

DR. CHRISTOPHER'S
Herbal Legacy Newsletter

Nutritive Herbs to Store for Survival

by Dr. John R. Christopher



The following herbs are nutritive as well as medicinal and can be relied upon as concentrated food sources during times when fruit, vegetables, grains, nuts and seeds are not very abundant.

Alfalfa (Arabic for “father of foods”)

It contains protein, chlorophyll, vitamins A, B12, K, C, P, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, and potassium. The tap root of alfalfa can extend as much as 40-70 feet below the surface of the ground, picking up many minerals from deep within the earth. This is something a plant with a shorter root could not do. Alfalfa can be used as a food or a food supplement. It contains essential hormones and enzymes necessary to keep the pituitary and adrenal glands functioning.

There is a story we have told at many lectures and classes about the family that was incarcerated in a concentration camp during the Nazi occupation of Europe. This particular family found the strength to carry them through to the end of the war when they were released. The key was an alfalfa plant growing in the corner of the compound inside the fence. Each member of the family secretly permitted themselves a few leaves of the plant every day...allowing the alfalfa plant to replenish its leaves throughout the long months. The family obtained the necessary nutriment from the plant. These nutriment were not provided by the inferior and scarce prison food. The family maintained their health while others around them dropped dead from malnutrition.

Kelp or Dulse (dried and powdered or granulated)

These plants originate in the ocean. They also contain essential protein, vitamins (including B12) minerals, plus about 35 trace elements needed by the body in order to function well. The organic

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iodine supplied by kelp will rebuild and maintain the thyroid gland. Kelp also has a salty flavor because of the high potassium content, so it will flavor other foods as an excellent salt substitute without the ill effects of salt. We know of a couple who lived on a beach far from “civilization.” When mushrooms and other wild vegetable food was scarce inland, they survived on fresh kelp washed ashore from the sea. Often they made kelp soup or kelp drink sweetened with honey and using fresh water.

Slippery Elm Powder

This is high in protein and vegetable gelatin. One could thrive very well on slippery elm alone. We have attended several cases where small children were losing weight rapidly and becoming weaker from some wasting disease. Often they could not keep down any regular food. When they were placed on slippery elm gruel, a combination of slippery elm powder, water and honey made into a thin paste, they not only survived, but actually gained weight and regained their health. The taste is very palatable, too. It is filling, satisfying and nourishing.

Licorice Root Powder

The adrenal glands need a lift about every 5 hours to sustain the body’s energy. If a meal or some other nourishment isn’t available, licorice root will feed the adrenals. The armies of Alexander the Great carried licorice root with them on their long marching campaigns for energy, strength and stamina. A far cry from today’s K-Rations, a calcium-leaching sugar chocolate candy bar issued to the poor G.I., by the military.

Licorice root will also retain hunger and thirst. A tablespoon of licorice root powder in a quart of water (shaken thoroughly) and taken a mouthful at a time over a period of a day will sustain the energy of a person who needs to stay alert on a long automobile drive, for example.

Licorice root tea is a splendid pick-me-up. A group of women who worked on the night shift at a well known radio factory were getting caffeine jitters from ingesting quantities of the popular over-the-counter preparation for staying awake. They switched to licorice root tablets and found that their energy could be maintained throughout the night without the consequences of caffeine.

Licorice root is an excellent choice for a storage herb, it was even found in Egyptian tombs! Do not procrastinate in obtaining the substance, however. We import tons of it from the middle east every year for commercial medications and the licorice candy industry. Only the Good Lord can say when a transportation strike will cripple the nation’s economy and we will woefully bemoan our fate that this valuable herb has now become unobtainable. There is a species of licorice that is native to our country and it grows in high mountain areas. You can check local herb guides for pictures and localities. Another possibility is to try to obtain some starts for licorice at a nursery and cultivate it in your garden.

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Comfrey Root Powder or Leaves:

This herb is nutritive as well as medicinal. Comfrey root powder or comfrey leaves are unexcelled foods. Comfrey contains high quantities of protein as well as calcium. Comfrey root or comfrey leaf can be made into a tea or be included in green drinks (if you are fortunate enough to have electricity available for your blender and green leaves for your drink). Several folks we know have used the root powder as a thickening agent in their soups and stews: far more valuable than flour or cornstarch.

Marshmallow Root Powder

This is an invaluable herb which can be used as an herbal food as well as a soothing bath for healing the worst of open sores, especially gangrene. Marshmallow root powder can be reconstituted and used as a drink (a tea or thicker if desired) that can keep one from starvation. It is full of vegetable protein. It also promotes the flow of mother's milk.

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