

Common Name: **Sweet Woodruff**

Genus: *Galium*

Species: *odoratum*

Family: Rubiaceae

AKA: Wuderove, Wood-rova, *Asperula odoratum*



Historical Uses:

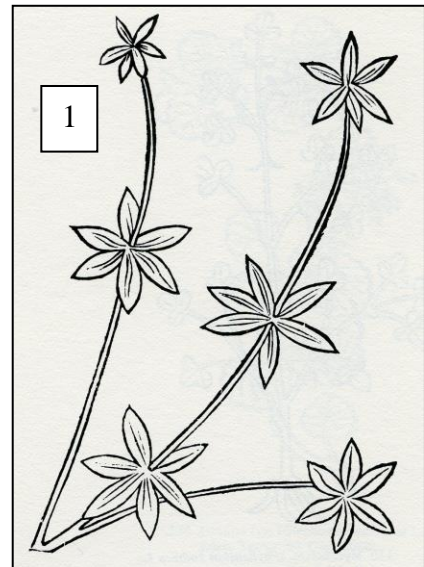
Medical:

“For obstructions of the spleen, jaundice, boils, and impetigo, as an emmenagogue, to relieve dryness of the tongue and mouth, and to prevent excessive sweating and hemorrhage. It cools, dries, and cleanses.” (1)

“The Woodruffe is accounted nourishing and restorative, and good for weakly consumptive people; it opens obstructions of the liver and spleen, and is said to be a provocative to venery.” (2)

“It is good for healing all sicknesses that come from heat,” states the Hortus sanitatis, and “the drops of dew lie a long time on this herb.” (3)

“The fresh leaves, bruised and applied to cuts and wounds, were said to have a healing effect, and formerly a strong decoction of the fresh herb was used as a cordial and stomachic. It is also said to be useful for removing biliary obstructions of the liver.” (4)



Culinary: “In Germany sprigs of woodruff are steeped in Rhine wine to make a delicious drink called *Maibowle*.” (5)

Household: “A fixative in the perfume industry and an aromatic in liquors and in pharmacy. Also used to keep insects away from linen, it was once used as a mattress stuffing.” (6)

“Sweet woodruff, when dried, has a scent like new-mown hay. It was used for strewing on floors, perfuming clothes in chests, and making garlands for churches on feast days. The dried herb is still used to perfume linens and is said to keep away moths.” (7)

“The flowers are of a very sweet smell as is the rest of the herb, which, being made up into garlands or bundles, and hanged up in housed in the heat of summer, doth very well attemper the air, cool and make fresh the place, to the delight and comfort of such as are



Young plant- can be expected to grow much bushier given good growing conditions

therein. It is reported to be put into wine, to make a man merry and to be good for the heart and liver, It prevaieth in wounds, as Cruciata and other vulnerary herbs do. (8)

Folklore/Astrology: “It is cold and dry in the first degree.” (9)

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Whole plant.

Medicinal: “Internally for thrombophlebitis, varicose veins, biliary obstruction, hepatitis, jaundice, and insomnia in

children. Used in homeopathy for inflammation of the uterus.” (10)

Culinary: Sprigs are soaked in white wine to make *Maitrank* or *Maibowle* (Alsace), and added to fruit cups.

Economic: Dried herb is an ingredient of potpourris.

Area of Origin: Native to Europe, North Africa, and Russia.

Physical description: Perennial with four sided stem. Leaves proceed upward in a whorl.

Plant type: Perennial

Form: Ground cover.

Height: To 18 inches

Flower color: White

Flowering period: Late spring.

Soil type/requirements: Moist, well-drained, neutral to alkaline soil.

Hardiness zone: USDA zone 3-9

Sun requirements: Shade

Propagation: By seed sown when ripe; by division in autumn or early spring.



Close-up of the leaf

Sources

- 1. Anderson, pg. 133
- 2. Culpeper, pg. 201

3. Freeman, pg. 43
4. Grieve, pg. 853
5. Freeman, pg. 43
6. Anderson, pg. 133
7. Freeman, pg. 43
8. Gerard, pg. 1124
9. Anderson, pg. 133
10. Bown, pg. 219

Illustrations/Images:

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| 1. Schoffer's Herbal | 1485 |
| 2. PSUMG | 2013 |
| 3. PSUMG | 2013 |

Last revised: August 2013