

Yarrow

Latin Name: *Achillea millefolium*

Also known as: Yarroway, Thousand-leaf, Thousand Seed, Milfoil, Bloodwort, Soldier's Woundwort, Staunchweed, Nose-bleed, Carpenter's Weed, Old Man's Pepper, Ladies' Mantle, Devil's Nettle, Englishman's Quinine

Scientific Classification

Family: Asteraceae – aster, daisy and sunflower family
Compositae – in earlier classifications
Genus: Achillea – yarrow
Species: *A. millefolium* – common yarrow

Influence on the Body	(PRINCIPAL ACTIONS are listed in CAPITAL LETTERS)
<i>Blood and Circulatory System</i>	alterative (purifies the blood, cleanses, and induces efficient removal of waste products) • BLOOD CLEANSER • blood purifier • reduces blood pressure • blood coagulant • hemostatic (stops bleeding)
<i>Blood Sugar</i>	diabetes
<i>Body System</i>	stimulant (increases internal heat, dispels chill, and strengthens metabolism and circulation) • tonic (increases energy and strength throughout the body) • mucous membranes • ANTI-CATARRH (soothes inflamed mucous membranes and eliminates congestion) • ASTRINGENT (increases the tone and firmness of tissues, reduces mucous discharge from the nose, intestines, vagina, and draining sores) • insomnia
<i>Cancer</i>	cancer
<i>Digestive Tract</i>	aromatic (contains volatile oils which aid digestion and relieve gas) • bitter (stimulates digestive juices and improves appetite) • digestant • stomachic • stomach problems • ulcers • gas • carminative (brings warmth and circulation, relieves intestinal gas discomfort, and promotes peristaltic movement) • diarrhea • infant diarrhea • colic (severe abdominal pain) • dysentery (bowel inflammation) • colon • BOWEL HERMORRHAGE • bleeding bowels • bleeding hemorrhoids • hemorrhoids
<i>Ears</i>	ear infections

<i>First Aid</i>	bruises • abrasions • cuts • wounds • vulnerary (promotes healing of wounds by protecting against infection and stimulating cellular growth) • burns • fractures
<i>Infections and Immune System</i>	COLDS • FLU • anti-bacterial • antiseptic • promotes sweating • DIAPHORETIC (promotes perspiration, increasing elimination through the skin) • FEVERS • ANTI-PYRETIC (reduces fever) • night sweats • MEASLES • chicken pox • smallpox • malaria • typhoid • yeast infections • spleen
<i>Inflammation</i>	anti-inflammatory • bursitis • arthritis • rheumatism
<i>Liver</i>	liver problems • jaundice
<i>Lungs and Respiratory System</i>	respiratory catarrh • bronchitis • LUNGS • pleurisy • pneumonia • HEMORRHAGE
<i>Mouth, Nose & Throat</i>	sore throat • NOSE BLEEDS
<i>Nervous System</i>	nervous disorders • cramps • anti-spasmodic • epilepsy • congestive headaches • hysteria
<i>Reproductive System</i>	<i>Female:</i> • female problems • sore breasts • uterus • vaginal discharge • leucorrhoea (vaginal discharge due to infection) • douche • profuse or irregular menstrual bleeding • emmenagogue (promotes menstrual flow) • menstrual cramps • yeast infections
<i>Skin, Tissues & Hair</i>	skin problems • dandruff • hair loss preventative
<i>Urinary Tract</i>	urinary problems • urine retention • diuretic (increases urine flow) • kidney problems • Bright's disease (chronic kidney inflammation) • bladder disorders

Key Properties:

- **CLEANSING** – purifies the blood, improves circulation, cleanses toxins and congestion, quiets inflammation, increases elimination, and gradually detoxifies and strengthens the spleen, liver, kidneys and bowels
- **STIMULATING DIAPHORETIC** – increases circulation and elimination, relaxes, opens and cleanses pores, releases blocked passages, induces perspiration, lowers fevers
- **HEMOSTATIC** – strengthens blood vessels and helps arrest bleeding, hemorrhaging and draining wounds, both externally and internally

Primarily affecting: CIRCULATION SYSTEMS

History

Yarrow has accumulated many names through the years. Some refer to the physical characteristics of the plant and others refer to how it is used.

In Homer's *Iliad*, the centaur Chiron (who conveyed herbal secrets to his human pupils) taught Achilles to use yarrow to bind the wounds of his soldiers on the battle grounds of Troy. Yarrow's genus name 'Achillea' is said to have come from this tradition. Some say, however, that it was named after the person, Achillea, who discovered the plant.

The name 'millefolium', is derived from the many segments of its foliage; 'mille' is the Latin word for thousand. This also accounts for its popular names, milfoil and thousand weed.

The herb came to be connected with fortune telling and witchcraft. It was used in charms and spells. In some areas it was supposedly dedicated to the evil one, from which arose the common name 'devil's nettle'. The Druids (an early Celtic priesthood in the area of the current British Isles) used the stems of the plant to foretell the weather, and the Chinese used them as 'stalks of divination' to predict the future.

In Eastern European countries, the herb was known as yarroway. It was said that one could know their beloved was true if their nose began to bleed when quoting a charm while tickling their nose with the feathery leaves of yarroway. A similar tale said that it was possible to ensure seven years of love after marriage, by tucking yarrow flowers into the wedding bouquet.

During the Middle Ages, yarrow was made into an herbal mixture known as gruit and used in the flavoring of beer (prior to the use of hops). At one time, its pungent leaves were dried and used as inexpensive snuff, leading to the name 'old man's pepper.'

Nicholas Culpepper, English botanist, herbalist and physician (1616–1654), recommended yarrow for wounds and as being 'profitable in cramps.'

While the English explored and colonized the world, they were exposed to many cultures and diseases. Quinine was the drug of choice in Europe for fevers at the time. If quinine was not available, yarrow was used as a substitute and it became known as the Englishman's Quinine.

The plant was used in traditional Native American herbal medicine. They used it as a tonic for run-down conditions and indigestion. The leaves made a poultice for skin rashes, rheumatic joints, chest colds, and applied to breasts following childbirth to desensitize them.

The Pawnee used the stalk for pain relief. The Chippewa inhaled the steam for headaches and chewed the roots as a tonic. The Cherokee drank yarrow tea to reduce fever and aid sleep. The Piute called yarrow 'wound medicine.' The Navajo considered yarrow to be a 'life medicine' and chewed the leaves to stop toothache pain. They also made infusions of the plant tops and poured it into the ears for earaches.

The Shakers knew of yarrow and included it in treatments for a variety of complaints from hemorrhages to flatulence.

Historically, yarrow's virtues have been used to relieve fevers, clean the blood, and heal wounds. These same attributes apply today.

Attributes	<u>Key Components:</u> (including, but not limited to)
<i>Nutrients</i>	<p>Vitamins <u>A</u> • <u>Choline</u> (B complex) • <u>C</u> • <u>E</u> • <u>K</u> • <u>Copper</u> • <u>Iron</u> • <u>Manganese</u></p> <p><u>Linoleic acid</u> • <u>Tannins</u> • <u>Azulene</u> (in the essential oil) • <u>Achilleine</u> (a bitter alkaloid) • <u>Salicylic Acid</u> (aspirin precursor) • <u>Flavonoids</u> • <u>Bitter</u></p> <p>Azulene has anti-inflammatory and antibacterial activities. Achilleine stimulates the appetite and relieves stomach and gallbladder disorders. It also has antispasmodic and astringent qualities (helps to slow heavy bleeding). Flavonoids may also have antispasmodic properties.</p>
<i>Tonic</i>	<p>Yarrow is one of the best multi-purpose herbal teas that may be used regularly in large amounts, and as a general restorative and tonic for run-down conditions.</p>
<i>Blood Purifier and System Cleanser</i>	<p>Yarrow promotes the removal of toxins from the blood and moves them through the digestive system. It improves digestive evacuation by supporting and regulating liver and pancreas functions and secretions. Blood circulation is thus improved and the herb helps lower blood pressure.</p> <p>Yarrow flowers contain an oil which easily infiltrates the bloodstream. It helps rid the body of uric acid impurities (a</p>

primary cause of gout) and morbid waste materials (by-products of disease and the healing process).

Yarrow's invigorating tonic action stimulates removal of mucous congestion and disease. Aromatic compounds found in yarrow help shrink inflamed tissues, and they promote sweating which eliminates waste through the pores.

Mucous Membranes

Yarrow has a soothing and healing effect on mucous membranes of the urinary tract, respiratory tract, digestive tract, and female organs.

Use of the herb relieves kidney problems, infections, and mucous discharge from the bladder.

An infusion of the plant's leaves helps relieve congestion in the respiratory tract from colds, bronchitis and lung disorders. A chest rub can be made with yarrow's essential oil to ease congestion. Yarrow also alleviates hemorrhage and bleeding of the lungs.

Colds and Infections

The herb has been used for centuries to 'sweat out' fever, flu, colds, and pneumonia. When taken at the first sign of symptoms, yarrow can often break up a cold within 24 hours.

Yarrow is considered very effective where there are symptoms of chills, constant nasal drip, catarrh, and sensations of alternate chills and fever. It helps to alleviate hay fever and the herb is remarkably effective for relieving flu and fevers. It may be one of the best healing agents in dealing with plagues of flu-type diseases.

The tannins in the flowers are antiseptic and powerful virus inhibitors. Yarrow's essential oil has astringent, antibacterial and some anti-inflammatory properties.

Yarrow is an excellent fever remedy for childhood diseases with skin eruptions, such as measles, chicken pox, and small pox.

Digestion

The herb acts as a bitter tonic and is highly recommended, with other digestive herbs, to help relax the bowels and improve digestion. Yarrow counteracts nausea, relieves gas, balances the function of the liver, and has an influence on secretion production throughout the digestive tract. It is healing to the glandular system and tones the mucous membranes of the stomach and bowels. It is excellent for shrinking hemorrhoids and for relieving diarrhea of infants

	and adults.
<i>Women</i>	Yarrow is excellent for menstrual problems, soothing, cleansing and healing catarrhal conditions of the female organs. It is effective in controlling fungus and yeast infections in the female reproductive system.
<i>Blood Vessels</i>	<p>Yarrow has blood-regulating effects that help strengthen vein walls. They reinforce tiny blood vessels and reduce blood clotting time. The herb's astringent action helps contract blood vessels, stop hemorrhage, and promote circulation.</p> <p>Use the tea both internally and externally to help stop bleeding and accelerate the healing process. Yarrow's beneficial effects on wounds are legendary. Combined with its anti-inflammatory properties, yarrow both helps repair varicose veins and alleviates their discomfort.</p> <p>Yarrow has seemingly conflicting actions, relegated by the needs of the body: it will quickly stop a nose bleed when inserted into the nostril; however, to ease a severe sinus headache, inserting a roll of yarrow into the nostril relieves pressure by causing the nose to bleed.</p>
<i>Other Uses</i>	<p>Yarrow intensifies the medicinal action of other herbs and is considered a catalyst in herb combinations.</p> <p>Swedish scientists have found that yarrow extract repels mosquitoes.</p>
Herb Parts Used	Leaves, flowering tops, stems are used both fresh and dried. The aromatic properties are strongest in the flowers, astringency is greatest in the leaves.
Preparations and Remedies	<i>Fresh:</i> Chewing yarrow leaves will frequently ease the pain of a toothache.
<i>Powdered Formula</i>	<i>Infection Formula:</i> (see GOLDENSEAL preparations)
<i>Infusions</i>	<p>Yarrow tea is bitter to the taste, but very effective.</p> <p><i>Yarrow Tea:</i> Pour 1 cup boiling water over one to two teaspoons of dried or fresh yarrow. Cover and let steep for about 15 minutes.</p> <p>– Drink one large cup of the unsweetened tea before every meal for gastritis, nausea, poor appetite, gallbladder pain, and</p>

as a digestive aid.

– For sweating out a fever, the tea must be taken warm (or take capsules with warm water or peppermint tea). This will initially increase body temperature, relax and open skin pores, stimulate free perspiration, and ultimately reduce the fever.

– Drink cool tea for bronchitis and other respiratory afflictions. Taking cold yarrow tea at night can help to alleviate night sweats.

Yarrow, Chamomile and Fennel Tea:

Mix two parts yarrow flowers and one part each of chamomile blossoms and fennel seeds to relax stomach mucous membranes and prevent inflammation. Fennel improves the taste and reduces flatulence.

Yarrow and Mullein Tea:

Mix 1 part mullein leaves and 2 parts yarrow for infusion and cover well for 15 minutes in a proportionate amount of water (typically, 1-3 teaspoons combined herbs to 1 cup water). Strain, sweeten, cool, bottle, and keep in a cool place. Take 1 cupful, 2-3 times daily for hemorrhoids.

Yarrow and Calendula Tea:

Mix equal parts of yarrow and calendula flowers (or hawthorn) for weak veins, light nosebleeds, hemorrhoids, and menstrual conditions.

Yarrow and Red Raspberry Leaf Tea:

Equal parts yarrow and red raspberry makes a good tea for varicose veins and weak vessels. Drink three cups daily.

Cold and Flu Tea:

Make a tea blend of equal parts yarrow, elder flowers, lemon balm, and mint. For fastest relief, drink two cups of the tea and rest in bed as soon as cold or flu symptoms are felt.

Yarrow and Licorice Root Tea:

Prepare a tea with a mixture of three parts yarrow flowers and one part dried licorice root. Drink three cups a day during heavy menstrual bleeding. Drinking one cup of the tea daily relieves chronic sinus congestion in both adults and children.

Inhalation

Inhale the steam of fresh yarrow herbs in boiling water for hay fever and mild asthma.

Fomentations

Apply a towel soaked in yarrow tea (as hot as possible) and

	<p>place a hot water bottle over the towel for chronic lower-back pain, external hemorrhoids, or other areas of discomfort.</p> <p>For stubborn wounds, apply a fomentation made with double-strength yarrow tea. It will help alleviate bleeding and accelerate blood capillary healing.</p>
<i>Poultices</i>	The bruised or mashed leaves make an excellent first aid poultice for treating traumatic injuries, especially deep cuts.
<i>Shampoo Additive</i>	Add yarrow tea to shampoo to help stop hair loss.
<i>Enemas</i>	<p>Use one ounce of the tea in a retention enema for internal hemorrhoids. If there is swelling or bleeding, insert two ounces into the colon after each bowel movement. Use warm yarrow tea to soothe and ease inflammation.</p> <p>For diarrhea in children - insert one cupful or more (according to age) of the infusion.</p>
<i>Douche</i>	Use the cool tea as a douche for vaginal irritation and discharge.
<i>Bath</i>	As a tea and bath additive, yarrow relieves vaginal inflammations, eases menstrual pain, and helps regulate menstrual flow.
<i>Essential Oil</i>	Yarrow essential oil is pale yellow to brilliant blue (azulenes turn blue upon distillation). Massage essential oil on area of concern in a carrier oil (almond oil, extra virgin olive oil, etc.). Use of yarrow essential oil is indicated for prostate or menstrual problems, neuralgia, acne, eczema, and inflamed tissues. It minimizes varicose veins, reduces scars, and stimulates bladder nerves.
<i>Ointment</i>	<p><i>Yarrow - Red Raspberry Ointment:</i> 1/2 ounce Red Raspberry leaves, powder 1/2 ounce Yarrow flowers and stems, powder 3 ounces Extra Virgin Olive Oil 1 ounce Wheat Germ Oil Approx. 1/2 ounce Beeswax</p> <p>Fold herbs into warm olive oil and stir for 15 minutes over low heat. To make a stronger salve, heat for up to 3 days (use crock pot on warm setting for this longer maturation).</p> <p>Remove from heat and strain herbs out. Put the infused oil</p>

	<p>back into the pot and add wheat germ oil and enough beeswax (around 1/2 ounce) to stiffen the ointment when at room temperature. Continue stirring over low heat until the beeswax is melted, take off heat, and while still stirring, let cool until it starts to thicken. Pour into clean container, let sit until set up, and store in a cool place.</p> <p>Apply externally as needed, for accelerated blood vessel and tissue repair of closed wounds, bruises and varicose veins. It helps reduce scars and relieves inflammation and discomfort.</p>
<p>Safety</p>	<p>No health hazards or adverse side effects are known.</p> <p>This herb is a mild abortifacient and should not be taken during pregnancy except in combination with other herbs and under the direction of a health care professional.</p> <p>Essential oils are potent, only a small amount is needed. They should never be put into the eyes nor directly contact mucous membranes. If contact burning occurs, soothe the area with a carrier oil such as almond or olive oil. Be careful to purchase only pure essential oils when using for therapeutic purposes.</p>
<p>Plant Profile</p> <p><i>Description</i></p> <p><i>Growing Yarrow</i></p>	<p><i>Natural Habitat:</i> Native to the coast of Oregon and California, yarrow is now found throughout North America, Europe and Asia. It grows by road-sides and in wastelands, pastures, meadows, and dry fields.</p> <p>This perennial plant (grows back from a persistent rootstock each year) has a single, grayish-green stem (one to three feet high) that branches toward the top. The entire plant is covered with white, silky hairs. Lacy, fern-like leaves are narrow and oblong (three to four inches long and one inch broad). Each dark green leaf has many, finely cut segments.</p> <p>Small grayish-white (or rose-colored), daisy-like flowers are packed in dense clusters of terminal flower heads. Each cluster has an overall flat-topped appearance. Yarrow blooms throughout the summer and fall.</p> <p>The plant has a hardy, horizontal, root stock and self-propagates by underground runners. Yarrow has a peculiar, pleasant aroma and a rough, bitter, astringent taste.</p> <p>Yarrow prefers full sun and fast draining soils. The plant will</p>

rot if the soil remains wet for long periods.

Planting Yarrow will propagate by division of the creeping root stock, or by sowing seed and transplanting after the seedlings are big enough to thrive on their own. The herb is hardy and grows quite easily. Growing yarrow in stressful growing conditions will produce flowers with higher essential oil content. Plant in poor soil and water sparingly.

Sow seeds shallowly indoors in early spring, or outdoors in late spring. To promote flowering, pick blossoms often. The life of the plant may be prolonged by dividing it every other year and planting 12-18 inches apart. Common yarrow is a weedy species and can become invasive.

Harvesting Harvest leafy stems and flowers on dry mornings when plants are in the early stages of full bloom.

Drying Pick flowers with plenty of stem and hang upside down in bunches in a dry, dark, airy location (when drying for floral arrangements, hang each flower separately).

Storage When stems are dry, remove the flowers and leaves. Crumble the leaves and break stems into small pieces. Mix stems, leaves, and flowers together and store the mixture in airtight containers. Yarrow is not suitable for freezing.