

20 UNUSUAL USES FOR GARLIC



Pungent and powerful, garlic has dozens of health and household uses.

Chew up a raw clove of garlic and you might exhale noxious, eye-watering clouds of stink all day, but you'll also repel mosquitoes (and vampires), increase your immunity, heal cold sores, expel parasites and maybe even get in the mood. Garlic is a broad-spectrum antibiotic, killing bacteria, fungus, viruses and mold, so it's an important ally for natural health. Check out these 20 unusual and sometimes strange alternative uses for garlic.

Acne

Slice open a clove of raw, fresh garlic and apply it to breakouts as a home remedy for acne. Your skin won't smell terribly good, but the antibacterial properties of garlic will help lessen the appearance of acne, even those deep acne cysts that can otherwise be difficult to treat.

Pesticide

Whiteflies, aphids, cabbage loopers and squash bugs. All of these creepy-crawlies and more can totally decimate the beautiful organic garden you've been tending all season. Ward them off with an all-natural garlic pesticide spray. Mince three garlic cloves and let them sit in two tablespoons of mineral oil for 24 hours. Then strain out the garlic and add the oil, along with a teaspoon of liquid dish soap, to a pint of water in a spray bottle. Spray on infested plants.

Cold sore treatment

These unsightly lesions always seem to pop up at the most inopportune times, like the morning before a big date. Raw garlic may work just as well as commercial medical treatments, though the acidity may cause discomfort at first. Cut a garlic clove in half and place it directly on the cold sore for 10 minutes, several times a day. Garlic supplements in capsule form may also speed up the healing process.

Mosquito repellent

If you don't mind smelling like Italian dressing, garlic can work wonders in warding off pesky mosquitoes without the use of DEET and other potentially toxic chemicals. Try this oddball garlic mosquito spray: let a few minced cloves of garlic infuse an ounce of mineral oil for 24 hours, strain, and mix the garlic-scented oil with 2 cups of water and 1 teaspoon of freshly squeezed lemon juice. Strain again if necessary and pour into a spray bottle.

Glass repair

Did you know that garlic juice is a natural adhesive? While it's not up to any major jobs, it can be used to fill in hairline cracks in glass and hold them together. Crush a clove of garlic and rub its sticky, viscous juice into the cracks and wipe away the excess.



Flea deterrent

Need natural flea protection for your dog? Consider garlic. Many natural pet health stores sell capsules of garlic and brewers yeast, which are taken orally to discourage fleas from biting. You can also grate a small amount of fresh garlic onto your dog's food once per day, but don't overdo it, as it may be harmful in large amounts.

Athlete's foot

Garlic is a potent natural antifungal, making it ideal for treating fungal infections like irritating and itchy athlete's foot. Add a few cloves of crushed garlic to warm water in a foot bath and soak the affected foot for 30 minutes.

Ear infections

A common folk remedy for centuries, garlic can indeed kill the bacteria that cause ear infections. Of course, this doesn't mean you should shove a clove of garlic into your ear and hope for the best. Crush a clove of garlic with a press and place it in a teaspoon of hot olive oil for five minutes. Strain, allow to cool and drip a few drops at a time into your ear canal. You can also purchase garlic oil made for this purpose at natural health food stores.

Splinter removal

Splinters suck. They're painful to remove, and sometimes they slice too far into the skin to pull out. Instead of waiting for it to come out on its own, try this odd trick: place a thin slice over the splinter and hold on with a bandage. The garlic should help the splinter work its way out of the skin within hours.

Skin cleanser

It's not exactly common, but some women swear by using garlic as a facial cleanser to dry out acne and tighten and exfoliate the skin. It will definitely burn, so take care if you have any open wounds. Make a paste of finely mined garlic, olive oil, facial cleanser and sugar; massage into skin in circular motions, then rinse.



Gas prevention

High in sulfur, garlic can be the culprit for uncomfortable stomach-distending gas for some people, but for others, it can reportedly ease it. The trick may be consuming it on a regular basis in order to maintain intestinal health. Garlic kills harmful intestinal bacteria and promotes the growth of beneficial flora, making digestion much smoother.

Yeast infections

At the first sign of a yeast infection, many women around the world turn to a rather unusual natural remedy: raw, peeled garlic cloves (not cut), typically tied in a strip of cheesecloth and inserted with a tampon applicator. Garlic's antifungal properties go to work on the yeast, supposedly keeping the infection at bay.

Fish bait

Garlic's strong smell may repel insects, but it has the opposite effect on fish. Yep, that's right, garlic cloves are recommended by some fisherman as an unusual bait that can attract catfish, carp, trout, bass and other species. Marshmallows or dough balls made from a mixture of crackers and cat food are coated with crushed or powdered garlic and placed on a hook to lure the fish with its scent.

Psoriasis relief

The persistent tightness and itching of psoriasis could be eased or even prevented by garlic's anti-inflammatory properties. Active compounds in garlic interact with arachidonic acid, an omega fatty acid in the skin linked to psoriasis. Garlic oil may be rubbed directly on affected areas once or twice per day.

Cough syrup

Ease inflammation in the throat and clear up excess mucus by using garlic as cough syrup. Try steeping raw, minced garlic in hot water, straining it after five minutes and drinking the liquid as tea; you can add ginger and honey to make it more palatable.



Mole removal

This method is almost certainly not recommended by dermatologists, and mole removal is best left to medical professionals, especially since skin doctors can tell upon excision whether the mole shows signs of malignancy. However, many people choose to go it alone, and garlic oil – applied several times per day and covered with a bandage – is an oft-repeated DIY route.

Cold banisher

Can garlic cure and prevent colds naturally? It's been in use for this purpose for centuries, and there's a good reason for that. **Researchers believe** that allicin, the main biologically active component of garlic, could block enzymes that may impede bacterial and viral infections. Eat three to four cloves of garlic per day, preferably raw and crushed, adding them to soups, stews, pasta sauces and salad dressings.

Road de-icer

Garlic is among the oddball solutions that many towns across the nation have been dreaming up to de-ice roads in winter. Ankeny, Iowa smelled awfully savory in 2008 when winter transportation crews spread garlic salt on the streets in advance of snowstorms. The salt, apparently unfit for human consumption, was donated by a local spice producer.

Hair loss help

Whether you've over-dyed your hair to the point of constant shedding or you're just going bald, garlic may be worth a shot before you resort to more drastic measures (or just buy a lot of hats.) Some people believe that massaging the scalp with garlic oil stimulates hair growth.

Parasite killer

Many alternative health practitioners advise using raw garlic to expel intestinal parasites. Recommended as part of a cleansing diet that also includes raw honey, lemon juice, pumpkin seeds, carrots and beets, garlic consumed in quantities of about three cloves per day may help clear nasty organisms out of the digestive tract.

Aphrodisiac

Does garlic turn you on? You may not like the smell of it on someone else's breath, but it may incite lust once it makes its way into your stomach. Garlic has been used as an aphrodisiac since ancient times, and modern medical knowledge may have an explanation: it aids circulation, pumping blood to your extremities. This effect might even increase men's endurance in the bedroom.