



# Burdock

Also known as: Gobo; Great Burdock; Beggar's Button.

Native to northern China and Siberia, burdock is more commonly cultivated in Japan where it is called gobo and has been an important vegetable since the 10<sup>th</sup> century. It is considered a delicacy in Southeast Asia. The root was valued by ancient folk healers as a blood purifier and strengthener, a tonic after sickness, and a relief medicine for arthritis. It is also highly valued for its medicinal uses for skin diseases. Burdock root extracts have been shown to destroy bacteria and fungus cultures, and also show strong cancer fighting properties. Steeping fresh burdock shavings in boiling

water produces a tea which is thought to help with indigestion, strengthening and toning the stomach, cleansing the liver and clearing acne.

In modern day Tokyo, gobo soup has its advocates. Sales are booming of a canned vegetable stock made with gobo, radishes, carrots and dried mushrooms, said to prevent cancer, cure diabetes, lower blood pressure and banish hangovers. The health-conscious and the stressed are buying up the soup by the case, and suppliers say they are hard-pressed to keep up with demand. Even the Prime Minister swears by it, and it has become the talk of Japan.

Burdock is available year-round in Oriental Markets, natural-food stores, and supermarkets selling to Japanese and Taiwanese customers.

When identifying healthy burdock, look for firm, unbroken roots with taut skin. Burdock will store for many months. If burdock becomes too dry and limp, try soaking it in water until it becomes firm again.

Burdock has a slender, straight shape. The root can grow to up to 4 feet long, but 2 feet in length is most common. It is usually about 1 inch in diameter. The tender crisp flesh quickly oxidizes. The peel is dark brown or rusty beige. When cooked, burdock changes color from milky white to shiny grey or brown. Its earthy flavor is similar to artichoke hearts or salsify. Burdock has a sweet, nutty, delicate, crunchy flesh. Its bark like skin looks thick, but is actually paper thin and can be scraped away with a fingernail or light scrubbing, much like the skin of a carrot.

Burdock's nutritional benefits are great. It is low in calories and high in fiber and potassium. It is a modest source of iron and calcium and contains vitamins B-complex and E.

(Cut out the squares below for convenient recipe cards on both sides)

## Burdock Chips

Burdock Root  
Vegetable oil  
Salt to taste

Make thin slices of the roots using a vegetable peeler. Fry slices until crispy in oil heated to 325 degrees. Remove from oil, drain and sprinkle with salt. Use as a garnish or a side dish.



## Burdock with Fresh Thyme

Serves 4

1 burdock root (about 8 ounces), scrubbed and trimmed, but not peeled	
2 T red wine vinegar	
1 T extra-virgin olive oil	1 clove garlic, minced
3 T dry white wine	2 tsp fresh thyme or 1/2 tsp dried
1/2 tsp salt	1/4 tsp pepper

Cut burdock crosswise into 1/4" thick slices; as you work, drop burdock into bowl of water with a little lemon juice or vinegar to prevent discoloration. In a medium saucepan, bring 1 quart water and 1 T of red wine vinegar to a boil over high heat. Add burdock; return to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook 10 minutes or until burdock is tender. Drain. In a medium nonstick skillet, heat oil over medium heat. Add garlic and saute 30 seconds until garlic is fragrant. Add drained burdock and cook one minute or until lightly coated. Add wine, thyme, salt, pepper, and remaining 1 T vinegar and cook one to two minutes to blend flavors.

*Recipes and information provided by Harmony Valley Farm; its farmers and staff.  
For more information go to [www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com](http://www.harmonyvalleyfarm.com)*

# Eating With the Seasons

Though many fresh foods are available year round, our regional agricultural community, and the urban communities surrounded by them, benefit when we choose to eat seasonally, from local producers. Knowing the seasonality of our favorite produce allows us to make informed choices.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
available all year round while supplies last											

harvested in  
September

Burdock grows wild along roadsides and on vacant lots in temperate regions, particularly in Asia, Europe and North America. We here at Harmony Valley Farm grow a Japanese variety on raised beds. It is vigorous, and grows very long and straight.

## Preparation and Storage Tips

**Preparing:** Although burdock may come covered with soil, especially if you buy it at a farmers' market, the peel of the root is brown and shouldn't be confused for dirt. Just scrub the burdock lightly with a vegetable brush to remove any soil: The peel contains nutrients and shouldn't be removed. Trim off the very tip of the root if it looks soft and black. Cut it into small pieces and drop immediately into cold water to prevent oxidation.

**To store** burdock, wrap it in a wet paper towel and seal in a plastic bag. Refrigerate in the vegetable compartment. It will keep for several months. If root becomes limp, soak in water until firm again.

### Harmony Valley Kinpira Braised Burdock with Carrot

1/2 lb burdock root, shaved thin  
 1/2 lb carrot, cut into matchsticks  
 1 T veg oil  
 1 T soy sauce (to taste)  
 1/2 C veg or chicken stock  
 1T honey  
 1 tsp sesame oil (optional)  
 1 tsp fresh ginger, minced (optional)

1 large shallot, sliced  
 1/4 C sake or white wine  
 2 T red miso  
 1 tsp Asian chili paste  
 1 tsp sesame seeds (optional)

In the oil, saute shallot and ginger for 2-3 minutes. Add vegetables, saute 3 more minutes. Add the remaining ingredients, except sesame seeds, and simmer, covered until vegetables are just tender. Uncover and continue to simmer until excess liquid has evaporated. Sprinkle with sesame seeds.

### Burdock and Parsnip with Peanut Dressing

1 burdock root (about 8 oz), scrubbed and trimmed, but not peeled  
 1 medium parsnip (about 6 oz)  
 1/4 tsp salt  
 4 tsp red wine vinegar  
 2 T creamy peanut butter  
 1/4 tsp sugar  
 1 T reduced sodium soy sauce

Julienne burdock and parsnips; while cutting, drop burdock into lemon water to prevent oxidation. In medium saucepan, combine 6 C water and 1tsp vinegar, and bring to boil over high heat. Add burdock and parsnip; return to a boil. Reduce to medium heat. Simmer 10 minutes until vegetables are just tender. Drain well. Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, combine peanut butter, soy sauce, sugar, salt and remaining 3 tsp vinegar. Add drained vegetables and toss until just combined.

**Harmony Valley Farm** is a family owned farm in western Wisconsin, dedicated to producing high quality, beautifully clean, and deliciously fresh certified organic produce. Our farming methods protect the environment and enhance diversity.