

CHICKWEED

(*Stellaria media*)

Clinical Summary

Actions

- Demulcent
- Anti-inflammatory
- Expectorant
- Antitussive
- Antirheumatic
- Topically:
 - Vulnerary
 - Emollient
 - Antipruritic

Indications

- Inflammatory disorders such as rheumatism, gout and as an adjunct to cancer treatment
- Digestive disorders - including diarrhoea, constipation, dyspepsia and ulcers
- Bronchial phlegm, bronchitis, dry coughs, sore throat
- Topically for eczema, psoriasis, rashes, burns, ulcers, abscess, itchy skin, inflammation of the eye, haemorrhoids and other pruritic skin conditions

Traditional Use

Considered a ubiquitous garden weed, chickweed has been historically used as a potage herb being favoured in soups and stews amongst peasants and nobles alike. It was often included in spring tonic remedies for its nutritive value. Chickweed water is an old wives' remedy for obesity however recent studies may be one step closer to scientifically proving this.

Energetics

Bitter, sweet, cooling.

Constituents

The major constituents are coumarins, genistein, triterpenoid saponins, gamma-linolenic-acid, flavonoids (mainly apigenin C-glycosides, rutin), phytosterols, hentriacontanol and lychnose. Chickweed also has a range of nutrients including most of the B complex (including thiamine, riboflavin and niacin), magnesium, oleic-acid, ascorbic-acid, carotenoids (including beta-carotene), calcium, iron, sodium, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, molybdenum and zinc.

Use in Pregnancy

Chickweed is generally considered safe in pregnancy when used in dietary amounts however safety is not known when used in larger quantities.

Contraindications and Cautions

Those with known contact hypersensitivities may need to be careful with topical use of chickweed due to the potential for allergic reactions.

Drug Interactions

None known.

Administration and Dosage

Liquid extract 1:1 in 25% alcohol
20 to 100mL weekly