garlic has been shown to protect the liver from the actions of acetaminophen, as well as other liver-affecting drugs. It has also been shown to be able to rid the body of heavy metal concentrations, such as mercury from fish consumption.

Its cousins, the various onions, have many of these same medicinal properties, but not as concentrated, and are not as powerful nor as wide in scope as garlic.

**Parts used:** bulb

**Actions:** antibiotic, antiviral, parasiticide, expectorant, carminative, digestant, alterative, diuretic, stimulant, tonic, anti-microbial, diaphoretic, cholagogue, hypotensive,

**anti-spasmodic, anti-oxidant, anti-fungal**

**Those using blood-thinning drugs should consult with their doctor before utilizing therapeutic sized dosages of garlic, as garlic may compound the effects of these types of drugs. It is safe to use garlic medicinally while pregnant and while nursing, in moderate amounts.**

### **Spiritual Uses of Garlic**

**Peeled garlic cloves placed in each room is said to ward off disease. The whole bulb is hung in new homes to dispel negativity and evil and evil spirits. It is a strong protective herb. A clove of garlic placed under the pillow of sleeping children is believed to protect them. Roman soldiers believed that garlic gave them courage. Dreams of eating garlic means that you will uncover secrets. Dreams of garlic in the house brings luck. It is often associated with the goddess Hecate. Garlic is mentioned in the Bible as being used by the Hebrews following Moses, and it was reportedly used by those same peoples to increase and maintain virility. Dioscorides, the Greek doctor who worked with the Roman army, notated garlic as a holy herb, and it was used in purification ceremonies in the temples of that time.**

### **Other Uses of Garlic**

**Early travelers across the Rocky Mountains in the United States put garlic into the nostrils of their horses and mules to prevent them from collapsing due to lack of oxygen. Explorers in the mountains of South America chewed wild garlic to relieve altitude sickness.**

### **Growing Garlic**

**Garlic is a perennial herb that likes moderate soil and lots of sun and warmth. The plant grows to 2 feet tall. The bulb is the most common used portion, although the greens are often used in salads. Plant it along with your roses to deter pests from the roots. The bulbs are usually dug in the fall in most climates, allowed to dry, and stored. Individual cloves can be used to start new garlic plants.**