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# Some Ethnically Important Herbaceous Plants of East-Central Illinois

John E. Jester

*Eastern Illinois University*

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SOME ETHNICALLY IMPORTANT HERBACEOUS

PLANTS OF EAST-CENTRAL ILLINOIS

(TITLE)

BY

JOHN E. JESTER

B. S. in Education, Eastern Illinois University, 1969

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

Master of Science in Botany

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CHARLESTON, ILLINOIS

1974

YEAR

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## INTRODUCTION AND HISTORY

Since prehistoric times, botany and man's survival went hand in hand. Plants were not only used for food, but became the primary source of medicines. As man became more sedentary, he domesticated more of the plants he used, thus his knowledge of and reliance on "wild" plants diminished.

In Europe prior to the 17th century, botany and medicine were highly integrated. Herbals were written by the people of medicine who applied these uses. The essence of a herbal was the combination of traditional plant lore, the medicinal properties of the herbs and their botanical classification. In the 17th century when the arts of botany and medicine became scientific, the botanical books ignored the medicinal properties of these plants and the medical books contained no plant lore. Today as modern science begins investigating for new medicines and new applications of old drugs, the old herbals and ethnobotanical literature have become sources for further clues and avenues of investigation.

It is the purpose of this paper to provide a historical summary of the uses of some of the herbaceous plants found in East-central Illinois; pertaining primarily to the ethnic groups that were once found in this area. This study discusses some of the more common ethnically important plants in the 5 county area including: Douglas, Edgar, Coles, Cumberland and Clark Counties. Data on the occurrences of these plants in this area were supplied by Dr. John Ebinger, Eastern Illinois University.

The literature of the prehistory of East-central Illinois is very scant. Archeologists agree that the Hopewell Indians were widespread in the Eastern United States from New York to Kansas and from Wisconsin to Louisiana. Ruins and remains of the Hopewellian cultures date this agrarian society between the years of 500 B.C. and 500 A.D. (Deuel 1958). Although there are no ruins or remains of the Hopewellian culture in East-central Illinois, it is not improbable that these people at least traveled through this area, as did countless other Indian tribes in their nomadic forays.

It was not until the arrival of the early French explorers that the locations of the various Indian tribes were known to the white man. According to most Indian histories there were no definite groups of Indians established in this area until around 1550, when the Illini (Illiniwek) or Illinois Indians made forays and began living for extended periods of time in this area.

At the time of Marquette and Joliet's voyage in 1673, the following tribes comprised the Illinois Confederacy: Kaskaskia, Cahokia, Michigamea, Peoria and Tamaroa (Deuel 1958). All spoke a dialect of the Algonkian language. The Illini came under French influence in 1673, and from then on relied heavily on them for military support in their wars with other Indian nations. They shifted their settlements frequently after being attacked by the Iroquois in 1680. Later, under repeated pressure by the Sauk, Fox, Kickapoo and Potawatomi, who invaded and occupied the northern part of Illini territory, their population dwindled.

The Piankeshaw and Miami Indians came into East-central Illinois in the late 1600's. About the same time the Potawatomi Indians moved south from Northern Illinois into Central Illinois. The Miami had villages in parts of Western Illinois in the late 1600's, and they eventually

moved eastward into Indiana. By the late 1700's the Kickapoo occupied much of the country drained by the Wabash River. The Kickapoo controlled and dominated the eastern part of Illinois which became known as the Illinois wilderness.

Throughout this time, the French fur traders and explorers had many contacts with the Indians. The Indians became an integral part of the European fur economy, being the primary suppliers in exchange for manufactured items.

At this time, Anglo-Saxon settlers were in the process of forming and expanding a republic of states along the east coast of the continent, and thereby forcing the aborigines westward. As new generations of white men expanded the "frontier"--which to the white man on this continent was endless--they did so at the expense of the red man, the North American Indian. The early settlers came through the easiest pass in the Appalachians, the Cumberland Gap, and into the area of Tennessee and Kentucky. From here some of these Anglo-Saxon settlers pushed on by the "right" of Manifest Destiny and eventually started settling up the rivers from St. Louis. By the early 1800's there were settlements along most navigable rivers in East-central Illinois.

The Sauk, Fox, Potawatomi and Kickapoo did not long enjoy their reign in Illinois. Immediately after the Black Hawk War in 1832, steps were taken to remove all Indians from Illinois. By the treaty of Chicago, the Indians were forced to give up their lands. The former residents of this state now live in reservations in Iowa, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and in the Santa Rosa Mountains in Eastern Chihuahua, Mexico.

The white settlers took over the area and, with the knowledge they brought with them and what they learned from the Indian, flourished.

This study encompasses not only the ethnic uses of some of the native plants of this area, but also those introduced by the early settlers, which have escaped from cultivation.

MAP - SHOWING THE FIVE COUNTY AREA



Indicates Douglas, Edgar, Coles, Cumberland and Clark Counties;  
the area where the plants in this study have been reported.

## DISCUSSION OF SPECIES

Family Apocynaceae--Dogbane Family

Apocynum androsaemifolium L.

Folknames:

Dogbane (Fernald et al. 1958), Milkweed, Honeybloom (Meyer 1972), Indian physic, Wandering milkweed, Spreading dogbane, Bitter-root (Carter 1888), American ipecac, Catchfly, Honeytrap, Silkweed, Choctaw root, Rheumatism weed (Coons 1963).

Description:

This plant grows 3 to 6 feet high, having a large perennial root. The leaves are dark green above, pale beneath, ovate, and about 2 to 3 inches long and an inch wide. The corolla is pink; calyx five-cleft; and stamens 5. The fruit is a follicle. Every part of the plant exudes milky juice. Native.

Comments:

Apocynum is from two Greek words meaning "dogbane" (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). Historically this plant has been used for making twine and rope, and medicine. The Indians of California have used this plant as a source of fiber for cordage (Coons 1963).

Medicinally, dogbane has been used as an emetic, a cathartic, a diuretic and a tonic. For medicinal use the rhizomes and roots are dried and powdered. The plant is poisonous and should be used with care. Fernald et al. (1958) report that the plants are sometimes held responsible for poisoning young cattle and sheep.



A large dose of the fresh or dried root is emetic and a heart stimulant (Lindley 1838). A medium dose in an infusion--1 tsp. of the powdered root in 1 pt. of boiling water, drunk cold 2-3 tbsp., 6 times a day--acts as a diaphoretic and diuretic with some laxative action (Meyer 1972). The roots or rhizomes are also expectorant and anthelmintic (Carter 1888). In a mild dose dogbane acts as a general tonic and alternative (Coons 1963).

Dogbane contains the glucoside apocynein, the toxic resin apocynin and several other toxic substances including cymarin (Tehon 1951).

#### Season of Availability:

The roots and rhizomes should be collected in the fall and dried for medicinal use.

#### Habitat:

Borders of woods, banks of streams; often occurring in large patches in open, cut-over woods and thickets (Tehon 1951).



Family Apocynaceae--Dogbane Family

Apocynum cannabinum L.

Folknames:

Dogbane, Indian hemp, Rheumatism weed, Indian physic (Coons 1963), American hemp, Choctaw root, Bowman's root, Hemp dogbane (Spencer 1940), Amy root (Tehon 1951).

Description:

Erect, about 3 feet high and exudes a milky juice when broken. The leaves are opposite, and attached to the main stem by short petioles. They are lanceolate with slightly obtuse ends, about 4 inches long; upper surface smooth, lower surface with silky hairs. The whitish flower clusters bloom in July. The seed pods are from 6 to 8 inches long and pointed toward the end. The root is from 5 to 6 feet long and about 1/2 inch thick. The fresh root emits a milky juice. Native.

Comments:

This plant has many of the same uses as A. androsaemifolium L. The species name of this is derived from a Greek word meaning hemp. Since the time of the early settlers who learned the uses of dogbane from the Indians, the root has been used as a diuretic, a diaphoretic, a cardiac stimulant, and an expectorant. It has been used to treat dropsy and as a heart-stimulating tonic (Coons 1963). This species should be used with caution since it is poisonous and violently emetic in large doses.

According to Meyer (1972), the medicine should be infused; 1 tsp. of the powdered, dried root to 1 pt. of boiling water. Take 1 tsp., 3-8 times a day.

Its constituents are similar to those of A. androsaemifolium L.: cymarín--a toxic substance, and apocynin which is a heart tonic (Grieve 1971).

Season of Availability:

The fleshy roots and rhizomes should be gathered in the fall and dried for medicinal use.

Habitat:

Dogbane is commonly found along streams on moist gravelly, or sandy flats (Tehon 1951).

Family Araceae--Arum Family

Acorus calamus L.

Folknames:

Sweet flag, Sweet or Sea sedge, Myrtle flag, Sweet myrtle, Calamus (Carter 1888), Sweet grass, Sweet cane, Sweet root, Sweet rush (Meyer 1972), Gladdon, Myrtle grass, Cinnamon sedge (Grieve 1971).

Description:

Perennial herb, resembling the blue flag, but may be distinguished by the aromatic taste of the corm and leaves. The flowers are perfect; perianth of 6 short segments; stamens 6, with linear filaments; ovary 2-3-celled. It grows from stout rhizomes, with linear, erect, elongate leaves, with the midvein usually off center. Native.

Comments:

There are many historical references to the healing properties of this plant. Calamus was an article of trade in the Near East over four thousand years ago. According to Gathercoal and Wirth (1936), the peeled dried rhizome of this plant was used as a drug in India in ancient times, and was also known to the Greeks and Romans. It was introduced into Europe during the 16th century.

The American Indians used this plant in many ways, indicating that it was believed to be a type of medical treatment for almost anything. The Teton Dakota Indian warriors chewed the rootstock to a paste which they rubbed on their faces to "prevent excitement and fear in the presence of the enemy." The young men of certain Missouri River Indians braided the aromatic green leaves into garlands which they wore around their necks (Gilmore 1919).

The dried foliage was at one time sold to churches for scattering over floors to provide a "saintly odor" (Coons 1963); or to cover up the odor of the congregation.

Many herbals give the medicinal uses of this plant and refer to it as a stomachic, a cough remedy, a carminative, a tonic, and relieving dysentery, headaches, vertigo and asthma. The raw root may be chewed as a stomachic since it will stop stomach rumbling (Coons 1963). "It is an aromatic which excites a warm sensation in the stomach, improves the appetite and aids in digestion" (Johnson 1884).

The rhizome has also been used to make a confection by boiling it in sugar. The candied rhizome has been used medicinally as a cough lozenge (Grieve 1971), and as a preventative during the middle ages in Europe at times of prevalence of epidemic diseases (Lindley 1838). It is also eaten as a nibble. The rootstock was used by certain Missouri River Indians as a cough remedy and as a remedy for toothache (Gilmore 1919). Grieve (1971) states that the powdered root is a vermifuge, insecticide, and has been used to destroy white ants.

This panacea has also been used as an ingredient in tonics and purgatives, and as a flavoring agent in other medicines.

An infusion for medicinal purposes should be prepared by adding 1 oz. of the dried, powdered rhizome to one pint of boiling water. This should be drunk cold as needed (Lindley 1838). An average dose of the dried root is 3 g. (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

Aside from its medicinal uses, calamus has been employed in perfumes and in wine as bitters (Lindley 1838). As a food, this plant has been used as a seasoning and as a substitute for cinnamon, nutmeg, or ginger (Grieve 1971). The young shoots, or the inner portion of the young shoots, may be used as a salad herb.

The rootstock and rhizomes contain a volatile oil and a bitter principle called acorin (Tehon 1951).

**Season of Availability:**

The root and rhizomes to be used medicinally should be collected in early spring or late fall, split longitudinally, and if large, peeled before drying. For use as a salad herb, collect the young shoots in the spring as they become available.

**Habitat:**

*Calamus* grows in swampy or stream edge spots (Coons 1963). It is not abundant in Illinois, being restricted to localized areas along streams, pond margins, and inundated meadows (Tehon 1951).

Family Araceae--Arum Family

Arisaema triphyllum (L.) Schott

Folknames:

Jack-in-the-pulpit, Indian turnip (Fernald et al. 1958), Dragon-arum, Bod onion, Wild turnip (Carter 1888), Cuckoo plant (Coons 1963).

Description:

The plant has a round flattened perennial rhizome. There are 1-2 leaves with 3 leaflets. The leaflets are oval, mostly entire, acuminate, smooth and paler on the under side. The peduncle is 1/2 to 6 inches; spathe convolute below, expanded above and arched over the spadix. The corm is very acrid. Native.

Comments:

Historically, this plant has been used for food and medicine by many ethnic groups. According to Gilmore (1919), certain Missouri River Indians used the powdered rhizome of this plant as a counter-irritant treatment for headaches and rheumatism. Gilmore (1919) also states that the seeds of Indian turnip were used by the Pawnee Indians for filling gourd rattles.

Other medicinal uses included in most herbals are: expectorant, irritant, diaphoretic, and carminative. According to Johnson (1884), the pulverized corm was used externally to treat skin infections and ulcers. Coons (1963) states that the powdered fresh roots and corms are used for sore throat and that the corms are grated and boiled in milk to provide a medicine for coughs and pulmonary consumption.

The corms were used by many American Indian tribes for food. According to Gillespie (1951) the corms are best prepared for eating by cutting them in small pieces and drying to remove their pepperiness.

Roasting will also diminish the irritating qualities of this corm, which can then be rendered into flour for bread or biscuits.

Indian turnip contains a volatile oil, an acrid principle, possibly an alkaloid, and calcium oxalate crystals (Tehon 1951).

#### Season of Availability:

For medicinal use, the roots and corms should be collected during the early spring or late fall when the plant is dormant (Fernald et al. 1958). Corms to be used for food should be collected in the summer or autumn and dried or roasted (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

It is common to abundant throughout Illinois in open or dense, rich, low woods, chiefly near streams (Tehon 1951).

Family Araliaceae--Ginseng Family

Aralia racemosa L.

Folknames:

Spikenard, Pettymorrel, Spignet (Ward 1967), Life of man, Old man's root, Indian spikenard, Indian root (Grieve 1971), Wild licorice, Pigeon weed (Coons 1963).

Description:

This stout perennial herb grows to 6 feet. It has a few widely spreading leaves that have 3 divisions, pinnately compound. The leaflets are ovate and variable in size, often doubly serrate, acuminate and obliquely cordate at the base. The inflorescence is a large panicle with numerous umbels. The styles are connate at the base only. The fruit is dark purple. Native.

Comments:

Most herbals list medicinal uses of this plant. The leaves have a cooling effect on the skin. The roots and rhizomes are aromatic and have been used as an alternative, stimulant and expectorant. Coons (1963) states that spikenard is an ingredient in cough syrup, and that the roots and rhizomes are also used as a blood purifier. According to Johnson (1884), this plant has been used externally to treat chronic rheumatism and external skin infections.

The berries are antirheumatic and have been used as an external application for toothache (Carter 1888).

An infusion of the dried, powdered roots and rhizomes for medicinal use should be prepared by adding 1/2 oz. of the root powder to 1 pt. of boiling water. Take 2-3 tbsp. as needed (Coons 1963).

The roots and rhizomes of this plant have also been used as ingredients in jelly and root beer. The young herbaceous tops have been used as a potherb (Gillespie 1951).



**Season of Availability:**

The rhizomes and roots for medicine should be gathered in the fall and dried (Kraemer 1915). Those plants to be used for food or flavoring can be collected whenever available.

**Habitat:**

This plant can be found in rich woods. It is common to rare throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Araliaceae--Ginseng Family

Panax quinquefolius L.

Folknames:

Ginseng (Gilmore 1919), Chinese seng, Ninsin, Five fingers, Seng (Meyer 1972), Tartar root, Red berry, Man's health (Grieve 1971).

Description:

Ginseng is a perennial root propagated by seed only. The root is fusiform; stems 2-6 inches; leaflets usually 5, obovate, serrate, on long petioles. Flowers greenish white, all or mostly perfect; styles usually 2. Fruit is a bright red berry. Native.

Comments:

Historically, this plant has been a famous panacea in the Orient. The word ginseng comes from two Chinese characters meaning, "wonder of the world." Much of this plant is exported to the Orient, where the Chinese, Koreans, and Japanese use it as an aphrodisiac, heart tonic and panacea, the dried root being boiled with jujubies in water for 2-4 hours. In markets and shops, bottles of distilled alcohol with ginseng roots in it can be purchased for drinking.

Most herbals list ginseng as being a stimulant, a stomachic, and a tonic.

The generic name of this plant is derived from two Greek words meaning "all-cure" or "panacea" (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

According to Fernald et al. (1958), the roots can be used as a survival food, having a parsnip flavor. The Pawnee Indians used the root in making love charms (Gilmore 1919).

The evolution of the world-wide use of the root of ginseng is attributed to the doctrine of signatures; the dried root is often 2-branched, resembling the general body form of a man.

In Western medicine, ginseng is used to treat loss of appetite, and mental and nervous exhaustion. The active principle appears to be a glucosidal substance, panquilon. It also contains saponin and a volatile oil containing a camphoraceous substance (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). An average dose of the dried powdered root is 2 g. (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

**Season of Availability:**

The root is collected in the fall and dried whole (Tehon 1951).

**Habitat:**

Ginseng can be found in densely shaded areas in rich woods. It is rare or at most infrequent throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Aristolochiaceae--Birthwort Family

Aristolochia serpentaria L.

Folknames:

Virginia snakeroot (Tantaquidgeon 1942), Pelican flower, Virginia snakeroot, Texas snakeroot (Carter 1888), Snakeweed, Red River snake-root (Grieve 1971), Serpentaria, Sangrel, Birthwort (Coons 1963).

Description:

The erect stems arising from a rhizome grow to 2 feet. The leaves are ovate to oblong, truncate or cordate at their bases; the lower leaves are reduced to scales. The flowers are solitary on slender scaly peduncles from the lowest nodes. The perianth is S-shaped. Native.

Comments:

The generic name of this plant means "an aid in childbirth," hence the name birthwort. The species name means "snake-like," referring to the twining characteristic of the rhizome. According to Grieve (1971), many powers are claimed for this plant as an antidote to the bites of snakes and mad dogs, but this has not been authoritatively proven. Tantaquidgeon (1942) states that the Delaware Indians used this plant singly, or combined with wintergreen as a tonic. Most herbals list this plant as being a tonic, a stimulant and a diuretic. According to Johnson (1884), the extract of the roots and rhizomes of serpentaria was formerly employed in typhoid fever, but is now used in bronchial and pulmonary affections, as well as being used as a diuretic and an emetic. In large doses the plant is emetic, causing nausea, pains in the bowels, and vomiting. In small doses, serpentaria has its most beneficial effect, promoting the appetite, toning up the digestive organs, and increasing

arterial action. In an infusion it is an effective gargle for sore throat (Grieve 1971). Small doses of this plant are also used to check vomiting and tranquilize the stomach (Lindley 1838). Carter (1888) also lists this plant as being an anodyne, a general febrifuge and an emmenagogue. It is often given with other drugs to increase their absorption and activity (Tehon 1951). An average small dose of the dried roots and rhizomes of this plant is 1 g. (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). The important constituents of snakeroot are: the drug serpentaria, a volatile oil containing borneol, an amorphous bitter principle aristolochin (also known as serpentarin) and the alkaloid aristolochinine (Tehon 1951).

#### Season of Availability:

The roots and rhizomes are collected in the autumn and dried (Kraemer 1915).

#### Habitat:

This plant is infrequent to rare in moist woods throughout the southern 2/3 of Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Asclepiadaceae--Milkweed Family

Asclepias incarnata L.

Folknames:

White Indian hemp, Water nerve-root (Carter 1888), Swamp silkweed (Grieve 1971), Rose-colored silk weed (Coons 1963).

Description:

The stem is erect and stout; 3-5 ft., branched above. The leaves are lanceolate to oblong, usually acuminate. The umbels are many; corolla pink to red. Native.

Comments:

As the folkname Indian hemp suggests, the fibers of this plant were used to make cordage and cloth. Medicinally, the root of the plant is used, being emetic, cathartic, diuretic, purgative, emmenagogue and anthelmintic (Carter 1888). According to Coons (1963), this plant has been recommended in rheumatic, asthmatic and catarrhal infections. Tantaquidgeon (1942) also lists the above uses of this plant by the Delaware Indians, and states that it was administered to women following childbirth.

A mild dose may be prepared by infusing 1/2 oz. of the dried powdered root in 1 pt. of boiling water (Coons 1963).

As holds true for the following species of Asclepias, the young shoots of A. incarnata L. can also be used for food as a potherb. Gillespie (1951) states that the hardened, milky exudate of this plant has been used as a chewing gum, but is very bitter.

Season of Availability:

For medicinal purposes the roots should be collected in the fall

and dried. The young shoots to be used for food should be collected in the spring as available.

**Habitat:**

This plant is common on moist ground, in roadside ditches, or in swamps throughout Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Asclepiadaceae--Milkweed Family

Asclepias syriaca L.

Folknames:

Milkweed (Fernald et al. 1958), Swallow-wort (Culpeper 1952),  
Silkweed, Cottonweed, Virginia silk, Wild cotton (Spencer 1940).

Description:

The stout, simple stems grow from 3-5 ft.; leaves thick, narrowly or broadly elliptic to ovate or oblong, hairy beneath. There are often numerous umbels, terminal and axillary, compactly many-flowered. Corolla purple to green. Native.

Comments:

Historically, this plant has been used, because of its fibers, to make cloth and paper (Grieve 1971). Waugh (1916) states that the Iroquois used the young plants and immature flower clusters as potherbs. Gilmore (1919) further states that the Indians of the Missouri Valley region also used the young fruits for food.

Medicinally, the plant was used in the Old World as a counter-poison both against the bad effects of poisonous herbs and the bites and stings of venomous creatures, and was considered to be helpful against malignant fevers, jaundice and dropsy (Culpeper 1952).

Most herbals list this plant as being used as a treatment of asthma, pulmonary complaints and as a pain reliever. Grieve (1971) states that the roots of both A. syriaca L. and A. tuberosa L. are used in both powdered form and infusion for treating typhus fever and asthma, "producing expectoration and relieving cough and pain." The juice of the roots has been used to remove warts and to treat ringworm (Coons 1963).



The plant contains a poisonous crystalline substance asclepione (Coons 1963). And Fernald et al. (1958), warns that the rootstock is poisonous, and the raw shoots are known to poison livestock.

Several authors state that a type of sugar was extracted from the flower clusters by the Indians, but this has since been questioned. As well as food use, the hardened milky juice of this species was used as chewing gum (Gillespie 1951).

#### Season of Availability:

The rootstocks to be used for medicinal purposes should be collected in the fall and dried. The tender young portions of this plant to be used as a potherb should be collected as they become available.

#### Habitat:

This plant is common throughout Illinois in waste places, fields, and pastures, especially where the land is sandy or gravelly (Tehon 1951).

Family Asclepiadaceae--Milkweed Family

Asclepias tuberosa L.

Folknames:

Pleurisy root, Butterfly weed, Tuber root, Wind root (Ward 1967), "Where butterflies light" (Tantaquidgeon 1942), Orange swallow-wort, Flux root (Carter 1888), Orange milkweed, Indian nosy, Silkweed (Coons 1963).

Description:

This plant has a perennial, large, fleshy, white fusiform root, from which numerous stems arise, growing from 1 to 2 ft. high; erect, and growing in bunches from the root. Leaves alternate, lanceolate, hairy, dark green above and paler beneath. Flowers are yellow to bright orange-red, in solitary, terminal umbels. The fruit is a long, narrow, green follicle. Native.

Comments:

The uses for this species are similar to the uses of the two preceding species. According to Gilmore (1919), certain Indians of the Missouri Valley region ate the raw root of this plant for bronchial and pulmonary trouble. It was chewed and put into wounds, or pulverized when dry and blown into wounds. It was also applied externally as a treatment for old, obstinate sores. Tantaquidgeon (1942) states that the Delaware Indians used the root of this plant as a remedy for pleurisy and rheumatism and also administered it to women following childbirth. Herbals attribute expectorant, diaphoretic, antispasmodic, carminative and anodyne qualities to this plant. According to Ward (1967), pleurisy root acts directly on the lungs, "stimulates sweating and relaxes capillaries," thereby reducing pain and strain on the lungs and heart. In large doses the plant is emetic, purgative and anthelmintic.

The roots contain large quantities of a yellowish glucoside, asclepiadin (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). A mild infusion can be prepared by using 1/2 oz. of the dried powdered root to 1 pt. of boiling water (Coons 1963).

**Season of Availability:**

The root should be collected in the autumn and dried.

**Habitat:**

Butterfly weed can be found in waste places and dry or sandy fields throughout Illinois; occasional or locally abundant (Tehon 1951).

Family Boraginaceae--Borage Family

Cynoglossum officinale L.

Folknames:

Hound's tongue (Culpeper 1952), Gypsy flower (Meyer 1972), Wild comfrey (Tehon 1951), Canadian burr, Tory weed (Coons 1963).

Description:

This coarse biennial has an erect stem, 1 to 2 ft. high; leafy to the top; leaves lanceolate, numerous, and gradually reduced; villous. Inflorescence of numerous false racemes in the upper axils or on short axillary branches. Corolla is dull reddish-purple. Native of Eurasia.

Comments:

Historically, the bruised leaves were used to cure bites of mad dogs (Culpeper 1952). In the Old World it was believed that this plant "will tie the tongues of hounds so that they shall not bark at you if laid at your feet" (Grieve 1971). According to Culpeper (1952), the bruised leaves of juice boiled in hog's lard "helps prevent the falling of hair," and the juice is good for burns and new and old wounds.

In modern medicine it is often used internally and externally to relieve piles, as a demulcent, and as a sedative. According to Carter (1888), the leaves are astringent, have anodyne qualities and are narcotic; the roots are astringent, diuretic and vulnerary. Meyer (1972) indicates that because of the mucilaginous qualities of this plant, it is demulcent and sedative; being used in coughs from colds and externally it can be used as a poultice for burns, bruises and ulcers.

This plant contains consolidin and the alkaloid cynoglossine (Tehon 1951).

**Season of Availability:**

The leaves and roots are collected in the summer and autumn. The roots should be thoroughly dried. The leaves are best used fresh.

**Habitat:**

This plant was introduced to Illinois, escaped from cultivation, and became naturalized throughout the state. It is common along transportation lines and in dry fields, woods and pastures (Tehon 1951).

Family Carophyllaceae--Pink Family

Saponaria officinalis L.

Folknames:

Soapwort (Moloney 1919), Old-maid's pink (Tehon 1951), Bouncing bet, Sweet Betty, Wild sweet-William, Boston pink, Chimney pink, Sheepweed, Soapwort gentian, World's wonder, Lady-at-the-gate, Wood phlox, Mock gillflower (Spencer 1940), Soaproot, Fuller's herb, Bruisewort, Crow soap (Grieve 1971), London pride, Latherwort, Dog cloves (Coons 1963).

Description:

Perennial, colonial by rhizomes. It is 1 to 2 ft. high. The glabrous leaves are lanceolate. The inflorescences are congested and subcapitate. The fragrant flowers are white or pinkish, the calyx tube often becomes deeply bilobed. Native of the Old World; formerly cultivated.

Comments:

According to Moloney (1919), saponin exists in all parts of this plant. The herb was used in Europe as a treatment of syphilis and inflammation of the lungs. It was the soap of the mendicants. The bruised leaves and stems churned in water will make suds (Spencer 1940).

Herbals' uses for this plant include: soap substitute, cure for itch, and treatment for venereal disease. According to Coons (1963), the thickened juice was used as a treatment for gonorrhea prior to penicillin. The plant contains mucilage as well as saponin and can be utilized as an alternative, a diaphoretic and a tonic (Tehon 1951). Spencer (1940) warns that the saponin in this plant is very poisonous to some people, and it should therefore be used with care. Internally the drug

is best administered in a decoction; 2 oz. of the root boiled in 1 pt. of water (Coons 1963).

This plant was once used as an ingredient of beer since it made the product foamy (Coons 1963).

#### Season of Availability:

The herb and rootstock are collected as available. They are most effective when fresh (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

This plant is frequently found as a weed along transportation routes and in waste places throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Chenopodiaceae--Goosefoot Family

Chenopodium album L.

Folknames:

Lambsquarters (Gilmore 1919), Pigweed, White goosefoot (Spencer 1940), Frost blite, Mutton tops, Dirt weed, Dirty Dick, Midden Myles, Bacon weed, Fat hen (Grieve 1971).

Description:

Erect, usually much branched annual growing to 3 ft. The leaves and the flowers turning reddish late in the season; leaves are rhombic-ovate to lanceolate, the larger ones are toothed. The flowers are in dense glomerules forming continuous spikes that are grouped in a terminal panicle; calyx is white. Seeds are black and shiny. It is native of Eurasia, U. S. and Canada.

Comments:

The young tops and leaves were cooked and eaten by the Dakota and Omaha Indians (Gilmore 1919). Waugh (1916) states that the Iroquois Indians similarly used this plant. According to Gilmore (1919), the Pawnee Indians used the macerated plant for painting bows and arrows green.

According to Grieve (1971), many North American Indians also used the dried seeds of this plant for making flour and bread. Gibbons (1967) points out that as a food, the greens of pigweed are higher in vitamins C and A and calcium than spinach.

Medicinally, the leaves have been used as an antiscorbutic; presumably because of their high vitamin C content. The leaves and the seeds are anthelmintic for parasitic roundworms (Carter 1888).

The plant has been used as a poultry and pig feed (Grieve 1971). The pollen is sometimes used to prepare a hay fever antigen (Tehon 1951).



**Season of Availability:**

The young tops and leaves for potherbs should be collected in the spring and early summer while tender. The pollen and seeds should be collected in mid-summer as they become available.

**Habitat:**

This plant is a common weed on cultivated ground and waste places about homes and farm buildings throughout the state (Tehon 1951).

Family Chenopodiaceae--Goosefoot Family

Chenopodium ambrosioides L.

Folknames:

Mexican tea (Carter 1888), Wormseed, Jerusalem tea, Jesuit tea, Spanish tea, Ambrosia, Stickweed, Goosefoot, Stinking weed, Epazote (Coons 1963).

Description:

In Illinois, it exists as an erect annual, to 3 ft., with ascending branches. The leaves have minute yellow glands, the lower blades are lanceolate, lobed to serrate; the upper leaves are progressively reduced, toothed or entire. The flowers are sessile, arranged in slender elongate spikes forming terminal panicles. Native of tropical America.

Comments:

The oil extracted from this plant has been a long used remedy for intestinal worms. According to Tehon (1951), it yields a volatile oil containing the active principle ascaridol, which is used as a vermifuge for roundworms, hookworms and intestinal amoeba.

Mexican tea is the dried above-ground portion of this plant and is used in Central and South America as an anthelmintic (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). Its other uses include: tonic, antispasmodic, and emmenagogue. An average dose of the oil is 1 cc. (Coons 1963). Carter (1888) warns that the plant is poisonous and narcotic and should be used with care.

Season of Availability:

The seeds yield the greatest proportion of oil. They can be collected from July to October (Tehon 1951).

**Habitat:**

This naturalized plant has become established as a weed in gardens, roadsides and waste places throughout Illinois (Cronquist and Gleason 1963).

Family Compositae--Composite Family

Achillea millefolium L.

Folknames:

Yarrow, Nose-bleed, Milfoil, Thousand leaf (Culpeper 1952), Old man's pepper, Soldier's woundwort, Carpenter's weed, Bloodwort, Devil's nettle (Grieve 1971), Knight's milfoil, Thousand-weed, Devil's plaything, Yarroway (Spencer 1940), Staunchweed, Sanguinary, Field hops (Gibbons 1967).

Description:

10 to 20 inches high, simple stem, branching at the top, many long, crowded, alternate and dentate leaves spread upon the ground. They are finely cut and divided into many parts. The flowers are white or rose-colored, in numerous heads, forming paniculate inflorescences. Native.

Comments:

The name Achillea refers to a legend that Achilles first revealed the healing power of this plant as a first aid treatment of wounds received in the battle of the siege of Troy (Gibbons 1967). The Delaware Indians made a tea of this plant for disorders of the liver and kidneys (Tantaquidgeon 1942). Gilmore (1919) states that an infusion of the herb was used by the Winnebago Indians to bathe swellings, and that for earache, a wad of the leaves was put into the ear.

In the Old World, yarrow was used to stop the bleeding of battle wounds, to cast spells, to conjure up the devil and to make love charms (Gibbons 1967).

Yarrow is generally used as an astringent, a vulnerary, a diuretic, a diaphoretic and a tonic. According to Moloney (1919), yarrow was

powdered and used as a snuff in conjestive headache, chewed as a cure for toothache, and worn as a protective charm against chills and fever.

An infusion of 1 oz. of the dried leaves to 1 pt. of boiling water is a good treatment for colds and fevers, "it causes sweating, purifies the blood, and will flush the kidneys" (Gibbons 1967). Grieve (1971) states that a decoction of the plant is reputed to prevent baldness if the head is washed with it. Yarrow contains a volatile oil and the alkaloid achilleine (Tehon 1951).

#### Season of Availability:

Collect the entire herb, except the roots when the plant is in full flower from June through November (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

Yarrow is commonly found throughout Illinois on grazed land, in abandoned fields and along roadsides (Tehon 1951).

Family Compositae--Composite Family

Chrysanthemum leucanthemum L.

Folknames:

Ox-eye daisy, Whiteweed, Marguerite (Fernald et al. 1958), Field daisy, Horse gowan, Moon daisy (Ward 1967), Dog daisy, Bull daisy, Poor-land daisy, Maudlin daisy, Butter daisy, Poverty weed, Dog blow, Moon penny (Spencer 1940), Golden, Dun daisy, Maudlinwort (Grieve 1971).

Description:

Rhizomatous perennial 5-20 inches, simple or nearly so, glabrous or inconspicuously hairy; basal leaves are oblanceolate, petiolate, and often lobed. The flower heads are produced singly at the ends of the branches. The disc is 1/2 to 1-1/2 inches wide; rays 15-30, white; achenes about 10 ribbed. Native of Eurasia.

Comments:

This plant appears to have been used as a salad herb by some Europeans (Fernald et al. 1958). The taste is bitter and tingling.

Medicinally, the leaves and stems have been used as a treatment for external sores and wounds, and internally as a diuretic, a tonic and a sedative. Culpeper (1952) states that it is "good for wounds in drinks or salves," and that an infusion will cure "mouth sores and sores of the secret parts," adding "leaves bruised and applied to the testicles or any part swollen and hot relieves them."

According to Coons. (1963), this plant has been used to treat jaundice, wounds, consumption and cutaneous eruptions. It has also been used as an insect powder. In large doses it induces vomiting (Ward 1967).

Season of Availability:

The above-ground portion of this plant should be collected when the plant is in flower, May through August.

**Habitat:**

Ox-eye daisy is commonly found along roadsides, in fields and in waste places throughout Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Compositae--Composite Family

Cichorium intybus L.

Folknames:

Chicory, Succory, Endive (Meyer 1972), Blue dandelion root (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936), Blue sailors, Blue daisy, Coffee weed, Bunk (Spencer 1940), Hendibeh, Barbe de Capucin (Grieve 1971).

Description:

A perennial herb, that has become naturalized throughout the United States. The stem grows from 1 to 3 feet, branching. Leaves are long-lanceolate, dark gray-green and coarsely dentate. The flowers are violet blue; 2 ranks of ray flowers on the head, toothed. Blooms from July until October. Native of Eurasia.

Comments:

Historically, chicory was greatly appreciated by the Southern Europeans and the early Romans, who understood its value as a tonic after lack of green food in the winter (Coons 1963). It came under cultivation in Europe for hay, a vegetable, and a coffee substitute (Spencer 1940).

Medicinally, chicory is a tonic, a diuretic, a hepatic and a laxative. Culpeper (1952) states that a "handful of leaves boiled in water and drank fasting drives forth choleric or phlegmatic humors, opens obstructions of the liver, gall bladder and spleen." According to Meyer (1972), a tea of the root is good for a sour stomach. A syrup prepared from the plant is an excellent mild laxative for children (Grieve 1971).

An infusion is prepared from 1 tsp. of the root to 1 pt. of boiling water. Drink a cold mouthful 2-3 times a day (Meyer 1972).



If used in excess this medicine can cause venous passage congestion in the digestive organs within the abdomen and a fullness of blood in the head which can lead to loss of visual power in the retina (Grieve 1971).

Chicory contains inulin and a bitter glucoside, chicorin (Tehon 1951). The leaves have been used as a source of a blue dye (Grieve 1971).

#### Season of Availability:

For food the young tops should be collected in the early spring, or the root may be dug and forced in moist sand indoors. The root can be dug anytime and dried. For use as a coffee substitute, the roots should be ground and roasted.

#### Habitat:

Chicory is common along roadsides and railroads, and in pastures and fields throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Compositae--Composite Family

Eupatorium perfoliatum L.

Folknames:

Boneset, Indian sage, Thoroughwort (Ward 1967), Sweating plant, Ague-weed (Carter 1888), Crosswort (Meyer 1972), Feverwort, Vegetable antimony (Coons 1963).

Description:

Perennial herb with a horizontal crooked root; stems rough and hairy, 1 to 5 ft. high; leaves opposite, broad-based, tapering gradually to the acuminate tip, crenate to serrate at the base. Flowers white, numerous, in corymbiform inflorescences. Native.

Comments:

This plant was named in honor of Eupator, King of Pontus, who is said to have used one of the species in medicine. Perfoliatum means having a sessile, clasping leaf (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). The common name, boneset, came from the plant's value in treating colds and influenza which used to be called "break-bone fevers" (Coons 1963). Harris (1972) states that the Indians, noticing how the two opposite leaves of this plant are joined together as if to indicate a fusion of broken leaves, used the plant in healing broken bones. This plant was used by many North American Indians as a treatment for intermittent fevers. It was the Indians who introduced this plant and its uses to the white settlers.

Most herbals list this plant as being a stimulant, a tonic, an astringent, a diuretic, a diaphoretic, an expectorant, a febrifuge, an aperient and an emetic. The plant's greatest power is manifested upon the stomach, liver, bowels and uterus (Grieve 1971). Gibbons (1967) also states that the American Indians used this plant for various types

of fevers; influenza, pneumonia, typhoid and colds. The Delaware Indians used an infusion of the roots and leaves as a treatment for chills and fevers (Tantaquidgeon 1942). Harris (1972) states that because of this plant's cleansing effect upon almost all of the body's organs, boneset was considered to be a general panacea and was included in almost all herb remedies.

The plant contains tannic acid, which accounts for some of the astringent, diuretic and diaphoretic qualities. It also contains the bitter glucoside eupatorin (Tehon 1951), and gallic acid (Kraemer 1915).

In mild doses the drug is diaphoretic for muscular rheumatism and general colds (Grieve 1971). A cold infusion taken 30 minutes before meals acts as a tonic (Johnson 1884). A warm infusion is diaphoretic (Meyer 1972). In large doses, boneset is emetic, purgative and cathartic (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). A large dose can be prepared by infusing 1 oz. of the dried leaves and stems in 1 pt. of boiling water; take in wine-glassful doses (Grieve 1971).

#### Season of Availability:

When to be used in medicines, the leaves and flowering tops should be collected when the plant is in flower from August through October (Weiner 1972).

#### Habitat:

Boneset is common throughout Illinois on low, wet ground (Jones 1963).

## Family Compositae--Composite Family

### Senecio aureus L.

#### Folknames:

Golden senecio, Ragwort (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936), Life root, Golden groundsel, Swamp squaw-weed (Tehon 1951), Life-root plant, Cough-weed, False valerian (Carter 1888), Squaw weed, Female regulator, Cocash weed (Meyer 1972).

#### Description:

Stem erect, smooth, 1-2 ft. high. Basal leaves are simple and rounded, mostly cordate and long petioled; strongly cordate blade, generally rounded at the tip, crenate or serrate. Cauline leaves reduced, generally pinnatifid, becoming sessile upwards. Heads many, flowers yellow. Native.

#### Comments:

Historically the roots and herb of this plant have been used as an emmenagogue, thus the names "female regulator" and "squaw weed." According to Johnson (1884), a decoction of the entire plant is diaphoretic, diuretic, and tonic. Meyer (1972) states that the medicinal use of this plant has greatly declined in modern times. At one time, the dried above-ground portion of senecio was listed as an official drug in the U. S. (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). The plant was once considered to be an effective fever-reducer, an antiscorbutic (presumably because of its vitamin C content), a detergent and a vulnerary, being used to treat wounds (Carter 1888).

The plant contains a volatile oil, the glucoside inulin, and the alkaloids senecine and senecionine, which are poisonous to livestock (Weiner 1972).

**Season of Availability:**

The plant including the rootstock and roots, but not the flowers, are collected during the summer (Tehon 1951). According to Kraemer (1915), the leaves and flower tops should be gathered in the early summer and dried.

**Habitat:**

Senecio is found on wet soil, around marshes, bodies of water and streams throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Compositae--Composite Family

Silphium perfoliatum L.

Folknames:

Cup plant, Indian cup plant, Rosin weed (Carter 1888), Square stem, Angle stem (Gilmore 1919), Ragged cup, Indian gum (Meyer 1972).

Description:

Stems 3-7 ft., square, glabrous; leaves or their petiolar bases are connate-perfoliate, the blade is deltoid to ovate, coarsely toothed. Flowers yellow, heads numerous in open inflorescences. Perennial from a horizontal rhizome. Native.

Comments:

According to Gilmore (1919), a decoction of the root of this plant was used by the Indians of the Missouri Valley region as an emetic for ritualistic cleansing before going on the buffalo hunt, or any important undertaking. It was also used to cleanse the body after "defilement" by accidental exposure to a woman during her menstrual period.

Medicinally, a strong infusion of the root has been used as a tonic, a diaphoretic for treating fevers, a diuretic and an alternative, being most useful in liver and spleen ailments, and internal bruises (Grieve 1971). According to Meyer (1972), an infusion should be prepared with 1 tsp. of the powdered root per 1 c. of boiling water. Drink cold, one cup per day.

The above-ground herb was used by Indians of the Missouri Valley as a smoke treatment for "cold in the head," neuralgia and rheumatism (Gilmore 1919). Carter (1888) also states that the above-ground portion is emetic, will reduce fevers, and has been used to treat "heaves" in

horses. The gum when chewed, is a stimulant and an antispasmodic, being used to treat coughs, and as a general pectoral (Grieve 1971). Coons (1963) states that the gum is also styptic and will sweeten the breath, having an odor like frankincense.

**Season of Availability:**

The root can be collected and dried in the spring or fall. The above-ground herb should be collected when available.

**Habitat:**

This plant, a native of the midwest, can be found throughout Illinois on alluvial soils, usually in prairie habitats (Jones 1963).

Family Compositae--Composite Family

Tanacetum vulgare L.

Folknames:

Tansy, Bitter buttons (Fernald et al. 1958), Parsley fern, Scented fern, Ginger plant (Tehon 1951).

Description:

Coarse, aromatic perennial from 1 to 3 ft. arising from a stout rhizome; stem glabrous or nearly so. Leaves numerous, sessile or short-petiolate, pinnatifid, with evidently winged rachis, the pinnae again pinnatifid, or deeply lobed. Flowers golden yellow; heads discoid and numerous.

Comments:

Because of its aroma, the above-ground part of tansy has been used as a cooked vegetable and as a condiment (Fernald et al. 1958). The uses of this plant were introduced to the aborigines by the early settlers. The Delaware Indians used it in making a medicine to treat stomach disorders (Tantaquidgeon 1942). According to Culpeper (1952), the fresh leaves are astringent and aid in the healing of external wounds and bruises. The leaves are also used externally to remove freckles and reduce the redness of sunburn. A decoction of the flowers and leaves will ease stomach pains and rheumatism (Culpeper 1952). A decoction has also been used to stimulate menstruation, as a tonic, and as a diaphoretic for treating intermittent fevers (Johnson 1884). Grieve (1971) warns that in large doses the drug is a violent irritant. Meyer (1972) states that the plant has narcotic qualities and should be used with care. It has been used to treat hysteria. Johnson (1884) states that infusions have been used to induce abortion.



The seeds are generally regarded as being useful in expelling intestinal worms. An infusion of 1 oz. of the seeds in 1 pt. of water should be used (Grieve 1971).

Lindley (1838) indicates that the fresh herb will repel flesh flies from meat if rubbed on the surface.

The plant contains a toxic, volatile oil which is composed of thujone, borneol and camphor (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). Weiner (1972) warns that some people are highly reactive to the toxins in this plant, and that some fatalities have been reported from drinking tansy tea.

#### Season of Availability:

The herb to be used as a condiment should be collected in the late spring. For medicinal use, the root may be collected in the spring or fall. The above-ground herb and flower tops should be collected in the summer from July to September and used fresh or dried (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

Tansy has become naturalized and is widely distributed throughout Illinois near old settlements, and waste places where it has escaped from old gardens. It was originally introduced from Europe (Tehon 1951).

## Family Compositae--Composite Family

### Taraxacum officinale Weber

#### Folknames:

Dandelion, Blow ball, Lion's tooth, Peasants cloak, Yellow gowan, Priest's crown, Irish daisy, Monk's head (Spencer 1940), Fortune teller, Cankerwort (Tehon 1951), Doon head clock (Coons 1963).

#### Description:

Leaves generally glabrous, oblanceolate, pinnatifid or lobed, the terminal lobe larger than the others, tapering to a petiolar base. Heads usually large, flowers all ligulate and perfect, yellow. Native.

#### Comments:

The use of this plant for food and medicine was known to the aboriginals and to the Europeans and Egyptians. The name of this plant comes from the Greek word taraxus, which was a disease of the eye for which the juice was used (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

The tender young crowns may be eaten as salad greens or as a cooked vegetable. The flower heads can also be used as a cooked vegetable when young. They have also been used in making wine. The ground, roasted roots may be used as a coffee substitute.

Medicinally, dandelion has been used most frequently as a tonic. It was a common constituent of patent medicines (Grieve 1971). The juice of the root has the strongest medicinal action. It increases the appetite and promotes digestion. The Delaware Indians used the plant as a laxative as well as a tonic. Most herbals agree that dandelion has a special effect on the liver and kidneys. Grieve (1971) states that this use as a hepatic arose by the doctrine of signatures because

the bright yellow flowers were associated with the bilious hue of a person suffering from a liver disorder. Other uses as a medicine include: diuretic, antiscorbutic, and sialagogue. These properties are best yielded to an infusion; 1 tsp. of the root to 1 c. of boiling water (Coons 1963). According to Grieve (1971), the juice of the stalks of dandelion will remove warts.

This plant contains a volatile oil, inulin, the enzyme levulose, and the bitter principles taraxacin and taraxacerin (Kraemer 1915).

#### Season of Availability:

For food use, the tender crowns of the plant should be collected in early spring, or the roots can be dug in the fall and forced in sand to produce greens during the winter. The flower heads can be collected anytime throughout the year, but are least bitter in the early spring.

The roots for use as a coffee substitute, or medicine are best collected in the late summer and fall (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

Dandelion is a common weed throughout Illinois, being found in all waste places, field, lawns and gardens (Tehon 1951).

## Family Cruciferae--Mustard Family

### Dentaria laciniata Muhl.

#### Folknames:

Toothwort, Pepper-root, Crinkle root (Carter 1888), Coralwort, Tooth violet, Dog teeth violet, Dentaria (Culpeper 1952), Little burr (Tantaquidgeon 1942).

#### Description:

Rhizome constructed at intervals; stems 1-2 in., shortly spreading-hairy above; basal and cauline leaves similar, the basal leaves are absent at anthesis, the cauline leaves are typically in a whorl of 3, deeply 3-parted, the segments linear or lanceolate. Flowers in a loose panicle, white to pink. Native.

#### Comments:

According to Waugh (1916), toothwort has been used by the Iroquois Indians for food, being eaten raw with salt, or boiled. Other Indians used the root as a condiment (Gibbons 1967). It has a mild horse-radish flavor.

Medicinally, the Delaware Indians used the root in conjunction with other medicine as a stomachic. They also used the plant to treat venereal disease and swollen glands (Tantaquidgeon 1942).

In the 1600's, Culpeper (1952) stated that the herb works to "cleanse the bladder," acting as a diuretic. The powdered root was used to relieve pains of the lower abdomen and to treat internal wounds. An ointment of the root applied externally helped the healing of wounds and ulcers (Culpeper 1952).

#### Season of Availability:

The above-ground herb should be harvested in early spring. The root can be harvested before anthesis in early spring, or after, in late spring.

**Habitat:**

Toothwort is commonly found in deciduous woods throughout Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Ericaceae--Heath Family

Monotropa uniflora L.

Folknames:

Indian plant, Corpse Plant (Fernald et al. 1958), Pine sap, Pipe plant, Fit root, American ice plant (Carter 1888), Convulsion weed, Ghost flower (Coons 1963).

Description:

Flowers regular, 5-merous. Stems 3-5 in., usually solitary, waxy white, lacking chlorophyll. Solitary flowers, usually nodding. Leaves reduced. Native.

Comments:

There is some dispute as to the food value of this plant. Gillespie (1951) states that it can be used as a vegetable like asparagus when parboiled or roasted. Fernald et al. (1958) say that it is generally considered inedible.

Medicinally, the root has been used as an astringent, a tonic, a sedative and an antispasmodic (Carter 1888). In strong doses the plant is emetic, hence its name convulsion weed. According to Coons (1963), a tincture of the fresh plant has been used as eye drops to sooth sore eyes. The medicinal properties are best yielded to a decoction (Carter 1888).

Season of Availability:

The herb can be picked when available during the early summer.

Habitat:

Indian pipe can be found in rich woods in localized areas throughout Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Gentianaceae--Gentian Family

Sabatia angularis (L.) Pursh.

Folknames:

American centaury, Sabatia, (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936), Rose pink, Bitter bloom (Tehon 1951), Square-stemmed sabbatia (Kraemer 1915).

Description:

Stout annual 2-3 ft., with many opposite branches. Leaves ovate to lanceolate, broadly rounded or subcordate at base. Flowers 5-merous; corolla pink with a greenish center. Native.

Comments:

Medicinally this plant was used in pioneer times to treat intermittent fevers (Lindley 1838). Johnson (1884) also states that it promotes the appetite and aids in digestion.

Sabatia contains erythrocentaurin, a volatile oil, mucilage and sugars (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

Season of Availability:

The herb for medicinal use should be collected during the time of flowering in the summer (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

Habitat:

Found on moist ground; locally abundant throughout Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Geraniaceae--Geranium Family

Geranium maculatum L.

Folknames:

Spotten geranium, Wild cranesbill, American Kinoroot (Carter 1888), Cranesbill root, Alum root, Storksbill, Alum bloom, Old maid's nightcap, Shameface (Grieve 1971), Crane's bill, Chocolate flower (Coons 1963).

Description:

Flowers are 5-merous, polypetalous, regular, several to few, rose-purple or occasionally white. Perennial from a thick rhizome with a few long-petioled basal leaves that are pedately cleft into 5-7 lacinate segments. Native.

Comments:

Both the root and leaves of wild geranium have been used medicinally. The knobby rhizomes have been used in the commercial drug trade. When dried, they produce a purplish-brown powder, hence the name "chocolate flower" (Coons 1963). According to Tehon (1951), 25% of the dried drug is tannin, which explains the astringent qualities of the plant. It has been used to treat diarrhea and dysentery, being given in doses of 15 grains. Due to the high tannin content it may cause constipation if used over a prolonged period (Coons 1963). According to Grieve (1971), the plant is also used internally for piles and internal bleeding. Meyer (1972) states that an infusion of the roots or leaves makes a good gargle for throat irritation, or ulcerated mouth. Steep 1 tsp. of the root in 1 c. boiling water. The plant is also detergent (Carter 1888).

The amount of tannin in all parts of the plant is very high, and extracts may be used in home tanning (Coons 1963).



As well as tannin, wild geranium contains gallic acid, starch and calcium oxalate (Kraemer 1915).

**Season of Availability:**

The plant should be harvested from April to June before the flowers bloom. This is when the tannin content is highest (Tehon 1951).

**Habitat:**

It is abundant in moist woods throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Hypericaceae--St. John's-Wort Family

Hypericum perforatum L.

Folknames:

St. John's Wort (Johnson 1884), Devils scourge, God's wonder-plant, Llamath weed, Goat weed, Hundred hole, Rosin rose, Amber touch and heal (Coons 1963), Tipton weed, Rosin weed (Tehon 1951).

Description:

Perennial, 1-2-1/2 ft., with numerous leafy, opposite branches that are sharply ridged below the base of each leaf. Leaves sessile, linear-oblong. Flowers numerous, 5-merous, yellow, forming a large rounded or flattened compound cyme. Native of Europe.

Comments:

This was one of the chief herbs used by John the Baptist in his rituals of white magic and exorcisms (Coons 1963). According to Johnson (1884), it has been used since ancient times to heal cuts. Grieve (1971) lists an old belief that one whiff of the plant would cause evil spirits to fly away. The plant is regarded by most herbalists to be astringent, expectorant, diuretic, and sedative. Ward (1967) states that an infusion of the herb is serviceable for colds, coughs and disorders of the urinary system. Prepare the medicine by infusing 1 tsp. of the dried herb and flower tops in 1 c. of boiling water. Drink cold, 1 c. per day, a mouthful at a time (Meyer 1972). Because of its expectorant qualities, St. John's wort has been used internally to treat pulmonary consumption. It has also been used for diarrhea and bladder troubles. Several authors mention the use of this plant as a sedative and nervine. According to Moloney (1919), it is an excellent remedy for an "airy fit," being used to "dispell clouds of melancholia and other forms of insanity." Grieve

(1971) also states that it is serviceable in hysteria and nervous depression. The leaves, being astringent, can be used in an infusion as a gargle. The oil or tincture of this plant is used externally to help heal cuts and bruises (Tehon 1951). Grieve (1971) indicates that if externally applied, St. John's wort will dispell hard tumors in the breasts.

St. John's wort contains the volatile oil of hypericum, as well as hypericin and hypericum red (Tehon 1951).

#### Season of Availability:

The flowering tops should be collected from June to August and dried or used fresh (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

Having been naturalized, St. John's wort can be found as a weed in poor soil along roads and in waste places throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Labiatae--Mint Family

Collinsonia canadensis L.

Folknames:

Stoneroot, Knotroot, Horse-balm (Kraemer 1915), Horse-weed, Knob grass, Stone root (Carter 1888), Citronella (Tehon 1951), Heal all, Ox balm (Coons 1963), Richweed, Richleaf, Knotweed, Hardback (Grieve 1971), Hardrock, Wild citronella (Meyer 1972).

Description:

Erect, branched above, to 3 ft.; several pairs of leaves, ovate to ovate-oblong, petiolate, upper leaves becoming sessile, serrate. Flowers yellowish, 2-lipped, forming compound panicles. Perennial from a thick woody rhizome. Native.

Comments:

Medicinally, the leaves, stems and roots of this plant have been used. The whole plant is tonic, astringent, diaphoretic and diuretic (Coons 1963). These properties are best yielded to an infusion. A decoction of the fresh root has been given for bladder ailments and is valuable in all complaints of the urinary organs and rectum (Grieve 1971). The root also acts as an irritant and antispasmodic, inducing expectoration (Carter 1888). A mild dose can be prepared by infusing 1 tsp. of the root in 1 c. of boiling water. Drink 1 c. cold throughout the day. Externally the leaves are used to make poultices for bruises, wounds, sprains, sores, and cuts (Grieve 1971).

Harris (1972) indicates that it was the root swellings that indicated to the Indian herbalist that the plant may be good for treating swollen wounds and sprains. Mucilage yielded by the plant exerts its benefits upon all mucous linings.

The plant contains a saponin-like glucoside, and tannic acid (Kraemer 1915).

**Season of Availability:**

The rhizomes with their adhering roots are gathered in the fall and employed either fresh or dried. The leaves are gathered from late spring till fall as available and used fresh.

**Habitat:**

This plant is found in dry, rich woods from Champaign County south and south-westward (Jones 1963).

Family Labiatae--Mint Family

Mentha piperita L.

Folknames:

Peppermint, Balm mint, Brandy mint (Ward 1967), Lamb mint, Curled mint (Coons 1963).

Description:

Perennial herb, 1 to 3 ft., smooth, square stem, erect and branching. Leaves petiolate, dark green, sharply serrate, ovate or lance-ovate. Flowers purplish, calyx 5-toothed, corolla 4-lobed, in dense terminal spikes. Native of Europe.

Comments:

The generic name is derived from the Greek name Mintha, the name of a nymph. According to myth, Mintha was metamorphosed into this plant. Piperita is from Latin, meaning "pepper," alluding to the aromatic taste and color (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

Historically this plant has been used as a medicine by many groups. The Egyptians used an infusion of the plant as a pain reliever (Coons 1963). Most herbals list peppermint as a local sedative. Other uses include: carminative, stomachic and to reduce nausea. According to Lindley (1838), the plant was used to reduce flatulence and relieve nausea and pains in the alimentary canal. Thus the plant is useful in gastric and intestinal disorders. The oil extracted from the plant contains menthol and is used as an antispasmodic, a stimulant and a pain reliever (Carter 1888). The fresh plant, or an infusion of the plant has been generally used for the same purposes listed above, and it also acts as a diuretic and a diaphoretic (Grieve 1971). According to Culpeper (1952), poultices made of the fresh leaves will disperse curdled milk from the breasts.

The constituents of the plant include: a volatile oil--oil of peppermint, stearoptene, menthol, acetaldehyde, acetic acid, valerianic acid and others (Kraemer 1915). It is high in vitamin C and carotene (Gibbons 1967).

An average dose can be prepared by infusing 1 tsp. of the leaves and flowers in 1 c. of boiling water. Drink 1-2 cups cold, per day (Meyer 1972).

#### Season of Availability:

The above-ground herbaceous portion including the flowers should be collected during dry weather in August and September and dried (Kraemer 1915).

#### Habitat:

Peppermint can be collected throughout Illinois in moist places near lakes and streams, and along roads and ditches (Tehon 1951).

## Family Labiatae--Mint Family

### Monarda punctata L.

#### Folknames:

Horse mint (Meyer 1972), Spotted horsemint (Jones 1963).

#### Description:

Perennial, 2-3 ft.; leaves lanceolate or narrowly oblong, hairy, serrate, punctate. Tubular calyx, corolla strongly bilabiate, flowers densely aggregated into head-like clusters terminating the branches, yellowish, subtended by pinkish foliaceous bracts. Native.

#### Comments:

Tantaquidgeon (1942) states that the Delaware Indians made a tea of the plant for fever and as an external application to bathe the face of the patient. A hot infusion of the herb induces diaphoresis and is used to stimulate menstrual function (Johnson 1884). Meyer (1972) also lists the use as a carminative for flatulent colic and as a diuretic. An infusion can be made by steeping 1 tsp. of the dried leaves and flower tops in 1 c. of boiling water. Drink 1-2 cups per day (Meyer 1972). Grieve (1971) indicates that the principal use of this plant is external, being used for rheumatism and to reduce fever, especially in the case of cholera.

Horsemint contains the volatile oil monarda, from which thymol can be derived. It is antiseptic, parasiticide and deoderant. It is also anthelmintic, being especially useful in ridding one of hookworms (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

#### Season of Availability:

The above-ground herb and the flowering parts should be collected from August to September and used fresh or dried.



**Habitat:**

Horsemint can commonly be found on open, sandy dunes, small hills and sand prairies (Tehon 1951).

## Family Labiatae--Mint Family

### Nepeta cataria L.

#### Folknames:

Catnip, Catwort (Carter 1888), Catrup (Tehon 1951), "Smells good" (Tantaquidgeon 1942), Nep, Catmint (Coons 1963).

#### Description:

Perennial herb, 3-5 ft., square, erect branching stems, covered with fine whitish hairs. Leaves deltoid-ovate, coarsely toothed, truncate or subcordate at base, the petiole half as long as the blade. Flowers in spikes, whitish dotted with purple or pink, calyx weakly bilabiate, corolla bilabiate. Native of Eurasia.

#### Comments:

Cataria is derived from the Latin word catus, meaning "cat."

Nepeta is the name of an ancient Tuscan town (Coons 1963). Historically the plant was used in the Middle Ages in Europe to "procure women's courses" and to "reduce winds in the belly" (Culpeper 1952).

The leaves and tops are used as a stimulant, a tonic, a diaphoretic, a carminative, and an emmenagogue. It is useful in colds and fevers since it induces sleep and produces perspiration without increasing the heat within the body (Grieve 1971). It has been used in cases of scarlet fever and smallpox (Spencer 1940). For relief of stomach pains, flatulence or colic, an infusion of 1 oz. of the dried herb to 1 pt. of boiling water is serviceable (Coons 1963). In a hot infusion, the above-ground portion of this plant promotes menstruation (Johnson 1884). It is enough of a sedative to be used in cases of hysteria (Spencer 1940), and as a cure for nightmares (Gibbons 1967). In large, warm doses the plant is emetic (Grieve 1971). The bruised green herb

relieves piles (Culpeper 1952), and the juice drunk in wine is good for bruises (Coons 1963).

According to Coons (1963), the herb will repel rats, and the root of catnip if chewed will make the quietest person fierce and quarrelsome.

#### Season of Availability:

The above-ground herb, leaves and flowering parts should be collected when the plants are in full flower in the late summer and dried in the shade (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

#### Habitat:

This is a common weed in waste places and about dwellings in all parts of the state (Tehon 1951).

Family Labiatae--Mint Family

Scutellaria lateriflora L.

Folknames:

Scullcap (Johnson 1884), Side flowering skullcap, Mad dogweed, Blue pimpernell, Hood-wort (Meyer 1972), Mad-dog skullcap, Madweed, Hooded willow-herb, Quaker bonnet (Coons 1963).

Description:

Erect, branching stem, 1-3 ft., growing from a small, fibrous, yellow, perennial root. Leaves petiolate, opposite, thin subcordate on the stem, ovate on the branches, acuminate, acute and coarsely serrate. Flowers small, pale blue, solitary in the axils or in terminal or axillary racemes. Native.

Comments:

Scutellaria comes from the Latin word scutella, meaning "dish," alluding to the calyx when fruiting. Lateriflora also comes from the Latin word latus meaning "side," referring to the lateral arrangement of flowers on the stem (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). An old use of the plant listed in Potter's Cyclopedia, was for hysteria, convulsions and hydrophobia, hence the name mad-dog skullcap (Coons 1963). Johnson (1884) states that the use of this plant to treat hysteria and hydrophobia is of little value. Other herbals list this plant as being tonic, nervine, and sedative to alleviate spasmodic conditions. An infusion should be prepared with 1 tsp. of the dried leaves per 1 c. of boiling water (Coons 1963).

Scullcap contains a volatile oil and a bitter crystalline glucoside--scutellarin (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). Coons (1963) warns that an overdose will cause excitability and wakefulness as does caffeine.

**Season of Availability:**

For medicinal use, the above-ground portion of the plant should be collected in early summer and dried (Coons 1963).

**Habitat:**

Scullcap can be found throughout Illinois in wet soil by streams, lakes, ditches and swamps (Tehon 1951).

Family Leguminosae--Pea Family

Cassia marilandica L.

Folknames:

Wild senna, Locust plant (Meyer 1972), American senna (Johnson 1884), Maryland cassia, Wild senna (Coons 1963).

Description:

Perennial herb, 4-6 ft. high, with round, smooth and slightly hairy stems. Leaves have long petioles, ovate, each petiole has 8 or 10 leaflets, oblong, smooth and narrow. Flowers yellow, inflorescence of several axillary racemes. Native.

Comments:

This plant has been used medicinally by both the American Indians and the Europeans. The Indians used an infusion of the leaves and stems as a cathartic, a poultice of the roots for sores, and a decoction of the root for fever (Coons 1963). The dried leaves have also been used in a decoction as a laxative and purgative; boil 1 tsp. of the dried leaves in water for 1/2 hour.

This native American senna contains glucosides similar to those of the imported sennas which are often employed as laxatives (Tehon 1951).

Season of Availability:

The leaflets are collected in the summer and dried for medicinal use (Tehon 1951).

Habitat:

American senna can occasionally be found along roadsides and in fields or pastures on alluvial soils throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Leguminosae--Pea Family

Trifolium pratense L.

Folknames:

Red clover, Purple clover, Trefoil (Ward 1967), Honeysuckle, Meadow clover, Cleaver grass, Sweet clover, Bee bread (Coons 1963).

Description:

Short lived perennial, ascending or suberect, to 2-1/2 ft., the stem appressed-hairy. Lower leaves long-petioled, upper short-petioled to sessile, trifoliate. Flowers magenta to white in globose heads. Native of Europe.

Comments:

Trifolium comes from Latin, meaning "3-leaves." Pratense means "growing in meadow land." Historically, the leaves were used as good-luck charms in England against witches and evil (Coons 1963). Most herbals list this plant as being an alternative and a sedative. According to Meyer (1972), an infusion is good for bronchial and whooping cough, since the plant is antispasmodic. Its value in this application has been questioned.

A poultice of the herb has been used externally for ulcers and sores. It should be prepared by bruising the flowers and leaves, then steep them in water for 3 hours (Coons 1963). A strong infusion is considered useful for bathing skin infections. According to Moloney (1919), the Irish at one time used red clover as an ingredient in mixtures to "clear" the blood. Meyer (1972) recommends an infusion of 1 tsp. of the flower tops per 1 c. boiling water, drunk cold, a mouthful at a time.

The plant is used for fooder and as a green manure crop because it is considered to be high in trace minerals.

Red clover contains a fragrant, volatile oil, salicylic acid, and several glucosides (Tehon 1951).

**Season of Availability:**

The blossom heads should be collected when in full flower throughout the spring and summer.

**Habitat:**

The plant has escaped from cultivation and is established in old fields and waste places throughout the state (Tehon 1951).



Family Liliaceae--Lily Family

Asparagus officinalis L.

Folknames:

Garden asparagus, Sparrow grass (Carter 1888), Asparagus (Meyer 1972).

Description:

Perennial from a rhizome, stem freely branched to 6 ft., ultimate branches filiform. Flowers perfect or unisexual; perianth tubular to campanulate, greenish white. Native of Europe.

Comments:

According to Weiner (1972), the Indians used this plant as a potherb, as did the early settlers. As a table vegetable it was known to the Greeks and Romans in pre-Christian times (Moloney 1919). The seeds after being roasted and ground have been used as a coffee substitute (Gillespie 1951).

Medicinally the above-ground portion of the plant has been used as a diuretic, a diaphoretic, and a deobstruent. According to Culpeper (1952), the young buds "boiled in broth made the belly soluble and open." It is also good for expelling gravel and stones out of the kidneys. The herb has been used as a kidney stimulant and is recommended for gout and rheumatism (Moloney 1919). The young shoots are a gentle laxative (Coons 1963).

Culpeper (1952) states that the root held in the mouth will relieve a toothache, and if "taken while fasting several mornings together, stirs up bodily lust in man or woman." A bath in a decoction of the roots will relieve pains in the lower parts of the body, and sore muscles (Culpeper 1952).

The plant is rich in mineral salts and contains vitamins A and B (Gibbons 1967).

**Season of Availability:**

The young shoots for food should be picked when available in the late spring. The seeds should be harvested when dry in the late summer. The roots to be used for medicinal purposes should be harvested in late fall.

**Habitat:**

Asparagus is found in fence rows and waste places throughout Illinois. It has escaped from gardens (Tehon 1951).

## Family Lobeliaceae--Lobelia Family

### Lobelia inflata L.

#### Folknames:

Indian tobacco, Wild tobacco, Gagroot, Vomitroot, Bladderpod (Meyer 1972), Pukeweed, Asthma weed, Eyebright (Grieve 1971), Field lobelia (Coons 1963).

#### Description:

Annual or biennial, with a fibrous root. Stem erect, angular, hairy from 1/2 to 3 ft. Leaves alternate, ovate-lanceolate, serrate, hairy. Flowers blue to white in terminal racemes, 5-merous, irregular. Native.

#### Comments:

Lobelia was named in honor of Matthias de L'Obiel, a Flemish physician and botanist. Inflata is descriptive of the fruit, which is hollow and distended (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). Lobelia is an acrid narcotic and a powerful emetic. In small doses it is diaphoretic and expectorant, exciting expectoration without the pain of coughing (Lindley 1838). It is used to treat coughing caused by laryngitis and spasmodic asthma (Tehon 1951). As a narcotic it has sedative and depressant qualities (Coons 1963). It has been used instead of tobacco in the form of an enema in strangulated hernia (Lindley 1838). An overdose produces nausea, great depression, cold sweats, vomiting, and can result in death (Grieve 1971). An average dose as an emetic is 0.1 g. of the powdered plant (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

Externally in an infusion lobelia is useful as eye drops, having a soothing effect and as an application for sprains, bruises or skin diseases. Oil of lobelia is valuable in treating tetanus (Grieve 1971).

The plant contains the acrid, emetic alkaloid lobeline, lobelani-  
dine, isolobelanine, a volatile oil (lobelianin), and lobelic acid (Gather-  
coal and Wirth 1936). Meyer (1972) warns that the plant is extremely  
dangerous for internal use. Poisonous symptoms may occur from absorp-  
tion of it through the skin (Grieve 1971).

#### Season of Availability:

The leaves and tops of the plant should be collected and dried  
while the plant is in flower from June through October (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

Lobelia can be found throughout Illinois in open woods, fields  
and waste places (Tehon 1951).

## Family Malvaceae--Mallow Family

### Malva rotundifolia L.

#### Folknames:

Mallow (Johnson 1884), Dwarf mallow (Moloney 1919), Common mallow, "Cheeses" (Spencer 1940), Low mallow, Maller, Cheese plant (Meyer 1972), Fairy cheese, Doll cheese (Gibbons 1967).

#### Description:

Stems prostrate to ascending. Leaves broad, toothed. Flowers pink to white, solitary or fascicled in the axils, regular, 5-merous, perfect. Native of Europe.

#### Comments:

This plant has had recorded uses since the time of Theophrastes. The fruits can be used as a mucilaginous potherb. The whole herb, being mucilaginous is demulcent and emollient (Meyer 1972). It is useful for loosening coughs and relieving sore throats. Internally it relieves irritations of the bowels, kidneys and urinary organs (Coons 1963). According to Gibbons (1967), the root has antiseptic properties. An ointment made from the root is used as an emollient for rubbing into painful and stiff joints (Moloney 1919). The fresh leaves steeped in hot water and made into a poultice will reduce the inflammation of bruises and insect stings (Coons 1963). A medicinal infusion can be prepared by steeping 1 tsp. of the leaves in 1 c. of boiling water (Meyer 1972).

The plant contains mucilage and tannin.

#### Season of Availability:

The fruits can be collected when available in the summer. For medicinal purposes, the whole herb is collected when available, being

**Habitat:**

It is common as a weed around dwellings and waste places throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Nelumbonaceae--Lotus Family

Nelumbo lutea (Willd.) Pers.

Folknames:

Yellow lotus (Gilmore 1919), Water chinquapin (Carter 1888).

Description:

Rhizomatous aquatic herb. Leaves orbicular, centrally peltate, normally raised above the water on long petioles. Flowers solitary, pale yellow on elevated, stout peduncles. Native.

Comments:

The Indians of the Missouri Valley considered this plant to have mystic powers (Gilmore 1919). Medicinally, the roots, leaves and seeds have been used as a laxative, a diuretic, a refrigerant and an emollient (Carter 1888). The seeds, leaves and tubers have been used for food both by the Indians and the settlers. The tubers, after peeling can be used as a starchy vegetable, being boiled or baked. They are also dried for winter use (Gilmore 1919). The young leaf stalks and unrolling leaves can be used as a potherb. According to Fernald et al. (1958), the half-ripe seeds were eaten raw or cooked, having a flavor like chestnuts. Gilmore (1919) states that the Indians of the Missouri Valley used the cracked seeds with meat to make soup.

Season of Availability:

The tuberous roots can be best collected in the spring and autumn, the seeds in the summer and fall, and the young leaf-stalks in the early summer (Fernald et al. 1958).

Habitat:

This plant is generally found in quiet shallow water in isolated areas.

Family Onagraceae--Evening Primrose Family

Oenothera biennis L.

Folknames:

Evening primrose (Carter 1888), Night willow-herb, Tree primrose, Cure all, Field primrose, Fever plant, Coffee plant, Wild beet (Spencer 1940), Wild evening primrose, Scurvish, Scabbish, Kings cureall (Meyer 1972), Cabish, Tall sundrop (Coons 1963).

Description:

Biennial or short-lived perennial. Stem erect, stout, 1-5 ft., hairy. Leaves 1-6 in., lanceolate to oblong, acute or acuminate, entire to dentate. Flowers yellow, in spikes, 4-merous, perfect, regular. Native.

Comments:

The roots of evening primrose if collected from late autumn to early spring can be used as a vegetable resembling parsnips. They should be cooked in two waters to remove the bitter taste (Fernald et al. 1958). The young first year rosettes can be used as potherbs (Spencer 1940).

Medicinally, the mucilaginous infusion of this plant has been used to treat coughs from colds, asthma and whooping cough. It has also been used as an astringent and for treating gastrointestinal disorders (Grieve 1971). An infusion can be made of 1 tsp. of the plant per 1 c. of boiling water. Drink 1 cup per day, a mouthful at a time (Meyer 1972). Carter (1888) and other authors indicate evening primrose as being helpful in treating "female complaints," and it will act as an antisiphilitic. A decoction or an ointment of the plant has been beneficial in treating skin irritations and eruptions (Johnson 1884).



**Season of Availability:**

For medicinal use, the leaves should be collected and dried from the second year's growth of this biennial plant (Grieve 1971).

**Habitat:**

Evening primrose can be found throughout Illinois along roadsides, in fields and in waste places (Jones 1963).

Family Papaveraceae--Poppy Family

Sanguinaria canadensis L.

Folknames:

Bloodroot (Gilmore 1919), Red puccoon root (Carter 1888), Red puccoon, Indian plant, Tetterwort, Sanguinaria (Meyer 1972), Indian paint, Red root, Coon root, Snakebite, Sweet slumber (Grieve 1971), Yellow or white puccoon (Coons 1963).

Description:

Perennial with a fibrous root, which when cut emits an orange colored juice. From a stout rhizome which sends up a single lobed leaf and a large white flower on a scape. Leaf orbicular in outline, lobes undulate to coarsely toothed. Flowers white, petals 8-16. Native.

Comments:

Millspaugh (1887) states that the American Indians used the red juice of the rhizome of bloodroot for painting their clothing and implements of warfare. Grieve (1971) also states that American Indians used it for a body dye, and that American and French dyers have successfully used it. According to Gilmore (1919), the Indians of the Missouri Valley used the dye by boiling the roots with the material to be dyed. He also states that the Indians used the root as a love charm; a bachelor after rubbing some of the root on his palm would contrive to shake hands with the girl he desired. The Oklahoma Delaware Indians also used bloodroot as a ceremonial paint (Tantaquidgeon 1942).

Medicinally, bloodroot is an acrid narcotic. In small doses it lowers the pulse and has some reputation as a tonic and stimulant (Lindley 1838). In large quantities it produces poisoning with vomiting,

burning in the stomach, faintness, vertigo, dimness of eyesight, paralysis and possibly death (Grieve 1971).

Because of its expectorant qualities, the early settlers used it as an ingredient in cough remedies (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). Most herbals list uses of bloodroot in small doses as a tonic (promoting gastrointestinal secretions), a sedative, and an antiseptic. It has been recommended for typhoid, pneumonia, jaundice, respiratory tract infections and externally for treating ringworm (Meyer 1972). Tantaquidgeon (1942) states that the Delaware Indians used it for general debility; "a peanut-sized piece of the root is taken every morning for 30 days."

Bloodroot contains the alkaloids sanguinarine, chelerythrine and protopine which is also found in opium (Grieve 1971). Applied to a denuded surface, it is quite a powerful caustic (Millsbaugh 1887).

#### Season of Availability:

For use as a dye, the roots can be collected anytime during the growing season. Medicinally, the rhizomes are dug during the early summer, the roots discarded and carefully dried (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

#### Habitat:

Bloodroot is commonly found in moist, rich woods throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Phytolaccaceae--Pokeweed Family

Phytolacca americana L.

Folknames:

Pokeberry, Inkberry, Red weed (Gilmore 1919), Pokeweed, Pigeon berry (Fernald et al. 1958), Poke, Virginia poke, Red ink berry, Scape, Garget, American cancer, Cancer jalap, Pocan, Pocan bush, American nightshade (Spencer 1940).

Description:

Perennial herb to 9 ft., branched above. Leaves lance-oblong to ovate, alternate, entire. Flowers greenish-white or pinkish, in racemes or spikes, perfect, regular. Native.

Comments:

Gilmore (1919) states that certain Indians of the Missouri Valley used the red juice from the fruit of this plant as a decorative stain. The generic name means "red plant," and refers to the juice from the berries (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

The young shoots can be used as a potherb if cooked in two waters. These young shoots have also been preserved by pickling (Gillespie 1951). The roots can be dug in the fall and forced indoors in moist sand (Fernald et al. 1958).

Medicinally, it is the root that is used. It is narcotic, emetic, cathartic, and can cause death (Fernald et al. 1958). According to Tantaquidgeon (1942), the Delaware Indians used it as a rheumatism medicine. As an emetic, a dose of 1 g. of the powdered dried root is serviceable; as an alternative, 0.1 g. should be used (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). Spencer (1940) states that a tincture of the dried root has been used to reduce caking and swelling in cows udders.

Pokeweed contains the crystalline alkaloid phytolaccine (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

**Season of Availability:**

The young shoots to be used for food should be collected when available in the spring. The berries are available for dye in the late summer. The root to be used medicinally should be collected in the autumn (Tehon 1951).

**Habitat:**

The plant is common in light woods, fields and waste places throughout Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Podophyllaceae--Mayapple Family

Caulophyllum thalictroides (L.) Michx.

Folknames:

Blue cohosh, Pappose root, Blueberry root (Grieve 1971), Yellow ginseng (Carter 1888), Squaw root (Meyer 1972), Blue ginseng, Leontice (Coons 1963).

Description:

Smooth perennial herb, erect stem bearing above the middle a single large, sessile, triternate leaf, and another smaller leaf just below the panicle, plant 1/2 to 2 ft. Flowers yellowish green or greenish purple, 6 sepals, 6 petals. Native.

Comments:

The generic name comes from two Greek words meaning "stem leaf." The species name (also of Greek origin) means "like meadow rue" (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). According to Gilmore (1919), the Indians of the Missouri Valley used a decoction of the root of this plant to reduce fevers. Coons (1963) states that the American Indians used this plant as a parturient; it stimulates uterine contractions, thus hastening childbirth. Most herbals list this plant as being an alternative, a diuretic, an antispasmodic and an emmenagogue. Infuse 1 tsp. of the powdered root in 1 c. of boiling water. Drink 1 cup cold per day, a mouthful at a time (Meyer 1972). Blue cohosh has been used to treat rheumatism, dropsy, epilepsy, hysteria and uterine inflammations (Grieve 1971).

The plant contains two resins, a saponin-like glucoside (caulophyllosaponin), the glucoside caulosaponin and a crystalline alkaloid methyl-cytisine (caulophylline) (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

**Season of Availability:**

The rhizome and roots are collected throughout the growing season.

**Habitat:**

Blue cohosh is common in woods throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Podophyllaceae--Mayapple Family

Podophyllum peltatum L.

Folknames:

May apple, "Flower hangs-down" (Tantaquidgeon 1942), Mandrake, Yellow berry, Indian apple, American mandrake, Ducksfoot, (Carter 1888), Racoonberry, Wild lemon (Ward 1967), Hog's apple, Devil's apple, Ground lemon (Kraemer 1915), Wild jalap, Vegetable mercury, Umbrella plant (Coons 1963).

Description:

Perennial herb from a rhizome, the flowering stem with a pair of leaves and a short-peduncled, solitary terminal flower. Leaves peltate and deeply lobed. Flowers white, 6 sepals, 6-9 petals. Native.

Comments:

The generic name is from Greek, meaning "foot-like leaf." Peltatum means "shield-like" (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

May apple was used by the Iroquois Indians as an ingredient in their corn medicines. The leaves of it and Sambucus canadensis were combined in water in which the corn was soaked before planting (Waugh 1916). According to Tantaquidgeon (1942), the Delaware Indians used the fruit as a love charm. The fruits are considered quite edible, being eaten when ripe in the late summer. Waugh (1916) states that the Iroquois ate them fresh as well as dried. They should be eaten with caution, since several herbalists indicate that the fruits are sure and active cathartics. Gibbons (1967) indicates that juice and marmalade can be made from the fruit.



Many of the medicinal uses of mayapple were known by the Indians who introduced it to the early settlers (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). According to Tantaquidgeon (1942), the Delaware Indians used it as a spring tonic and laxative. Fenton (1941) reports that the Iroquois knew about the cathartic action of the fruit.

Most herbalists state that it is the root that is chiefly used in medicine. In mild doses it is a stomachic, an alternative, a cathartic, an emmenagogue and a diaphoretic. According to Johnson (1884), it increases intestinal secretions. In large doses the root is purgative, emetic and anthelmintic. It can produce nausea and severe intestinal upset ending in death (Grieve 1971). Externally, powdered mayapple root has been used as a counter-irritant. It should be used with caution.

The plant contains a crystalline substance podophyllotoxin, and podophylloresin, both of which are purgative and poisonous, podophyllic acid and picropodophyllin (Coons 1963).

A mild dose can be prepared by infusing 1 tsp. of the powdered root in 1 pt. of boiling water. Take 1 tsp. at a time as needed (Meyer 1972).

Many old-time mushroom hunters use this plant as an omen of the presence of mushrooms.

#### Season of Availability:

The fruit is available in the late summer. The roots to be used medicinally should be collected in late September or October, or for some purposes throughout the summer (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

Mayapple is abundant in moist woods throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Polygalaceae--Milkwort Family

Polygala senega L.

Folknames:

Seneca snakeroot (Johnson 1884), Seneka, Senega (Meyer 1972),  
Snakeroot, Milkwort, Mountain flax, Rattlesnake root (Grieve 1971).

Description:

Several erect stems from 8-14 in. arise from a perennial, branching root. Leaves alternate, nearly sessile, lowest reduced and scale-like. Flowers white, in dense racemes, sepals 5, petals 3. Native.

Comments:

The generic name of this plant is derived from Greek; it means "much milk." Senega refers to the Seneca Indian tribe of the New York area who used this plant as a remedy for rattlesnake bite (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). Fenton (1941) states that the Iroquois also used it as a treatment for snake bite. The roots were chewed and applied.

Herbalists' uses of the root of this plant include diaphoretic, diuretic and expectorant in small doses, and emetic and purgative in large doses. Johnson (1884) reports that the root was used as a stimulating expectorant in later stages of bronchial and pulmonary affections, and it has also been found useful in rheumatism. A mild dose can be prepared by infusing 1 tsp. of the root in 1 c. of boiling water. Drink cold, 1 cup per day, a mouthful at a time (Meyer 1972).

Snakeroot contains the glucosides senegin and polygalic acid (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

Season of Availability:

The rootstick should be collected in the fall and the knotty crown removed before drying (Tehon 1951).

**Habitat:**

The plant is infrequent in rich, dry woods especially along streams and around lakes in the northern half of Illinois (Tehon 1951).

## Family Polygonaceae--Buckwheat Family

### Rumex acetosella L.

#### Folknames:

Sheep sorrel, Sour grass, Red sorrel (Meyer 1972), Sour dock, Field sorrel (Jones 1963).

#### Description:

Erect annual or perennial, 1/2 to 1-1/2 ft.; leaves variable, usually 3-lobed, the terminal lobe narrowly elliptic to oblong, the lateral much smaller, triangular. Flowers greenish, in small verticils aggregated into a compound inflorescence which is sometimes half the length of the plant. Native of Eurasia.

#### Comments:

Tantaquidgeon (1942) reports that the Delaware Indians prepared this plant much like we do rhubarb. According to Waugh (1916), the Iroquois ate the plant raw as a salad. Europeans also used this plant as a spring salad ingredient and knew that it was good against scurvy (Culpeper 1952).

The leaves are refrigerant and diuretic. A decoction of the leaves is a pleasant, cooling drink, used to treat fevers (Lindley 1838). Boil 1 tsp. of the herb in 1 c. of water, drink cold (Meyer 1972).

The constituents are similar to R. crispus L.

#### Season of Availability:

The young leaves to be used for food and medicine should be collected in the spring.

#### Habitat:

Red sorrel is common along roadsides, in fields, and on waste ground throughout Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Polygonaceae--Buckwheat Family

Rumex crispus L.

Folknames:

Sour dock (Gilmore 1919), Yellow dock, Curled dock, Narrow dock, Rumex (Meyer 1972), Narrow-leaved dock, Bitter dock, Out-sting (Coons 1963).

Description:

Deep, perennial, spindle-shaped, yellow root. Stem 2-3 ft., leaves lanceolate, strongly crisped, acute, of a light green color. Flowers numerous, pale green, drooping and interspersed with leaves below, aggregated into compound inflorescence. Native.

Comments:

Waugh (1916) reports that the Iroquois Indians used the young leaves as a potherb. The Omaha Indians had the same use (Gilmore 1919), as do many people today. According to Meyer (1972), it is a good source of digestable plant iron.

Medicinally, the Dakota Indians used the crushed green leaves on boils to draw out suppuration (Gilmore 1919). The root has been used as an alternative, a tonic, a diuretic and a laxative. Tantaquidgeon (1942) states that the Delaware Indians used the root as a blood purifier and as a remedy for jaundice. A decoction or ointment of the root applied externally will cure itch and skin irritations (Lindley 1938).

Season of Availability:

For food use, the tender young greens should be picked in the spring. Cooking them in 2 or 3 waters will remove their bitterness. For medicinal use, the root is collected in the summer or fall after the seed tops have turned brown (Tehon 1951).

**Habitat:**

Sour dock is a common weed in waste places along roads and ditches, and in low damp ground throughout the state (Tehon 1951).

Family Portulacaceae--Purslane Family

Claytonia virginica L.

Folknames:

Spring beauty, Fairy spuds (Fernald et al. 1958).

Description:

Perennial herb from a rounded corm, with one or few leaves from the base and a single opposite pair on the stem below the loose terminal raceme, 4-6 in.; flowers white, with pink veins. Native.

Comments:

The small corms found 2-3 inches below the ground were used by the Iroquois for food (Waugh 1916). Schery (1952) reports that the roots and rhizomes were used by many American Indians, especially for winter food. The roots can be boiled or roasted. They have a sweet flavor, resembling potatoes. Only in regions where the plants are superabundant would the quantity be sufficient to repay digging for the corms. The young above-ground herb can be used as a potherb (Fernald et al. 1958).

Season of Availability:

The greens should be collected when available in early spring. The tubers can be collected when they can be detected by the presence of the plant in spring and summer.

Habitat:

Spring beauty is abundant in woods and waysides throughout Illinois (Jones 1963).

Family Ranunculaceae--Buttercup Family

Caltha palustris L.

Folknames:

Marsh marigold (Waugh 1916), American cowslip, Palsywort, Water dragon (Carter 1888), Kingcups, Water blobs, Horse blobs, Bulls eyes, Leopard's foot, Meadow routs (Grieve 1971), Cowslip, Mare blobs (Coons 1963).

Description:

Stem 1-2 ft., bearing one or more rounded, kidney-shaped entire or crenate leaves and a few flowers produced terminally. Basal leaves long-petioled, the others progressively less so. Flowers bright yellow, sepals 5-9, petals none. Perennial herb. Native.

Comments:

Marsh marigold is the herb of the May Day festival in Ireland and parts of Europe, being associated more with divination and magic than therapeutics. Garlands were made of it to protect cattle and rid them of evil influences of fairies and witches (Moloney 1919).

The Iroquois cooked the young leaves of this plant like spinach (Waugh 1916). As well as being usable as a potherb, the flower buds can be pickled. They should first be boiled in two waters to remove the bitter acrid principle before pickling (Fernald et al. 1958).

Medicinally, cowslip has been used as an expectorant and pectoral, being useful in cough syrups (Coons 1963). Gibbons (1967) states that the juice of this plant has been used to remove warts.

The fresh plant contains the poisonous glucoside helleborin, which is expelled in boiling (Fernald et al. 1958). It also contains berberine,



a bitter tonic and astringent which is used in inflammation of the mucous membranes. An average dose consists of 2 g. (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). According to Grieve (1971), an infusion of the flowers has been used to treat fits in children and adults. The juice of the plant makes a yellow stain.

#### Season of Availability:

For use as a potherb or for medicine, the plant or plant parts should be collected in early spring and summer (Fernald et al. 1958).

#### Habitat:

Cowslip can be found throughout central Illinois on wet ground (Jones 1963).

Family Ranunculaceae--Crowfoot Family

Hydrastis canadensis L.

Folknames:

Golden seal, Yellow root, Yellow puccoon (Johnson 1884), Indian tumeric (Tehon 1951), Orange root (Ward 1967), Yellow eye (Carter 1888), Ground raspberry, Wild curcumis, Tumeric root, Indian dye, Eye root, Eye balm, Indian paint, Jaundice root (Grieve 1971).

Description:

Perennial, from a tortuous, knotty, creeping, yellow rhizome. Stem erect, simple, 6-12 in., bearing two unequal terminal leaves. Leaves alternate, palmate, having from 3 to 5 lobes, hairy, dark-green, cordate at base. Flower solitary, terminal, white or rose colored, 3 sepals, no petals. Native.

Comments:

The American aborigine used the root of golden seal to make a yellow dye used on their clothing and weapons (Grieve 1971). According to Meyer (1972), it will dye cloth from yellow to orange, depending on the mordant used.

Medicinally, the root of golden seal has been used as a tonic, an alternative, a laxative, a diuretic and as a treatment for inflammation of mucous membranes. According to Johnson (1884), the rhizomes and rootlets are a powerful tonic, having been used as a substitute for quinine in the treatment of intermittent fevers. Coons (1963) states that golden seal promotes digestion, improves the appetite, and is useful for treating typhoid fever. It is detergent and has a gentle laxative action which is valuable in chronic constipation. It reduces sickness and vomiting from stomach upset (Grieve 1971). According to Johnson

(1884), the American Indians used the roots as a topical application to ulcers and arrow wounds, and as eye drops to soothe infected eyes. The Indians also used a decoction of the plant as a vaginal douche (Coons 1963). It has been used to treat gonorrhoea and hemorrhoids (Johnson 1884). A mild dose can be prepared by infusing 1 tsp. of the powdered root in 1 pt. of boiling water. Drink cold in small amounts during the day (Coons 1963).

Golden seal contains the alkaloids berberine, hydrastine and canadine (Kraemer 1915).

#### Season of Availability:

The roots and rhizomes should be collected in the fall (Kraemer 1915). The leaves should be collected in the late summer (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

The plant can be found in moist, rich woods throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

Family Rubiaceae--Madder Family

Mitchella repens L.

Folknames:

Partridge berry, Twin berry, Snake vine (Fernald et al. 1958), Squaw berry (Waugh 1916), Winter clover (Carter 1888), Checker berry, Deerberry, One-berry (Grieve 1971), Two-eyed checker berry, Running box (Coons 1963), Hive-vine (Meyer 1972).

Description:

Smooth creeping stem arising from a perennial root, 1-8 in., forming mats. Leaves petioled, round-ovate, opposite, dark-green. Flowers white, often tinged with red, mostly terminal, in pairs, 4-merous. Native.

Comments:

The generic name is derived from the name of Dr. John Mitchell, a botanist from Virginia. Repens comes from Latin, meaning "to creep" (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

The berries, considered barely edible by some, were used by the Iroquois for food, being eaten fresh or dried (Waugh 1916).

Medicinally, the herb has been used primarily as a tonic, a diuretic, an astringent, an emmenagogue and a parturient. According to Tantaquidgeon (1942), the Delaware Indians made a tea of the plant to treat suppressed menstruation, and as a strengthener to the female organs. Grieve (1971) states that Indian women took this medicine a number of weeks before delivery to make childbirth safe and easy. The Indians also used the plant as a tonic and a diuretic. An infusion can be prepared by adding 1 tsp. of the vine to 1 c. of boiling water (Meyer 1972).

Partridge berry has been used to treat dropsy, suppression of urine, diarrhea, and sore nipples (Grieve 1971).

The plant contains tannin and a bitter principle (Tehon 1951).

#### Season of Availability:

The herb is collected for medicinal use throughout the summer (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

Squaw vine is locally abundant through most of the state in woods with acid soils (Tehon 1951).

## Family Scrophulariaceae--Figwort Family

### Verbascum thapsus L.

#### Folknames:

Mullein, Shepherd's club, Bullock's lungwort (Carter 1888), Great mullein, Gray leaf (Tantaquidgeon 1942), Cow's lungwort (Tehon 1951), Blanket herb, Candle flower (Ward 1967), Jacob's staff, Flannel-leaf, Velvet leaf, Velvet dock, Torches, Hedge taper, Candlewicks, Big taper, Clown's lungwort, Fettwort, Hare's beard, Peter's staff, Touchwort (Spencer 1940), Aaron's rod, Lungwort (Coons 1963), White mullein, Rag paper, Wild ice leaf, Bullocks lungwort, Hag's taper (Grieve 1971), Beggars blanket, Adam's flannel, Cuddy's lungs, Tinder plant, Quaker rouge (Gibbons 1967).

#### Description:

Biennial with a tall, straight, stout, wooly, simple stem, 3-6 ft.; lower leaves oblong or oblanceolate, petioled, upper leaves progressively reduced, sessile, alternate, entire or toothed, wooly. Flowers yellow, in a spike-like raceme; calyx regular, 5-parted; corolla nearly regular. Native of Europe.

#### Comments:

In ancient Rome and Germany, women used an infusion of the flowers to give their hair a golden or yellow color. Quaker girls and settler girls rubbed the leaves on their cheeks to redden them (Coons 1963). Spencer (1940) states that European peasants scraped the hairs off of the leaves of this plant and used them to make candlewicks. The hairs on the leaves also make an excellent tinder when dry for starting fires. Europeans used the dried flower stalks dipped in suet as torches or tapers (Grieve 1971).

Medicinally, mullein has had many uses: emollient, demulcent, expectorant, astringent and pain reliever. Spencer (1940) states that the smoke of the dried leaves provides relief from asthma and other spasmodic coughs and pulmonary complaints. Heated poultices of the leaves applied to sore muscles to allay rheumatism pains and reduce swellings, were used by the Delaware Indians (Tantaquidgeon 1942). Grieve (1971) states that poultices of the leaves were also used to treat hemorrhoids. Infusions and decoctions of the leaves are taken internally for chest complaints, coughs of asthma and as a treatment for diarrhea. In Europe, an oz. of the dried leaves was boiled in 1 pt. of milk for treating such coughs and more recently for diarrhea (Moloney 1919). An infusion of the flowers is considered to be a remedy for mild throat and nose inflammation. In an ointment, it is serviceable for ringworm and other fungoid infections. Mullein oil, made from steeping the flowers in olive oil, has been used externally to treat earache, frostbite and bruises. Mullein juice and the powdered roots are said to remove rough warts (Grieve 1971).

Mullein contains mucilage, a volatile oil and a resinous substance (Kraemer 1915).

#### Season of Availability:

The leaves and the flowers when fully open, are collected (Tehon 1951). The root can be collected in the spring or fall.

#### Habitat:

Mullein is a common weed in all open waste places throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

## Family Solanaceae--Nightshade Family

### Datura stramonium L.

#### Folknames:

Jimson weed, Jamestown weed (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936), Nightshade, Thorn-apple, Stink-weed, Apple of Peru (Meyer 1972), Stinkwort, Devil's trumpet, Devil's apples, Mad apple (Spencer 1940).

#### Description:

Coarse, heavy-scented, inconspicuously puberulent annual, often divaricately branched to 5 ft.; leaves petiolate, with large, coarsely, few-toothed or sublobate blade. Calyx cylindric or prismatic; corolla elongate-funnelform, very large; fruit a 2-carpellate, 4-celled, spiny capsule, opening by 4 apical valves. Native.

#### Comments:

The generic name of this plant is from the Sanskrit word dhatura and the Arabic word tatura, a native name. Stramonium comes from French; it means "stinkweed" (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936).

Grieve (1971) indicates that Jimson weed has been used medicinally as an antispasmodic, an anodyne, and a narcotic, being sedative to the central nervous system. The leaves are smoked to relieve the symptoms of spasmodic asthma (Lindley 1838). Culpeper (1952) states that the juice of the fresh plant is taken in doses from "half a grain to a dram in 24 hours to treat epileptic disorders, convulsions and madness." Externally jimson weed has been used in poultices and ointments to relieve pain in burns, rheumatism, irritable ulcers and hemorrhoids (Lindley (1838).

Most authors warn that jimson weed is a strong narcotic and violently poisonous. It contains the alkaloids hyoscyamine, atropine and



scopalomine (Tehon 1951). Gathercoal and Wirth (1936) state that an average dose consists of 0.075 g. of the dried leaves and flowering tops. According to Grieve (1971), poisoning symptoms include dimness of sight, dialation of the pupils, giddiness, delirium and sometimes death.

#### Season of Availability:

The leaves and flowering tops are collected when the plant is in flower; the seeds when mature in the summer (Tehon 1951).

#### Habitat:

Jimson weed can be found throughout Illinois as a weed in fields, waste places and in cattle and hog yards on farms (Tehon 1951).

## Family Typhaceae--Cat-tail Family

### Typha latifolia L.

#### Folknames:

Cat-tail (Gilmore 1919), Reed mace (Carter 1888), Great reed mace (Moloney 1919).

#### Description:

Stems 3-8 ft. from a perennial rhizome; leaves flat, linear, sheathing at the base. Flowers unisexual, densely crowded in long, cylindrical, terminal spikes; perianth none, staminate flowers subtended by hairs; pistillate flowers composed of a 1-celled ovary. Native.

#### Comments:

According to Gilmore (1919), certain Indians of the Missouri Valley used the "down" to make dressings for treating burns and scalds, and on infants to prevent chafing. Newborn infants were laid in a mass of this "down" and the mother removed it with milk from her breast. Pads of cat-tail down were used as diapers. It was used as filling for pillows and as padding for cradle boards, baby wrappings and in quilting. Pieces of the stem were considered essential in making ceremonial objects.

Tantaquidgeon (1942) states that the Delaware Indians made a medicine from the root to dissolve kidney stones. Some herbals indicate that the root has been used as an emollient, an astringent, and that the down was used for treating burns (Carter 1888).

As a food, cat-tail is very useful. Fernald et al. (1958) state that it has been used as a salad, a starchy vegetable, flour for bread, a cooked vegetable in soups, and in making jelly and pickles. According to Gillespie (1951), the peeled young shoots are eaten raw or used for

pickles. The young flower stalks are gathered before the pollen forms and are eaten raw, steamed or eaten in soup. The pith core at the junction of the root and new shoot is eaten raw or roasted, having a taste similar to tapioca. The pollen has been used as flour to make bread.

#### Season of Availability:

The young shoots should be collected in the spring, and the pollen in mid-summer. The rootstocks can be collected in the spring or fall.

#### Habitat:

Cat-tail is commonly found throughout Illinois in marshes, margins of ponds, and along ditches (Jones 1963).

Family Umbelliferae--Parsley Family

Cicuta maculata L.

Folknames:

Water hemlock, Beaver poison (Fernald et al. 1958), Mushquash root (Tehon 1951), Spotted hemlock, Spotted cowbane (Carter 1888), Spotted parsley, Wild hemlock, Snakeweed, Muskrat weed, Cowbane, Death of man (Illinois State Board of Health 1899).

Description:

Stem stout, much branched to 6 ft.; principal leaves twice or thrice pinnately compound with wholly separate leaflets, the uppermost dissected or even simple; leaves linear to lance-ovate, sharply and coarsely serrate to nearly entire. Flowers white, in umbels, compound. Roots clustered. Native.

Comments:

The whole plant is extremely poisonous. The Hurons and the Iroquois used the plant for committing suicide. They also used the roots for poultices for reducing sprains and inflammations (Fenton 1941). The herb has been used as a narcotic, an anodyne and an emetic (Carter 1888). Kraemer (1915), warns that water hemlock is probably responsible for more cases of poisoning in the U. S. than any other green plant. The poisonous property resides in an aromatic, oily fluid, which is found chiefly in the root, but also in the stem, seeds and leaves (Illinois State Board of Health 1899). The toxic substance is a yellowish, amorphous, poisonous substance cicutoxine. It also contains the volatile oil umbelliferon (Kraemer 1915).

Season of Availability:

Tehon (1951) states that the roots, rootstocks and seeds are collected as available.

**Habitat:**

Water hemlock is widespread in wet meadows and pastures throughout Illinois (Tehon 1951).

## Family Umbelliferae--Parsley Family

### Daucus carota L.

#### Folknames:

Queen Anne's lace, Wild carrot, Bird's nest, Crow's nest, Devil's plague (Spencer 1940), Carrot, Beesnest plant (Carter 1888).

#### Description:

Biennial from a stout taproot, 1-3 ft., hirsute to subglabrous; leaves oblong, pinnately decomposed, the ultimate segments linear, lanceolate, or oblong. Inflorescence showy, compound umbels, terminal from the upper axils; flowers mostly white, the marginal ones often enlarged and irregular. Native of Eurasia.

#### Comments:

Culpeper (1952) states that wild carrot belongs to the zodiac sign of Mercury, and "therefore will break wind and remove stiches in the side, provoke urine and helps to break and expel the stones in the kidneys." All parts of this plant have been used medicinally. According to Tantaquidgeon (1942), the Oklahoma Delaware Indians picked the blossoms for infusing as a treatment for diabetes. The seeds are carminative, diuretic and stimulant. Grieve (1971) states that the seeds are good in flatulence, windy colic, hiccoughs, dysentery, chronic coughs and obstruction of the viscera. The leaves and stems have similar qualities as the seeds, being diuretic, and stimulant (Ward 1967). Other authors give analagous uses. The roots have been used as a poultice to relieve pain of wounds and to help healing (Grieve 1971). Fernald et al. (1958) indicate that the roots are edible, but scarcely so.

Wild carrot contains a volatile oil (Tehon 1951).

**Season of Availability:**

The seed is collected when mature in the summer, the leaves before flowering and the roots also before anthesis.

**Habitat:**

Queen Anne's lace was introduced and has become naturalized throughout Illinois in fields, waste places and along roadsides (Tehon 1951).

## Family Valerianaceae--Valerian Family

### Valeriana officinalis L.

#### Folknames:

Valerian, Capon's tail, Great wild valerian (Ward 1967), Garden heliotrope, Phu, Set-wall, All-heal, Nard (Coons 1963), Amantilla (Grieve 1971).

#### Description:

Fibrous rooted perennial, 1/2 to 3-1/2 ft. from a short rhizome; stems hairy at least at the nodes; basal and cauline leaves similar, pinnately divided into 11-21 lanceolate, dentate segments; petioles of the upper leaves progressively shorter. Flowers perfect, corolla 5-lobed, corymbiform inflorescences are large and open. Native of Eurasia.

#### Comments:

Valerian is named for Valerianus, an emperor of Rome (A.D. 253-260), who first used the plant in medicine (Gathercoal and Wirth 1936). It is used as an antispasmodic, a nervine, a carminative and an anthelmintic. According to Lindley (1838), the roots are stimulant, producing a specific influence on the cerebral-spinal system. It is employed in fevers, epilepsy, and hysteria. Ward (1967) states that it promotes sleep and is much valued in neuralgia and nervous debility. Grieve (1971) adds that it is a sedative to the higher nerve centers in conditions of nervous unrest and nervous overstrain with none of the after effects of narcotics. According to Coons (1963), to allay pain and promote sleep, an infusion should be prepared by adding 1 oz. of the dried root to 1 pt. of boiling water.

The roots and rhizomes contain a volatile oil yielding isovaleric acid, an alkaloid, bornyl valerate and a resin (Tehon 1951).



**Season of Availability:**

The roots and rhizomes are collected in the autumn and dried (Kraemer 1915).

**Habitat:**

Valerian has been grown as an ornamental herb in garden throughout Illinois where it has escaped from cultivation (Tehon 1951).

Family Verbenaceae--Verbena Family

Verbena officinalis L.

Folknames:

Vervain (Ward 1967), European vervain (Carter 1888), Herb of grace (Grieve 1971), Blue vervain, Wild hyssop, Herba veneris, Simpler's joy (Coons 1963).

Description:

Slender annual 3-9 in., ascending or erect, the stem glabrous or nearly so; leaves pubescent, the lower ones ovate, narrowed to a petiole, 1-2 pinnatifid or 3-5 cleft, the upper ones smaller and less dissected. Flowers blue, purple, or lilac in slender spikes, ending the stem and branches; calyx 5-angled and 5-toothed; corolla funnelform, weakly 2-lipped. Native of Europe.

Comments:

According to Grieve (1971), this plant was used to bathe Christ's wounds on Mt. Calvary. It was also used in Europe as a charm against snakes and other venomous bites and for general good luck. The bruised leaves were worn around the neck for prevention and treatment of headaches. Moloney (1919) states that the Irish also wore it around their necks, but as a preventative against scrofula.

Herbals list this plant as being a tonic, an emetic, a febrifuge, a diaphoretic, an expectorant and a nervine. Ward (1967) states that vervain is one of the strongest diaphoretics in nature. It is good for colds, coughs, and pain in the head. It was esteemed as a remedy for consumption. According to Grieve (1971), it is useful internally for intermittent fever, ulcers, ophthalmia and pleurisy. Externally, a poultice is serviceable for headache, rheumatism and piles. Carter (1888) also adds that it has been used externally to treat poison ivy.

**Season of Availability:**

For medicinal use, the leaves should be collected as available.

**Habitat:**

This plant has been naturalized from Europe, it is found along roadsides, in fields and in waste places (Cronquist and Gleason 1963).

## GLOSSARY OF ETHNOBOTANICAL - MEDICAL TERMS

alternative - helps alter or correct the symptoms of minor functional disorders.

amenorrhea - absence or suppression of the menses.

analgesic - pain relieving.

anodyne - pain relieving.

anthelmintic - substance that causes the death or removal of intestinal worms.

antiperiodic - reduces fever and prevents its recurrence.

antiscorbutic - used in the prevention or treatment of scurvy.

antispasmodic - allays or helps prevent the recurrence of spasms.

aperient - producing a natural movement of the bowels.

bilious - ailment caused by excess bile.

bronchitis - inflammation of the bronchial tubes.

catarrh - inflammation of a mucous membrane.

cathartic - producing evacuation of the bowels.

chorea - a nervous disorder characterized by irregular and involuntary movement of the muscles.

colic - a cramp or spasmodic pain in the stomach or intestines.

condiment - a food additive, seasoning.

consumption - tuberculosis of the lungs.

counter irritant - irritating agent applied externally to mask a previous irritation.

decoction - a liquid preparation obtained by boiling herbs in order to extract the active principles.

demulcent - allays the action of stimulating or acrid substances, and is soothing to irritated mucous membranes.

deobstruent - removes obstructions from various organs.

detergent - a cleansing substance.

diaphoretic - increases the perspiration; an aid in eliminating waste products through the skin.

diuretic - helps to increase the flow of urine and improve the elimination of wastes through the urine.

doctrine of signatures - belief that morphology or color indicates use.

dropsy - an infiltration of the tissue with watery fluid.

emetic - causing vomiting.

emmenagogue - an agent which stimulates menstrual flow.

emollient - used externally to exert a healing or soothing effect on the skin.

epilepsy - nervous disease characterized by muscle spasms and loss of consciousness.

expectorant - helps facilitate expulsion of mucous from the respiratory tract.

febrifuge - a drug that reduces fever.

flatulence - a state of being affected with the presence of excessive gas in the alimentary canal.

hepatic - an aid in liver disorders.

indolent - slow in healing.

infusion - the process of extracting the active principle of a substance by means of hot water without boiling; or the extract.

jaundice - a pathological condition characterized by yellowish staining of the skin and whites of the eyes.

leucorrhea - excessive bleeding, usually internal.

mucilaginous - gummy or sticky, soothing to inflamed areas.

narcotic - drug that dulls the senses, relieves pain and induces sleep.

nervine - quiets nervous strain due to excitement, fatigue, overstrain, or headache.

neuralgia - severe pain along the course of a nerve.

panacea - a cure-all.

parturient - relating to the process of childbirth.

pectoral - pertaining to the chest.

poultice - a mass of crushed or ground herbs applied externally.

purgative - a drastic cathartic.

refrigerant - agent which has a cooling effect on the skin.

rheumatism - painful inflammation and swelling of the muscles and joints.

scrofula - tubercular disorder causing a swelling of the lymph glands.

sedative - allays nervous irritability.

sialagogue - agent producing the flow of saliva.

stimulant - agent which causes alertness.

stomachic - agent which promotes appetite and strengthens the stomach.

stranguary - painful urination.

sudorific - a strong diaphoretic.

suppuration - production of pus.

tonic - an agent producing normal tone of an organ.

vermifuge - expells or kills intestinal worms.

vertigo - dizziness.

vulnerary - agent that heals wounds.

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