

Grass - The Medicine beneath our Feet by Steve Meyerowitz, Sproutman®

Fifty million years ago, the oceans receded enough to reveal the land and soon after, the first sign of vegetation appeared—grass. Today, it remains our most ubiquitous form of vegetation. No matter where we journey on this earth, from the grassy outback “down under,” to the Arctic Circle with its one inch tundra, to our greatest cities where it fights its way up through the cracks in the sidewalks, there is grass. Grass is the primary source of food for all grazing animals. Unlike them, we humans cannot digest grass because of its woody fiber. But our number one food is grain—which germinates into grass. Wheat, barley, rice, rye, oats, millet, and corn are the world’s top food crops. Plant any of them and you get grass!

The awareness of the healing properties of grasses dates back to 2,800 B.C. in China, with similar early ceremonies worshiping cereal grasses and grains by the Romans and Egyptians. References can also be found in the Dead Sea scrolls. Early research about “immature” pasture grass was done in England in the 1800's. Modern research into the nutritional content of “cereal” grasses—wheat, barley, oats, etc—began in 1935 and was when chemists at the University of Wisconsin described the growth stimulating factor of grass as “distinct from all the known vitamins.”¹

This work was inspired by the agricultural chemist Dr. Charles F. Schnabel. He started a movement that made grasses available for both livestock and human consumption. In the early 1940's, you could buy ‘tins’ of Schnabel's dry grass powder in pharmacies all across North America. Stories about the new health food with “more vitamins than the alphabet has letters,” ran in Newsweek, Business Week, and Time magazines. In the 1970s, Japanese researcher and medical doctor, Yoshihide Hagiwara, restored his health by drinking grass juice powder made from young barley grass. He determined that the 10-12 inch plant provided the maximum nutrient value. At the same time in the USA, Dr. Ann Wigmore popularized the use of indoor grown fresh squeezed grass juice for the therapeutic treatment of cancer patients who had been pronounced ‘incurable.’ Word about the “miracles” resulting from her wheatgrass treatments spread. Today, wheatgrass and barley grass are available both as powder or tablets and fresh squeezed wheatgrass juice is sold in juice bars and health food stores everywhere.

As a doctor, Hagiwara, facilitated a large body of university level research on dried barley grass juice. He found that it contains 11 times the calcium of cow's milk, 5 times the iron of spinach, 4 times the vitamin B-1 of whole wheat flour, 7 times the vitamin C in oranges and an abundance of vitamin B-12, 80 mcg per hundred grams.² But the therapeutic benefits of grass go beyond its vitamins and minerals. Grass is a superb source of high quality antioxidants that prevents aging at the cellular level and strengthens our immunity. Barley grass is especially rich in 3 antioxidants—SOD, 2"-O-GIV, and VES. Superoxidedismutase (SOD) is an enzyme that neutralizes free radicals. Damage from free radicals is considered the number one cause of aging and has been

implicated in other diseases including heart disease and cancer. Another significant antioxidant compound is 2"-O-GIV, a novel isoflavonoid abundant in young barley grass which also has anti-estrogenic properties.³ In preliminary studies, vitamin E succinate (VES), stopped the proliferation of prostate, breast, and leukemia cancer cells.⁴ This means that grass, in general, and barley grass, in particular, has the potential to help us fight aging and disease and increase our immunity.

Another significant therapeutic ingredient in grass is chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is the plasma of plants. Green plants take in sunlight and transform it into food which nourishes the whole plant. This is the process of photosynthesis. Look around you and you will notice that green is the predominant color in nature. This is no accident. In the science of spectro-chromology, green is the color for healing and relaxation. Just walk in a meadow and you can feel its effects. The soft green grass makes you want to lie down and relax. Your tensions are absorbed by the earth. Chlorophyll is often called "concentrated sun power." It is similar to hemin in hemoglobin, the oxygen and iron-rich factor in our blood. Drinking lots of chlorophyll-rich juice is like getting a blood transfusion. It flushes the lymph system, nourishes and oxygenates the vascular system, cleanses the intestines, and is healing and soothing to all mucous membranes.

The young grasses behave like vitamins because they are naturally concentrated. But this supplement is made in nature's laboratory with a full spectrum of phytochemicals and complex co-factors that enhance and enable its therapeutic action. Green foods like grass deliver hundreds of nutrient compounds in perfect balance. Since many modern pharmaceuticals mimic natural medicine discoveries, why not go to the source. These ancient plants may hold within the secrets to health and healing. Perhaps that is why the basic unwritten theme of ancient civilization has always been the search for greener grass.

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