

GOLDENROD



***Solidago* spp (*virgaurea*)**
[so-li-DAY-go virg-AW-ree-uh]

Family: Compositae

Names: Aaron's Rod, blue mountain tea, Golden Wings, Woundwort; Verge d'or, Herbe des juifs (French); Echte Goldrute, Goldrute (German); Verga d'oro, Verga aurea, Erba giudaica (Italian); Nawloc Pospolita (Goldenrod)

Description: Variable perennial with a knotted rhizome, upright stems, and oblanceolate, finely toothed, pointed leaves. Yellow flowers are borne in late summer, followed by brown fruits with a tuft of short, white hairs. Reaches a height of 32". Native to Europe and Asia and naturalized in North America.

Cultivation: Prefers well-drained, moisture-retentive soil in sun or partial shade. Propagate by seed sown in spring, or by division in autumn or spring. Leaves may be damaged by

caterpillars and powdery mildew. The flowers attract many different beneficial insects, such as lacewings and ladybugs, which are effective in controlling pests, especially aphids. The leaves and flowering tops are picked before flowers are fully open and dried for use in infusions, liquid extracts, ointments, powders and tinctures. Pick fresh each year as it loses its diuretic quality after a year of storage.

History: *Solidago* is from the Latin *solidare*, "to join," or "to make whole" and refers to the healing powers of these plants. The ancient Germans considered goldenrod to be the best wound herb and before engaging in battle, gathered goldenrod as a precaution. Herbal later called it "Pagan Woundherb" followed by St. Peter's Staff Herb. In Germany today it is commonly called "fastening herb" because it fastens wounds together or "golden woundwort". Goldenrod is the state flower of Alabama, Kentucky and Nebraska. Sweet goldenrod (*Solidago odora*) is the State Herb of Delaware. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth, goldenrod powder was exported to London for its healing powers and was sold for as much as a half crown per pound. One superstition says that he who carries the plant will find treasure. Thus, the goldenrod is the symbol for treasure and good fortune.

On the origin of goldenrod, the following story is told. An ugly old woman walking in the woods was tired and foot sore. She asked the trees for a walking stick to help her, but all the trees refused her request. However, an old broken stick said to her, "I am old and ugly, but if I can help you please use me." As the old woman emerged from the woods, she turned into a lovely fairy, and turning to the stick, asked what it would like more than anything else in the world. Its

answer was simply to be loved by children everywhere. Turning it into a lovely flower and sprinkling gold dust over it, the fairy declared that children all over the world would always love the goldenrod.

Common names for the different species describe various physical traits of the plant: hairy goldenrod, blue-stemmed goldenrod, tall goldenrod, and stiff goldenrod.

In Europe during the 16th century, Arnaud de Villeneuve, an alchemist and physician, was the first to discuss the diuretic and vulnerary medicinal worth of goldenrod. North American Indians used it as an internal antidote to toxic alkaloids, and as a fomentation against rattlesnake bites, wounds and ulcers. Dr. Vogel used it as one of the main ingredients in his famous diuretic tincture. Daniele Laberge maintained that goldenrod is the most effective plant against allergies and that it restores the cellular integrity of all the mucous membranes.

The elixir made from goldenrod flowers reinforces a sense of self in harmony with the collective consciousness.

Language of flowers: precaution, encouragement

Chemical Constituents: saponins, rutin, diterpenes, phenolic glucosides, actylenes, cinnamates, flavonoids, tannins, hydroxybenzoates, and inulin. The saponins are antifungal.

Properties: a bitter, astringent, relaxant herb that stimulates the liver and kidneys, anti-inflammatory; expectorant; digestive; promotes healing; urinary antiseptic

Medicinal Uses: Because it is antioxidant, diuretic and astringent, goldenrod is a valuable remedy for urinary tract disorders. It is used both for serious ailments such as nephritis and for more common problems like cystitis. It reputedly helps flush out kidney and bladder stones. The diuretic effect is very helpful for cases of colon bacilli. The saponins act specifically against the *Candida* fungus, the cause of yeast infections and oral thrush.

Internally also used for chronic excess mucus, skin diseases, influenza, whooping cough, and flatulent dyspepsia associated with nervous tension. It is the first plant to think of for upper respiratory catarrh, whether acute or chronic. Externally used for wounds, insect bites, ulcers and sore throat. Due to its mild action, goldenrod is appropriate for treating gastroenteritis in children. It may be used as a mouthwash or douche for yeast infections. As a gargle it can be used in laryngitis and pharyngitis. Combines well with marsh cudweed (*Gnaphalium uliginosum*), Echinacea, Poke Root and Wild Indigo. A cold extract is more effective than an infusion made with boiling water. A daily dose is two to three cups. The alcohol extract from the herb contains many constituents considered by some to be more effective than the tea.

In an herbal tea, or a decoction, the flowery top of the goldenrod is recommended for treating seasonal allergies of the pulmonary mucous membranes, and for treating chronic intestinal problems (1 tsp flower in 1 cup water). In the case of ulcerous colitis: 1 average plant to 2 cups boiled water. This is also an effective parasiticide against pathogenic yeasts.

Dosage: Pour a cup of boiling water onto 2-3 tsp of the dried herb and leave to infuse for 10-15 minutes. Drink 3 times a day. Or take 2-4ml of the tincture 3 times a day

Tea Blend for Bladder Infection:

15 grams goldenrod herb, 15 grams rosemary leaves, 15 grams rosehips, 10 grams white willow bark, 10 grams nasturtium flowers, 10 grams blue cohosh herb, 5 grams boldu leaves, 5 grams short buchu leaves, 5 grams Echinacea root. Combine the herbs and store them in a tightly lidded container. To prepare tea, pour 2 cups boiling water over 1 Tbsp herb mixture. Let it steep for 5 minutes before straining it. Drink several cups daily.

Topical Sunburn Relief

1 tsp coneflower root
1 tsp goldenrod leaves

1 tsp Echinacea root

1 cup boiling water

Combine the above herbs in a nonmetallic container and cover with the boiling water. Steep for 30 minutes; cool and strain. Apply as a wash, as needed.

Veterinary Medicine: Goldenrod is also used to treat kidney diseases in animals. The tea or herb is added to the affected animal's fodder.

Homeopathic Medicine: Tincture of *Solidago Virga aurea* is prepared from the fresh flowers. Used for albuminuria, calculus, croup, deafness, dysuria, eruptions, gout, leucorrhoea, ophthalmia, phosphaturia, enlarged prostate, rheumatism, sciatica, scrofula, suppressed urine

Flower Essence: *S. californica* is used for the flower essence. Useful for those easily influenced by group or family ties, an inability to be true to oneself, subject to peer pressure or social expectations. Goldenrod essence helps such persons to find a true relationship to the Higher Self. It encourages a vertical or individuated axis to counter balance the overly broad, horizontal social axis, which influences the personality too strongly. In this way the soul acquires greater strength and inner conviction, learning to successfully balance the polarities of Self and Other.

Cosmetic Uses:

Hair Rinse: A handful of fresh flowers infused in 1 pint of boiling water and used as a rinse, will impart a golden sheen to fair hair and improve its texture.

Ritual Uses: An herb of prosperity

Other Uses:

Dye: 1 pot goldenrod flowers, 1 lb alum-mordanted wool, 4 gal water. Boil the goldenrod, which is covered in water, for an hour. Strain out the plant material and add enough water to make up the 4 gallons. Enter the wet alum-mordanted wool and simmer for a half-hour to 1 hour until you get the color you

like. Cool and rinse until the water runs clear. Color is a strong yellow...with chrome: gold.

Goldenrods contain small quantities of rubber, which can be increased with selective hybridization. This has been the subject of extensive research to determine whether it would be economically worthwhile to grow the goldenrod for its rubber content.

Toxicity: Some sensitive people are allergic to its pollen. Avoid consuming goldenrod if this is the case.

Culinary Uses: Goldenrod greens are a traditional potherb. Add to summer soups. To thicken autumn stews, add goldenrod seeds. For a pleasant brew for camp or home, steep the flowers and/or leaves and sweeten, if desired with honey. The flowers add a colorful touch to herbal tea blends. Blossoms can also be added to pancake and fritter batters and bread and biscuit doughs.

Recipes:

Golden Crepes

¾ cup flour

1/3 cup chopped goldenrod flowers

1 cup milk

2 eggs, beaten

1 tsp butter, melted

oil to grease griddle or crepe pan.

In large bowl, blend flour and goldenrod flowers. In small bowl, combine milk, eggs, and butter. Add egg mixture to the flour mixture and stir until smooth. Batter will be thin. Oil crepe pan lightly and set on medium heat. Pour 3 tablespoons batter onto the greased pan and tilt to spread batter evenly. When golden brown, turn the crepe and brown its other side. Place in warm oven to keep hot until all crepes are cooked. Serve topped with maple syrup, jam, or butter, or fill with fish or seafood as a supper dish. (Discovering Wild Plants)

Goldenrod-Honey Bread

6 cups whole-wheat flour

6 cups white flour

1 cup goldenrod flowers

1 tablespoon salt
1-3/4 cups instant dry milk
2 tablespoons yeast
Mix all the above together
3 cups warm water
3/4 cup raw honey (dissolve completely in the water)
2 eggs, lightly beaten

Mix the wet ingredients together. Now add the wet mixture to the dry mixture and blend with a wooden spoon. This dough should be stirred a little every 15 minutes or so for an hour. Now knead the bread until it becomes elastic. Form two large loaves and allow them to rise for an hour. Bake them at 400 degrees for ten minutes. Reduce the heat right away to 350 degrees and bake for 30-35 minutes longer. Serve warm with Honey Butter

Honey Butter:

1 cup sweet butter
1/2 cup raw honey

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Resources:

Companion Plants, www.companionplants.com
plants
Crimson Sage, <http://www.crimson-sage.com>
Plants
The Rosemary House, www.therosemaryhouse.com
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