

Red Clover

Trifolium pratense

Before vasodilators, people smoked anti-asthma cigarettes containing red clover. It has now been discovered that the pharmaceutical drugs, which act in the short term, increase the severity and frequency of asthma in the long run, creating greater dependency on the drugs.

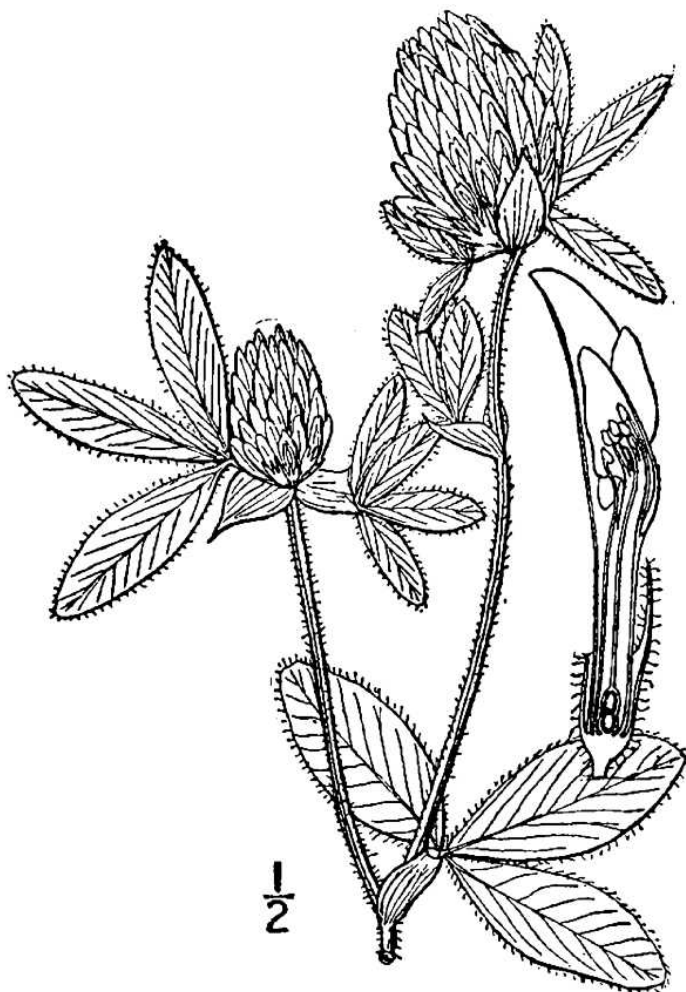
Decomposing sweet clover leaves (fermentation) transforms harmless coumarin into dicoumarin which stops blood from clotting. This substance became the first medical blood-thinning drug, dicumerol, as well as warfarin, a rat poison.

Red Clover facts:

- Widely distributed throughout Europe including Britain, naturalized in nearly every country, even the Arctic Circle and high up into mountains
- Flowers between May and September
- Short lived perennial (some consider it to be a biennial)
- Abundant on meadow land of a light sandy nature

Red Clover description:

- Several stems 1 to 2 feet high, arising from the one root, slightly hairy
- Leaves ternate, leaflets ovate, entire, nearly smooth, ending in long point often lighter colored in center
- Flowers red to purple, fragrant, in dense terminal ovoid or globular heads



Red Clover nutritional information:

- Minerals: magnesium, copper, calcium, Chromium, iron, phosphorus
- Vitamins A, B-complex and C

Red Clover constituents:

- Isoflavones; biochanin A, daidzein, formononetin, genistein, pratensein, trifoside
- Other flavonoids including pectolinarin and trifoliin (=isoquercitrin)
- Volatile oil, containing furfural
- Clovamide; L-Dopa-Caffeic acid conjugates
- Coumarins; coumestrol, medicagol and coumarin
- Miscellaneous; a galactomannan, resins, minerals vitamins, phytoalexins

Red Clover actions:

- Alterative
- Expectorant
- Anti-spasmodic
- Diuretic
- Anti-inflammatory

Red Clover Medicinal Indications:

- Often used as a cleansing herb for skin complaints such as eczema and psoriasis, especially in children
- Useful for coughs, bronchitis and whooping cough that are irritable and drippy
- Popular anticancer remedy and is still used for breast, ovarian and lymphatic cancer sufferers
- Works to dissolve cysts, especially encysted glands, has an affinity to swollen glands in the upper body, especially when singular (multiple is better treated with cleavers)
- Blood thinner (if fermented while dried)

Red Clover Applications:

- Infusion of flowers – see above Use 1/2 ounce of dried blossoms per cup of boiling water. Steep for up to 8 hours and strain. Drink up to 2-4 cups a day. Red Clover works best over time.
- Tincture – used internally for eczema and psoriasis take 1-2 teaspoons up to 3 times a day
- Syrup – used for stubborn, dry coughs see recipe below
- Ointment – for lymphatic swelling

Preserving Red Clover:

- Drying

Getting to Know Red Clover:Experiment 1 – know what it looks like

Study a live plant or pictures if the live version is not available. Notice how it grows out of the ground. Is it bushy? Does it sprawl? Where are the leaves located? What do the flowers look like? Sketch the plant on the last page of this handout.

Experiment 2 – taste the herb

Try it both fresh and dried. What does it taste like in both instances?

Fresh blossom:

Dried blossom:

Experiment 3 – making an infusion

4 tablespoons raw herb (leaves and stems, chopped) = 1 tablespoon dried.

Infusions: use 1/2 oz dried herb per cup of water. Boil water and remove from flame. Add herb and steep for 6-8 hours.

Tisanes: Use 1 tbsp dried herb per cup of water. Boil water and remove from flame. Add herb and steep 10-20 minutes.

- Compare the difference between fresh and dried infusions and tisanes
- Compare the difference between infusions and tisanes

	Fresh blossom	Dried blossom
hot		
cold		

Experiment 4 – making a medicinal remedyRed Clover Blossom Syrup

1 quart Red Clover blossoms

1 quart (4 cups) water

4 cups sugar

½ lemon or orange (organic if possible) chopped, peel and all

Note: The citrus is optional, it will give the syrup an orangey or lemony flavor. If you want the pure Red Clover flavor, you can skip the citrus.

if you'd like to spruce up the color, add a Tbsp of beet juice or berry juice. It has a rather brownish tone to it, like a light maple syrup. Either way is fine and does not affect the outcome of the syrup.

Put blossoms and water in a pot. Simmer gently for about 15-20 minutes, turn off heat, cover, and let sit overnight. The next day, strain and press liquid out of spent flowers. Add sugar and sliced Citrus and heat slowly, stirring now and again, for several hours or until reduced to a thick, honey-like syrup. Can in ½-pint or 1 pint jars.

This recipe makes a little more than 1 pint. I usually triple or quadruple this, and I make more than one batch when they are in season to have enough for the year. The syrup makes great Christmas presents, so make plenty!

Experiment 5- cooking with Red Clover

Red Clover Rice

2 cups rice, brown or wild
2 cups Red Clover flowerettes, plucked out of the flowerheads
½ cup butter
1 tsp salt

Cook rice in 6 cups water until done. While the rice is still hot, mix in Clover flowers, butter and salt. Serve hot.

You could add a ½ cup honey and some chopped nuts and dried golden raisins or cranberries to make this a sweet dish. You can also try quinoa or other grains instead of rice for this recipe.

Both recipes from <http://www.prodigalgardens.info/june%20weblog.htm#Red%20Clover>

Experiment 6 – Further study/references

The following are some internet sites that have great information on Red Clover:

<http://www.healthy.net/scr/article.asp?ID=1451>
<http://www.prodigalgardens.info/june%20weblog.htm#Red%20Clover>
<http://botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/c/clovrd75.html>
http://altnature.com/gallery/Red_Clover.htm

- On your own, read at least three separate sources of information regarding Red Clover. The following are some books that have information but do not limit your search to my selections.

Identifying and Harvesting Edible and Medicinal Plants by Steve Brill pgs. 24 - 26
Indian Herbology of North America by Alma Hutchins pgs. 233 - 235
Earth Mother Herbal by Shatoiya De La Tour pgs. 94 - 95
A Modern Herbal by Mrs. M. Grieve pgs. 207 - 208
The Holistic Herbal by David Hoffman p. 154
The Complete Medicinal Herbal by Penelope Ody p. 105
The Book of Herbal Wisdom by Matthew Wood Pgs. 473 - 477
Rosemary Gladstar's Family Herbal by Rosemary Gladstar p. 358 - 359

- See if you can locate Red Clover growing nearby your home. Dig some up, pot it up and put it in a location where you can observe it every day for the next month.
- Try incorporating Red Clover into at least one meal a week for the next month. Or, try incorporating it into one meal a day for a week or longer. Record your thoughts and uses.