

Common Name: **Lovage**

Genus: *Levisticum*

Species: *officinale*

Family: Apiaceae

AKA: *Ligusticum levisticum*, Old English Lovage, Italian Lovage, Love Parsley

Historical Uses:

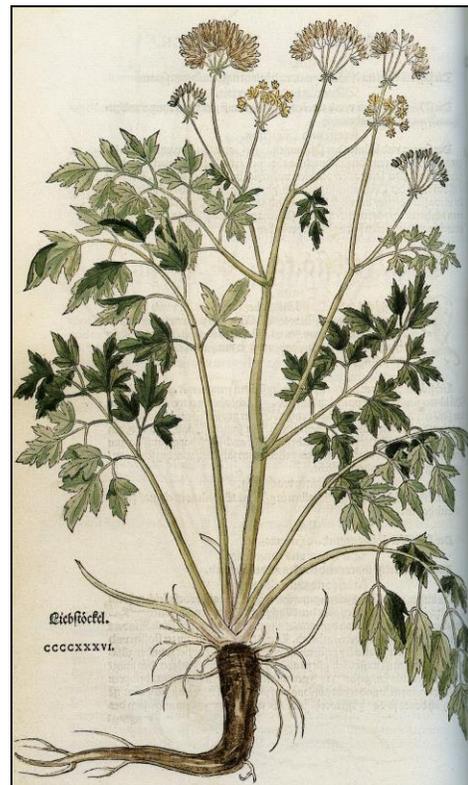


Medical: “If eaten raw, it breaks down a person’s nature and makes it worse. And if someone eats it cooked and alone without any other condiments, it makes them heavy and lethargic in mind and body. If it is, however, cooked and eaten with other condiments, then it does not do much harm. Let whoever suffers pain in the glands in the neck so the neck veins are inflamed take lovage, a little ground ivy, and cook these in water. Pour off the water and place it warm around the neck and swollen veins: the person will be cured.”(1)

“If Saturn offend the throat this is your cure. It openeth, cureth and digesteth humours, and mightily provoketh women’s courses and urine. Half a drachmat a time of dried root in powder, taken in wine, doth wonderfully warm a cold stomach, helpeth digestion, and consumeth all raw and superfluous moisture therein; easeth all inward gripings and pains, dissolveth wind, and resisteth poison and infection.(2)

The roots of lovage are good for all inward diseades, driving away ventosities or windiness, especially of the stomache. The seed thereof warmeth the stomach, helpeth digestion, wherefore the people of Genes in times past did use it in their meates, as we doe pepper, according to the testimony of *Ant. Musa*. The distilled water of lovage cleareth away the sight, and putteth away spots, lentils, freckles, and rednesse of the face, if they be washed therewith.”(3)

Culinary: The leaves and stems from lovage have been used for soup and stew ingredients and the stalks have been blanched as a vegetable since early times. It is similar to Angelica in that the young stems were used for flavoring and confectionary. It was used as a drug plant in the 14th century, its medicinal reputation mainly coming from its pleasing odor.(4)





Folklore/Astrology: Warm and dry in the second degree. Under the domain of the Sun under the sign of Taurus.

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Roots, leaves, seeds, young stems. “Leaves are picked before flowering and distilled for oil or dried for infusions. Stems are cut in spring when tender and succulent. Roots are lifted in the third year and used fresh or dried for decoctions, liquid extracts, tinctures and oil distillation.”(5)

Medicinal: “A bitter-sweet, sedative herb, pungently aromatic, that benefits the digestion, relaxes spasms, increases perspiration, and acts as a diuretic and expectorant. Lovage is used internally for indigestion, colic, gas, poor appetite, kidney stones, cystitis, painful menstruation, and slow labor. It is used externally for sore throat and ulcers.”(6)

Culinary: “The young shoots and leaf stalks of lovage are blanched and eaten as a vegetable. Seeds are also added to soups,

bread, and biscuits. Leaves are added to soups, salads, and savory dishes, and dried leaves are made into tea.”(7)

Economic: Oil is commercially used in food flavoring, alcoholic drinks, and in perfumery.(8)

Cautions: It is easy to mistake lovage for other members of the carrot family which are poisonous such as water hemlock, poison hemlock, and fool’s parsley.

Area of Origin: Mediterranean region, southeastern Europe

Physical description: Large, upright, multi-stemmed plant with large fleshy roots, and hollow stems.

Plant type: Perennial

Height: 5ft-6ft

Flower color: Yellowish green

Flowering period: Summer

Soil requirements: Moist, deep rich soil

Hardiness zone: 5-8

Sun requirements: Sun or partial shade

Propagation: Lovage is usually sown by seed in Autumn; and is propagated by division in Spring.

Sources:

1. Von Bingen, p. 128-129
2. Culpeper, p. 86

3. Gerard, p. 1007-1008
4. Grieve, p. 499-500
5. Bown, p. 259
6. Ibid
7. Ibid
8. Ibid

Illustrations:

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| 1. Fuch's Herbal | 1543 |
| 2. PSUMG | 2005 |