

GALIUM (CLEAVERS) TEA / WATER

Galium aparine

AKA Cleavers, Sticky Weed, Sticky Willy, Goosegrass



A common hedgerow perennial native to Europe, cleavers are recognised by their long sticky stems and seeds like little round balls which stick to everything that they touch including dogs' paws and ears. It is a member of the bedstraw family, so-called for their strewing values in less hygienic times and gives off a smell of new mown hay.

Cleavers are a wonderfully gentle lymphatic cleanser and a fantastic sprint tonic, helping clean up our system after winter. It soothes irritated membranes of the urinary tract and promotes urine flow and is useful for many mouth and throat problems. It is high in vitamins and minerals.

Parts used

Aerial parts – above ground parts, gathered in handfuls from early spring until the plants flower (little white flowers) in the summer

Actions

Diuretic, hypotensive, lymphatic, immunostimulant, alterative, anti-inflammatory, astringent, antineoplastic, febrifuge, aperient, bitter tonic, hepatic, cholagogue, diaphoretic, vulnerary.

Circulation

Lowers blood pressure, perhaps through its diuretic action
The asperuloside may also have a hypotensive action

Digestion

Improves digestion and stimulates the flow of bile from the liver. It may be helpful in hepatitis

Skin

Its cleansing properties are helpful for chronic skin disorders such as eczema, acne, boils, psoriasis, and rosacea
Helps resolve eruptive infections such as measles and chicken pox

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Urinary system

As a diuretic, cleavers aid the elimination of fluid toxins via the kidneys

Useful for losing weight

Traditionally used as a tea for a cleansing “spring tonic” cooling heat and clearing toxins

Helpful for clearing grit, gravel, or calcium deposits in the urinary tract.

Used to treat kidney stones and urinary infections, cystitis, and irritable bladder:

because it promotes the flow of urine, and cools and soothes, they are used to reduce heat and irritation in the urinary tract. Helps relieve the scalding pain on urination associated with cystitis.

Remedy for urethritis, for kidney inflammation, irritable bladder, and prostatitis.

Immunity

As a lymphatic tonic, cleavers enhance lymphatic circulation, aiding the body in its cleansing and immune work and purifying the blood

Used to treat lymphatic congestion, swollen lymph glands, glandular fever, ME and tonsillitis

May have anti-tumour activity

Clears heat and resolves inflammation, so is helpful in arthritis and gout

Promotes immune function and reduces fevers

Externally

Can be used in skin washes for skin disorders, cuts, and scrapes, and as a hair rinse for dandruff / seborrhoea. Infusion as a lotion for burns, scalds, sunburn, acne, psoriasis, and abrasions

Indications

Tonsillitis, glandular fever, ME/Chronic fatigue, enlarged adenoids, pharyngitis, ear infections, swollen lymph glands, cellulite, lymphatic congestion, PMS, fibroids, sluggish liver function, chronic skin conditions (acne, eczema, psoriasis, styes, boils, impetigo, scabies), oedema, overweight, urinary infections, irritable bladder, kidney stones, arthritis, gout, fevers, eruptive infections including measles, chickenpox, ulcers, tumours, hypertension.

Ayurvedic Indications

A spring cleanser, clears ama, pitta and kapha from rasa and rakta dhatus.

Information above from The Complete Herbal Tutor & Dispensing with Tradition by Anne McIntyre and Hedgerow Medicine by Julie and Matthew Bruton-Seal

How to pick

Cleavers grow abundantly in the spring and summer, it sends up bright green shoots from January onwards, being one of the first plants to sprout. Always pick from areas that have not been sprayed, that are away from the pollution of roads or chemicals and that have not been peed on by dogs.

Harvest before or during the flowering stage before it goes to seed. Once it goes to seed, leave it. The older it is, the stickier it becomes.

How to use

Cleavers is best used when fresh as it loses some of its effectiveness when dried, but you can purchase dried capsules. Picking your own in the spring and using it daily while in season is a great way to give yourself a gentle annual spring-cleanse.

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Tea / Hot Water Infusion

1 tablespoon of fresh herb to 1 cup of water.

Cleavers Water / Cold Water Infusion

Chop fresh cleavers and place in a tall mason jar or jug. Pour in filtered water to cover the plant. Cover and leave overnight in the fridge, or a cool place, and drink the water at room temperature. Alternatively, just leave in a jug for a few hours if you can't wait.



Cleavers Juice

If you don't have a juicer, just chop up a handful of fresh cleavers, put in a jelly bag and squeeze out the juice. Dose: take 1 teaspoonful two or three times a day

In food

Chop a little of the young cleavers, especially the tips, to mix in with salads or add to soups. The juice can be blended with smoothies.

Frozen

You can put it in a blender and freeze in ice cube trays