



Early Summer Foraging

As the Pagan festival of Beltaine passes us at the end of April we start to tip out of Spring and into early Summer. We are greeted with many of our wild plants producing beautiful flowers all around us, the air starts to fill with the buzzing of insects and we start to enjoy the season's lush vegetation. This is a great time to go foraging for foods and medicines and below are a few of the seasons highlights that are common and abundant as we enjoy these lighter and brighter months.

Eight Great Early Summer Herbs To Forage

Comfrey *Symphytum officinale* Boraginaceae

Parts Used: Leaves & Flowering Tops

Herbal Actions: Vulnerary, Demulcent, Anti-Inflammatory, Astringent, Expectorant, Emollient

Uses: Comfrey has a longstanding reputation for its tissue healing and anti-inflammatory effects on broken and fractured bones, arthritis, inflamed joints, cuts and wounds. It is also mucilaginous and soothing so excellent for healing irritated gut and respiratory tracts.



Meadowsweet *Filipendula ulmaria* Rosaceae

Parts Used: Aerial parts – leaves & flowers

Herbal Actions: Anti-Inflammatory, Analgesic, Diuretic, Antacid, Astringent, Anti-Rheumatic

Uses: Primarily a digestive herb for soothing and protecting mucous membranes and reducing excess acid. Excellent for heartburn, indigestion, gastritis and peptic ulcers. It contains aspirin like compounds and so is also gently anti-

inflammatory, pain relieving and can reduce fevers. Used traditionally for aches & pains, rheumatism, sprains and bruising.

Elderflower *Sambucus nigra* Caprifoliaceae

Parts Used: Flowers in summer, later berries

Herbal Actions: Diaphoretic, Anti-Catarrhal, Nervine, Diuretic, Alterative

Uses: Elderflowers are ideal for treating colds & flu, and also any catarrhal problems in the upper respiratory tract such as hay fever and sinusitis. The flowers 'open all the tubes of the body' and encourage sweating so also have an Alterative, cleansing action.





Daisy

Bellis perennis

Asteraceae

Parts used: Flower heads

Herbal Actions: Vulnerary, Expectorant, Astringent

Uses: Daisy's old name was Bruisewort, referring to its ability to heal bruises and tissue damage. It can be used as a native substitute to the now endangered Arnica which is imported from the Alps. Also useful for coughs and catarrh, and all conditions which manifest in these forms. It can be used freely and safely.

Plantain

Plantago major, P.lanceolata

Plantaginaceae

Parts Used: Leaves

Herbal Actions: Astringent, Anti-inflammatory, Vulnerary, Demulent, Mucous membrane tonic

Uses: Strengthening & nourishing to the mucous membranes, & useful in conditions like sinusitis, ear infections, hay fever and catarrh. It is mucilaginous so helps to soothe and heal irritation. Externally, plantain is a primary herb for healing wounds and drawing out pus, splinters & dirt. It is a specific herb for bites & stings.



Hawthorn.

Crataegus spp.

Rosaceae

Parts Used: Leaf & Flower

Herbal Actions: Cardiac trophorestorative, Hypotensive, Coronary & Peripheral Vasodilator, Relaxant, Diuretic

Uses: Hawthorn is primarily a tonic for coronary disease, high blood pressure, arteriosclerosis and angina pectoris. It also lowers cholesterol. As well as gently moving heart function to normal, Hawthorn can also be used to calm the emotional heart, helping with anxiety and restlessness.

Sweet Cicely.

Myrrhis odorata.

Apiaceae

Parts Used: Aerial parts – leaves & flowers, later seeds & root

Herbal Actions: Anti-Microbial, Carminative, Expectorant

Uses: All of the parts of Sweet Cicely have a delicate aniseed taste. As a herb Sweet Cicely is used as a carminative to expel wind, reduce spasm in the gut and support digestion. It can also be added to cough mixes.



Rose

Rosa canina

Rosaceae

Parts Used: Flowers gathered at midsummer, later Hips

Herbal Actions: Cooling Astringent, Nervine, Anti Inflammatory, Immuno-stimulant

Uses: Rose petals strengthen the nervous system helping in insomnia and lifting the mood. The petals also have a good anti-viral property and can support the immune system in infections. Externally rose water makes a fragrant skin toner to help with acne, spots & rashes.