

The Longwood Herbal Task Force  
(<http://www.mcp.edu/herbal/default.htm>) and  
The Center for Holistic Pediatric Education and Research  
Clinician Information Summary

## SORREL

### SUMMARY

Sorrel has historically been used as a salad green, a spring tonic, a diarrhea remedy and a weak diuretic. It is also one of four ingredients in the herbal cancer remedy, Essiac, but there are no clinical studies evaluating its use in treating any illness. Due to the lack of scientific study, recommendations about dosages cannot be made. Allergic reactions have been reported. It should not be used by patients taking calcium or iron supplements because of the risk of interfering with absorption of these minerals, nor should it be used by patients with a history of renal stones due to the oxalate content. Tannins may cause intestinal upset and renal and hepatic damage. There are no data on safety during pregnancy, lactation or childhood.

**POPULAR USES:** Spring tonic, diuretic, anti-diarrheal, anemia remedy, part of Essiac herbal cancer remedy

**CHEMICAL CONSTITUENTS:** Oxalic acid, tannins, anthracene derivatives, others.

### SCIENTIFIC DATA

*In Vitro:* No antiviral, antibacterial or antineoplastic effects.

*In Animals:* No data.

*In Humans:* Despite numerous testimonials, no controlled trials have been reported evaluating sorrel's use as a diuretic, anti-diarrheal, anti-anemia remedy, or anti-neoplastic agent.

### TOXICITY AND SIDE EFFECTS

*Side effects:* Allergic reactions have been reported. Oxalates may cause renal damage; deaths have been reported in livestock from eating too much sorrel. Tannins may cause GI upset, renal and hepatic damage.

(continued)

*Interactions with other medications:* Oxalates may interfere with absorption of calcium and iron.

*Contraindications:* History of renal stones.

*Pregnancy:* Not typically used. No data evaluating safety.

*Lactation:* No clinical studies evaluating safety.

*Pediatric use:* No clinical studies evaluating safety in childhood.

**ADDITIONAL REFERENCES OR RESOURCES**

- HOME: <http://www.mcp.edu/herbal/default.htm>