

Valerian, All Heal

Family	Valerianaceae
Botanical	Valeriana officinalis
Parts Used	Rhizome and roots
USDA Hardiness	4A - 9B
Light	Full Sun to Partial Shade
Soil	Any well drained soil
Duration	Perennial



Propagation	Plant from root divisions or start from seed indoors or in the greenhouse in late winter or early spring. Transplant into the garden after danger of frost. When taking or giving root divisions, take from the outer edges and do not disturb the crown. Soil pH requirements: 6.6 to 7.5 (neutral).
Water	As needed, do not overwater
Growing	Provide valerian with full sun for at least 6 hours a day. It likes a nitrogen rich soil that drains well and appreciates plenty of moisture. Valerian can grow to about 5 feet high and more than a foot across, so give it plenty of space and it needs staking.

Medicinal Uses	Antispasmodic, carminative, nervine and stimulant.
Benefits	Eases restlessness, insomnia, hysteria, anxiety, hyperactivity, cramps, backaches and emotional stress. Used effectively for sleeplessness associated with pain.
Preparation	Tincture or capsules. Collection of the roots are unearthed in the late fall. Clean thoroughly and dry in the shade. Infusion: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 1-2 teaspoons of the root and infuse for 10-15 minutes. Drink when needed for pain or cramping. Combines well with Cramp Bark. For insomnia, combine with Passion Flower and Hops. For relief of tension, combine with Skullcap.

Fines Herbes

Culinary Uses

Valerian root is used in many commercial "sleepy time" tea blends and is often safely blended with chamomile. Sweeten with honey if you like, and a touch of lemon.

Valerian is my goto herb for sleepless nights, especially when bothered by pain. I get a deeper, more restful sleep, without any morning fogginess. Valerian's pungent, rooty flavor can be modified by adding good tasting herbs like carob and ramon nut and sweetening with honey

Valerian Root Tea

Ingredients:

1 teaspoon Valerian root

Additions: Sweeten with honey or stevia.

Variations: Add carob, ramon nut, and/or cinnamon to improve flavor.

Recipe Instructions: Herbal Tea :Make a cup of valerian tea by infusing a teaspoon of the dried herb in 1 cup of hot water. DO NOT BOIL. Cover while steeping to prevent the essential oils from escaping.



Historical Facts

Valerian has been used as a medicinal herb since at least the time of ancient Greece and Rome.

Hippocrates described its properties, and Galen later prescribed it as a remedy for insomnia.

There is evidence it was widely used in many Anglo-Saxon home remedies.

In the Middel Ages it was carried in clothing as a moth repellent.

Nicholas Culpepper, the famous 17th century herbalist joins with many old writers to recommend the use both of herb and root, reminding us that it is 'under the influence of Mercury, and therefore hath a warming faculty'.

During World War II, air-raids caused many symptoms of nervous disability in the civilian population and Valerian was prescribed and proved excellent, helping to prevent or minimize symptoms.

Oil of Valerian was employed to a considerable extent on the continent as a popular remedy for cholera.

You may be familiar with the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin: Modern versions of this legend suggest that the rats were charmed by his music, but earlier accounts suggest that his success primarily was due to many pieces of valerian root which were in his pockets. Cats are attracted to valerian, which can induce a state of ecstasy in them. Rats, too, are attracted by it, and it was used in the past as bait by rat-catchers.

Additional Tips

Nutrition Facts

Valerian root also contains essential vitamins and minerals such as calcium, magnesium, EFA's, beta-carotene and B vitamins. Because it's an herb, valerian also contains Quercetin; a bioflavonoid high in antioxidants, found in the yellow pigment of plants, and associated with cardiovascular health and known for its beneficial effects against hypertension, atherosclerosis, osteoporosis and diabetes. Imagine that? A natural sleep aid with all those benefits too!