



Cleavers

Galium Aparine

Cleavers gets its name from the stickiness of the whole plant. Whorls of narrow, lance-shaped, bristly, leaves grow on the sprawling, weak stems. The plant is covered with hairs that cleave to each other and for that matter, anything they touch. To make matters worse, the tiny white flowers develop into small burs that also bear the bristles.

Cleavers juice, tinctures, and infusions are said to be effective cleansers for the lymphatic system - a much gentler remedy than Pokeweed, but also much safer. It is also known as a remedy for stomach ulcers. Cleavers was once listed in the US Dispensary as a preventive and treatment for scurvy.

Cleavers infusion is made by macerating 1 ½ ounces of herb in a pint of warm water for 20 minutes and given in 2-4 oz. doses, 3-4 times a day. This is said to be helpful with all skin afflictions and will also fade freckles when taken for a few months. You may want to apply it to the skin, as well as taking internally. The same dose is supposed to be useful for bedwetting in children.

It is said that a balm made from Cleavers is used to heal irritated skin. However, some people get severe welts from harvesting Cleavers due to the hairs on the plant. Wear gloves and long sleeves when collecting and handling this plant. Strain teas, infused oils, and tinctures made from Cleavers to remove hairs before applying or ingesting to avoid irritation.

The roasted seeds of Cleavers are sometimes used as a coffee substitute in Sweden. They also use a mat of the plant to filter milk. This is said to give it additional health benefits.

Most of this genus is known by the name Bedstraw. Other species of Galiums have been traditionally used for anti-cancer, antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial and cardioprotective effects in folk medicine.

Folklore says that women used to wash with an infusion of cleavers to guarantee success with their love life.

