

Herbal Treatments Using Plants Found on the Northern Plains: Pioneer Remedies and Folk Medicines

compiled by Robert Kammen*

Introduction

I had just returned from the Korean Conflict and had secured employment in the Grand Tetons when I stumbled upon the ruins of a pioneer log cabin during a weekend hike into the wilderness. The few remaining logs were covered with moss, but part of the door frame still rose above the wind-rippled grass, and through this I stepped to stand in silent contemplation, wondering what had happened to those who lived here. A trapper, perhaps, or a mountain man; certainly not a sodbuster for this was rugged terrain—high plateau country. My cursory search revealed the blade of an old shovel, some pieces of harness, and the remains of a small book bound in leather in which I found three or four fragment pages, yellowed with age, brittle to the touch.

The first page bore a man's first name, Joshua, in a wide, sprawling signature that bespoke boldness. And the other pages contained herbal remedies. "Use the leaf of a Crowfoot plant," I read, and eagerly my eyes devoured the instructions detailing how to transform the leaves into a liquid astringent.

But there the instructions ended, abruptly, like the wind change that carried the scent of fir trees away. For what purpose was this plant to be used, to treat what ailing body part, or what illness? My curiosity aroused, I turned to the remaining pages where I found two herbal treatments listed—Culver's root made a strong antiseptic; False Unicorn root gave only instructions for its remedial preparation.

I returned to our main construction camp, which was strung along beautiful Jackson Lake, its calm surface mirrored the jagged peaks of the grand Tetons. And in the days following the information from that old leather book was constantly in my thoughts. My subconscious tried to pierce the veil of time to when the log cabin sheltered a historical character, as we have come to call these people who settled our western states. Now in my mind's eye I could dimly see a man clad in buckskin, the long shaggy hair framing a bearded face, and with pain lines radiating away from squinting eyes as he prepared one of these herbal remedies, and he became a living person again, one who lived and loved, a man who suffered the trauma of illnesses and tragedy, dreamed

great dreams, and succumbed to the vagaries of old age or died a violent death. And now in my hands I held the only legacy he had left to modern man—three old-fashioned herbal remedies.

On Saturday morning, I drove southward along the highway meandering through Jackson Hole country and to the historic town of Jackson, where I called upon a local doctor. Reverently I handed him the leather-bound bit of history and asked him his opinion of its contents.

"Interesting," he murmured, leading me into his office, where we settled down around a desk cluttered with books and medical paraphernalia, "May I inquire just how this came into your possession?"

I told him about last weekend's hike into the wilderness, and of finding the book in the ruins of an old log cabin.

"A trapper, probably," he said. "I've heard that Culver's root makes an antiseptic. Unfortunately, these types of treatments have gone out of style, so to speak. Miracle drugs; sometimes they're not the answer."

"Perhaps there isn't any clear-cut answer," I ventured.

"Man is fallible," he said. "God is not—if He created us out of dust, surely He would also create medical plants."

"These herbal remedies?"

"Those, and other means by which early man could treat his wounds of illnesses. Sometimes the drugs we use

* The author expresses thanks to Bonnie Heidel of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and Dr. William Barker of North Dakota State University for technical assistance with preparation of this article.

today help one part of our body and harm another. But just between you and I, young man, I'd rather trust in some herbal remedies like these than take some of the sample drugs I receive in the mail every day. For the sake of my patients, however, I must act the role of a modern doctor—modern office, treatment rooms, modern drugs. By the way, I've heard of an old rancher, Seth Parsons, lives down near Big Piney; anyway, Parsons pretty much believes in the old ways of treating his ailments. Might

be a good idea to call upon him, that is, if you want to learn more about herbal remedies and such."

The trail I then traveled in my search for knowledge about our history brought me in ever-widening spirals from the west to the southeast and northward again. Though I visited museums and libraries, most of the information I gathered over the next two decades came from the minds of the elderly from every spectrum of society—Indians, ranchers, farmers, and townspeople. . .

GLOSSARY

Alterative:	<i>Causing alteration; having the power to alter.</i>	Emollient:	<i>Softening, making supple; relaxing; soothing to the skin. A medicine which softens and relaxes living tissues that are inflamed.</i>
Amenorrhea:	<i>A morbid or unnatural suppression of menstruation.</i>	Expectorant:	<i>Having the quality of promoting discharges from the mucous membrane of the lungs or trachea. A drug which promotes such discharges.</i>
Anodyne:	<i>Any medicine which allays pain; anything which diminishes distress; assuaging pain; relieving.</i>	Febrifuge:	<i>A febrifuge medicine or agent; a cooling drink.</i>
Antiscorbutic:	<i>Counteracting scurvy or a scorbutic tendency; a remedy for or a preventive of scurvy.</i>	Fistula:	<i>An abnormal duct or passage caused by injury or disease, as one leading from an abscess to the body surface or from one cavity or hollow organ to another. Any of various suppurative inflammations.</i>
Aperient:	<i>Gently purgative; having the quality of opening; laxative. A medicine which gently opens the bowels.</i>	Flatulent:	<i>Affected with or caused by gases generated in the alimentary canal; generating or apt to generate gas in the stomach.</i>
Aromatic:	<i>A plant, drug, or medicine which yields a fragrant smell and often a warm, pungent taste.</i>	Purgative:	<i>Cathartic; purging; cleansing; bringing about a bowel movement; a medicine that evacuates the bowels; a cathartic.</i>
Astringent:	<i>Contracting; styptic; contracting the organic tissues and canals of the body and thereby checking or diminishing bleeding or excessive discharges.</i>	Refrigerant:	<i>A medicine which abates fever.</i>
Carminative:	<i>Expelling wind from the body; relieving flatulence.</i>	Resolvent:	<i>A substance which diminishes or dispels inflammation.</i>
Debility:	<i>A state of general body weakness; feebleness.</i>	Rubefacient:	<i>Producing redness on the skin; a substance for external application which produces redness of the skin not followed by a blister.</i>
Demulcent:	<i>Softening; mollifying. Any medicine which lessens the effect of irritation, as mucilaginous substances.</i>	Soporific:	<i>Causing sleep; tending to cause sleep; marked by lethargy or drowsiness; a drug or agent inducing sleep.</i>
Diuretic:	<i>Having the power to increase the amount of urine discharged. A medicine that increases the secretion of urine.</i>	Stomachic:	<i>Pertaining to or strengthening the stomach; exciting the action of the stomach; medicine that strengthens the stomach and stimulates digestion.</i>
Dropsy:	<i>An abnormal collection of serous fluid in any cavity of the body or in the cellular tissue; edema.</i>	Sudorific:	<i>Causing sweat; a medicine that produces sweat.</i>
Emetic:	<i>Inducing vomiting, as a medical substance. An emetic medicine or agent.</i>	Vermifuge:	<i>A medicine or agent that expels parasitic intestinal worms.</i>
Emmenagogue:	<i>A medicine taken to promote the menstrual discharge.</i>		

The Old Settler's Journal

Editor's Note**

This article is excerpted from "The Old Settlers' Journal, 1850-1900, Volume I: Herbal Treatments and Other Old-Fashioned Remedies," an unpublished manuscript compiled by Robert Kammen. In publishing these excerpts, the State Historical Society of North Dakota hopes to illuminate a portion of the folk history of the pioneer era on the northern plains. We cannot verify the effectiveness of the herbal treatments, do not recommend their use, and most certainly advocate that authoritative medical advice be obtained before any illness is treated. The sole reason for appearance of the following material in *North Dakota History* is to provide a sampling of folk remedies employed by pioneers.



AVENS (Avens root; chocolate root; throat-root; *Geum virginianum* L.)

Action: Tonic, stomachic, astringent.

Uses: Bleeding, chronic diarrhea, wind colic, stomach affections, asthma, leucorrhoea, flooding, sore throat.

Avens grows to about two feet high and has a perennial, small brown, contorted, horizontal root. The stem is erect, simple or branched, and has few flowers. The flowers are quite small, white, and grow on the ends of the stems. The fruit is a cluster of dry berries which are oval, brown, and smooth. This plant is found in hedges and thickets in moist places in most parts of the United States. It flowers from June to August. It has long been used in domestic practice. The root is the part usually used. Tonic, astringent, stomachic, it is used for passive and chronic bleeding, chronic diarrhea, wind colic, stomach affections, asthmatic symptoms and weakness, leucorrhoea, flooding, and sore throat. It must be used for some time and

then is a good builder and tonic. Make the decoction by using an ounce of the root to a pint of water and take one or two ounces or more, four times a day. The dose of the powder is from twenty to thirty grams.



BARBERRY (*Berberis vulgaris* L.)

Action: Tonic, diuretic.

Uses: Kidney troubles, urinary troubles, gravel.

Not found in North Dakota, this shrub rises from four to eight feet in height and has long bending branches and many thorns. It has egg-shaped leaves, yellow flowers, and many oblong red berries which hang in loose bunches. Found on hills and mountains from Canada to Virginia, it flowers in April and May and ripens its fruit in June. The bark of the stem and root is the part used.

It is a tonic and diuretic and is especially good for kidney troubles, cloudy urine, diminished urine, pain in passing urine, and pain in back and front. It is also good for gravel. The tea made from the bark is one of the best kidney remedies known; the dose is from one to four teaspoonfuls four times a day. The dose of the fluid extract is from ten to thirty drops

three to four times a day. The tea is made by using from one to two ounces of the bark to a pint of boiling water.

** The illustrations used with this article are from *The New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern United States and Adjacent Canada* by Henry A. Gleason (New York: New York Botanical Gardens, 1974 ed.). The drawings are used by permission of the New York Botanical Gardens, are copyrighted, and may not be reprinted without express, written permission of the owner.

BETH ROOT (Indian balm; bath root; birth root; ground lily; nodding wake robin; three leaved nightshade; lamb's quarter; *Trillium Cernuum* L.)

Action: Astringent, tonic, antiseptic.

Uses: Bleeding from lungs, bloody urine, menorrhagia, leucorrhoea, asthma, difficult breathing, womb troubles, diarrhea, tumors, ulcers, carbuncles, buboes, stings, gangrene.

This plant has an oblong, tuberous root from which rises a slender stem from ten to fifteen inches high. It has three large leaves at the top of the stem; between them appears a solitary flower, bell-shaped, and having a purple or white color. The root has a brown color outside and white within. The plant is common in the middle and western states, grows in rich soils and in damp, rocky and shady woods, and flowers in May and June.

It is astringent, tonic, and antiseptic. It has been used very successfully in bleeding from the lungs, bloody urine, menorrhagia or uterine hemorrhage, leucorrhoea, asthma, and difficult breathing. Indian women used it often for womb troubles and in confinement to aid labor and for flooding. Its astringent action makes it good for hemorrhages. Boiled in milk, it is good for diarrhea and dysentery when taken internally. The root may be made into a poultice and used for tumors, indolent and offensive ulcers, carbuncles, buboes, stings of insects, and to restrain gangrene. The dose is from one to three ounces. The tea is commonly used and is also good for injections into the vagina for leucorrhoea and flowing. When used as an injection, the infusion may be made stronger by using more medicine to the pint of water.



BLACK SNAKE ROOT (*Sanicula marilandica* L.)

Action: Nervine, tonic, astringent.

Uses: Rattlesnake bites, intermittent fever, sore throat, hives, skin diseases, St. Vitus' dance, diarrhea, leucorrhoea, dysentery, gonorrhoea.

The stem is one to three feet high. Three to five leaves grow at the top of the long naked stem and are parted in a whorl. Several stems rise from the same root. The flower stem rises considerably higher than the leaf stalks, with two or three small leaflets near the top. There are not many flowers and they are white and sometimes yellowish. The plant grows along roadsides and thickets and flowers in June. It is common in the USA and Canada.

In its action it is nervine, tonic, and astringent. Indians consider it a sovereign remedy for rattlesnake bites. Take three bunches of roots and boil them in a pint of water and drink in divided doses at intervals of twenty or

thirty minutes. At the same time prepare a decoction of the leaves and stems and bathe the bitten parts. The Indians claimed in this way to be able to cure snake bite even if it happened two days previously. The plant is also good for intermittent fever, sore throat, hives, and skin diseases. It may be used as a tea, or the juice of the root may be swallowed. It is also good for St. Vitus' dance. For children from eight to ten years old the dose of the powdered root is one-half dram three times a day. The decoction is good for diarrhea, leucorrhoea, dysentery, and gonorrhoea. The decoction is made by using an ounce of the plant to a pint of water and the dose of this is from two to four ounces three or four times a day.

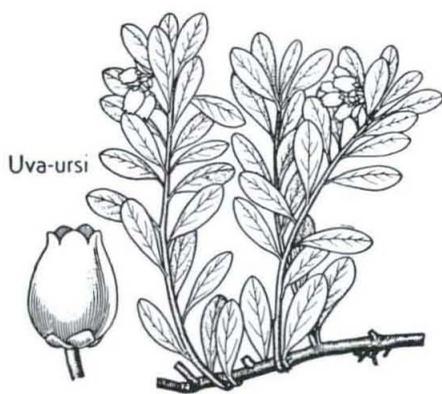


BLUE VIOLET (*Viola cucullata* Ait.)

Action: Demulcent, expectorant, laxative.

Uses: Sore throat, constipation, coughs, eruptive diseases.

This plant, which is not found in North Dakota, is well known, having blossoms of a blue-violet color and a root about an inch long. It grows on rich, moist lands. A decoction made from this plant is valuable in the treatment of eruptive diseases of children, and a syrup made of the petals is excellent for sore throat, coughs, and constipation of children.



BEARBERRY (Red berry; mountain box; Kinnikinnick; wild cranberry; *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (L.) Spreng).

Action: Astringent, tonic, antilithic.

Uses: Kidney, bladder and urinary troubles, diabetes, diarrhea, dysentery, excess of menses, gonorrhea, gleet.

In North America and Europe, this is a ground-creeping evergreen shrub and vine. The leaves are oval, toothed, pale-green in color, and smooth on the underside. The flowers are whitish, terminating the stem in clusters of from six to twelve. The berries are scarlet and contain five seeds. It grows on mountains and dry uplands all over the United States. Good for debilitating discharges and particularly for kidney, bladder, and urinary passages, it is also good for diabetes, diarrhea, dysentery, excess of menses, chronic kidney and bladder troubles, chronic gonorrhea and gleet. In making the decoction use an ounce of the leaves to one and one-half pints of water

and boil down to a pint. The dose is from one-half to three ounces or half a small glassful three or four times a day. The dose of the powder is from five to ten grams and of the fluid extract from one-half to one dram.



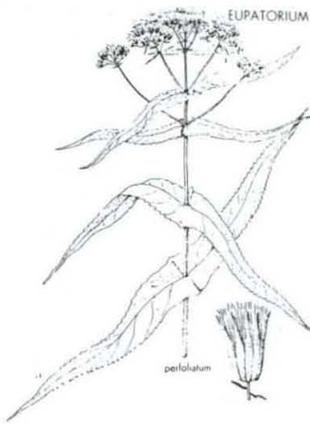
BLOODROOT (Red root; red puccoon; *Sanguinaria canadensis* L.)

Action: Acid, emetic, expectorant, tonic, antiseptic, alternative.

Uses: Lung and liver troubles, catarrh, croup, whooping cough, typhoid pneumonia, rheumatism, jaundice, dyspepsia, sick headache.

Bloodroot grows in most parts of the United States in woods and on shady banks in rich, light soil. It is one of the earliest and most beautiful spring flowers, appearing in March and April. The root is about the thickness of a finger, two or three inches long, fleshy, reddish-brown without and brighter red within. Each bud gives off a single large, smooth leaf. The flower is white and of short duration. The whole plant is pervaded with an acid, orange-colored juice, but the greatest quantity is in the root. It imparts its qualities to boiling water and to alcohol. The root should be kept in a dry place. Age and moisture impair its value.

It is acid, emetic, expectorant, tonic, and antiseptic, and is a very active agent. Small doses stimulate the stomach and hasten the pulse, and larger doses produce nausea and slow the pulse; the full dose causes active vomiting. It is used for the lungs and liver, catarrh, croup, whooping cough, typhoid pneumonia, rheumatism, jaundice, dyspepsia and sick headache. The tea is made by using an ounce of root to a pint of water and the dose is from one-half to one ounce three or four times a day. If given more often, smaller doses should be used; do not give enough to nauseate. For several diseases it is given every few hours. The dose of the tincture is from ten to twenty drops and of the fluid extract from five to ten drops. For the diseases mentioned give two teaspoonfuls or more of the tea every two hours. For sick headache give the same dose every half hour. The tincture is very good for sick headache when used in the following way: Put five drops of good tincture into a glass half full of water and give two teaspoonfuls every ten minutes until better. As an emetic for croup the dose of the powder is ten to twenty grains and of the tincture twenty to thirty drops. As a stimulant or expectorant give three to five grains and as an alternative for liver troubles give from one-half to two grains four times a day. The dose of the tincture for these troubles is from two to three drops every three hours.



BONESET (Thoroughwort; feverwort; sweating plant; crosswort; vegetable antimony; ague weed; Indian sage; *Eupatorium perfoliatum* L.)

Action: Diaphoretic, tonic, emetic, alterative, antiseptic, cathartic, febrifuge, astringent, stimulant.

Uses: Fevers, colds, ague, dropsy, acute and chronic rheumatism, catarrh, bilious fevers, influenza.

This plant grows in the United States. It is valuable for creating sweats, tonic, alterative, antiseptic, cathartic, emetic, febrifuge, astringent, and stimulant. It was one of the most powerful remedies of the Indian tribes for fevers, colds, and agues. It grows most commonly in meadows and swamps near streams. The leaves are joined together around the stem, giving the effect of being run through by the plant. The plant is grayish-green in color, and the flowers are pale white. The leaves are woolly below and rough above the taper where they are joined to a sharp point. The seeds are black

and oblong. A strong decoction made from the plant should be taken warm. It causes free vomiting and is sufficient to break up almost any cold or fever at the beginning. It cleanses the stomach, excites all secretions, relaxes constriction, and produces sweating. By causing sweating it is good for colds. Always take a drink of cold tea after the sweat is over. The cold infusion preparations are tonics and do not produce vomiting. The dose of the strong tea is from two to four ounces once or twice a day. The dose of the fluid extract is from thirty to forty drops. It is good for intermittent and remittent fever, diseases of general debility, dropsy, troubles arising from intemperance, acute and chronic rheumatism, catarrh, bilious fevers, influenza, and lake fevers. It may be used as a tonic (sweetened), laxative, or emetic by changing the dose and using warm. The syrup does away with the nauseous taste. The dose of the powder is from ten to twenty grains once or twice a day. Of the decoction and infusion the dose is from one-half to three ounces once or twice a day. The cold preparations are not so exhausting. To make the infusion use two ounces of the plant to a pint of boiling water, but do not boil it. To make the decoction boil two ounces of the plant in a quart of water. The dose of the fluid extract is from thirty to sixty drops.

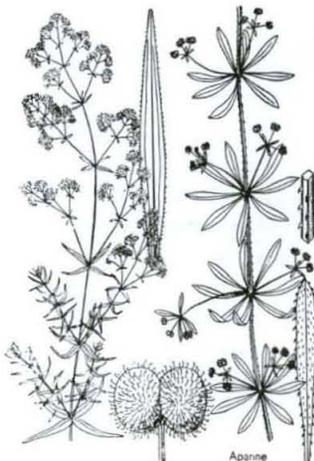


BURDOCK (*Arctium lappa* L.)

Action: Cathartic, diuretic, diaphoretic.

Uses: Bad blood, rheumatism, gout, venereal diseases, kidney troubles.

Burdock grows along road sides and has burrs which stick tight to a person. The plant promotes sweating and urination, is very cleansing, and is good for bad blood. The seeds, when pulverized and taken as a powder in from one-half to one teaspoonful doses, act as a powerful diuretic. The decoction or tea taken freely is good for rheumatism, gout, and venereal diseases. Medicines made from Burdock act better when combined with other remedies, such as dandelion, yellow dock, wahoo, sarsaparilla, prickly ash, or wild cherry. The decoction is made by boiling four ounces of the root in a quart of water. Half a pint of this may be drunk three or four times a day. The seeds are more diuretic than the root and are a more useful alterative. They are principally used for kidney troubles.



CLEAVERS (Goosegrass; catchweed; clivers; *Galium aparine* L.)

Action: Diuretic, aperient, antiscorbutic.

Uses: Suppression of urine, kidney troubles, gravel, tumors, freckles, erysipelas, scarlet fever, measles.

This vine-like plant grows in hedges, on low grounds, in meadows, and near brooks. It rises from four to six feet in height, climbing the bushes near it. The leaves are eight in a whorl, and the upper side is whitish with sharp prickles. The stem is square, the angles being guarded with sharp prickles which are bent downward. The flowers are small, inconspicuous, and divided in four segments. These change into a rather large fruit composed of two berries slightly adhering together and covered with hooded prickles containing two seeds.

This is one of the most valuable diuretics or kidney remedies that our country produces. It is good and speedy for all suppressions of urine and

for gravel complaints. The pressed juice mixed with oatmeal to the consistency of a poultice and applied over an indolent tumor three times a day, keeping the bowels open by castor oil, and taking a tablespoonful of the juice every morning, will often drive the tumor away in a few days. The tea should be made with cold water. Three or four ounces of the dried herb to a quart of water is sufficient. This should be used every day as a common drink and especially for gravel. It seems to possess a solvent power over the stone or gravel, crumbling it into a sandy substance. It is peculiarly applicable to inflammation of the kidneys and bladder as a result of its crumbling as well as its diuretic qualities. Use in a warm tea made with one and one-half ounces of the herb to a pint of warm water and steeping for two hours. Take two to four ounces three or four times a day. This may be sweetened with honey or sugar. Take equal parts of cleavers, maiden hair, and elder blows, and steep in warm water for two or three hours and when cold drink freely for erysipelas, scarlet fever, and measles. The tea made with cold water is good for freckles when applied locally several times a day.



CROWFOOT (Wild cranesbill; storksbill; tormentil; *Geranium maculatum* L.)

Action: Astringent

Uses: Wounds, gonorrhea, ulcers, diabetes, bloody urine, profuse menstruation, aphthous sore mouth, dysentery diarrhea, cholera infantum, bleeding piles, nose bleed, hemorrhage, gleet, leucorrhea, flooding, quinsy.

This plant is perennial, and has a thick, rough, knobby, fleshy root, black outside and reddish inside with short fibres. It has long, slender stalks, one to three feet high with long narrow leaves or segments at a joint with two leaves at each fork. The flowers are large and generally purple, mostly in pairs with long stems like a crane's bill springing from the leaves. The fruit is a capsule in five sections containing one seed each. This plant grows in all parts of the United States. It is found in open woods, thickets, and hedges and flowers from April to June. The root is used and should be collected late in autumn.

It is a powerful astringent. The Indians used it for wounds, gonorrhea, ulcers of the legs, diabetes, bloody urine, too great menstruation, and aphthous sore mouth. It is good for children with poor stomachs. It is used in infusion as an astringent with milk in the second stage of dysentery, diarrhea, and cholera infantum. A strong decoction of the root, two ounces to a pint of water, may be injected for bleeding piles and retained as long as possible. As an ointment it is also good for piles. In making the ointment add two ounces of the finely powdered root of cranesbill to seven ounces of tobacco; apply the ointment to piles three or four times a day. Crowfoot or cranesbill is also good for nosebleed and bleeding from wounds and small vessels, as after pulling teeth. Apply the powder to the bleeding parts and if possible cover with a cotton compress. In decoction in combination with unicorn root it has proved of service for diabetes and Bright's disease. For gleet and leucorrhea, a decoction of two parts cranesbill and one part blood root forms an excellent injection. The decoction is also useful as a gargle for quinsy, sore throat, and in severe cases of flooding after labor. In these troubles the application of cranesbill either in decoction of fluid extract by injection or by sterile cloths is very good. The dose of the powdered root is from twenty to thirty grains three or four times a day. In making the decoction an ounce of the root may be used to a pint of boiling water and the dose is one or two ounces three or four times a day. Crowfoot or cranesbill is an excellent remedy.



DANDELION (Monk's head; *Taraxacum officinale* Weber)

Action: Laxative, diaphoretic, diuretic, expectorant, tonic, alterative, aperient.

Uses: Liver complaint, constipation, jaundice, dyspepsia, dropsy, blood purifier.

The root should be gathered in the autumn. It is laxative, diaphoretic, diuretic, expectorant, tonic, and alterative. It is good for torpid liver and liver complaint, constipation, jaundice, dyspepsia, and dropsy. It is prepared in decoction or infusion from the green plant. The pressed juice is best. It can be used freely. Combined with other remedies such as yellow dock, burdock and wahoo, it acts very well as a blood purifier. The dose of the root extract is from ten to forty grains; of the root fluid extract, from one to two drams; of the infusion, from one to two ounces. The infusion may be taken frequently. The following is a good combination. Take

one ounce of fluid extract of dandelion, sixty grains of potassa iodide, one ounce of fluid extract of wahoo, and one ounce of fluid of burdock, one ounce of fluid extract of yellow dock, and one ounce fluid extract of red clover. The dose is a teaspoonful four times a day. Dandelion may be taken as a tea, the dried roots may be eaten, or the plant may be eaten in the form of greens for either liver or bowel difficulties.

GARLIC (*Allium sativum* L.)

Action: Antiseptic, expectorant

Uses: Coughs, colds, croup, chronic bronchitis, capillary bronchitis, retention of urine, convulsions, pneumonia.

Garlic is well known by its strong disagreeable odor and its taste which is stronger than onion.

It is an antiseptic and stimulating expectorant, good for coughs and colds. A poultice of garlic is good for croup. It is very good in chronic bronchitis and in capillary bronchitis of children. For these purposes it may be used as an ingredient in poultices. Garlic is generally used in syrup form. The dose is from one-sixth to one teaspoonful. The following is a good combination for bronchitis of children: take two ounces of syrup of garlic, one ounce of sweet spirits of nitre, and one ounce of glycerine. The dose is from one to two teaspoonfuls in water every two or three hours. Another good preparation is made by mixing three ounces of syrup of garlic with two ounces of syrup of tar. A teaspoonful or two may be taken in water every two or three hours.



The bruised bulbs applied as a poultice over the bladder is good for retention of urine. Applied to the feet it is fine for convulsions of children. The dose of the fresh juice of the bulb is from one-half to one teaspoonful. If used too freely it causes headache, flatulence, stomach disturbance, piles, and fever.

GOLDENROD (Sweet scented golden rod; *Solidago odora* Ait.)

Action: Stimulant, carminative, aromatic.

Uses: Nausea, pain in stomach and bowels.

There are many kinds of goldenrod, but the flowers and leaves of the kind used as a medicine taste somewhat like fennel or anise. It is called sweet scented goldenrod. The tea should not be boiled. Given freely while warm it is good for nausea or sickness of the stomach and for pain in the stomach and bowels caused by gas. This variety is not found in North Dakota.



LOBELIA (Indian tobacco; wild tobacco; poke weed; emetic herb; asthma weed; *lobelia inflata* L.)

Action: Emetic, diaphoretic, expectorant.

Uses: Asthma, stings, spasms.

This plant grows in abundance by roads and in stubble fields. The first year it throws out a few roundish leaves and the next year produces the stem, branches, and seeds. It has an erect, hairy stem with blue flowers in the axils of the leaves. The capsule from which the flower grows contains two cells and is very full of small black seeds. A powder is made of the seeds. In making lobelia tea use an ounce of leaves, seeds, and pods to a pint of water. The dose of the powder is from one-to five grains; ten to twenty grains act as an emetic. The dose of the tincture is ten drops every ten minutes for asthma and should be continued until a little nausea is produced. For emetic action it is too severe. Only enough should be given



to produce sickness at the stomach. This is a very active remedy and should be given carefully. Poultices of powdered lobelia and slippery elm bark with weak lye water are very good for bites and stings of poisonous insects, for spasms and pains of the limbs, and for producing muscular relaxation.

MAIZE (Indian corn; *Zea mays* L.)

Action: Diuretic

Uses: Congested kidneys, chronic inflammation of kidneys, suppressed urine, irritable bladder, acute and chronic cystitis, dropsy.

The green pistils of maize, or Indian corn, gathered when the tassel has shed its pollen are good as medicine. Cornsilk is a diuretic for local dropsy and heart trouble. It is good for congested kidneys, chronic inflammation of the kidneys, suppressed urine, irritable bladder and acute and chronic cystitis. It is good for dropsy of the lower extremities from heart or kidney disease. The fluid extract is the best way to give it and the dose is from one to two drams every three or four hours. A tea may be made from the cornsilk but is not so easily made as most teas. The following combination is good for dropsy. Take one and one-half ounces of the fluid extract of cornsilk, three ounces of the fluid extract of dandelion, and three ounces of the infusion of digitalis. Give two teaspoonfuls in water every three or four hours. Another good preparation for the same purpose is made by taking two ounces of fluid extract of cornsilk, three drams of cream of tartar, and two ounces of sweet spirits of nitre. The dose of this is half a teaspoonful every two or three hours. A tea made from powdered corn is very good for nausea and vomiting in many diseases.



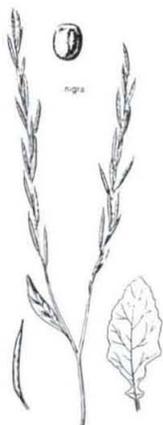
MULLEIN (*Verbascum thapsus* L.)

Action: Emollient

Uses: Earache, diarrhea, painful urination, piles, scalds, wounds, sprains, swelling, ulcers, lump, sore throat, tonsillitis, mumps, sore eyes.

The warm oil is splendid for earache. Drop into the ear and insert cotton. The tea is made by boiling four ounces of fresh, or six ounces of dry, leaves in a pint of fresh milk for ten minutes. Drink this quantity three times a day for coughs, dysentery, or piles. It is also good for diarrhea and painful passing of urine, and is a good wash for piles and scalds and wounds in cattle. A poultice of the pulp and leaves is good for sprains and swellings. The leaves boiled in vinegar and water are good for sores and ulcers. Weak mullein tea is good for weak and sore eyes. Fomentations of the leaves are good for external piles, ulcers, and lumps. The leaves infused in hot vinegar or water are very good when applied to the throat for sore

throat, tonsillitis, and mumps. The flowers placed in a tightly corked bottle and exposed to the sun's action are said to yield a fine relaxing oil.



MUSTARD (White mustard and black mustard; *Brassica nigra* (L.) W.D.J. Koch)

Action: Emetic, irritant, stimulant, epispastic, rubefacient.

Uses: Liver and stomach troubles, neuralgia, headache; sleeplessness, amenorrhea, lumbago, colic, croup, sciatica.

This is a warm stimulating medicine when something is needed to liven the stomach. A poultice made with mustard alone, or horseradish leaves mixed with vinegar, bread crumbs, and white of eggs, makes a fine application for neuralgia. Do not let it stay on long enough to blister but only long enough to redden the parts. This is good whenever it is desired to draw the blood to the surface or away from the congested parts as in convulsions and lung troubles. This is also especially good on the back of the neck for headache and neuralgia. Never put it on the feet, or at least not for a very long time, or you will have a long resting spell as you will be

unable to walk. Mustard must be used in water, though, as a foot bath when it is desired to draw the blood from the brain in case of sleeplessness, amenorrhea, or headache. A handful of ground mustard is the amount added to the bath. Poultices and pasters from mustard should remain on from ten to fifteen minutes only. Mustard leaves may be bought at the drug store and are splendid for neuralgia, headache, lumbago, colic, croup, sciatica, etc. Dampen them with cold water before applying. They are better than the poultice and should be kept on for from five to ten minutes. The dose of mustard as an emetic is from one to three teaspoonfuls in six to eight ounces of warm water. Mustard applied locally is good for pains almost anywhere.



dioica

NETTLE (Great stinging nettle; *Urtica dioica* L.)

Actions: Astringent, tonic, diuretic.

Uses: Diarrhea, dysentery, piles, scurvy, gravel, kidney troubles, bowel troubles, bleeding.

Use the roots or leaves. The plant is a dull green and armed with very small rigid hairs or prickles. The stem is from two to four feet high. The flowers are green and branching with clustered, axillary, interrupted spikes. The plant is common in Europe and the USA. It grows in waste places and flowers from June to September. A decoction of the plant, made by using one ounce of the plant to a pint of water, when strongly salted, will coagulate milk as readily as rennet without imparting to it any unpleasant flavor.

It is astringent, tonic, and diuretic. It is valuable in diarrhea, dysentery, piles, scurvy, and in gravel and other kidney troubles. A strong syrup of the root of the nettle combined with wild cherry and blackberry root is excellent for all summer complaints of children and bowel affections of grown people. The leaves, when applied to bleeding surfaces, help to stop the flow of blood. The dose of the powdered root or leaves is from twenty to forty grains, and of the decoction from two to four fluid ounces three or four times a day.

.....



cepa

ONION (*Allium cepa* L.)

Action: Expectorant, sedative, stimulant, diuretic, rubefacient.

Uses: Croup, laryngitis, earache, cough, bronchitis, eczema, inflammations.

The action of onion as an expectorant is similar to the action of garlic, but onions are not so strong and are more pleasant to take. They are also used as poultices. In large doses they cause stomach uneasiness and flatulence. When used as a poultice they are very fine for croup, laryngitis, and earache. Added to sugar and water they are good as a cough syrup. Boiled Spanish onion eaten at night is an excellent laxative. Raw onion applied locally is very good for inflammation, especially if a little salt is added. Onion syrup is good for chronic bronchitis. For chronic eczema the following is good: Take equal parts of syrup of Spanish onion and syr, phosphate compound. Give one or two spoonfuls in water or milk three or four times a day. Milk helps to take away the smell after eating.

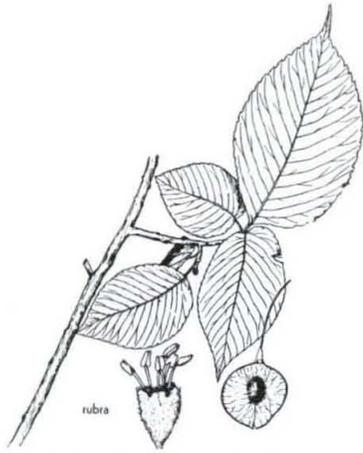


Pl. major

PLANTAIN (Large plantain; round leaved plantain; ribgrass; *Plantago major* L.)

Uses: Bleeding, ivy poisoning, burns, scalds, bruises, erysipelas, toothache; bites of insects, spiders and snakes.

The fresh leaves ground to a paste in a mortar and applied to wounds will check bleeding. They are good for ivy poisoning, burns, scalds, bruises, and even erysipelas (infectious skin disease). For toothache apply the bruised leaves to the cheek and the paste to the tooth. The juice taken internally, one ounce every hour, and also applied to the wound, is good for bites of insects, spiders, and snakes.



SLIPPERY ELM (Red elm; *Ulmus rubra* Muhl.) [*U fulva* Michx.]

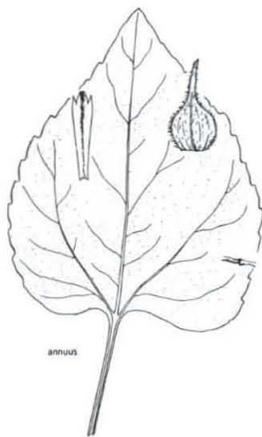
Action: Soothing, mucilaginous.

Uses: Coughs, colds, influenza, pleurisy, quinsy, dysentery, painful urination, inflammation of stomach and bowels, poisoning, erysipelas, burns, scalds, piles, bruises, ulcers, gonorrhoea, gleet, whites, diarrhea, poultices, "going down" of mumps.

Found in all parts of the United States, slippery elm is mostly prepared as a fine flour, a large teaspoonful of which may be briskly stirred into a pint of cold water and this again stirred into a quart of hot water, and then boiled. This may be drunk freely. It is very good for coughs, colds, influenza, pleurisy, quinsy, dysentery, and painful urination. It is also good for inflammation of the stomach and bowels and especially after poisoning when mild mucilaginous drinks are required. When used for the latter purpose it should be drunk cold. The bark may also be chewed. Poultices of

ground elm bark with lead water are good for erysipelas and local inflammations and may be used either hot or cold.

In making mucilage of elm use six parts of dried bark to 100 parts of boiling water and drink freely. This is good as a bland drink after poisoning. Used alone as a poultice, slippery elm has been found very good for inflamed surfaces, fresh wounds, burns, scalds, bruises, and ulcers. This poultice was also applied when mumps affected the testicles. The poultice should be changed every two to four hours. Injections of slippery elm tea made from the bark is good for diarrhea, whites, piles, gonorrhoea, and gleet. Powdered bark sprinkled over the surface prevents chafing and allays itching and heat in erysipelas. Make the tea from the bark by using two ounces of the bark to a pint of boiling water. This may be drunk freely.



SUNFLOWER (Common sunflower; *Helianthus annuus* L.)

Action: Diuretic, expectorant.

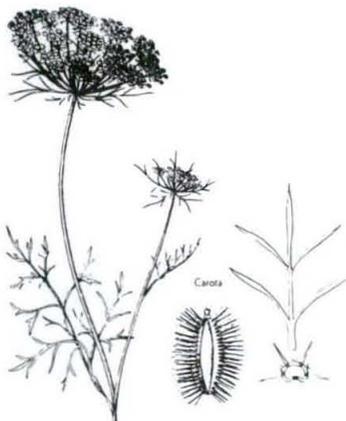
Uses: Kidney troubles, throat troubles, lung troubles, bronchitis, laryngitis.

Sunflower has an erect rough stem usually about seven feet high. The leaves are large and three nerved. The flowers are large and nodding with yellow rays. The seeds are numerous and dark purple when ripe. Sunflower is native to the Americas, and is cultivated here as a result of its beautiful yellow flowers which appear in July and August. The ripe seeds are the part used.

The seeds and leaves are diuretic and expectorant and have been much used in kidney, throat and lung affections. Put two pounds of the bruised seeds into five gallons of water and boil down to three gallons, strain, add twelve pounds of sugar and one and one-half gallons of good Holland gin.

The dose of this is from two drams to two ounces three or four times a

day, or whenever there is a tickling or irritation of the throat, or the cough is excessive, or when expectoration is difficult in bronchitis, laryngitis, or lung consumption. Other medicines may be added to the above. An infusion of the pith of sunflower stem is good as a diuretic. The pith contains nitre. For the tea use ten ounces of the pith to a pint of water. The dose is from one to two ounces three or four times a day.



WILD CARROT (Bee's nest; bird's nest; *Daucus carota* L.)

Action: Diuretic

Uses: Kidney and bladder diseases, obstructed menses, stomach troubles, dysentery, chronic coughs, fissures and ulcers, hiccough.

The root of the cultivated carrot when scraped makes a fine poultice for ulcers.

The wild carrot is common in the USA and grows in old fields and by roadsides. The stalks are rougher and whiter than the stalks of the cultivated carrot. When used in the form of a strong decoction, the wild carrot is excellent for gravel and passage of stone from the bladder and kidneys. It is also good for fissured nipples and ulcers which are of a cancerous nature. The seeds are good for dysentery, flatulent disorders, obstructed menses, hiccoughs, and chronic coughs. From one-quarter to one-third of a teaspoonful is the dose of the bruised seeds. A strong decoction made of the seeds may be drunk freely while warm.