

Chickweed

Stellaria media (stel-lar'-ee-ah mee'-dee-`ah)

Caryophyllaceae – Pink or Carnation Family

Stellaria: from the Latin *stella* for "star" because of the star-like shape of the flowers

media: intermediate

adder's mouth, chickenweed, chick wittles, clucken wort, passerina, satin flower, skirt buttons, starweed, starwort, stitchwort, tongue grass, white bird's eye, winterweed

Action Continuum: nourishing, tonifying

Character: taste is juicy and salty (mineral salts) with residual sweetness; energetics is cooling and moistening

Herbal Actions: nutritive, restorative, alterative, male tonic, cooling, anti-pyretic, anti-inflammatory, anti-rheumatic, demulcent, emollient, diuretic, carminative, laxative, antimicrobial, vulnerary, pectoral, expectorant

Primary Known Medicinal Constituents: steroidal saponins, polysaccharides, mucilage

Nutritional Profile: very high in aluminum, iron, magnesium, manganese, silicon, zinc; high in calcium, cobalt, fat, phosphorus, potassium, protein, sodium; average in chromium, fiber, niacin, thiamine; low to average in riboflavin, vitamin C

Body Systems Affected: circulatory, digestive, endocrine, respiratory, skin, urinary

Cautions: none

Part(s) used: fresh aerial parts

Primary Types of Preparations: fresh whole herb, juice, poultice, tincture, long infusion, compress, oil, salve, lotion

Primary Uses: The saponins emulsify and increase the permeability of all membranes, which explains many of the herbal actions, from increasing the absorption of nutrients, to breaking up congestion, to weakening bacterial cell walls, to reducing cholesterol, to dissolving cysts. Dissolves fat, balances the metabolism, and regulates the thyroid, so it aids weight loss. It is cooling, so good for treating fevers, infections, rheumatic conditions, and arthritis.

Fresh Whole Herb

Nourishes and strengthens convalescents and anyone in a debilitated condition, i.e., recovering from surgery or trauma, malnourishment, anemia, rickets or scurvy. Helps change tendencies, habitual or hereditary, toward cancer, diabetes, and arthritis. Eases yeast

overgrowth, constipation, hard stools, hemorrhoids, stomach and intestinal ulcers, colitis, internal inflammation, stomach cancer, and those healing after treatment for appendicitis and peritonitis.

Fresh Juice

Use to dissolve warts and other skin growths.

Fresh Poultice (as needed; poultices used on infections must be thrown away)

Reduces swollen glands, testicular burning or itching. Reduces swelling from sprains and arthritis. Soothes minor burns and itchy, dry skin. Heals cuts and wounds and prevents bacterial infection. Draws out infection, splinters, venom. Use for ulcers, erysipelas, splinters, pimples, boils, abscesses, infected cuts, blood poisoning, rashes, sores. Helps with infected, inflamed, or injured eyes. Heals and strengthens tendons and ligaments.

Fresh Tincture (20-90 drops a day, in water)

Use for any heated chest congestion such as croup, asthma, smoker's cough, bronchitis, whooping cough, pleurisy, chest colds, flu, pneumonia, emphysema, allergies, tuberculosis. Soothes sore throats and eases hoarseness. Cools hot flashes. Use for bladder infections and cystitis. Eases chronic rheumatic pain and restores joint mobility. Aids with weight loss and lowering cholesterol. Use for thyroid irregularities, swollen glands, ovarian cancers, testicular cancers. Dissolves lipomas and cysts, especially ovarian ones, if taken faithfully for up to a year.

Dried Long Infusion

A strong infusion added to the bath is good for extensive areas of irritated, erupted, inflamed skin. Baths and soaks also help with arthritis, rheumatism, muscle and joint stiffness and soreness, gout, backache, and bursitis.

Compress (soaked in tincture diluted in water or infusion, as needed)

Reduces swelling from sprains or arthritis. Soothes minor burns and itchy, dry skin. Use for psoriasis and eczema. Heals cuts and wounds. Draws out infection.

Salve or Oil

Use salves for psoriasis and eczema. Heals minor injuries, mosquito bites, rashes, chicken pox, measles, itches, sore spots, cold sores, fever blisters, herpes sores, mouth sores, hot spots, diaper rash, genital itches, bruises, hives, weals, scabs, blisters. Oil relieves vaginal dryness; use hot oil packs to heal and strengthen tendons and ligaments.

Lotion

Use for acne and to refresh the eyes.

Status: Introduced - naturalized

Plant: erect to prostrate, annual/perennial, 2"-16" forb; 4 -sided stems with many branches

Flower: white, 5-parted, 1/8"-1/4" wide, petals deeply lobed so that they look like 10 parts, sepals longer than the petals; usually solitary, stalked, from upper leaf axils; blooms Feb.-Dec., longest period of any Wisconsin flower

Fruit: oval to oblong, very hairy capsule

Leaf: opposite, **triangular, upper stalkless, lower on stalks** getting longer toward the base of the stem

Root: shallow and fibrous

Habitat: waste places, cultivated land, gardens, meadows, woodlands; usually found during autumn, winter, and spring; in the summer it is found only in cool, shady, and damp areas

History and Lore: Chickweed has naturalized itself wherever Europeans have settled, becoming one of the commonest weeds. Though often regarded as a bothersome weed, its presence indicates a fertile, mineral-rich soil. Sometimes it can be found growing in the midst of winter, in the snow-free space under the trees. It has been given as a tonic for caged songbirds since Renaissance times, and is a good food for domesticated fowl and rabbits. Its magical powers are said to be fidelity and love; it is carried or used in spells designed to attract a love or to maintain a relationship.

Resources/References:

Weeds Heal – A Working Herbal, Isla Burgess

Cunningham's Encyclopedia of Magical Herbs, Scott Cunningham

The Green Pharmacy, James A. Duke

Opening Our Wild Hearts to the Healing Herbs, Gail Faith Edwards

Botany in a Day, Thomas J. Elpel

Earthly Bodies & Heavenly Hair, Dina Falconi

Foraging & Feasting, A Field Guide and Wild Food Cookbook, Dina Falconi

A Modern Herbal, Maude Grieve

The New Holistic Herbal, David Hoffman

The New Age Herbalist, Richard Mabey

The Complete Medicinal Herbal, Penelope Ody

Nutritional Herbology, A Reference Guide to Herbs, Mark Pedersen

The Herbalist's Way, Nancy & Michael Phillips

Herbal for The Childbearing Year, Susun S. Weed

Healing Wise, Susun S. Weed

Breast Cancer? Breast Health!, Susun S. Weed

New Menopausal Years, Susun S. Weed

Down There, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Susun S. Weed

The Book of Herbal Wisdom, Matthew Wood

Flora of Wisconsin, Consortia of Wisconsin Herbaria <http://wisflora.herbarium.wisc.edu/>





A. GRÄSSTJÄRNBLOMMA, STELLARIA GRAMINEA L.
 B. VÅTARV, STELLARIA MEDIA CYR.