



Plantain

Plantago major, Plantago lanceolata

“Plantain is so common that the Native Americans called it “White Man’s Footprint” because they said it grew everywhere the settlers stepped.”

Plantain has distinguishing parallel, ribbed veins that run from the base of the stem to the tips of the leaves which are spoon-shaped (*major*) or narrow (*lanceolata*) and grow in a rosette. When not mowed, the flower spikes up to 12 inches tall.

Plantain easy to identify and familiar to almost everyone because it is so common in yards, but only herbies know that the whole plant is edible as well as medicinal and is a good source of nutrition.

Plantain extracts have antibacterial properties. Juice from the crushed or chewed leaves quickly stops blood flow from wounds and encourages the repair of damaged tissue. A recent study showed that a 50% concentration of Plantain was helpful for burn wound healing and compared favorably to silver sulfadiazine and may be a suitable substitute. (Amini, et al., 2010)

Plantain is said to cause a natural aversion to tobacco and is used in smoking cessation preparations. Developing evidence suggests that plantain might help chronic bronchitis, making it a suitable addition to homemade cough syrups. Plantain infusion is approved by German Commission E for respiratory inflammations and catarrhs, as well as inflammatory reactions of the skin.

Plantain tea may be especially helpful with stomach ulcers.

Poultices and salves are made with Plantain to treat burns, insect bites, stings, and rashes. The leaves are used in tea, tincture, or ground in capsules. The seeds may have cholesterol-lowering properties due to their fiber and mucilage content.

To use plantain, make a tincture or simmer a handful of leaves (or 2 tablespoons dried) for 10 – 15 minutes. Drink ½ cup as often as you like or use the leaves for a compress or poultice. The dried leaves can be infused in oil to make salves and balms. Plantain infused oil is even suggested to help reduce wrinkles!

