

Plantago major - broad leaf (top right corner)
Plantago lanceolata - narrow leaf (left)
Family: *Plantaginaceae* - plantain
Parts Used: leaves

Plantain has over 200 different species in its family, but the most common species found in North America are the two listed above. This is one of my favorite herbs because it can be used safely with babies, children, adults, pregnant and nursing mothers as well as animals, everyone can benefit from this herb! Known as a common yard weed you can probably find it in your yard or neighborhood.

Properties

Alterative, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, anthelmintic, antivenomous astringent, expectorant, decongestant, demulcent, deobstruent, diuretic, febrifuge, hemostatic, kidney tonic, ophthalmic, mucilaginous, refrigerant, restorative, vulnerary, laxative, mucilaginous, styptic, tonic.

Energetics: cooling, moistening, bitter
Systems Affected: skin, blood, respiratory, urinary

Uses

- Full body support and healing
- Stimulates new cell growth
- Boosts immune system, can be used for all types of illness and infection.
- Fever
- Draws toxins from the body internal and external. Removes obstructions both physical and emotional.
- Removes splinters and slivers (soak in hot tea for 20-30 minutes).
- Stings and bites from insects and snakes (poultice)
- First aid; cuts, abrasions, bruises, wounds, burns, bleeding, allergic reactions etc. (excellent to use on animals)
- Skin eruptions; boils, goiters, blisters, , acne, rashes, disorders, etc.
- Eczema, psoriasis, rashes, including poison ivy/oak, nettle stings,
- Respiratory; bronchitis, coughs, chest congestion, colds, asthma, anything to do with the lungs.
- Sore throat, dry itchy throat, laryngitis, etc.
- Athletes foot, ringworm, or other skin fungus (soak in tea then apply poultice).
- Eye infection and styes (poultice/compress over closed eyes or tea in eye cup)
- Canker and mouth sores
- Toothache, gum health
- Hemorrhaging and stomach ulcers.
- Can be used to slow the flow of heavy menstrual cycles.
- Hemorrhoids, varicose veins

- Blood health; enriches blood, blood poisoning, cleansing, detoxing, stops bleeding.
- Stimulates and supports liver, useful for all type of issues including hepatitis.
- Cleansing; can flush out kidney, stomach, intestinal tract, liver, and lungs.
- Bladder and urinary conditions, including bed wetting.
- Digestive issues; diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, colitis, etc.
- Gut healing, including leaky gut, IBS, and other intestinal issues.
- Soothes inflammation and moisturizes mucus membranes throughout the body.
- Parasites in both humans and animals.
- Seasonal allergies
- Nutrient dense, power food; great for emergencies. Referenced as "super herb" in some herbals for the variety of vitamins and minerals.

Herb Preparations

For best results when treating with plantain take internally as well as applying externally. Heat can destroy antibacterial properties. Best used fresh if possible.

- Poultice/compress (best way for abscesses, boils, bites, and stings)
- Tea (makes a great disinfectant)
- Bath, soak, steam, gargle, eye wash, etc.
- Extract, liniment
- Honey, syrup
- Herbal oil
- Salve, ointment, balms
- Powder, capsules, pills, sprinkle
- Food; add to smoothies, salads, juicing, and sprinkling away. Young leaves are more tender where older leaves are tougher and bitter.
- Juicing
- Put a leaf in a sock to prevent blisters when hiking or long walks.

Foraging/Harvesting

A common “weed” found on pathways, lawns, gravel, fields, and disturbed areas. Can be easily identified by the parallel lines running up and down the broad leaf or lance leaf. When picked it has stretchy strands. Flowers are found on elongated spikes and bloom from April to September.

- Leaves can be harvested anytime but picking or cutting as needed. Cut the entire plant down before flowering to dry for future use or process in one of the methods above. It will continue to produce more leaves for continual harvesting.

Safety/Dosage

No known cautions - safe for all ages!

Use 1 cup tea or 1/2-1 tsp extract, 3 times a day for acute conditions, until cleared.
Juiced plantain leaves: 1 tsp to 1 cup water, 1-2 times a day up to 1 Tbsp every hour while applying externally for serious acute conditions.