

# Löwen-Zahn

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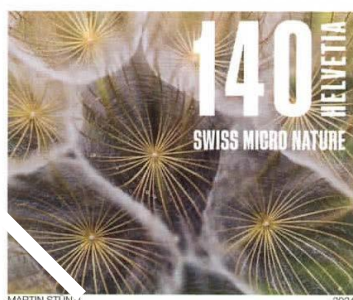
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Dear Readers,

We wish you a happy, healthy, and successful New Year 2026!

As the editor, it is a must for me to collect all stamps and cancels depicting the dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*). The German name of this traditional medical plant is “Löwenzahn”, and the serration of its leaves vaguely resembles to a row of lion’s teeth and, at the same time, to postage stamps’ perforation. This is the reason that our journal (by my predecessor) has chosen it as name and logo.



Some of the stamps recently issued focus on microstructures of the dandelion’s spherical seed head, often called “blowball” or in German “Pustelblume”: A stamp from Belgium (1), which is part of the 2021 sheet of the series “Geometry in Nature”, gives the dandelion’s seed head as an example for circular symmetry in nature. The Swiss stamp (2) is a microphotograph of the densely spiral-shaped inflorescence seen from above. Each single-seeded fruit is connected to a hair-like pappus enabling it to be dispersed by the wind (anemochory). Finally, a Dutch sheet “The Language of Nature” contains a microscopic picture (3) of the seed head with fruits and their fragile pappi representing a Fibonacci sequence.

The dandelion as well as our Löwen-Zahn are always good for fascinating surprises!

Detlef Werner

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Hinweis: Die Verwendung der MICHEL-Nummerierung erfolgt mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Schwaneberger Verlags, Unterschleißheim. Diesem stehen die ausschließlichen urheberrechtlichen Nutzungsrechte zu. Darüber hinaus ist die MICHEL-Nummerierung durch wettbewerbsrechtliche Vorschriften geschützt.

1. Stamp. Geometrie in der Natur (IV); Kreis - Gewöhnlicher Löwenzahn (*Taraxacum ruderalia*) in der Fruchtreife. Belgien: MiNr. 5026, Michel Block 256; 2021.
2. Stamp. Naturmuster - Fruchtstand des Gewöhnlichen Löwenzahnes (*Taraxacum*). Schweiz: MiNr. 2899; 2024.
3. Stamp. Formensprache der Natur - Fibonacci-Sequenz: Samenstand eines Löwenzahns. Niederlande: MiNr. 4289; 2024.

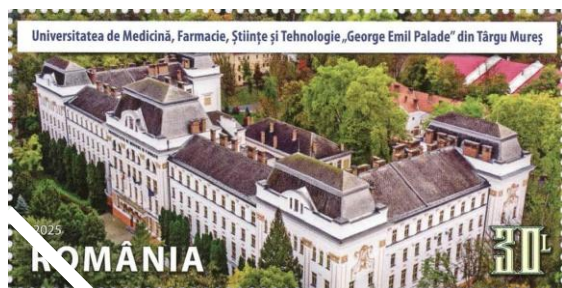
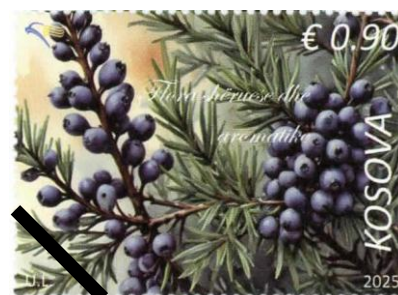
## New Stamp and Cancel Issues

A “lovebird” relevant to pharmacy? Yes, sometimes it is impossible to present a stamp or cancel directly showing the subject of interest: the bacterium *Chlamydia psittaci* causes psittacosis, an infectious pulmonary disease transmitted from parrots to humans. As a prevention, close contact to birds of the parrot family should be avoided, and the so-called lovebirds belong to these (4). Today, infections with *Chlamydia* can be treated with antibiotics, but they have the potential of severe illness and were even subject of biological weapon’s research.



Lucie Randoin (1885-1960) was the first woman teaching at the medical faculty in Paris. Her research focussed on vitamins of the B group as essential components of the daily diet. She recognized the connection between these vitamins and the metabolism of sugars, to alcoholism and malnutrition. In addition, she published the first tables with composition and nutritional values of foodstuff. The French post honours Mrs Randoin with a stamp showing her portrait (5).

A medical plant not often found on stamps is the Juniper (*Juniperus communis*). We see it here on a stamp of a new series from Kosovo (6). The “berries” of this tree contain an essential oil with pinen, terpineol and sabinen as main components. It is used not only as a spice (especially for game dishes) or for the distillation of gin, but also as a natural diuretic and as a remedy against dyspepsia.



Romania celebrates 80 years of the university for medicine, pharmacy, natural sciences and technology “George Emil Palade” in Targu Mures (7). The sheet in which the stamp is embedded shows its picturesque location in Transylvania. There are also stamps on occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> birthday as well of those honouring the pharmaceutical faculties in Cluj-Napoca and Bucharest.

The Indian postal office issued a series of stamps introducing agricultural products from the province of Bihar. One shows the leaves of the betel plant (*Piper betle*) (8), that are used as flavouring and envelope of the betel nut chew. The traditional preparation of this far-east stimulant is combining chopped areca nuts that contain arecoline, alkaline slaked lime to hydrolyze arecoline to absorbable arecaidine, and these leaves and other aromatic plants to give it a pleasant taste. Betel leaves contain an essential oil with chavibetol, eugenol and safrol as main components.



4. Stamp. Haustiere (V): Vogel - Gelbes Rosenköpfchen (*Agapornis roseicollis*). Bundesrepublik Deutschland: MiNr. 3942; 2026.
5. Stamp. 140. Geburtstag von Lucie Randoin - Lucie Randoin (1885-1960), Biologin. Frankreich: MiNr. 9033; 2025.
6. Stamp. Heil- und Aromapflanzen (I) - Gemeiner Wacholder (*Juniperus communis*). Kosovo: MiNr. 698; 2025.
7. Stamp. 80 Jahre George-Emil-Palade-Universität für Medizin, Pharmazie, Naturwissenschaften und Technik, Targu Mures - Universitätsgebäude (Luftaufnahme). Rumänien: MiNr. 8481, Michel Block 1034; 2025.
8. Stamp. Landwirtschaftliche Produkte aus Bihar - Magahi-Paan-Betelpfeffer (*Piper betle*). Indien: MiNr. 4116; 2025.

## Leverkus, Carl (1804-1889)

(Buchholz, K.) Text und Abbildungen dieses Beitrags stammen aus der Sammlung von Kurt Buchholz, München. Er hat sich ausschließlich auf Absenderfreistempel (AFS) spezialisiert, um „berühmte Persönlichkeiten“ philatelistisch zu porträtieren.

Exponatseite: Leverkus, Carl

geb. 5.11.1804 in Wermelskirchen – gest. 4.2.1889 in Leverkusen

Apotheker, Chemiker und Chemieunternehmer, Namensgeber der Stadt Leverkusen.

Leverkus begann 1822 eine Apothekerlehre und studierte dann an der Universität Marburg. Nach einer Anstellung als Apothekergehilfe in Trier ging er nach Paris, arbeitete dort in einer Apotheke und studierte abends Chemie an der Sorbonne. 1829 legte er in Berlin das Apotheker-Examen ab.



Leverkus eröffnete 1834 die erste Fabrik zur Herstellung künstlichen Ultramarinblaus. Die entstandene Siedlung wurde später „Leverkusen“ genannt. Nach seinem Tod verkauften seine Söhne 1891 einen Teil des Fabrikgeländes an die Elberfelder Farbenfabriken vorm. Friedrich Bayer & Co. AG (heute Bayer AG Leverkusen).



## APIs on Stamps (V): Urea

(Diesveld, J.) The Dutch scientist Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738) discovered urea in urine in 1727 (9). He named it *sal nativus urinae* = the native salt of the urine. His method of isolating urea must have been a very smelly procedure - it lasted about a year! Also, the French chemist Hilaire Rouelle (1718-1778) is attributed to the discovery in 1773; as is the English chemist William Cruickshank (1741/50-1810/11) who found urea nitrate in 1797. The compound urea was seen as a component that only could be made in living organisms. The experimental results by Friedrich Wöhler (1800-1882) in 1828 showed this not to be true (10). He made urea with materials that did not come from living organisms: silver cyanate (AgNCO) mixed with ammonium chloride (NH<sub>4</sub>Cl) gives ammonium cyanate (NH<sub>4</sub>NCO), which after a heat treatment results in urea (H<sub>2</sub>NCONH<sub>2</sub>). The first artificial synthesis of an organic compound starting from inorganic compounds, by passing living organisms. This was a definitive blow to the vitalism (= life force) theory: organic compounds can only be made by living organisms.

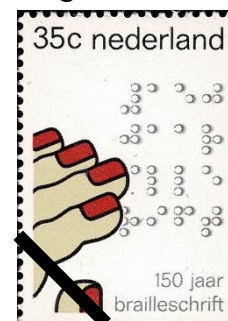
In living organisms (mainly mammals) urea originates from the conversion of amino acids (the building blocks of proteins) and other nitrogen containing compounds into metabolic waste products.

Nowadays urea is an important product. It is synthetically made in a twostep process from air (via the Haber-Bosch process): formation of ammonium (NH<sub>3</sub>) from air; the next process is the Haber-Meiser process: ammonium reacts with carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) to urea (11).



Very large amounts are needed as fertilizer. Taking advantage of a special property of urea, a small amount can be put to medical use. This special property is that urea is hygroscopic, meaning it "attracts" water. There are skin conditions

which can benefit from a moisturizing action e.g., eczema or psoriasis (cancel on the right). The problem is the application of a powered urea. Application as a crème would be very beneficiary. The chemist Isaac Lifschütz (1852-1938) found the solution: a stable emulsion based on Eucerit. The word Eucerit is derived from old Greek, meaning beautiful wax. It is processed fat from the wool of sheep. This was the beginning of the pharmaceutical company Beiersdorf. Urea is also keratolytic, meaning it breaks the bond between dead skin cells. This property is used to treat fungal nails (12).



9. Stamp. Niederländische Wissenschaftler - Herman Boerhaave (1668-1738), Mediziner und Chemiker. Niederlande: MiNr. 2192; 1928.
10. Stamp. 100. Todestag von Friedrich Wöhler (1800-1882), Chemiker - Modell des Harnstoffmoleküls, Formel der Harnstoffsynthese. Bundesrepublik Deutschland: MiNr. 1148; 1982.
11. Stamp. Bilder aus Bangladesh - Raffinerie, Chittagong [tatsächliche Aufschrift: Chittagong Urea Fertilizer]. Bangladesch: MiNr. 303; 1989.
12. Stamp. 150 Jahre Braille-Blindenschrift - Finger tasten Braillepunkte ab. Niederlande: MiNr. 1057; 1975.

## Of Rats and Pharmacy

(Werner, D.) Rats have a relevance for pharmacy in several aspects. First of all, rats (*Rattus norvegicus* and *Rattus rattus*) and mice are used as test animals in the pre-clinical investigation of new drug substances. As mammals with short reproduction cycle, rats are a “model” for human organism and organs. The most prominent laboratory rat is the Wistar™ rat, of which many strains exist with special genetic profiles. On stamps, laboratory animals are rarely pictured (13), and if, mostly as a negative example of animal welfare (14). More and more, in-vitro methods are developed as a substitute for in-vivo testing, but it is still not possible to abstain completely from laboratory animals to investigate and detect possible toxic effects of drugs intended for human use.



A second medicinal and pharmaceutical aspect of rats is their emerging role in pest control. Due to abundant availability of feed in warehouses, waste containers and sewers, their populations are growing rapidly in towns and jeopardize human food stocks and hygiene (15). At the same time, rats as relatively “intelligent” animals avoid conventional traps (16) and baits, and historic rat catchers achieved only a temporary effect (17). The method of choice today is to poison them with rodenticides of the anticoagulant class, with a delayed but efficient lethal effect. Substances of this class of anticoagulants are also used in pharmacy as potent drugs against uncontrolled formation of blood clots in patients with arteriosclerosis or after heart diseases.

Finally, rats played an important role in the transmission of bubonic plague: The bacterium *Yersinia pestis* lives in the blood of a blood-sucking flea (*Xenopsylla cheopis*) (18), which lives in the rat’s fur and is transferred by them to humans by bites. It was Alexandre Yersin (1863-1943), a Swiss bacteriologist, who worked in East Asia (19), identifying *Yersinia pestis* as the responsible pathogen. However, it was still a long way from medieval pest healers with the bird-like masks (20) to modern antibiotic treatment.



13. Stamp. Interkosmosprogramm: Weltraumforschung - Satellit zur Erforschung der kosmischen Biologie, Versuchstier. Tschechoslowakei: MiNr. 2558; 1980.
14. Stamp. 10 Jahre Verbot von Tierversuchen in San Marino - Mikroskop; Maus. San Marino: MiNr. 2731; 2017.
15. Stamp. Welternährungstag - Pflügen / Milchvieh / Traktor in Maisfeld / Ratte frißt Getreide. Tansania: MiNr. 209, MiNr. 210, MiNr. 211, MiNr. 212, Michel Block 30; 1982.
16. Stamp. Handwerkliche Erzeugnisse - Rattenfalle. Tuvalu: MiNr. 182; 1983.
17. Stamp. Sagenhaftes Deutschland (II): Der Rattenfänger von Hameln - Flötenspieler lockt Ratten von Hameln fort. Bundesrepublik Deutschland: MiNr. 3578; 2020.
18. Stamp. Jahrtausendwende: Ereignisse der Jahre 1650–1700 - Ausgabe des Buches „Micrographia“ von Robert Hooke (1665). Grenada: MiNr. 4134; 2000.
19. Stamp. 100. Jahrestag der Entdeckung des Pesterregers - Alexandre Yersin (1863-1943), schweizerischer Tropenarzt und Entdecker des Pesterregers *Yersinia pestis*; Unterschrift; Hütte. Vietnam: MiNr. 2616; 1994.
20. Stamp. Jahrtausendwende: Bedeutende Ereignisse der Jahre 1700–1750 - Beulenpest breitet sich in Deutschland und Österreich aus (1711). Nevis: MiNr. 1465; 2000.