

Common Name: **Wormwood**

Genus: *Artemisia*

Species: *absinthium*

Family: Asteraceae

AKA: Common Wormwood, Absinthe, Wermod



## Historical Uses:

**Medical:** “Wormwood voideth away the wormes of the guts. It is excellent good for them that vomite blood from the spleene. It quickly refresheth the stomack and belly after large eating and drinking. Besides all this Dioscorides declareth, that it is good also against windenesse and griping pains of the stomache and belly, with Seceli and French Spikenard: the decoction cureth the yellow jaundies or the infusion, if it be drunke thrice a day some ten or twelve spoonfuls at a time.” (1)

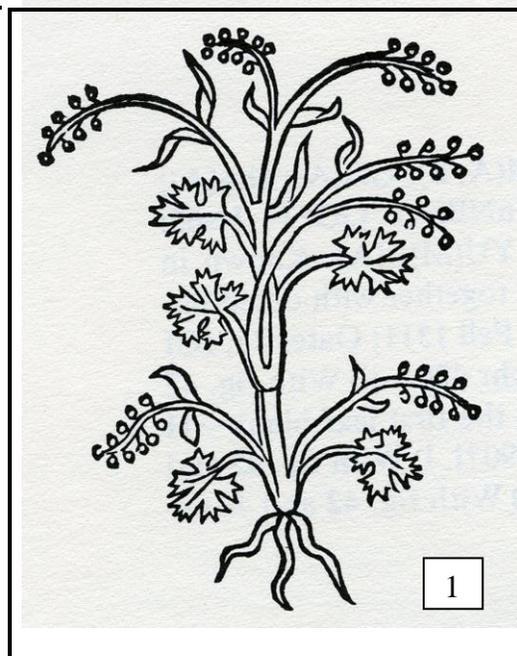
“It will check the pain in the head from gout and the more inner pain of the head as well. Also mix its juice into olive oil so that there is twice as much oil as wormwood juice. Warm this in a glass vase from the sun, and keep it for a year.

When a person suffers pain in or around the chest so that it makes a person cough, rub this on the chest. This mixture heals a person inwardly and outwardly. Moderately cook wine with honey and mix this with wormwood juice so that the juice overcomes the taste of the wine and honey. Drink this every third day while fasting from May till October. It checks a person’s

melancholy, clears the eyes, strengthens the heart, does not allow the lungs to become ill, warms the stomach, purges the intestines, and makes good digestion possible.” (2)

“For removing bruises and other sores from the body, take the plant *absinthium*, simmer it in water, put it in a cloth, and put it on the sore. If the flesh is tender, simmer it in honey and slay it on the sore. If worms are a bother around the anus, take equal amounts of the same plant, *absinthium*, horehound, and lupine. Simmer them in sweetened water or in wine. Put it on the anus two or three times, and it will kill the worms.” (3)

“The juice of the bitter wormwood “mingled with sweet milk is good for worms in the womb” and for worms in a man’s ears”, states Banckes’s Herbal. When drunk with spikenard “it assuageth the wicked winds” of the stomach. “Pounded with the gall of a



bull, and afterwards put into a man's eyes, it putteth away all manner impediments of the sight. It is good to comfort the heart" (4)

**Folklore/Astrology:** Rub it on an infant before the child's twelfth week would preserve it from all effects of heat and cold. Hot in the second degree and dry in the third. Under the dominion of Mars. (5)

**Other:** "For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, And her mouth is smoother than oil: But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword." (6)



**Cautions:** The drink "absinthe" did contain *absinthin* and *thujone* which brought about hallucinations, delirium and destruction of brain tissue (7).

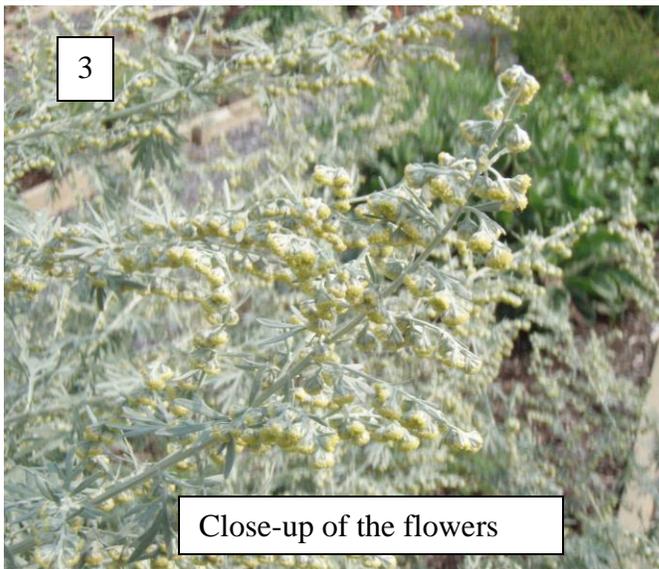
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### Contemporary Uses:

**Parts Used:** Whole plant is cut when flowering, leaves are picked before flowering.

**Medicinal:** "An aromatic, diuretic, bitter herb that has anti-inflammatory effects and acts as a tonic for the liver, digestive system and nerves. It stimulates the uterus and expels intestinal worms. Given internally for digestion, poor appetite, gall bladder complaints, and roundworms. Taken in small doses for short-term treatment only." (8)

**Cautions:** Not given to children or pregnant women.



**Area of Origin:** Mediterranean region

**Physical description:** Multi-branched from a woody base. Stem covered with fine white hairs. Leaves finely cut. Leaf stalks finely winged at the margins. (9)

**Plant type:** Perennial

**Form:** Subshrub

**Height:** To 48"

**Flower color:** Yellow, insignificant  
**Flowering period:** August to September

**Soil type/ requirements:** Well drained, neutral to slightly alkaline

**Fruit:** Inconspicuous

**Hardiness zone:** USDA 3-9

**Sun requirements:** Full sun

**Propagation:** By seed sown in spring, by division in autumn or spring.

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**Sources:**

1. Gerard, pg. 1095-1098
2. Von Bingen, pg.100
3. Van Arsdall, pg. 195
4. Freeman, pg. 31
5. Anderson, pg. 40
6. The Bible, King James Version: Proverbs 5:3-4
7. Anderson, pg. 40
8. Bown, pg. 132
9. Ibid

**Illustrations:**

1. Schoffer      1485
2. PSUMG      2011
3. PSUMG      2011