

Common Name: **Dill**

Genus: *Anethum*

Species: *graveolens*

Family: *Apiaceae*

AKA: Polgidos, Cynocephali, Mercurij



## Historical Uses:

### Medical:

“The dill being boiled and drank, is good to ease swellings and pains; it also stayeth the belly and stomach from casting. The decoction thereof helpth women that are troubled with the pains and windiness of the mother, if they sit therein. It stayeth the hiccough, being boiled in wine, and but smelled unto, being tied in a cloth.” (1)

“A diuretic, a relief for flatulence, hiccoughs, and halted vomiting; it eased pains and other problems of the womb, and increased lactation. Continued use dulled the sight and reduced sexual powers, but Gerard credited it as an aphrodisiac, a reliever of hysteria, a curative for moist ulcers in the rectal and genital areas, and a soporific for infants.” (2)

“For genital itching or soreness, take the plant that is called anetum or dill, burn it into dust, then take the dust and honey and mix it

together. First bathe the sore place with warm myrtle-tree water, and then apply the preparation. If the same thing troubles a woman, her midwife should provide the same remedy for there as we said earlier. For headache, take the flowers of the same plant and simmer them with oil. Apply this to the temples and fasten it to the head.” (3)

“Let whoever has much blood flowing from his or her nostrils take dill and twice as much yarrow and place these green herbs around the forehead, temples, and chest. These herbs ought to be fresh since their strength flourishes mainly in their greenness. If it is winter, one should pulverize them and place the powder, sprinkled with a little



wine, in a little pouch, and put it on the person's forehead, temples, and chest, as mentioned above. Accordingly, in order that a man may extinguish the pleasure and desire of his flesh, let him take dill during the summer, twice as much water mint, a little more tithymal, and the root of Illyrian iris. Let him stir all these ingredients into vinegar and make a paste from these. Then let him eat these frequently with all his food. In winter, however, let him pulverize these and chew the powder with his food since he is not able to have the greenness of these herbs at this time. In a humid and mild wind, when cows get sick easily, mix dill and a little less of Illyrian iris root in their fodder. This consumes the bad humors in the cattle." (4)

"Ye decoction of ye dried haire and of ye seed being drank, draws down milk and assuageth the tormina and inflations, and stops both ye belly and ye vomitings that float on ye top of ye stomach; it moves urine, it stayeth ye hickets, and being drank too long together it both dulls the sight and extinguisheth geniture, but ye decoction thereof is good by way of Insession for women troubled with womb-griefs, but the seed being burnt, and sprinkled on takes away ye Condylomata." (5)

"Like the other umbelliferous fruits and volatile oils, both Dill fruit and oil of Dill possess stimulant, aromatic, carminative and stomachic properties, making them of considerable medicinal value. Oil of Dill is used in mixtures, or administered in doses of 5 drops on sugar, but its most common use is in the preparation of Dill Water, which is a common domestic remedy for the flatulence of infants, and is a useful vehicle for children's medicine generally." (6)



Close-up of the seeds

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"The seed likewise if it be smelled unto stayeth the hicket, especially if it be boyled in wine, but cheefely if it be boyled in Wormewood Wine, or Wine and a few branches of Worme-wood, and Rose leaves, and the stomach bathed therewith. Galen faith, that being burnt and layed upon moist ulcers, it cureth them, especially those in the secret parts, and likewise those sub pre and putio, though they be old and of long continuance. Common Oyle, in which Dill is boyled or funned, as we do oyle of Roses, doth digest, migrate paine, procureth sleepe, bringeth raw and unconcoted humors to perfect digestion, and prouoketh bodily luft. Dill is of great force of efficacy against the suffocation or

strangling of the mother, if the woman do receive the fume thereof being boyled in wine, and put under a closed stole or hallow seat fit for the purpose.” (7)

**Culinary:**

“In whatever way it is eaten, it makes a person sad. It is not desirable to eat it raw because it has more of the dampness of the earth in it than fennel and it draws a little of the richness of the earth to itself. As a result, it is bad for a person to eat it raw, but nevertheless it checks gout and is thus useful in food.” (8)

“As a sweet herb, Dill is not much used in this country. When employed, it is for flavoring soups, sauces, etc., for which purpose the young leaves only are required. The leaves added to fish, or mixed with pickled cucumbers give them a spicy taste. Dill vinegar, however, forms a popular household condiment. It is made by soaking the seeds in vinegar for a few days before using. The French use Dill seeds for flavoring cakes and pastry, as well as for flavoring sauces. Perhaps the chief culinary use of Dill seeds is in pickling cucumbers: they are employed in this way chiefly in Germany where pickled cucumbers are largely eaten.” (9)

**Folklore/Astrology:**

“Mercury hath the dominion of this plant, and therefore to be sure it strengthens the brain.” (10)

“Dill was used both in and against witch craft, as in “Vervain and dill/That hindereth witches of their will.” Boiled in wine, it roused the passions, and was under the sign of Mercury. Some translators of the Bible have mistakenly called it anise, an error that has persisted for over two centuries but is now being corrected through improved scholarship.” (11)

“Dill is an Herbe of Protection. It has been used to repel negative energies and black magic. It keeps one’s mind clear and gives strength to reason. It has been used to protect the user from falling prey to the results of the belief in superstition. Dill is also an herbe used in blessings, particularly those for the home and the kitchen.” (12)

**Other:** “Mentioned in the Bible “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithes of mint and dill (incorrectly translated in the King James version of 1611) and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of law, judgment, mercy and faith.” Mathew 23:23. (13)

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**Contemporary Uses:**

**Parts Used:** Leaves, seeds, and oil.

**Medicinal:** “Internally for digestive disorders, including indigestion, colic, gas (especially as an ingredient of gripe water for babies), and hiatus hernia.” (14)

**Culinary:** “Both seeds and leaves are widely used in cooking, especially in Scandinavian cuisine, with eggs, fish, seafood, and potatoes. Sprigs of dill are added to

pickles and vinegar; chopped dill is the man flavoring in gravlax (preserved salmon).” (15)

“Dill is used primarily for its aromatic properties, in flavoring pickles and the like. The green, ground, is excellent in salads, but it has a more interesting history as a Magickal Herbe. As such, it is a good choice for kitchen magick, to bring an air of well-being to your guests.” (16)

“Dill-seed cakes make a good ritual bread for all to share at the bread-breaking part of the ritual.” (17)

“Its oil and seeds are used as a flavoring in the liquor and pickling industries, and in curry powders.” (18)

**Economic:** Oil is used in commercial medicines, soaps, detergents, and for flavoring in the food industry.

**Other:** “Dill may be used in cleaning, or added to the incense.” (19)

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**Area of Origin:** Native to Southern Europe

**Physical description:** Slender plant with a single, easily uprooted stem, and a matte, rather than shiny, appearance.

**Plant type:** Annual or biennial

**Form:** Upright

**Height:** 20 to 40 inches

**Flower color:** Yellow flowers.

**Flowering period:** Summer

**Soil type/requirements:** Well-drained, neutral to slightly acid soil.

**pH:** 5.0 to 8.2, average 6.5

**Hardiness zone:** USDA zone 8-14

**Sun requirements:** Full sun

**Propagation:** By seed sown in spring or summer.

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## **Sources**

1. Culpeper, pg. 51
2. Anderson, pg. 28
3. Van Arsdall, pg. 201-202
4. Von Bingen, pg. 67
5. Dioscorides, Bk. 3, 67
6. Grieve, pg. 256
7. Gerard, pg. 1033
8. Von Bingen, pg. 66-67
9. Grieve, pg. 256
10. Culpeper, pg. 51
11. Anderson, pg. 28
12. Beyerl, pg. 214

13. Tucker, pg. 155
14. Bown, pg. 121-122
15. Ibid.
16. Beyerl, pg. 214
17. Ibid.
18. Anderson, pg. 28
19. Beyerl, pg. 318

**Illustrations/Images:**

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| 1. Schoffers Herbal | 1484 |
| 2. PSUMG            | 2013 |
| 3. PSUMG            | 2013 |

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