

Common Name: **Shepherd's Purse**

Genus: *Capsella*

Species: *bursa-pastoris*

Family: Brassicaceae

AKA: Shepherd's Scrip, Shepherd's Pounce, Shepherd's Sprout, Lady's Purse, Witches' Pouches, Rattle Pouches, Pick-Pocket, Blind-weed, Pepper-and-Salt, Poor Man's Parmacettie, Sanguinary, Mother's Heart, Toywort, Pick-purse, Casewort



## Historical Uses:

**Medical:** “The seed is sharpe, warming, purging choler upward and made also into a Glister for the Sciaticall. Being dranck it brings out blood, and breakes the internos abscessus. It moves ye Menstrua also, and destroies the Embrya.” (1)

“Shepheards purse stayeth bleeding in any part of the body, whether the juyce or the decoction thereof be drunke, or whether it be used pultesse-wise, or in bath, or any other way else. In a Clyster it cureth the bloody flix: it healeth greene and bleeding wounds: it is marvelous good for inflammations new begun, and for all diseases which must be checked backe and cooled. The decoction doth stop the laske, the spitting and pissing of blood, and all other fluxes of blood.” (2)

“It helps all fluxes of blood, either caused by inward or outward wounds; so also the flux of the belly, and bloody flux, spitting and voiding of blood, and stops the terms in women; being bound to the wrists of the hands, and the soles of the feet, it helps the yellow jaundice. The herb being made into a poultice, helps inflammations and St. Anthony's fire. The juice being dropped into the ears, heals the pains, noise and matterings thereof. A good ointment may be made of it for all wounds, especially wounds in the head.” (3)

**Folklore/Astrology:** “It is under the dominion of *Saturn*, and of a cold, dry, and binding nature, like to him.” (4)



## Contemporary Uses:

**Parts Used:** Whole plant, leaves, seed pods

**Medicinal:** “Internally and externally to stop bleeding, especially in heavy menstruation, blood in urine, hemorrhoids, nosebleed, and wounds. Also internally for cystitis, and externally for varicose veins. In Chinese medicine, to cool the blood, with uses similar to the above; also for hypertension and postpartum bleeding.” (5)



Young plant in the garden

“When dried and infused, it yields a tea which is still considered by herbalists one of the best specifics for stopping haemorrhages of all kinds- of the stomach, the lungs, or the uterus, and more especially bleeding from the kidneys.” (6)

**Culinary:** “Leaves are rich in vitamin A, B, and C, and may be added to salads or cooked as a vegetable. Seed pods have a peppery flavor and may be used as seasoning.” (7)

**Area of Origin:** Europe, Asia

**Physical description:** Annual or biennial with a rosette of entire to pinnate basal leaves and a branched stem with smaller leaves.

**Plant type:** Annual or biennial

**Height:** 1 ¼ “- 16”

**Flower color:** White

**Flowering period:** Summer

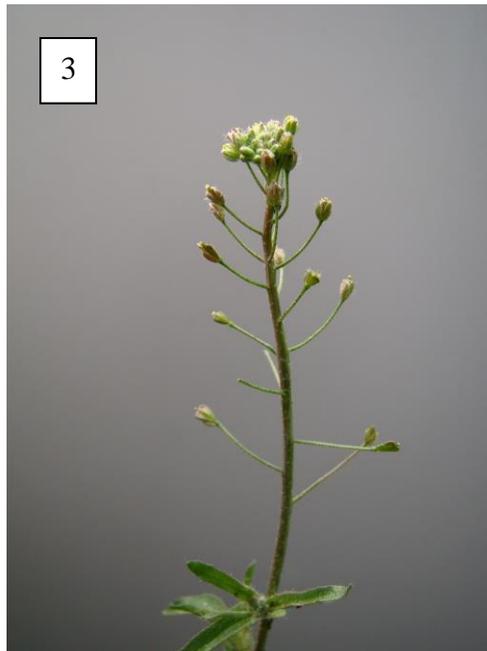
**Soil type/requirements:** Well-drained soil in sun.

**Fruit:** Heart-shaped seed pods

**Hardiness zone:** USDA 3-9

**Sun requirements:** Sun or partial shade

**Propagation:** By seed sown in spring. It self-seeds freely.



Close-up of the flower stem

## Sources

1. Dioscorides, p. 197
2. Gerard, p. 276
3. Culpepper, p. 151
4. Ibid
5. Bown, p. 153

6. Grieve, p. 738
7. Bown, p. 153
8. Talbot/Whiteman, p.
9. Von Bingen, p.

**Illustrations/Images:**

1. Gerard's Herbal      1633 ed.
2. PSUMG                2014
3. PSUMG                2014