

Common Name: **Borage**

Genus: *Borago*

Species: *officinalis*

Family: Boraginaceae

AKA: Burrage, Bee Bread, Common Bugloss, Starflower



Historical Uses:

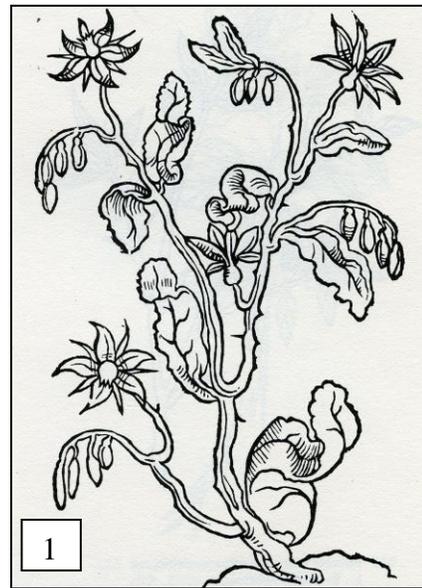
Medical: “The leaves boyled among other pot herbs do much prevaile in making the belly soluble, they being boyled in honied water be also good against the roughnesse of the throat, and hoarsenesse, as Galen teacheth. Syrrup made with the floures of Borage comforteth the heart, purgeth melancholy, and quieteth the phrenticke or lunaticke person.” (1)

“Let whoever’s eyes are cloudy break borage into pieces, smear this on a piece of red silk cloth, and put this on his or her eyes at night. Do this often; the cloudiness of the eye will flee. It is not harmful if some of the ointment touches the inside of the eyes. If the piece of silk be green or white, let the person put borage juice on it and then smear it ion felt. Place this around the entire neck, over the back of the head and right up to the ears, but not over the ears. Do this often and the ringing of the ears will stop.” (2)

“Borage was used as a mild medicine. It was said to calm the heart, purge melancholy and calm lunatics. The leaves eaten raw were said to ‘engender good blood’, or to encourage health.” (3)

“It was known as a diuretic, demulcent, emollient. Herbalists believed that borage imparted a sense of well-being, and the Roman scholar Pliny considered it to be an antidepressant.” (4)

Culinary: “Those of our time do use the floures in sallads, to exhilarate and make the mind glad. There be also many things made of them, used everywhere for the comfort of the heart, for the driuing away of sorrow, and



increasing the joy of the mind.”
(5)

“The leaves and floures of borage
put into wine make men and
women glad and merry, and drive
away all sadnesse, dullness, and
melancholy, as *Dioscorides* and
Pliny affirme.” (6)

“A pot herb. The leaves and
flowers of borage, although hairy,
are a nice addition to a salad or
sandwich. The flavor, resembling
that of a cucumber, brings a cool
refreshment of flavor. The flowers
are also used as a candied cake
décor and added to syrups. Borage
is said to encourage excitement to
the mind.” (7)



Folklore/Astrology: A flower of
Jupiter, it is warm and moist in
the first degree. (8)

Additional Historical Facts:
“*Pliny* called it Homer’s
Nepenthe, capable of inducing
absolute forgetfulness and named
it *Euphrosynum* after the one of
the three graces (Euphrosyne)
who brought joy, since it
promoted cheer and merriment.”
(9)



Ego Borago gaudia semper ago = I, Borage bring always courage (10)

Contemporary Uses:

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Summer Drink, wine & cider: Borage was said to encourage exhilaration and make the mind glad (11).

Candied flowers: The flowers are made into a sweet by adding sugar. (12)

Syrup: Can be made from the flower. (13)

Young Leaves & Flowers: Although hairy, the flavor is cool and refreshing, tasting similar to that of a cucumber. Add to a salad or sandwich.

Cautions: Borage may be harmful in large doses. It can be a skin irritant and possible allergen, and there is a presence of pyrrolizidine alkaloids. (14)

Area of Origin: Europe

Physical description: Rough, pubescent, and rounded stems. Leaves are alternate, large, wrinkled, deep green, ovoid, with a pointed apex. Leaves are greater than 3 inches, 1 ½ inches broad with many stiff hairs on upper surface and veins. Margin is entire and wavy. Occasionally has foliage that is variegated. Flowers are purple, blue or white forming on a raceme. They are star shaped with 5 petals, dark black anthers form a cone at the center.

Plant type: Annual (occasionally biennial), self-seeding.

Form: Basal rosette growth although often forming an erect stem.

Height: 24 in. in vegetative growth; up to 36 in. during flower.

Flower color: Purple, blue or white.

Flowering period: June through fall frost.

Soil type: Prefers sandy, poor soils

Soil requirements: Prefers well-drained, sandy soils.

Ph: Alkaline soils

Fruit: Brownish purple nutlets containing four seeds

Hardiness zone: Hardy annual

Sun requirements: Prefers full sun, performing well in partial shade.

Propagation: Sow seeds directly into soil at 2 in. depth, as the tap root prefers not to be disturbed. A hard frost is able to kill off full size plants and seedlings. When seeding for transplants, seed 2-3 weeks before last frost date.

Bibliography

1. Gerard, p. 796
2. Von Bingen, p. 168
3. Grieve, p. 119-120
4. Orzolek,
5. Gerard, p. 796
6. Ibid.
7. Grieve, p. 119-120
8. Anderson, p. 53-54
9. Ibid.
10. Gerard, p. 796
11. Grieve, p. 119-120
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid
14. Bown, p. 145

Illustrations:

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| 1. Schoffer Herbal | 1485 |
| 2. PSUMG | 2011 |
| 3. PSUMG | 2011 |
| 4. PSUMG | 2011 |