

Common Name: **Purslane**

Genus: *Portulacca*

Species: *oleracea*

Family: Portulacaceae

AKA: Pigweed, Portulaca



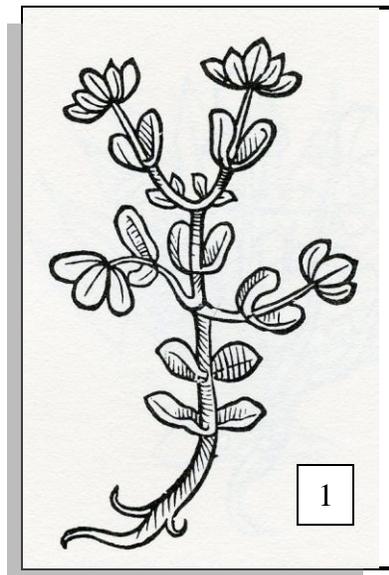
Historical Uses:

Medical: “Portulaca Sylvestris, hath broader, and thick little leaves, that the former Portulaca (Andrachne). It grows in rocky places, somme tymes also it is in Gardens. It hath leaves like those of the Olive tree, but much smaller, yet more and tender. Red stalkes, many out of one roote, leaning to ye earthward, which being chewed are found to be of good juice, clammy, and somewhat saltish. It hath a warming sharpe, exulcerating facultie, and being applied with Axungia, dissolving of ye Strumae.” (1)

“Purslane is commended against wormes in young children, and is singular good, especially if they be feverish withal, for it both allaieth the outmuch heate, and killeth the wormes: wich thing is done through the saltnes mixed therewith, which is not only an enemy to wormes, but also to putrifaction.

The leaves of the purslane eaten raw are good for the bladder and kidnies, and allaieth the outrageous lust of the body; the juice also hath the same virtue.

The juice of the purslane stoppeth the bloody fluxe, the fluxe of hemorrhoides, monthly termes, spitting of blood, and all other fluxes whatsoever.” (2)



“Purslane [*burtel*] is cold. When eaten, it produces bile and mucus in a person. It is not beneficial for a person to eat it.” (3)

“For the excess flow of semen, the plant that is called porclaca or purslane, helps effectively, either eaten by itself or with other drinks.” (4)

“It is the best nourishment in cases of colic and fevers from bilious conditions. It cleans the blood and all inward parts,

loosens the bowels, and counteracts the chills of fever. Diuretic, it is good against stanguary and dysuria, helps cut lips and ulcers (both internal and external), and makes an application to soothe boils. Its juice is a cure for menorrhoea and also stops vomiting. Good for headaches from many causes, it eases bladder and kidney pains, heals bleeding hemorrhoids, strengthens weak eyesight, curbs nosebleed, cleans teeth, ends heartburn, and restrains sexual desires.” (5)



Close-up of the stem and leaves

Culinary: “Raw purslane is much used in sallades, with oile, salt, and vinegar: it cooleth the hot stomacke, and provoketh appetite.” (6)

Folklore/Astrology: Cold in the third degree and moist in the second, it is ruled by the Moon. Strewn about a bed, it averts all magic spells and preserves the sleeper from lightning and gunpowder blasts.” (7).

Contemporary Uses:

Parts Used: Whole plant, leaves

Medicinal: “A sour, diuretic, cooling herb that lowers fevers and clears toxins. It is effective against many bacterial infections. Internally for dysentery, acute enteritis, appendicitis, mastitis, hemorrhoids, and postpartum bleeding. Not given to pregnant women or to patients with digestive problems, Externally for boils, snakebite, bee stings and eczema (8)

Culinary: Leaves eaten raw in salads, cooked as a vegetable, added to sauces and fillings, pickled in vinegar (9).

Area of Origin: Throughout Europe, Mediterranean area to India

Physical description: “Annual with thick, soft, trailing stems and thick, fleshy, spoon shaped leaves.” (10)

Plant type: Annual, semi-hardy

Form: Spreading

Height: 8” to 18”

Flower color: Small yellow flowers

Flowering period: Summer

Soil type/requirements: Best in rich, moist, well drained soils

Hardiness zone: USDA

Sun requirements: Full sun

Propagation: By seed sown *in situ* in spring

Sources:

1. Dioscorides, p. 164
2. Gerard, p. 521-522
3. Von Bingen, p. 72
4. Van Arsdall, p.197
5. Anderson, p. 248
6. Gerard, p. 521-522
7. Anderson, p.248
8. Bown, p. 329
9. Ibid
10. Ibid

Illustrations:

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| 1. Schoffer's Herbal | 1484 ed. |
| 2. PSUMG | 2012 |
| 3. PSUMG | 2012 |