

Common Name: **Agrimony**

Genus: *Agrimonia*

Species: *eupatoria*

Family: Rosaceae

AKA: Sticklewort, Cocklebur, Church Steeples, Egrimonie, Philanthropos



## Historical Uses:

**Medical:** “Agrimony was one of the most famous vulnerary herbs. The Anglo-Saxons, who called it Garclive, taught that it would heal wounds, snake bites, warts, etc. In the time of Chaucer, when we find its name appearing in the form of Egrimoynne, it was used with Mugwort and vinegar for 'a bad back' and 'alle woundes': and one of these old writers recommends it to be taken with a mixture of pounded frogs and human blood, as a remedy for all internal haemorrhages. It formed an ingredient of the famous arquebusade water as prepared against wounds inflicted by an arquebus, or hand-gun, and was mentioned by Philip de Comines, in his account of the battle of Morat in 1476. In France, the *eau de arquebusade* is still applied for sprains and bruises, being carefully made from many aromatic herbs. It was at one time included in the London Materia Medica as a vulnerary herb, but modern official medicine does not recognize its virtues, though it is still fully appreciated in herbal practice as a mild astringent and tonic, useful in coughs, diarrhoea and relaxed bowels. By pouring a pint of boiling water on a handful of the dried herb - stem, leaves and flowers - an excellent gargle may be made for a relaxed throat, and a teacupful of the same infusion is recommended, taken cold three or four times in the day for looseness in the bowels, also for passive losses of blood. It may be given either in infusion or decoction.” (1)



“Let a person who has lost understanding and knowledge have the hair cut from his or her head since the hair creates a horrible shaking tremor. Then cook agrimony in water and wash the person’s head with this warm water. Also, the herb should be tied warm over the heart when the person first senses mindlessness. Then place it warm over the forehead and temples. The person’s understanding and knowledge will be purified, and the mindlessness will leave. If a person becomes leprous



from lust or incontinence, let them cook agrimony, a third part hyssop, and twice as much asarumas the other two in a cauldron. Let the person prepare a bath from these, mix in as much menstrual blood as he or she can get, and get into the bath. Also let the person take goose fat, twice as much chicken fat, an a little chicken dung. Make an ointment from these. When the person gets out of the bath have them smear this ointment on themselves and go back to bed.” (2)

**Household:** “The whole plant yields a yellow dye: when gathered in September, the colour given is pale, much like that called nankeen; later in the year the dye is of a darker hue and will dye wool of a deep yellow. As it gives a good dye at all times and is a common plant, easily cultivated, it seems to deserve the notice of dyers.” (3)

**Folklore/Astrology:** “Hot, and doth moderately binde, and is of a temperate drinesse.” (4) “Agrimony tokens gratitude, and if placed beneath a sleeper’s head he cannot wake until it is removed. With Rue, Maidenhair Fern, Broom, Ground Ivy, braided into a wreath it supposedly reveals the presence of witches, and held them fast on the threshold.” (5)



Close-up of the flowers

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### Contemporary Uses:

**Parts Used:** Whole plant. Plants are cut when in flowering then dried for use. Avoid flower spikes that have started to develop spiny burrs.

**Medicinal:** “A bitter, mildly astringent, tonic, diuretic herb; it controls bleeding , improves liver and gall bladder function, and has anti-inflammatory effects. Used internally for colitis, dyspepsia, food allergies, diarrhea, gallstones, cirrhosis, grumbling appendix, urinary incontinence, cystitis, and rheumatism. Not given to patients with stress related constipation. Externally for sore throat, conjunctivitis, hemorrhoids, minor injuries, and chronic skin conditions.” (6)

**Culinary:** Fresh or dried flowering plant makes a pleasant tea.

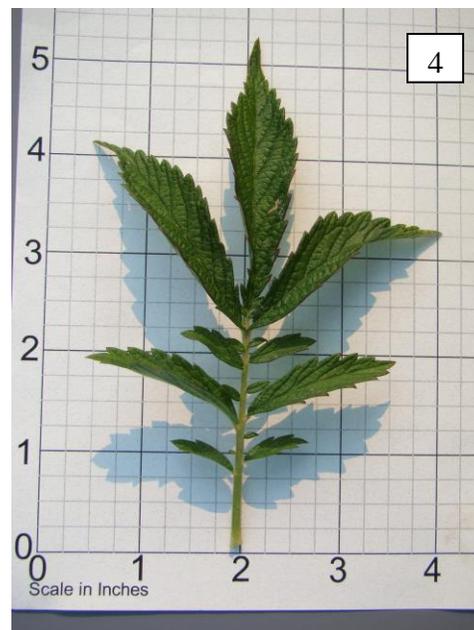
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**Area of Origin:** Europe

**Physical description:** Upright, hairy stems

**Plant type:** Perennial

**Height:** 12” to 24”



**Flower color:** Yellow, faintly scented

**Flowering period:** Summer

**Soil type/requirements:** Well drained soil. Can tolerate dry and alkaline conditions.

**Fruit:** Bristly fruit

**Hardiness zone:** USDA zone 6-9

**Sun requirements:** Full sun

**Propagation:** By seed in spring

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### **Bibliography**

1. Grieve, pg. 12-14
2. Von Bingen, pg. 107
3. Grieve, pg. 12-14
4. Gerard, pg. 373
5. Anderson, pg. 16
6. Bown, pg. 107

### **Illustrations:**

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|-------------------|------|
| 1. Shoffer Herbal | 1485 |
| 2. PSUMG          | 2005 |
| 3. PSUMG          | 2012 |
| 4. PSUMG          | 2012 |