

You are viewing one of thousands of biographies – click below for more, including Search box and access to Plant associated organisations.

[Plant Biographies](#)

[Bibliography](#)

---

*Actaea cimicifuga*

[Synonyms : *Actaea racemosa*, *Cimicifuga cimicifuga*, *Cimicifuga europaea*, *Cimicifuga foetida*]

**STINKING BUGBANE** is a perennial. Native to temperate Siberia and eastern Asia it has small, slightly unpleasant-smelling, cream flowers with long yellowish stamens.

It is also known as Bugbane, Fetid bugbane, Foetid bugbane, and *Ploštičnik evropský* (Czech). The flowers and fruit pods have a smell that some compare to that of decaying fish.

Warning – the plant is potentially poisonous (and some herbalists recommend that it is not taken by anyone with breathing difficulties).

*Cimicifuga* is derived from the genus name *Cimicifuga* meaning ‘like plants in that genus’.

This plant was once in the *Cimicifuga* genus and the name *Cimicifuga* is made up of Latin *cimici* (bedbug) and *fugio* or *fugo* (to repel, drive away, put to flight) components which describe stinking bugbane’s use in the past (not least in Siberia) as an insect repellent for bedbugs.

Locally it was collected and dried when fully grown then ground up into a powder and used for stuffing pillows, mattresses and cushions as a protection against biting insects.

Advocates of companion planting note that stinking bugbane inhibits the growth of plants nearby.

Medicinally, Chinese medicine has used a root decoction for treating fluid retention and, as necessary, inducing sweating. Local herbalists have also used it in treatments for malaria, some forms of cancer, measles (in its early stages), fever generally, diarrhoea, headaches, some nervous disorders, pain, coughs, colds, sore throats, and rheumatism. Recent Japanese research has suggested that it might be useful in treating osteoporosis and research by various bodies in different parts of the world indicates a recognition of its possible value in controlling menopausal symptoms.