

# Greenwood Herbals

## May 2005

### What's blooming at Greenwood Herbals in May:

Batchelor Buttons  
Bleeding Hearts  
Blood Root  
Celandine  
Chickweed  
Coltsfoot  
Golden Seal  
Lungwort  
Periwinkle  
Siberian Pea  
Solomon Seal  
Sweet Geranium  
Sweet Woodruff  
Veronica  
Violet

In May I am usually finishing up with spring cleaning. The gardens have all been raked clean of winter debris and the twigs and leaves have been removed. I am now ready to add compost to the gardens and work it into the soil. I want to be ready to begin planting by the end of the month. But looking at my garden journals over the past ten years, I see that I am two weeks behind. And it isn't just me. I have been waiting and waiting on the soil. It has just been too wet. I don't want to take the chance of becoming impatient and ruin the structure of my soil. It has taken me too long to get it just right. The plants are behind schedule too. In previous years I have been enjoying the blooms of Bleeding Heart, Solomon Seal and Lungwort by the beginning of the month. I noticed that these plants are just now emerging from their long winter sleep. (The list of plants to the left is from prior years). The only plant that seems to be on time this year is Coltsfoot. So since it is calling so much attention to itself, I thought it appropriate to discuss the plant and its uses here.



#### **Coltsfoot *Tussilago farfara***

An expectorant, demulcent, antispasmodic, astringent, and anti-inflammatory. It is used in almost any respiratory complaint, from irritating coughs, bronchitis, asthma, laryngitis to emphysema. Coltsfoot is one of the most popular remedies for the treatment of chest complaints. It is often used in the treatment of chronic emphysema and silicosis, helping to relieve the persistent cough associated with these conditions. Coltsfoot is particularly effective when used in combination with Licorice Root, Thyme, and Wild Cherry. A poultice of the flowers has a soothing effect on skin disorders including eczema, ulcers, sores, bites and inflammations

The plant is considered invasive by some gardeners. It will grow almost anywhere when grown in full sun. It prefers a moist neutral to alkaline soil and will also grow in partial shade. Coltsfoot is a very tough plant. When planted in a good location its roots will spread sending up new shoots some distance from the clump even if growing among dense competition. This can make it a problem weed in gardens. The leaves are harvested in June and early July, the flowers are harvested when fully open and the root is harvested in the autumn. All can be dried and used as required.

Greenwood Herbals has this plant growing in its medicinal herb garden. Right now it is in full bloom and the leaf is just starting to emerge. It is invasive, but as I harvest this plant it hasn't really bothered me too much. Oh, yes, when I saw it coming up in the valerian and over in the iris, I was a little perturbed, but looking at my stores, I see that I only have a small amount left from last year's harvest. So I am hoping for a good amount this year. We use the leaf in our asthma, bronchial, cough, and in our anti-fungal formulas due to its anti-inflammatory properties.

Greenwood Herbals  
561 Parsonsfield Rd  
Limerick, ME 04048

207-793-3553  
[www.greenwoodherbals.com](http://www.greenwoodherbals.com)

## Announcements:

- The Labyrinth has been cleared and is in need of new mulch, but is open to the public. Please don't forget to bring your own rocks to add to the Labyrinth.
- The website has been updated. Check it out at [www.greenwoodherbals.com](http://www.greenwoodherbals.com). My dear friend Bryan Shoup, who designed my website, has officially turned it over to me for maintenance. Bryan has done an exceptional job and is a skilled graphic designer. Bryan specializes in crafting digital and print designs for all personal and business needs. If you need a website or a business card designed or know someone who does, contact him at [design@graphicshoup.com](mailto:design@graphicshoup.com) or check out his website at [www.graphicshoup.com](http://www.graphicshoup.com) to check out his other work.
- This month Jan Conley will be coming up to help us mark the medicine trails through the woods. Jan is a fellow Master Gardener and is great at identifying plants. I am so grateful that she has agreed to help me do this. The medicinal trails will consist of trails leading to native and medicinal Northeast Woodland plants. Our woods in Limerick are full of wild food and medicine.
- This is a reminder that we will be closed August 26th through August 28th. I will be attending the Women's Herbal Conference.

Greenwood Herbals  
561 Parsonsfield Rd  
Limerick, ME 04048

207-793-3553  
[www.greenwoodherbals.com](http://www.greenwoodherbals.com)

