

Bugleweed Herb Profile

Also known as

Lycopus virginicus, Gipsyweed, Sweet Bugle, Water Horehound, and Water Bugle, Green Wolf's Foot, and Wolfstrapp

Introduction

Not to be confused with Carpet bugle or common bugle (*Ajuga virginicus*), bugleweed is a marshland native to Europe and naturalized to the United States in the 17th century by colonists who grew it for its medicinal qualities. It bears clusters of white, bugle-like flowers where stems connect to leaves. It is of the *lamiaceae* family, but is often referred to as the "odorless mint". The botanical name *Lycopus* refers to the resemblance of the cut leaf to a wolf's paw, which also explains the plethora of common names in many languages referring to wolves. Traditionally it has been used for nosebleeds, heavy menstrual bleeding, coughs, as a sedative and as an astringent. Today many herbal practitioners use it to help relieve an over-active thyroid, including the symptoms associated with it including racing heart, shaking and tightness of breath.

Constituents

Organic acids, lithospermic acid.

Parts Used

Dried leaves and flowers.

Typical Preparations

Teas, and less frequently, tinctures and encapsulations. Combined with growwell and/or lemon balm to treat thyroid disease.

Summary

Bugleweed is used in contemporary herbal medicine as a treatment for overactive thyroid (hyperthyroidism) and breast pain (mastodynia). The lithospermic acid in bugleweed is believed to decrease levels of certain hormones, especially the thyroid hormone thyroxine (T4). This compound also keeps antibodies from binding to and "burning out" cells in an overactive thyroid gland. By moderating estrogen levels, bugleweed relieves cyclic breast pain in women. Bugleweed has also been used for a great many years as a symptomatic treatment for Grave's disease.

Precautions

Don't use bugleweed as a substitute for medical care for hyperthyroidism and high doses may enlarge the thyroid. Its use while pregnant is not recommended.