

Common Name: **Betony**

Genus: *Stachys*

Species: *officinalis*

Family: Lamiaceae

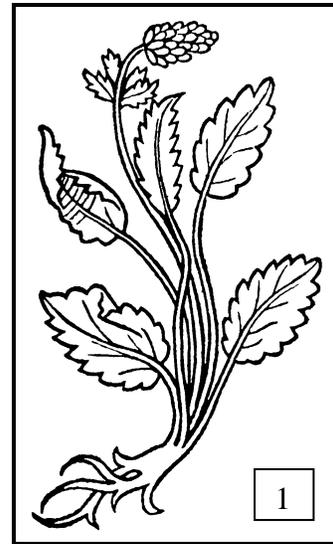
AKA: *S. Betonica*, *Betonica Officinale*, Bishopswort, Woundwort

Historical Uses:



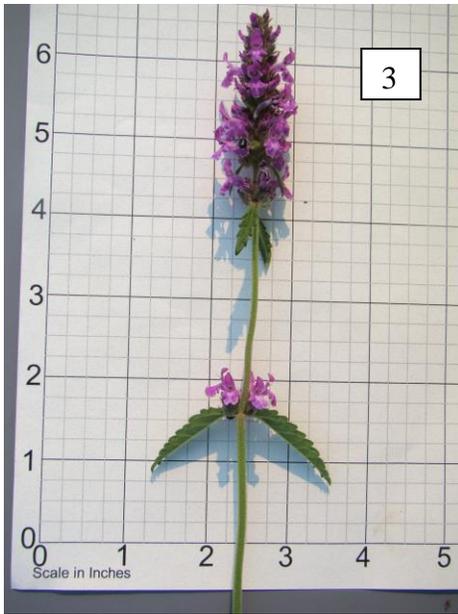
Medical: “This plant is grown in meadows, on cleared hilly land, and in sheltered places; it is good both for one’s soul and one’s body; it protects a person from dreadful nightmares and from terrifying visions and dreams. If a person’s skull is shattered, take the plant ; shred it and pound into powder. Then take two coins weight of it and drink it in hot beer. The skull will heal quickly.”(1)

“Sometimes the Devil sends his shadow over betony and over certain other herbs. Let whoever is foolish or silly so that the person lacks knowledge pound betony into juice, place it upon his or her chest at night, and tie it with a piece of cloth until morning. Do this often and a person’s knowledge will return. When betony has been found, take a leaf from it and put one leaf in each nostril and one under the tongue. Hold one leaf in each hand, and place one under each foot. Let the person look at betony intently. Let the person do this until the leaf becomes hot on the person’s body. Do this this often until the person is better and is thus released from the insomnia of love.”(2)



“Cuts into and removes thick humors, clears the urinary tract of deposits, brings on menses, helps pains in the sides, opens a blocked spleen, aids those with dropsy, heals wounds, eases toothache, and cures alopecia and obscured vision. It relieves headache and strained sinews, removes vertigo and epilepsy, and is useful for the bites of venomous creatures. It halts belching, makes an emetic for phlegm, stops the spitting of blood, arthritic pains, fevers in childbirth, and colic, and reveals all that is malicious and deadly.”(3)





Culinary:
Leaves used to make tea.(4)

Household:
Leaves also provide a yellow dye for wool. Can be used to supplement tobacco.(5)

Folklore/Astronomy: Warm and dry in the third degree.



Under the domain of Jupiter.

Other: Should be gathered in August but do not use a tool made of iron.(6) Has powers against evil so was planted in churchyards.(7)

Contemporary Uses:

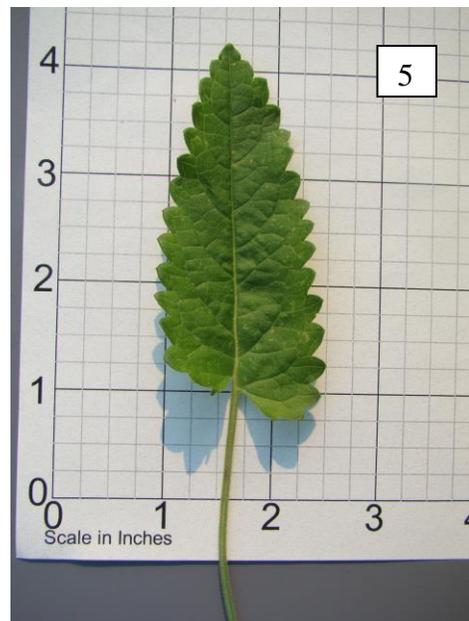
Parts Used: Whole plant. Plants are cut while in flower.

Medicinal: “A bitter astringent, sedative herb that improves digestion and cerebral circulation. Used internally for headaches associated with debility and nervous tension, and for anxiety, neuralgia, sinusitis, upper respiratory tract mucus, gastritis, poor digestion, hypertension, and menopausal problems. Externally used for wounds, bruises, ulcers, sore throat, and gum inflammations.” (8)

Culinary: Leaves and flower spikes used to make tea.

Economic: Dried leaves are included in herbal tobacco and snuff. (9)

Cautions: Excess causes diarrhea and vomiting. Contraindicated during pregnancy. (10)



Area of Origin: Native to Europe

Physical description: Erect perennial growing 1 to 2 feet tall. Its leaves are stalked on upright stems, narrowly oval, deeply veined, with a heart-shaped base, and a somewhat wrinkled texture and toothed margins.

Plant type: Perennial

Form: Upright

Height: 1 to 2 feet

Flower color: Magenta

Flowering period: Summer

Soil type/requirements: Well drained soil

Hardiness zone: USDA

Sun requirements: Sun or partial shade

Propagation: By seed in autumn or spring, also by division in spring

Sources

1. Van Arsdall, p.138-139
2. Von Bingen, p. 121-123
3. Anderson, p. 305
4. Ibid
5. Ibid
6. Van Arsdall, p.138-139
7. Anderson, p. 305
8. Bown, p. 374
9. Ibid
10. Ibid

Illustrations/Images:

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| 1. Gerard's Herbal | 1633 |
| 2. PSUMG | 2005 |
| 3. PSUMG | 2012 |
| 4. PSUMG | 2012 |
| 5. PSUMG | 2012 |