



Herbs For Healing Newsletter

Herb of the Month: Meadowsweet *Queen of the Meadow*

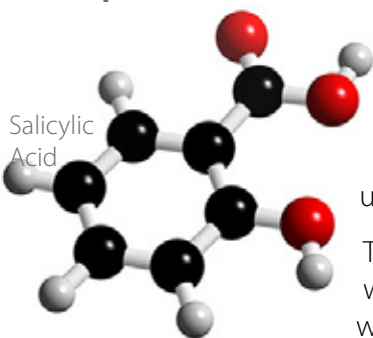


Driving or walking through the narrow country lanes you will notice the tall plants with creamy-white and fluffy flowers. Meadowsweet grows near ditches or streams.

The main stem is angular and reddish, up to 3 feet tall. The scent of the flowers reminiscent of sweet almonds. This is probably the reason why it was used as a popular Elizabethan strewing herb.

For the Druids, meadowsweet was one of the three sacred herbs. In 1652 Nicholas Culpeper wrote it 'removes the instability and constant change in the stomach'. Meadowsweet is certainly a herb with a history.

Aspirin (or Salicylic Acid) is isolated from meadowsweet



Meadowsweet's old botanical name used to be *Spirea ulmaria*, now it is *Filipendula ulmaria*.

There are good reasons why meadowsweet works as a **painkiller**, a **blood thinner** and as an **antacid**.

It contains **salicylic acid**, the principal ingredient in **aspirin**.

In fact, aspirin was originally created from meadowsweet (A-spirin).

Felix Hoffman who worked for Bayer AG duplicated the chemical form of salicylic acid and added some chemical alterations to invent aspirin in the late 19th century. White willow also contains this substance.

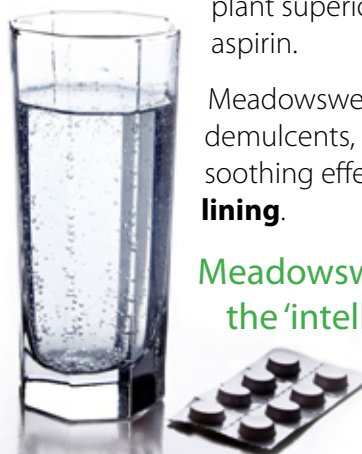
As most people know, aspirin can have quite serious side effects like stomach bleeding and stomach ulceration.

This is a potential difficulty with isolating an 'active ingredient'; **A whole plant like meadowsweet contains salicylic acid as well as many other constituents, which have a buffering effect.**

It is this **buffering effect**, which makes the whole plant superior to the isolated substance called aspirin.

Meadowsweet also contains tannins and demulcents, which have an astringent and soothing effect and thus **protect the stomach lining**.

Meadowsweet is an example of the 'intelligence of nature,' working for our benefit.



How can Meadowsweet be used?

Since it contains salicylic acid, drunk as a herbal infusion it will **ease mild pain, thin the blood** and it also will **rebalance stomach acid** without harmful side effects.

A safe alternative to Aspirin or Gaviscon

Infuse 1 or 2 teaspoonfulls of the fresh or dried herb (leaves and flowers) to one mug of boiling water for 10 minutes.

Drink one or two mugs a day.

It is a helpful plant for dealing with heartburn, hyperacidity and stomach ulceration.

The herb drunk as a tea can be used as a safe alternative to aspirin or Gaviscon.



Diuretic

Meadowsweet also acts as a diuretic, which makes it a beneficial plant for clearing fluid retention and cellulite.

Flavouring

As a flavouring herb, the flowers can be added to home-made beers and wines.

Medicinal Tea

In Germany meadowsweet is licensed as a standard medicinal tea, approved by the Commission E.

Also flowering now: St John's Wort

The yellow blossom is opening now. Try **St John's Wort Oil**:

Take about one cupful of the freshly picked flowers, cut them in small bits and cover them with a good quality olive oil.

Leave the bottle with the flowers infused in the oil in a sunny and warm place for about three weeks while the herb's properties are being extracted by the oil.

Shaking the bottle once a day enhances and speeds up the extraction process.

Afterwards the herb should be strained from the oil while squeezing out the plant material.

Store in a dark glass bottle in a cool place.

The colour of the oil always amazes me: it's red. St John's wort flowers contain a red pigment which is a biologically active ingredient.

Apply St John's wort oil on achy joints and painful muscles. Gently rub onto sun burned



WARNING

Meadowsweet should not be used by people with a sensitivity to aspirin or other salicylates-containing products.

Due to its blood thinning property meadowsweet should not be taken by people on blood thinning medication like Warfarin.



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