

Common Name: **Ribwort**

Genus: *Plantago*

Species: *lanceolata*

Family: Plantaginaceae

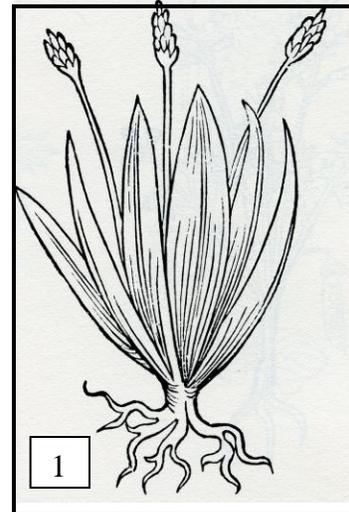
AKA: Lesser Plantain, Small Plantain, Dogs Rib, Snake Plantain, Ribble Grass, Black Jack, Jackstraw, Lamb's Tongue, Hen Plant, Kemps, Wendles, Cocks



Historical Uses:

Medical: “Repels purulence and bleeding and cures bleeding gums; mixed with wine, it is placed on serpent bites. It also stops dysentery and stomach trouble and heals wounds of the eye or nose if laid upon them for nine days. Drinking the juice kills worms. The seeds, if made into an application with grease, do away with hard malignancies of the body, ease gout, painful sinews, and all swellings. Drinking the juice in water greatly aids victims of malaria and cleanses fistulas, and the leaves and roots end all bladder problems, and reduce hemorrhoids. The roots are chewed for all dental problems.” (1)

“Good for ulcers, stayeth bleeding, when drunken stoppeth the bloody flux. Root and seed, when boyled in white Wine and drunke, openeth the conduits or passages of the liver and kidnies. The Juyce dropped in the eyes doth coole the heat and inflammation thereof. The leaves are singular good to make a water to wash a sore throat or mouth, or privy parts of a man or woman.” (2)



Household: The coat of mucilage which covers the seeds, when broken down in hot water, was at one time used for stiffening some kinds of muslin and other woven fabrics.(3)

“Curtis, in his Flora Londonensis, says ‘The farmers in general consider this species as a favorite food of sheep and hence it is frequently recommended in the laying down of meadow and pasture land, and the seed is for that purpose kept in shops.’ (4)



Close-up of the leaves

Folklore/Astrology: Cold and dry in the second degree. If hung around the neck it will clear out bladder stones. The plucked blossoms, placed within a girl’s bosom for an hour, foretold whether her sweetheart would marry her; they would re-blossom if he was so minded, but otherwise would not (5).

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: “Leaves, seeds.

Medicinal: “An astringent herb that is a diuretic, expectorant, and anti-mucus, promotes healing, controls bleeding, and is effective against bacterial infections. Used internally for diarrhea, hemorrhage, hemorrhoids, cystitis, bronchitis, mucus, sinusitis, asthma, hay fever, ear infections, dry cough gastritis, gastric ulcers, and

irritable bowel syndrome. Externally used for wounds, bruises, insect bites, ulcers, eye inflammations, shingles, hemorrhoids, and varicose ulcers.” (6)

Culinary: Leaves and seeds are edible. Younger leaves are preferred with veins and midrib removed. Seeds are eatable, dried leaves can be made into a tea. (7)

Area of Origin: Europe through temperate Asia.

Physical description: Dark green, slender perennial with a basal rosette of long stalked, ovate leaves. Leaf blades narrow, many times not over one inch.

Plant type: Perennial

Form: Upright flower stalks, arching, narrow leaves.

Height: 12”-24”

Flower color: Minute white-yellow-green flowers

Flowering period:

Soil type/requirements: Moist soil

Hardiness zone: USDA 3-9

Sun requirements: Full to part sun

Propagation: By seed in autumn or spring. Self-seeds freely.



Close-up of the seed head

Sources:

1. Anderson, p. 241-242

2. Gerard, p. 422
3. Grieve, p. 644
4. Ibid
5. Anderson, p. 241-242
6. Bown, p.329
7. Ibid

Illustrations:

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| 1. Schoffer Herbal | 1485 ed. |
| 2. PSUMG | 2012 |
| 3. PSUMG | 2012 |
| 4. PSUMG | 2012 |