

Common Name: **Barley**

Genus: *Hordeum*

Species: *vulgare*

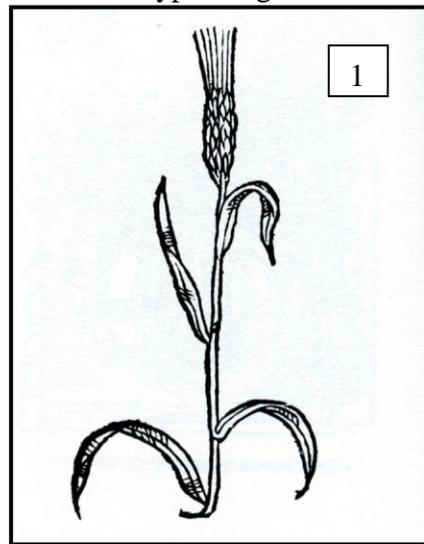
Family: Poaceae

AKA: Pearl Barley, Perlatum



Historical Uses:

Medical: “Barley [bordeum] is cold, so that it is colder and weaker than the previously mentioned grains. If it is eaten either in bread or in cereal, it harms both the healthy and the sick because it does not have the same strengths as certain other types of grains. But let the sick who are already weak in their whole body boil barley vigorously in water. And let them pour that water into a tub and then be placed in the tub. Let them do this often until they are healthy. They will heal the flesh of their body and will return them to health. And let whoever is so seriously ill that they are not able to eat bread, take barley and oats in equal parts, add a little fennel and cook these in water. Afterwards let this person strain this liquid through a piece of cloth then drink it as juice in the same proportion as if they had eaten bread. Let them do this until they have recovered. But let whoever has hard and rough skin on his or her face, which is led easily into roughness by the wind, cook barley in water. Then let that person wash his or her face softly with that water strained through a piece of cloth and cooled moderately. The person’s skin will be smooth and soft, and will have a fine color. And if a person’s head is weak, let them



wash it often with this water and it will become healthy.” (1)

“With Quineces or vinegar it is good for podagricall infalmmations. Being sod with sharpe vinegar as a pultis made of barly meale, and applied warme, it doth cure leprosies. The meale having its juice extracted out with water, and sod with pitch and oyle, is good for the fluxes of the joints. But ye meale of them doth stop the bellie and assuage inflammatuions.”

(2)

“Barley meale boyled in an honied water with figges, taketh away inflammations: with Pitch, Robin, and Pigeons dung, it softneth and ripeneth hard swellings.

With Melilot and Poppy seeds it taketh away the paine in the sides: it is a remedy against windinesse in the guts, being applied with Lineseed, Foenugreeke, and Rue: with tarre, wax, oyle, and the urine of a yong boy, it doth digest, soften, and ripe hard swellings in the throat, called the Kings Evil. Boyled with wine, myrtles, the barke of the pomegranate, wilde peares, and the leaves of brambles, it stoppeth the laske.”(3)

“Barley, in all the parts and compositions thereof (except malt) is more cooling than wheat, and a little cleansing: and all the preparations thereof, as barley-water and other things, made thereof, do give a great nourishment to persons troubled with fevers, agues and heats in the stomach.” (4)

“Diuretic, it brings boils to a head, makes a plaster for gout, stops diarrhea, soothes the pain of abscesses, cleans ulcers and roughness of the skin, aids in scrofula and testicular tumors, relieves fevers and hot swellings, and makes an eyewash.” (5)



Culinary:

Kourmi (Fermented Barley Drink) “ And that which is called Curmi is made of Barly, which also they doe often use to drinke instead of wine, but it is a causer of the headach, and a breeder of ill humors, and an hurter of the sinews. There are like sorts of drinke made of wheate in Iberia Occidentails, and in Britanny. (6)

“Malt is produced from barley by a process of steeping and drying which develop a ferment ‘diatase’ needed for the production of alcoholic malt liquors.” (7)

“used in bread and cake” (8)

Folklore/Astrology: “coole and drye in the first degree” (9)

“It is a notable plant of Saturn: if you view it diligently its effects by sympathy and antipathy, you may easily perceive a reason of them: as also why barley bread is so unwholesome for melancholy people.” (10)

Cautions: “If it is eaten either in bread or in cereal, it harms both the healthy and the sick because it does not have the same strengths as certain other types of grains.” (11)

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Seeds, seedlings

Medicinal: A sweet, warming herb that soothes irritated tissues, stimulates appetite, improves digestion, and suppresses lactation. Internally for indigestion, *Candida albicans* infection, and in the management of diabetes. Also for excessive lactation, hepatitis, abdominal bloating; coughs; weak digestion; poor appetite and digestion during convalescence.” (12)

Culinary: “Barley flour is a staple food” “Pearl barley is cooked in soups and stews, and infused with lemon or orange as barley water.” (13)

Economic: “Source of maltose, used as a natural sweetener.” “for brewing beer, distilling whisky, and making malt extracts; also roasted as an ingredient of grain coffees” “Flaked barley is an ingredient of breakfast cereals” “Seedlings are juiced for food supplements. Malted barley flour is used in baked products.” (14)

“Animal fodder” (15)

Cautions: “Not given to nursing mothers.” (16)

Area of Origin: Northeast Africa

Physical description: Annual grass with pale green, linear leaves

Plant type: Annual

Height: 20-36”

Flowering period: Summer

Soil type/requirements: Well drained

Ph: acid, neutral, alkaline

Hardiness zone: USDA 4-8

Sun requirements: Full sun

Propagation: By seed sown in autumn or spring

Sources

1. Von Bingen, p. 8
2. Discorides, p. 128
3. Gerard, p. 70-72
4. Culpepper, p. 15
5. Anderson, p. 147
6. Discorides, p. 128
7. Grieve, p. 84-5
8. Anderson, p. 147
9. Gerard, p. 71
10. Culpepper, p.15
11. Von Bingen, p. 7-8
12. Bown, p. 236-7

13. Ibid
14. Ibid
15. Anderson, p. 147
16. Bown, p. 236-7

Illustrations/Images:

1. Arndes Herbal 1492
2. <http://gogreen.net.nz/articles/barley-grass-and-its-many-health-benefits/>
3. Kevin Murphey, Washington State , <http://css.wsu.edu/people/faculty/kevin-murphy/>