



MATTHEW WOOD INSTITUTE OF HERBALISM

Materia Medica & Plant Identification

FIVE HERBS TO KNOW

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

ORGANIZATION

This guide is organized by the way Matthew was taught; the study guide will help you "see the land," recognize plant communities and environments, and learn the fundamentals of traditional herbalism, often referred to as materia medica.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCE MATERIAL

This extensive list can be found on our site at this web address:

Field/Prairie: <https://www.matthewwoodinstituteofherbalism.com/courses/take/materia-medica-flashcards/pdfs/44688214-field-prairie-flashcard-bibliography>

Weed: <https://www.matthewwoodinstituteofherbalism.com/courses/take/materia-medica-flashcards/pdfs/44676650-weed-flashcard-bibliography>

DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this guide is not medical advice. Consult with your trusted medical provider regarding your health and care.



Remember: **Nature is Alive!**

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

INFORMATION

On the first page, you will find:

- the **plant community** with photos of the unidentified plant(s).
- **parts** of the plant, using **commonly used** and **botanical terms**.
- **plant height, lichen length** and **mushrooms width**, given in metric and standard. Where more than one species is shown, you will see the **combined range** for **all species** listed.

On the following page, you will find:

- the **genus and species** listed in italics: If a species is unidentified, you will see the abbreviation "**sp.**"; if more than one species is used, you will see "**spp.**", meaning "several species." If there is **more than one interchangeable plants** with different genus names, they will be separated with a semi-colon.
- **former botanical names**, which are identified by "**syn.**" (synonym).
- the **plant family name**
- **region of origin**: abbreviations are: NA: North America; EU: Europe; SA: South America.
- **medicinal parts**: although many parts of the plant may be utilized, this guide includes the parts that are medicinally and traditionally used.
- corresponding **energetics and tastes, tissues states**, and **organ affinities**, and **traditional and historical uses** of the plant.
- **additional pertinent information** included, either in "**analogues**," "**caution**," or otherwise.

FIVE HERBS TO KNOW • TABLE OF CONTENTS



Common Name

- Blue Violet
- Dandelion
- Nettle
- Plantain
- Yarrow

Botanical Name: Genus & Species

- *Viola odorata*, *Viola spp.*
- *Taraxacum officinale*
- *Urtica dioica*
- *Plantago major*, *P. lanceolata*
- *Achillea millefolium*

Family Name

- Violaceae
- Asteraceae
- Urticaceae
- Plantaginaceae
- Asteraceae

Check out the full sets at

<https://www.matthewwoodinstituteofherbalism.com/courses/materia-medica-flashcards>

FIELD/PRAIRIE



WHOLE PLANT
10-15cm • 4-6in



FLOWER



LEAF



LEAF



FLOWER

BLUE VIOLET

Viola odorata, Viola spp. • Violaceae

Region of Origin: international

MEDICINAL PARTS

- leaf and flower
- picked during flowering if possible

ENERGETICS & TASTES

- sweet, slightly salty
- mucilaginous
- cool and moist

TISSUE STATES

- atrophy
- heat and excitation

ORGAN AFFINITIES

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• lymphatics• skin and mucosa | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• breasts | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• respiratory• children |
|--|---|--|

TRADITIONAL USES & HERBAL ACTIONS

- children with swollen glands, dry skin, constipation
- shy, flabby children, with moist skin and palms
- sinus catarrh, sore throat, chronic cough, associated with dryness, bronchitis, asthma, whooping cough (cooling and moistening)
- breast lumps, benign and malignant; cancer of the lymphatics, breasts, lungs
- combine with other moistening plants (Basil, Fennel seed)



WEED



WHOLE PLANT
20.3-30.5cm • 8-12in



SEED



LEAF



ROOT



FLOWER

DANDELION

Taraxacum officinale • Asteraceae

Region of Origin: EU, Asia, world

MEDICINAL PARTS

- roots (metabolic)
- leaves (diuretic)
- flowers
- white sap (warts)

ENERGETICS & TASTES

- roots: semi-sweet and bitter; cooling effect
- leaves: bitter, salty
- both earthen

TISSUE STATES

- cold depression
- damp stagnation
- heat from cold and damp

ORGAN AFFINITIES

- roots: liver and metabolism
- leaves: kidneys, diuretic
- muscles

TRADITIONAL USES & HERBAL ACTIONS

- roots: specific for mapped or geographical tongue
- roots: heat sinking down into the tissue, muscles, bones, and organs
- roots: improves liver and metabolism
- roots: heat and swelling in the sternocleidomastoid muscle
- leaves: potassium sparing diuretic; high in potassium
- roots, leaves, and flowers: external for sore muscles



WEED



WHOLE PLANT
10.2-40.6cm • 4-16in



LEAF & STEM



FLOWER



PLANT & ROOT



WHOLE PLANT

PLANTAIN

Plantago major, P. lanceolata • Plantaginaceae

Region of Origin: international

MEDICINAL PARTS

- leaves

ENERGETICS & TASTES

- mucilaginous
- astringent
- drawing agent
- mildly bitter and earthen

TISSUE STATES

- balances water
- relaxation
- torpor
- heat, irritation

ORGAN AFFINITIES

- | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|--------|
| • gastrointestinal tract | • mucosa | • feet |
| | • skin | |

TRADITIONAL USES & HERBAL ACTIONS

- drawing agent (external); mild antiseptic
- splinters, dirt, glass (imbedded); burns, boils, pus (external)
- mucus and particles in the lungs
- abscessed tooth; gum tonic
- gastrointestinal mucosa
- nerve pain (especially facial, teeth)

Analogues:

Psyllium seed (*Plantago psyllium*)



WEED



WHOLE PLANT

0.6-2.0m • 2-7ft



FLOWER



STEM



LEAF & SEED



LEAF

NETTLE

Urtica dioica, U. urens • Urticaceae

Region of Origin: EU, naturalized everywhere

MEDICINAL PARTS

- leaves
- seeds
- young shoots (edible, nutritive)

ENERGETICS & TASTES

- famous itching, burning effect on the skin
- earthen
- stimulant, diffusive

TISSUE STATES

- depression
- stagnation with phlegm
- damp stagnation

ORGAN AFFINITIES

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| • all protein processing functions in the body | • kidneys
• mucosa, skin, hair | • joints
• metabolism/liver |
|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|

TRADITIONAL USES & HERBAL ACTIONS

- leaves, dry or cooked: "nature's vitamin pill," high in minerals, chlorophyll, and vitamins
- leaves, tea or tincture: remove excess protein build up; gout, allergies, phlegm on irritated surfaces; water retention with kidney weakness; deepens respiration, oxygen uptake, and iron use; anemia. "When in doubt, give Nettles." ~David Hoffmann
- seeds are often preferred for the above
- for the brave, brushing arthritic joints with stalks to cause itch and increase blood flow



FIELD/PRAIRIE



WHOLE PLANT
0.2-1m • 8-40in



FLOWER



LEAF



LEAF



WHOLE PLANT

YARROW

Achillea millefolium • Asteraceae

Region of Origin: worldwide

MEDICINAL PARTS

- whole plant, the best part being the tops

ENERGETICS & TASTES

- bitter, pungent, acrid
- diffusive
- astringent, aromatic

TISSUE STATES

- excitation
- depression
- relaxation

ORGAN AFFINITIES

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|---------|
| • head | • kidneys | • fever |
| • digestive | • female system | |

TRADITIONAL USES & HERBAL ACTIONS

- tongue feathered and red in the middle, "heat attacking the blood level" or pointed with red on the outside, blue in the middle
- lack of menstrual flow, clumsy before the period, uterine fibroids, endometriosis
- lacerations, injuries to the arteries, bruises with cuts, stroke, head injury
- red and blue complexion and veins
- acute fever with rapid, full pulse

allergies possible
avoid large doses in pregnancy



NATURE IS ALIVE!



