



Cleavers

By Sarah Hillyer

How to use cleavers for a refreshing tea - May

On this beautiful sunny day we have been out picking local cleavers for a refreshing tea. For once, it's possible to forage from the hedgerows alongside country lanes as there are no polluting cars about! You probably picked Cleavers as a child and threw them to stick on your friends' clothing; the Velcro-like hairs will stick to anything! 'Sticky Willie', Goosegrass or Galium Aparine is a wonderful spring herb that is full of minerals and vitamins.

Many foraging books and blogs recommend eating it like spinach. I use it as a spring tonic to cleanse and support the lymphatic system. It can pick up metabolic waste materials from cells, and also provide a healthy environment for our white blood cells. Hence a really important immune boost.

It is often used to help with mumps, tonsillitis and swollen glands. It has been known for centuries as a cleansing herb as it aids the removal of metabolic waste from the body and cleanses the skin. It is also a gentle diuretic so will help with kidney and bladder inflammation.

Making Tea with Cleavers

You will find it growing everywhere along the hedgerows. Pick until the seeds appear in late June. To make a refreshing tea chop up a handful of cleavers and place them in a teapot or cafetière. Cover with boiling water and leave for 5 to 10 minutes. Strain and drink.

Cold Infusion

Wash and chop a handful of cleavers. Place in a jug with some slices of cucumber and lemon. Cover with water and leave in fridge overnight. Both are best made fresh but will last in the fridge for a day. Enjoy and know you are supporting your health.

Guidance

Never consume wild food unless you are 100% sure of its identification.
For more foraging guidelines please see British Local Food below.

About Sarah

Sarah Hillyer is a herbalist working in Sussex and Hampshire. Sarah has a degree in Phytotherapy (herbal medicine) and a Diploma in Nutrition.

Sarah teaches Herbal Workshops and Natural Wellbeing at The Sustainability Centre.

Links

<https://www.sustainability-centre.org/medicinal-herb-workshops.html>

www.southdownsherbalist.co.uk

<https://britishlocalfood.com/foraging-etiquette/>