

## *Celandine, Greater*

Below is from <http://botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/c/celgre43.html>

From *A Modern Herbal*, published in 1931, by Sophia Emma Magdalene (Maud Grieve)

Edited by Mrs. Hilda Lye. Mrs. Lye added American herbs to Mrs. Grieve's monographs and checked and edited the whole work.

### **Celandine, Greater**

Botanical: *Chelidonium majus* (LINN.) Family: N.O. Papaveraceae



- Description
- History
- Part Used
- Constituents
- Medicinal Action and Uses

---Synonyms---Common Celandine. Garden Celandine.

---Part Used---Herb.

---Habitat---Found by old walls, on waste ground and in hedges, nearly always in the neighborhood of human habitations.

### **Description**

At first glance, the four petals arranged in the form of a cross make it appear a member of the order *Cruciferae*, but it is not related to these plants, belonging to the same family as the Poppies (*Papaveraceae*) and has, like these flowers, a dense mass of stamens in the centre of its blossoms.

The Celandine is a herbaceous perennial. The root is thick and fleshy. The stem, which is slender, round and slightly hairy, grows from 1 1/2 to 3 feet high and is much branched; at the points where the branches are given off, it is swollen and jointed and breaks very easily.

The whole plant abounds in a bright, orange-colored juice, which is emitted freely wherever the stems or leaves are broken. This juice stains the hands strongly and has a persistent and nauseous taste and a strong, disagreeable smell. It is acrid and a powerful irritant.

The yellowish-green leaves, which are much paler, almost grayish below, are very thin in texture, drooping immediately on gathering. They are graceful in form and slightly hairy, 6 to 12 inches long, 2 to 3 inches wide, deeply divided as far as the central rib, so as to form usually two pairs of leaflets, placed opposite to one another, with a large terminal leaflet. The margins (i.e. edges) of the leaflets are cut into by rounded teeth.

The flowers drop very quickly when picked. They are arranged at the ends of the stems in loose umbels. They blossom throughout the summer, being succeeded by narrow, long pods, containing blackish seeds.

## Celandine Leaf - More Detailed Info

### History

This plant is undoubtedly the true Celandine, having nothing in common with the Lesser Celandine except the color of its flowers. It was a drug plant in the Middle Ages and is mentioned by Pliny, to whom we owe the tradition that it is called Chelidonium from the Greek *chelidon* (a swallow), because it comes into flower when the swallows arrive and fades at their departure. (The English name Celandine is merely a corruption of the Greek word.) Its acrid juice has been employed successfully in removing films from the cornea of the eye, a property which Pliny tells us was discovered by swallows, this being a double reason why the plant should be named after these birds.

Gerard says:

'the juice of the herb is good to sharpen the sight, for it cleanseth and consumeth away slimie things that cleave about the ball of the eye and hinder the sight and especially being boiled with honey in a brasen vessel, as Dioscorides teacheth.'

It is one of the twenty-four herbs mentioned in Mercer's *Herbal*.

In the fourteenth century, a drink made with Celandine was supposed to be good for the blood. Clusius, the celebrated Dutch botanist, considered that the juice, dropped into small green wounds, effected rapid cure, and when dropped into the eye would take away specks and stop incipient suffusions. The old alchemists held that it was good to 'superstifle the jaundice,' because of its intense yellow color.

### Parts Used

The whole herb, collected in the wild state, from May to July, when in flower, and dried. Likewise, the fresh juice.

### Constituents

The alkaloids Chelidonine and Chelerythrin, the latter narcotic and poisonous, also the two nearly allied alkaloids, Homochelidonine A, and Homochelidonine B. In addition, Protopine and Sanguinarine, and a body named Chelidoxanthin, a neutral bitter principle.

### Medicinal Action and Uses

Alterative, diuretic, purgative. It is used in jaundice, eczema, scrofulous diseases, etc., the infusion of 1 OZ. of the dried herb to a pint of boiling water being taken in wineglassful doses. The infusion is a cordial and greatly promotes perspiration. The addition of a few aniseeds in making a decoction of the herb in wine has been held to increase its efficacy in removing obstructions of the liver and gall.

A fluid extract is also prepared, the dose being 1/2 to 1 drachm. Eight to 10 drops of the tincture made from the whole herb, or of the fresh juice, given as a dose three times a day in sweetened water, is considered excellent for overcoming torpid conditions of the liver. In the treatment of the worst forms of scurvy it has been given with benefit.

The orange-coloured, acrid juice is commonly used fresh to cure warts, ringworm and corns, but should not be allowed to come into contact with any other part of the skin.

In milk, it is employed as an eye-lotion, to remove the white, opaque spots on the cornea. Mixed with sulphur, it was formerly used to cure the itch.

An ointment made of the roots and lard boiled together, also of the leaves and flowers, has been used with advantage for piles.

Celandine is a very popular medicine in Russia, where it is said to have proved effective in cases of cancer.

It is still used in Suffolk as a fomentation for toothache.

Below is from: <http://www.liveandfeel.com/medicinalplants/celandine.html>

In North America, celandine dates back to the year 1672 when it was used for treating warts. But the plant has a longer history; it has been used as a medicinal herb starting from ancient times. Long ago it was used by nomads as a perfume for feet, while today its purgative properties are considerably appreciated.

### **Description of Celandine plant**

**Celandine** (*Chelidonium majus*) is a herbaceous, perennial herb, found on plains but also in mountainous areas at maximum altitudes of 800 to 1000 meters. It grows on soft, sometimes even sandy soils, in shaded places in forests, bushes or gardens, while developing itself in a ramified fashion and reaching heights of 30-100 cm. Its flowers are yellow and they blossom in the period between May and fall. Its leaves are serrated, similar to oak leaves. All parts of the plant contain latex, a milky, yellowish-orange colored substance that has a bitter taste, which gets darker in color when being in contact with air. The plant is of European origin, (it was discovered near the Mediterranean region). Despite that, however, it has spread out easily to other areas of the world.

### **Properties and benefits of Celandine**

Celandine contains alkaloids like chelidonium, homo-chelidonium, oxy-chelidonium, methoxy-chelidonium, sanguinarine, coptisine, protopine, alocryptopine, in a percentage of about 0.2 - 0.5% depending on the part of the plant and on the time of harvesting. It also contains smaller quantities of baberine and sparteine, vitamin C (especially the leaves), resins, essential oils and mineral salts. Chelidonium and homo-chelidonium act in a similar way as morphine, sedative and narcotic on the superior nervous centers. At the same time, they also have a slight stimulating action upon respiration. Chelidonium is also responsible for anti-spastic action that the herb triggers. Sanguinarine from celandine has a stimulating effect on the medullary centers, and it even presents anti-tumoral effects of a colchicine type while the cheliritrine has the property to reduce the arterial pressure and to stimulate intestinal peristalsis and the contractions of the uterus. Apart from the described properties, celandine extracts have a remarkable antibiotic effect on many pathogenic germs. Other actions: calming, anti-septic and anti-spastic.

### **Treatments and mixtures**

Celandine is used successfully in treating severe hepatic illnesses, biliary and renal diseases (it eases liver and bile pains). Having a depurative property (of purifying blood), but also a property of detoxifying the liver, celandine is beneficial to metabolism. Externally, celandine is used to control skin diseases: treating skin tuberculosis, treating wounds, fistulas, psoriasis, warts or callosities. It is also efficient in cases of skin cancer and eczemas that are hard to treat. Celandine can be used as an adjuvant against baldness (alopecia), also having the property of fortifying the hair strands

When preparing the mixtures that are presented here, the use of the plant's more fragile branches and stems are recommended. These are to be harvested in their full blossoming period (the months of April and May) because that is when the plant contains the highest amount of active elements. It can be dried artificially at temperatures of 35-40 degrees Celsius or in the shade, stretched onto a thin layer and moved around once every three days.

### **Celandine infusion**

It is prepared by boiling a spoonful of grained herb in a cup of water. The infusion is recommended for treating hemorrhoids. In this purpose, two or three cups of tea are to be consumed every day in small drams.

### **Celandine syrup**

Is recommended in cases of hepatic afflictions. It is prepared by boiling a liter of water. After it starts bubbling slightly, five grams of dried celandine are added. The pot is covered with a lid and kept in a warm place over night, covered with pillows. The next day it is filtered and mixed with 200g of honey, until the honey dissolves completely. The resulting liquid is put into a bottle. This juice is administered ten times a day, a spoonful every hour. A wooden spoon is to be used. The syrup is well-known for the fact that it regenerates hepatic cells. The treatment should only be repeated after a pause of six months.

### **Celandine tincture**

It is a homeopathic remedy recommended for treating icterus, biliary dyskinesias, biliary calculosis, bladder atony, spleen and intestinal diseases. For controlling hysteria, insomnia or restlessness, it can be mixed with tincture of valerian or St. John's wort. Against warts, callosities, skin irritations, keratitis or skin cancer, a poultice will be applied on the affected area. In cases of uterine fibroids, the tincture poultice will be applied on the lower abdominal area.

### **Fresh celandine juice**

To obtain celandine juice, the stems, leaves and flowers have to be washed, then the liquid is squeezed out of them. It is only used externally. It is a good caustic against warts. The juice can be effective in cases of cataracts, cornea spots, or retinal bleedings. In this case, a moist celandine leaf is used from which the juice is squeezed out. The liquid is spread out toward the corner of the eye. The eyes are kept shut at this time. The same juice can be used for weak sight or overstressed eyes.

**Warning: Overdoses are not recommended since they can trigger toxic reactions.**