

## Prunella

*Prunella vulgaris*

Also known as Self-heal, Heal All, All Heal and Carpenter's Weed, Prunella was long ago given these names as she was known for treating 'everything that ails you.' Prunella is a mint relation, and as with all the other mints, if you plant it once, you never have to plant it again. Incredibly vigorous, the plant spreads by underground stems that shoot out in every direction once the first root is stuck in the ground. If there is anything to the doctrine of signatures, prunella should make anyone who takes it into his or her body stronger than an ox.

### Prunella facts:

- Low-growing plants
- Thrive in moist wasteland and grass
- Spread rapidly to cover the ground
- Native to Europe and Eurasia
- Naturalized in America and Australia
- Member of the Lamiaceae family

### Prunella description:

- Perennial low growing plant, spreads well
- Grows to 12 inches in height
- Pale purple flowers bloom in summer
- Immediately below flowerhead is a pair of stalkless leaves standing out on either side like a collar
- Flowers and bracts of this spike are arranged in most regular tiers or whorls, each tier composed of a ring of six stalkless flowers, supported by a couple of spreading, sharp-pointed bracts; the number of whorls varies from half a dozen to a dozen
- Flower-spike is at first very short, compact and cylindrical, but then opens out somewhat, maintaining much the same size throughout its length, not tapering as in the flower spikes of most other flowers. The flowers do not come out simultaneously in any one ring, so that a somewhat ragged looking head of flowers is produced.
- Each flower consists of a two-lipped calyx, the upper lip very wide and flat, edged with three blunt teeth, the lower lip much narrower and with two long, pointed teeth. Both lips have red margins and carry hairs. The two-lipped corolla is of a deep purple hue, the upper lip strongly arched, on the top of the arch many hairs standing on end, and the lower lip of much the same length, spreading out into three holes. Under the roofing upper lip are two pairs of stamens, one pair longer than the other, their filaments ending in two little branches, one of which carries an anther, the other remaining a little spike. Through the center of the two pairs of stamens the long style runs, curving so as to fit under the lip, its lower end set between four nutlets. Honey lies at the bottom of the corolla tube, protected from tiny insects by a thick hedge of hairs placed just above it. The flower is adapted by this formation, like the rest of the Labiate group, for fertilization by bees, who alight on the lower lip and in thrusting their probosces down the tube for the honey, dust their heads with the pollen from the anthers and then on visiting the next flower, smear this pollen on the end of the curving style that runs up the arch of the upper lip and thus effect fertilization. After fertilization is effected, the corolla falls out of the sheath like calyx, which, however, remains in place, as do also the two bracts supporting each whorl. When all



the purple corollas have fallen and only the rings of the persistent calyces remain, the resemblance to an ear of corn.

- Leaves are oblong in form and blunt, about an inch long and 1/2 inch broad, grow on short stalks in pairs down the square stem, from which they stand out boldly, and are often roughish on the top, with scattered, close hairs, their mid-rib at the back also carrying hairs and their margins fringed with tiny hairs. Their outline is either one continuous line, or they are slightly indented along their margins.

#### Prunella nutritional information:

- Vitamins A, B1, C and K
- Manganese
- Zinc

#### Prunella constituents:

- Volatile oil
- Tannin
- Sugar
- Cellulose
- Betulinic-acid, D-Camphor, Delphinidin, Hyperoside, Manganese, Oleanolic-acid, Rosmarinic-acid, Rutin, Ursolic-acid

#### Prunella energetics:

- Bitter
- Pungent
- Sweet
- Cold
- Drying

#### Prunella actions:

- Alterative
- Antibacterial
- Antibiotic
- Anti-inflammatory
- Antimutagenic
- Antioxidant
- Antipyretic
- Antiseptic
- Antispasmodic
- Antiviral
- Astringent
- Bitter
- Carminative
- Cholagogue
- Diuretic
- Febrifuge
- Hemostatic
- Hypotensive
- Immune stimulant
- Liver stimulant
- Stomachic
- Styptic
- Tonic
- Vasodilator
- Vermifuge
- Vulnerary

### Prunella Medicinal Indications:

- Effective medicine for most internal ailments and also good for external wounds
- Extract of plant is said to inhibit HIV virus
- Taken internally as a medicinal tea in the treatment of fevers, diarrhea, sore mouth and throat, internal bleeding, and weaknesses of the liver and heart
- Clinical analysis shows it to have an antibacterial action, inhibiting the growth of pseudomonas, Bacillus typhi, E. coli, Mycobacterium tuberculi, which supports its use as an alternative medicine internally and externally as an antibiotic and for hard to heal wounds and diseases.
- It is showing promise in research for herpes, cancer, AIDS, diabetes, and many other maladies.
- Prunella is great to have on hand for all sorts of ailments. The nickname of “Carpenter’s Herb” indicates Prunella is useful for treating any sort of afflictions a carpenter might encounter. Use for bumps, blows, bruises, cuts, sprains, strains and scrapes.
- Used to treat those in chemotherapy and those who have radiation side effects, both common with those who have cancer and are in treatment.
- Used for treating all things viral. There is a history of use for ulcers of the mouth and contemporary medicine uses her for treating the herpes virus, which forms cold sores or ulcers in the mouth.
- Ursolic acid is an anti-tumor compound that can be useful for treating tumors. Prunella stops the growth of mutagenic cells, which can cause cancer.
- Stimulates digestion and helps to expel or prevent gas as well.
- Improves the function of the stomach while increasing the appetite.
- Helpful with a sluggish liver.
- Stimulates the flow of bile.
- Helpful for stopping the flow of blood during a hemorrhage.
- Great as an antibiotic. At the first sign of infection, adding Prunella to your herbal maintenance helps to shorten the duration of an illness. At the same time, if the infection is bacterial in nature, Prunella will help to fight off the bacterial infection as well as a viral infection.
- Boosts the immune system to help fight off a cold.
- Reduces fever
- Helps with itchy eyes caused by allergens.
- Great for all sorts of eye ailments including styes and pinkeye. Since pinkeye can be caused by bacteria, viruses or allergies, Prunella is a great solution as she has actions for treating each kind. A weak infusion of Prunella in an eye cup is soothing and healing.
- Lowers blood pressure.
- Restores health when used as a tonic.

### Prunella Applications:

- Tea of leaves – see above Use 4 tablespoons fresh or 1 tablespoon dried leaves per cup of boiling water. Steep 10 minutes. Drink up to 3 cups a day.
- Tincture – take 1-2 teaspoons up to 3 times a day
- Eye wash – Use the tea in an eye cup 2 – 3 times a day

### Preserving Prunella:

- Drying

### Getting to Know Prunella:

Experiment 1 – know what it looks like

Study a live plant or pictures if the live version is not available. Notice how it grows out of the ground. Is it bushy? Does it sprawl? Where are the leaves located? What do the flowers look like? Sketch the plant:

Experiment 2 – taste the herb

Try it both fresh and dried. What does it taste like in both instances?

Fresh root:

Dried root:

Experiment 3 – making an infusion and tea

4 tablespoons raw herb (leaves and stems, chopped) = 1 tablespoon dried.

To make a tea, use 1 tbsp dried herb per cup of water. Boil water, and remove from flame. Add herb and steep 10–20 minutes.

To make an infusion, use 1/4 oz. dried herb per cup

- Compare the difference between fresh and dried teas
- Compare the difference between fresh and dried infusions
- Compare the difference between teas and infusions

	Fresh aerial parts	Dried aerial parts
hot		
cold		

#### Experiment 4 - making a medicinal remedy

Prunella Salve

Great for healing hard-to-heal wounds

Freshly wilted or dried aerial parts

Olive Oil

Beeswax

Place herb into jar - to the top with freshly wilted or 1/3 if dried, cover with oil and seal. Allow to sit 3-4 weeks, shaking daily.

Strain and add ¼ cup of beeswax to every 1 cup of infusion. Place on a double boiler and heat until wax is melted. Pour into a wide mouthed container and store in a cool, dark place.

#### Experiment 5- cooking with Prunella

Not used in cooking

#### Experiment 6 - Further study/references

The following are some internet sites that have great information on Prunella:

<http://botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/s/selfhe40.html>

<http://altnature.com/gallery/healall.htm>

<http://www.kew.org/plants-fungi/Prunella-vulgaris.htm>

<http://www.chinese-herbs.org/prunella/>

[http://www.missouriplants.com/Blueopp/Prunella\\_vulgaris\\_page.html](http://www.missouriplants.com/Blueopp/Prunella_vulgaris_page.html)

- On your own, read at least three separate sources of information regarding Prunella. The following are some books that have information but do not limit your search to my selections.

Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants by Andrew Chevallier pg. 122

A Modern Herbal by Mrs. M. Grieve pgs. 731 - 733

The Holistic Herbal by David Hoffman p. 129

The Complete Medicinal Herbal by Penelope Ody p. 88

Encyclopedia of Medicinal Herbs by Joseph Kadans pg. 28

All About Weeds by Edwin Rollin Spencer pgs. 212 - 215

Mountain Medicine by Darryl Patton pgs. 133 - 134

The Earthwise Herbal: A Complete Guide to Old World Medicinal Plants by Matthew Wood pgs. 403-5

- See if you can locate Prunella growing nearby your home. Dig some up, pot it up and put it in a location where you can observe it every day for the next month.