

Common Name: **Speedwell**

Genus: *Veronica*

Species: *officinalis*

Family: Scrophulariaceae

AKA: Common Speedwell, Female Fluellen, Elatine, Gypsyweed

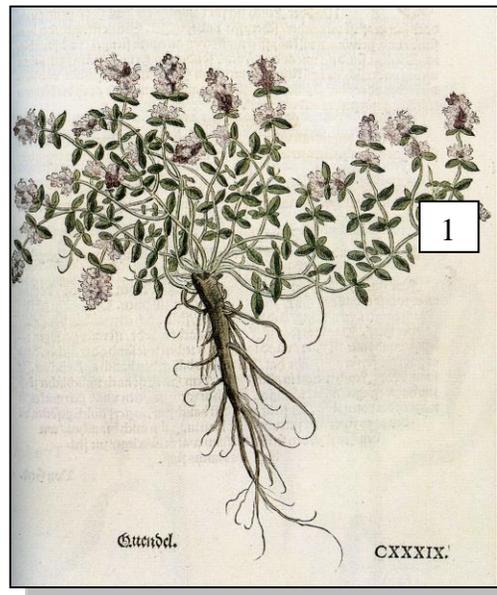


## Historical Uses:

### Medical:

“Good for coughs and consumptions, and is helpful against the stone and stranguary; as also against pestilential fevers. An infusion of leaves, drank constantly in the manner of tea, is greatly recommended as a provocative to venery, and a strengthener; it has been called a cure for barrenness, taken a long time in this manner.” (1)

“These plants are not only of a singular astringent facultie, and thereby helpe them that bee grieved with the Dysenterie and hot swellings ; but of such singular efficacy to heale spreading and eating cankers, corrosive ulcers, that their vertue in a manner passeth all credit in these fretting sores, upon sure prooffe done unto sundry persons, and especially upon a man whom *Pena* reporteth to have his nose eaten most grievously with a canker or eating sore, who sent for the Physition and Chirurgions that were famously knowne to be the best, and they with one consent concluded to cut thhe said nose off, to presurve the rest of the face: among these Surgeons and Physitions came a poore Barbar,



who had no more skill than had learned by tradition, and yet undertook to cure the patient. This foresaid Barbar standing in the companie and hearing their determination, desired that he might make a trial of an herbe which he had seene his master use for the same purpose, which herbe Elatine, though he were ignorant of the name whereby it was called, yet hee knew where to fetch it. To be short, this herbe he stamped, and gave the juice

of it unto the patient to drinke, and outwardly applied the same plaisterwise, and in very short space perfectly cured the man, and staid the rest of his body from further corruption, which was ready to fall into leprosie.

Elatine helpeth the inflammation of the eies, and defendeth humours flowing unto them, being boiled, and as a pultus applied thereto. The leaves sodded in the broth of a hen, or Veale, stayeth the dysenterie. The new writers affirme, that the female Fluellen openeth the obstructions or stoppings of the liver and spleen, provoketh urine, driveth forth



Close-up of the flowers

stones, and clenseth the kidneies and bladder, according to *Paulus*.” (2)

“It heals wounds, cleanses the blood, is good for the kidneys, stops scurvey, smallpox and the measles, and is a pectoral medicine that keeps the lungs free from ulcers and inflammations.” (3)

**Folklore/Astrology:** Venus governs this plant, of moderate temperature and nature. (4)

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### Contemporary Uses:

**Parts Used:** Whole plant

**Medicinal:** Formerly, internally for bronchial, arthritic, rheumatic, and skin complaints, nervous exhaustion, and stomach upsets; externally for minor injuries. It is regarded as obsolete by herbalists today. (5)

**Culinary:** Has been known to be used as an additive to some teas or as a tea substitute. Once known as the *thé d'Europe* (tea of Europe). (6)

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**Area of Origin:** Europe, Eurasia.

**Physical description:** Prostrate habit, with ascending branches, erect, spike-like flower clusters. (7)

**Plant type:** Perennial

**Form:** Low, prostrate

**Height:** Flower stalks- 3” to 18”

**Flower color:** Blue

**Flowering period:** Late spring to early summer

**Soil type/requirements:** Dry, slightly acid soil

**Hardiness zone:** USDA 3-9

**Sun requirements:** Full to partial sun

**Propagation:** By seed sown in autumn, by division in spring or autumn. (8)

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## **Sources**

1. Culpeper, pg. 160
2. Gerard, pg. 626
3. Anderson, pg. 335
4. Ibid
5. Bown, pg. 402
6. Ibid.
7. Grieve, pg. 758
8. Bown, pg. 402

## **Illustrations/Images:**

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| 1. Fuch's Herbal | 1543 |
| 2. PSUMG         | 2013 |
| 3. PSUMG         | 2013 |