

MONTHLY MEDICINAL PLANTS



My medicinal plant for the month of July is Bugleweed, or *Lycopus uniflorus*. This plant is the Western species of the official Bugleweed, *Lycopus virginiana*, which grows in the East, but they can be used interchangeably. Another common name is Water Horehound.

Bugleweed is less common and known than the other plants that I have written about so far, but I have seen it growing at several different locations on the island, and as a mint family plant it is not disturbed by sheep or deer. Look along the edges of streams, swamps and marshes and you may find it, standing up to 1.5 foot tall with serrated leaves and small white flowers, and the characteristic square stem of a mint.

To harvest, cut the top part of the stalk where the leaves look freshest, leaving the roots intact to come back next year. The leaves and top part of the stalk can be dried for tea or tinctured, the tincture is generally more effective.

Bugleweed is a bitter, non-aromatic mint with similarities to Skullcap and Motherwort. It is a relaxing nervine, helpful for insomnia and anxiety without being overly sedating. For insomnia it is especially indicated for those with alertness and nervous fear. It can be very helpful for panic attacks, a full gulpful of the tincture can be taken, or it can be taken in smaller doses as a regular tonic for anxiety.

Bugleweed is one of the few herbs that can help lower thyroid levels in cases of hyperthyroidism (high thyroid levels) and is especially useful for anxiety and nervousness associated with thyroid spikes. It can also be taken in pregnancy to lower thyroid levels associated with pre-eclampsia.

Bugleweed is helpful for some hot flashes, a teaspoon of the tincture can be taken before bed, or taken as needed.

Bugleweed (like Motherwort) is also a heart medicine, useful for rapid pulse, hypertension and palpitations. It will slow the pulse and give more

strength to each beat. It will also slow rapid pulse associated with fevers.

Bugleweed is a hemostatic, meaning that it can help stop bleeding, especially from internal organs such as the lungs, intestines and urinary tract. It can slow nose bleeds and excessive menstrual bleeding as well. It was a common treatment in the past for tuberculosis to help stop bleeding from the lungs. For bleeding, it should be taken in small frequent doses, about every 10 minutes, until the bleeding stops.

Bugleweed is also used for chronic dry coughs, as well as for asthma, especially for asthma associated with anxiety and heart palpitations.

Last but not least, as a bitter herb, Bugleweed is a good digestive tonic for a nervous stomach. As it lowers thyroid levels, Bugleweed is contraindicated for people who are hypothyroid (low thyroid). Bugleweed has become one of my personal favorite medicinal plants, especially this time of year when the intensity of a busy life makes it hard to stop and relax.

If you have any questions you can contact me at: hydrax23@gmail.com.

Thanks for reading, Jessica Slavik, Clinical Herbalist