

# Goat's Rue Herb Profile

## Also known as

Galega officinalis, Garden Rue, Devil's Shoestring, Virginia Pea, Cat Gut, French Lilac, French Honeysuckle, Italian Fitch, Pestilenzkraut.

## Introduction

Goat's rue is a wild legume used during the Middle Ages to treat plague. It is originally from Europe by way of Asia, but can now be found in most temperate regions around the world that have damp, sandy soil. Historically, Europeans used it to induce sweating to break fevers and to treat infections with parasitic worms and snakebite. Native Americans used it for several different reasons: as an aphrodisiac and to help with impotence in men, to "restore" health and beauty in women, and an herbal tea was made of the roots and given to children to make them grow up strong and muscular. Modern herbalists use it as an herbal tea to treat rheumatism, bladder problems, fever, hard coughs, irregular menstruations, and to increase the flow of breast milk. The famous herbalist Nicholas Culpepper stated that it was good as a soak for tired feet, and also, oddly enough, for cheese making. The plant has no odor unless a stem or leaf is bruised, causing the release of a stench, hence the name goat's rue.

## Constituents

Galgine (the anti-diabetic chemical in the plant), tannins, chromium.

## Parts Used

The above-ground parts of the plant, ground and chopped.

## Typical Preparations

Traditionally used as a tea, sometimes available in tea bags. May also be taken as a capsule or extract.

## Summary

Goat's rue derivatives have been associated with reductions in blood sugar levels, but more clinical studies are needed. It is also used cosmetically in hand and foot bath formulas.

## Precautions

The safety for pregnant or lactating mothers has not been clinically verified, but historical information tends to regard it as safe, and in fact it may be able to increase breast milk.