Standard Entry: *Herb Encyclopædia*

MALLOW (Common) *Malva Verticellata*

Common Mallow

Common Name: HIGH MALLOW.

Features: Mallow, popular name of plants of the genus Malva, family Malvaceæ, including annuals, biennials and perennials. There are about thirty species native to Europe, North Africa and Asia, several of which have been naturalized in North America. Malva verticellata grows abundantly in fields, roadsides, and waste places.

This species is erect or branching, 1–3½ in. high, with rounded heart-shaped leaves; small flowers are pink-veined against purple appearing clustered or single flowering from May to October. The whole plant abounds in mucilage, more especially the root; odour slight; taste sweetish. The fresh dried leaves are put into *decoctions;*[1] the root may be dried but it is best fresh, if chosen when there are leaves growing from it.

Medicinal Part: The herb.

Solvent: Water.

Bodily Influence: *Demulcent,*[2] *Emollient.*[3]

Uses: As with other mucilagionous herbs the properties of M. verticellata are an excellent *demulcent* in coughs, irritation of the air passages, flux, affections of the kidney and bladder, *etc.* Pliny wrote: "That anyone taking a spoonful of mallows will be free of disease." Parkinson wrote: "Leaves and roots boiled in wine or water or in both with parsley doth help to open the body for hot agues. Leaves bruised and laid on the eyes with a little honey take away the inflammation from them." The Chinese eat the leaves raw in salad, or boiled in spinach.

Dose: 1 teaspoonful of the herb to 1 cup of boiling water. Drink one or two cupfuls a day. Of the tincture ½ –1 fl. dram.

Externally: In inflammatory conditions of the external parts, the bruised herb forms an excellent application, making as it does a natural emollient *cataplasm.*[4] Our Indians used leaves, soft stems and flowers, steeped and made into a poultice for running sores, boils and swelling.

Russian Experience: Malva is known and pronounced in Russia as we do in America. There are several wild species throughout the land. Industry has stimulated cultivation.

Folk Medicine: The medical properties of Malva are appreciated in cases of *cathartic*[5] excess of the stomach and bowels. Also respiratory ailments of the common cold, sore throat, lung congestion, *etc.* used as a tea, poultice or Nastoika (with vodka). Malva contains a large amount of mucilage and sugar, plus Vitamin C, minerals, kerotin and colouring matter.

Industrial: For 1 acre 8–10 lb. of seeds are needed on an average. The following is estimated after a three–year period: roots 1,000–2,000 lb., leaves 1,000 lb.; seeds 200 lb. Ordinary grain seeding is done during the spring, or transplants from the greenhouse, in which case they yield more from the first year harvest.

Technical Terms:

1. Decoctions: to boil in water.
2. Demulcent: Soothing.
3. Emollient: Softening, relaxing.
4. Cataplasm: A soothing poultice often medicated.
5. Cathartic: purgative, purifying emptying of the bowels, a laxative.