

## PLANT MAGIC

Plant uses: food, medicine, cosmetics, dye, soap, transport, fuel, clothing, flavouring, religious rites, superstition, magic, paint, ink, weapons, buildings, furniture, decoration, musical instruments, coffins, candles, drinks, perfume, mathematical instruments, combs, pegs, toys, fences/hedges, insecticides, fertiliser, fodder, drugs, aphrodisiacs.

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### ACHILLEA FILIPENDULINA 'CLOTH OF GOLD' (Yarrow)

Styptic, healing – carpenter's herb. Diuretic, colds, high blood pressure, heart, dysentery, diarrhoea, skin, stomach, toothache. Replace hops in brewing. Snuff, tobacco substitute. In China yarrow stalks are used in consulting the *I Ching* (Book of Changes).

### ACTAEA (syn. CIMICIFUGA) SIMPLEX 'BRUNETTE GROUP'

MS, arthritis.

### AEGOPODIUM PODAGRARIA 'VARIEGATA' (Variegated Ground Elder or Goutweed)

Diuretic, sedative, poultice, gout, sciatica. Young leaves used in salads and soups and as a vegetable. Gerard – “grows of itself in gardens without setting or sowing, and is so fruitful in its increase it will hardly be gotten out again”.

### ALLIUM SPHAEROCEPHALON

Antiseptic, blood pressure, bronchitis.

### ANTHEMIS 'GRALLAGH GOLD'

Dye.

### CANNA INDICA

Seeds resemble shotgun pellets giving rise to the plant's common name of Indian Shot. Seed widely used for jewellery. Plant used in the treatment of women's complaints. A decoction of the root, with fermented rice, is used in the treatment of gonorrhoea and amenorrhoea. The plant is also considered to be demulcent, diaphoretic and diuretic.

### CHENOPODIUM BONUS-HENRICUS (Good King Henry)

Ancient food plant. Mercury/markery. Nutritious. Grain – flour, leaf and flower heads. Dye for shagreen (a granular leather made from horses or donkeys skin). Fodder. Ointment to heal sores. Cough remedy for sheep.

### CONVALLARIA MAJALIS 'ALBOSTRIATA'

Regulate heart action. Snuff, perfume.

CRATAEGUS LAEVIGATA 'PAUL'S SCARLET (Hawthorn)

Crown of Thorns. Strengthens heart muscle, sore throats. Hottest firewood. Liqueur. Woodturning.

CYMBIDIUM

Some orchids are sedative. Love philtres. Salop – very nutritious. Roots taken on sailing ships.

DIGITALIS OFFICINALIS & D. x MERTONENSIS

Heart, poultice for wounds.

ECHINACEA PURPUREA (Cone Flower)

Stimulates immune system, dilates peripheral blood vessels.

ERYNGIUM GIGANTEUM

Aphrodisiac, coughs, nervous diseases, liver, kidneys. Candied roots.

EUPATORIUM PURPUREUM

Gout, rheumatism, kidney stones, fever. Pink or red dye.

EUPHORBIA CHARACIAS *subsp.* wulfenii & TASMANIAN TIGER? (Molewort)

Bronchitis, asthma.

HELLEBORUS x ORIENTALIS

Diseases of the brain, psychosis, abortion, heart, local anaesthetic.

HYACINTHOIDES NON-SCRIPTA (Bluebell)

Apollo and Zephyrus – cry of woe traced on petals. Bookbinding, arrows, starch, ink. Snake bite.

IRIS GERMANICA

Orris root, when dried, smells of violets and is used in perfumery. Can be used in the making of pomanders – cover the orange with it and leave in a bag for a while before stuffing the orange with cloves. Diuretic, chest complaints, purgative. The essential oil is used as flavouring for alcoholic and soft drinks, enhancing fruit flavours.

LACTUCA SATIVA

Lettuce opium, sedative, coughs, insomnia.

LILIUM REGALE

Introduced by plant finder, Ernest Wilson. Romans – corns. Ghosts. Foodstuff. Symbolism. Burns, scalds, ulcers.

LOBELIA TUPA

Pain relief in cancer, syphilis, diarrhoea, emetic.

MANDRAGORA OFFICINALIS (Mandrake)

Magical, hallucinogenic, emetic, aphrodisiac, ulcers, nervous disorders, flying ointment.

NICOTIANA LANGSDORFII & N. SYLVESTRIS

Tobacco, Formerly used for asthma and regulate heart! Constipation! Pipe after breakfast to help action of the bowels! Insecticide.

PAEONIA 'BOWL OF BEAUTY'

Named after Paeon, the Homeric physician to the gods in ancient Greece, who first used the plant medicinally. Kidney stones, sedative, brain disorders, varicose veins.

PAPAVER ORIENTALIS 'BEAUTY OF LIVERMERE' & P. RUPRIFRAGUM

Opium, seed on bread and cakes, morphine.

PLANTAGO MAJOR 'RUBRIFOLIA'

Promotes healing – poultice for wounds, bronchitis, haemorrhaging, Pot herb. Bird seed, dog and snake bite.

PRIMULA

Drinks, conserves, cosmetics, rheumatics.

PULMONARIA OFFICINALIS & ARUM ITALICUM

Respiratory. Foodstuff, starch.

RICINUS COMMUNIS 'CARMENCITA'

Cattle cake, varnish, soap, purgative.

ROSMARINUS OFFICINALIS 'ROSEA' (Pink Rosemary)

Hair herb, tonic, digestive, insect repellent, headache, antiseptic. "Hungary Water for paralysed limbs" - aromatic restorative that relaxes spasms. Perfume, cooking.

TROPAEOLUM 'MARGARET LONG'

Leaves in salads, seeds pickled. Watercress many medical uses.

VERATRUM NIGRUM

Arrow poison. Used as a decoction to remove head lice, veterinary. Depresses action of the heart. Ordeal poison.

VERBASCUM 'SOUTHERN CHARM' (Hags Taper)

Smoking mixtures (leaves substitute for tobacco), cosmetics, dye, respiratory infections, antiseptic. Magical plant in ancient world. Coughs in cattle. Safeguard against evil spirits.

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