

Wild Lettuce Leaf – The Plant of Peaceful Release

Botanical Profile

- Latin Name: *Lactuca virosa*
- Alternative Names: Opium Lettuce, Bitter Lettuce, Tall Wild Lettuce
- Plant Family: Asteraceae
- Parts Used: Leaves and latex-rich sap (lactucarium)
- Origin: Native to Europe and parts of Asia; now naturalised in North America

Wild Lettuce Leaf is known for its gentle sedative properties and its traditional use as a natural pain reliever. At Peridotflow, we honour this dreamy, boundary-softening plant as an ally for releasing tension, calming restlessness, and inviting deep surrender—whether from pain, stress, or insomnia. Its bitter essence speaks the language of letting go.

Natural Pain Relief Without Opiates

Often referred to as 'opium lettuce,' Wild Lettuce offers analgesic support through its unique lactucarium compound without the addictive effects of true opiates. It has been used historically for mild to moderate pain, headaches, backaches, and joint discomfort.

Gentle Nervine Sedative and Sleep Support

Wild Lettuce calms nervous agitation and helps induce restful sleep. Its sedative action is beneficial for those dealing with insomnia caused by mental tension, overthinking, or chronic pain conditions.

Muscle Relaxant and Tension Soother

As a smooth muscle relaxant, Wild Lettuce can ease tension held in the body—whether emotional, digestive, or musculoskeletal. It's often used when the nervous system feels overstimulated and the body won't settle into ease.

Support for Emotional Boundaries and Hypervigilance

This plant has a unique affinity for people who feel overly open or exposed. It softens jagged energetic edges and can help highly sensitive individuals or empaths find calm in overstimulating environments.

Relief for Spasmodic and Restless Conditions

Wild Lettuce is traditionally used for coughing fits, menstrual cramps, and restless leg syndrome. Its antispasmodic nature helps relieve spasmodic tension across different systems of the body.

Folklore & History

Wild Lettuce has long been used by herbalists as a mild alternative to opium poppy. In ancient Greece, it was considered sacred to the god of sleep and death, Hypnos. The plant's bitter, milky latex—lactucarium—was historically collected and used to soothe pain and calm agitation.

Traditional Usage

Traditionally used in tincture or dried leaf form. A decoction or syrup of the leaves and stem was also made for coughs and sleeplessness. Often blended with other calming or pain-relieving herbs like skullcap or valerian.

Herbal Actions

Analgesic, Sedative, Nervine, Antispasmodic, Hypnotic, Bitter, Relaxant

Energetics & Tissue States

Temperature: Cooling

Moisture: Drying

Tissue States: Tense, Excited, Dry, Hypervigilant

Active Compounds

- Lactucarium – mild sedative and pain-reliever
- Bitter glycosides – support digestion and liver
- Flavonoids – calming and anti-inflammatory

Dosage & Preparation

- Tincture: 2–4 ml up to 3x/day
- Infusion: 1 tsp dried leaf per cup, steep 10–15 mins
- Combine with: skullcap, valerian, passionflower, or hops for enhanced effect

Safety & Contraindications

- Avoid during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- May cause drowsiness—do not combine with sedative medications
- Use caution in low blood pressure or bradycardia (slow heartbeat)

Herbal Pairings

- Skullcap – to ease anxiety and tension
- Valerian – for deeper sleep support
- Passionflower – for emotional overactivity
- Hops – for overstimulated nervous systems
- Chamomile – to soothe irritability in children or elders

Peridotflow Perspective

Wild Lettuce Leaf teaches the gift of release—of surrendering the tension we carry in the body, mind, and spirit. It is the plant we call on when the edge has become too sharp, when the restlessness is too loud. With tenderness, it reminds us that it's safe to rest, to exhale, and to soften back into peace.