

Common Name: **Hops**

Genus: *Humulus*

Species: *lupulus*

Family: Cannabaceae

AKA: Common Hop



Historical Uses:

Medical: “Hops is warm and dry, but it also has some moisture. It does not have much usefulness for a person because it makes the person’s melancholy increase, gives a person a sad mind, and makes his or her intestines heavy. But nevertheless, its bitterness prevents some spoilage in drinks to which it has been added so that they last much longer.”(1)

“This physician operates in opening obstructions of the liver and spleen, cleansing the blood, loosening the belly, expelling gravel, and provoking the urine; the decoction of the tops of hops worketh these effects. In cleansing the blood, they help to cure the French disease, and all manner of scabs, itch, and breaking-out of the body; also tetters, ringworms, and spreading sores, the morpew, and all discoloring of the skin”(2)

“The juyce is of more force, and doth not onely remove obstructions out of the intrals, but it is also thought to avoid choler and flegme by the stoole. It is written, that the same dropped into the eares taketh away the stench and corruption thereof. The



floures are used to season beere or ale with, and too many to cause bitternesse thereof, and are ill for the head.”(3)

Culinary: “The floures make bread light, and the lumpe to be sooner and easier leavened, if the meale be tempered with liquor wherein they have been boyled.”(4)

Mentioned by Pliny, who describes that in spring the Romans would eat the young shoots of this garden plant. Used in the 14th century in breweries in the Netherlands.

Folklore/Astrology: Warm and dry in the first degree. Under the domain of Mars

Additional Historical Facts: “Russian brides were crowned with it as a sign of joy, abundance, and exuberance. The name “Hop” is of Anglo-Saxon origin from the word *hoppan* which means to climb.”(5)

“Pillows filled with hops were made to help induce sleep for insomniacs. Plant was banned in England as dangerous under Henry VI until the time of Henry VIII.”(6)

“Hops was not initially used in beer like beverages. Earlier drinks were prepared from fermented malt. This beverage went by the name of “Ale” which is of Scandinavian origin. Ale could be brewed from malt alone or with various other ingredients including honey, heather tops, ground ivy, marjoram, buckbean, wormwood, yarrow, woodsage, germander, or broom.”(7)



Close-up of the Hop leaf



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Close-up of the Hop flower

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Leaves, shoots, flowers, oil

Medical: “A bitter, tonic herb that is aromatic and diuretic, relieves pain, and relaxes spasms. It is a potent sedative and has hormonal and anti-bacterial effects. Used internally for insomnia, nervous tension, anxiety, irritability, nervous intestinal complaints, priapism, and premature ejaculation. Externally used for skin infections, eczema, herpes, and leg ulcers.”(8)

Culinary: Used as a flavoring and preservative in beer. Young shoots can be eaten cooked or raw. (9)

Economic: “Extracts and oils are used to flavor soft drinks and food as well as in perfume. Aromatic qualities make hops an ingredient in stuffing in some pillows.”(10)

Area of Origin: Europe, Asia

Physical description: Climbing vine

Plant type: Perennial

Height: up to 30 feet
Flower color: Green to greenish-pink
Flowering period: July to August
Soil type: Moist well-drained soil
Fruit: Cones or strobiles
Hardiness zone: USDA 3-8
Sun requirements: Sun or partial shade
Propagation: By seed in spring

Sources

1. Von Bingen, p. 56
2. Culpeper, p. 75
3. Freeman, p. 9
4. Gerard, p. 738-741
5. Grieve, p. 411-415
6. Anderson, p. 147-148
7. Grieve, p. 411-415
8. Bown, p. 237-238
9. Ibid
10. Ibid

Illustrations/Images:

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| 1. Gerard's Herbal | 1633 |
| 2. PSUMG | 2011 |
| 3. PSUMG | 2011 |
| 4. PSUMG | 2013 |