

Common Name: **Lady's Bedstraw**

Genus: *Galium*

Species: *verum*

Family: Rubiaceae

AKA: Yellow Bedstraw, Cheese Rennet, Maid's Hair, Petty Mugget, Our Ladies Bedstraw

Historical Uses:



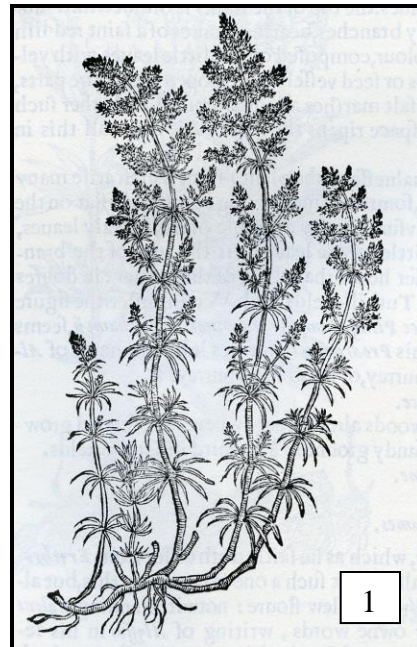
Medical: “The floures of yellow Maids haire, as *Dioscorides* writeth, is used in ointments against burnings, and stancheth bloud: it is put into the Cerote or Cere-cloth of Roses: it is set a sunning in a glasse, with oyle olive, until it be white: it is good to anoint the weried traveler: the root thereof drunke in wine stirreth up bodily lust, and the floures smallled unto worke the same effect.”(1)

Culinary: “The herbe thereof is used for Rennet to make cheese, as *Matthiolus* reporteth, saying, that the people of Tuscanie or Hetruria do use to turne their milke, that the cheese which they make of sheep and goats milke may be sweeter and more pleasant in the taste, and also more wholesome, especially to breake the stone, as it is reported.”(2).

Household: “The Yellow Bedstraw can furnish a red dye, like its ally, the Madder of the Continent, *Rubia tinctorum*. The stem and leaves of this *Galium* yield good yellow dye, which has been used to great extent in Ireland.”(4)

Folklore/Astrology: “The herbes, especially that with yellow floures, is dry and something binding, as *Galen* saith.”(5)

Other: “The common English name of this plant, 'Our Lady's Bedstraw,' is derived from its use in former days, even by ladies of rank, for stuffing beds. “We finds nothing extant in the ancient writers, of the vertues and faculties of the white



kindes but as herbes never had in use for physicke or surgeries.”(6)

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Whole plant. Plants are cut when flowering and dried for infusions, liquid extracts, and tablets.(7)

Medicinal: An astringent, acidic, slightly bitter herb that is alternative and diuretic, and relaxes spasms. Used internally for kidney, bladder and urinary complaints.(8)

Culinary: Flower tops are used to curdle milk for making cheese.

Area of Origin: Europe, western Asia,

Plant type: Perennial

Height: 6”to 36”

Flower color: Tiny, bright yellow, honey scented

Flowering period: Summer

Soil type/requirements: Dry, well-drained, neutral to alkaline

Hardiness zone: USDA 3-8

Sun requirements: Sun

Propagation: Seed sown when ripe; by division in autumn or early spring.



Close-up of the flower stalk

Bibliography

1. Gerard, p. 1126-128
2. Ibid
3. Grieve, p. 91-92
4. Gerard, p.1126-1128
5. Ibid
6. Bown, p. 219
7. Ibid
8. Ibid

Illustrations:

1. Gerard’s Herbal 1633
2. PSUMG 2012
3. PSUMG 2012