



Shepherd's Purse

Benefits and uses: Shepherd's Purse is used chiefly to control both internal and external bleeding. It is also thought to relieve urinary tract infection, excessive menstrual flow, diarrhea, hemorrhoids and varicose veins.

Information: Herbals/Nutritionals/Medicinals can be very strong, consequently, if each one is not tailored to your specific needs, then you can risk more harm than good. This information is meant to be used by your VHC Medical Team and personal Physician as they build your Total Health Plan. Never attempt to adjust your prescribed medications and/or Natural Treatments without your physician's and Medical Team's knowledge and guidance. Since herbals/nutritionals and medications can interact with each other, it is always advisable to consult with your health care provider and The Vibrant Health Community at www.VibrantHealthCommunity.com (or call 1-866-378-8253) before starting or changing your program.

Details

Shepherd's Purse is a hardy, self-pollinating annual, native to the Old World (probably Europe), introduced to the United States, and now growing profusely (sometimes regarded as a weed) in the fields, waste places and along roadsides of temperate areas throughout the world. The plant produces a stem that rises from a basal rosette of lobed leaves, with smaller, alternately-growing leaves farther up the stem and terminating in small white flowers that bloom throughout the year. Shepherd's Purse tolerates poor growing conditions in both sandy and loamy, well-drained soil in sun or partial shade and reaches a height of approximately eighteen inches. The heart-shaped seedpods apparently resemble the leather pouches once carried by shepherds, hence, the plant's name.

It is attached to the stalk by its pointed end, projecting erect, and the seeds emit a viscous compound when moistened. Aquatic insects stick to it and eventually die, making the plant borderline carnivorous. Shepherd's Purse has a long history. The herb was known to be a food as early as 595 B.C., as evidenced by excavations from Catal Huyuk, a large, Neolithic, urban cultural site in Turkey, and seeds were found in the stomach of the preserved "Tollund Man" (c. 500 B.C.- A.D. 400), who was discovered in a Danish bog. Early use of Shepherd's Purse in herbal medicine was confirmed and documented by the first-century Roman scholar and naturalist, Pliny (A.D. 223-279), who praised the seeds as an effective laxative. In the 1500s, the Italian physician, Pietro Mattioli, cited the herb to help stop excessive bleeding, a use that has remained to this day, and it is interesting to note that modern research has confirmed the plant's hemostatic properties. The esteemed seventeenth-century herbalist, Nicholas Culpeper, recommended the herb's medicinal qualities, saying, "few plants possess greater virtues than

this [Capsella]" and went on to prescribe it for bleeding from internal or external wounds; and during World War I, when there was a shortage of certain German drugs to control bleeding, British doctors used Shepherd's Purse extracts as a substitute. Shepherd's Purse has been employed for centuries in both Eastern and Western herbal medicine as an effective hemostat or blood coagulant (both internally and externally) that has been used to reduce or stop hemorrhage and bleeding from internal organs, particularly controlling profuse menstruation, postpartum and uterine bleeding, and blood in the urine. Shepherd's Purse is thought to be a very useful herb for gynecological conditions.

Used externally, Shepherd's Purse's styptic and coagulant properties have been used to reduce bleeding in wounds and to stanch nosebleed. Used topically, it is also thought to be a vaso-constrictor that is useful in alleviating varicose veins.

Shepherd's Purse is considered a diuretic with antiseptic properties that promotes the flow of urine, and as such, it helps to rid toxins from the body through the increased urine. The herb has been used to treat urinary tract infections, such as cystitis, abscess of the bladder, white mucous matter in the urine and also helps to flush uric acid and other matter (stones and gravel) from the kidneys. As an astringent, Shepherd's Purse is believed to be very helpful in treating diarrhea, hemorrhoids and dysentery.

Contraindications:

Shepherd's Purse should not be used during pregnancy, as it is a uterine stimulant. Those who take prescription kidney medications should not use this herb.

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