

Collinsonia canadensis

[Synonyms : *Collinsonia decussata*, *Collinsonia ovalis*]

HORSEBALM is a perennial. Native to eastern North America it has tiny lemon-scented, greenish-yellow flowers with protruding stamens.

It is also known as Archangel, *Baume de cheval* (French), Broadleaf collinsonia, Canadian collinsonia, Citronella, Clergyman's friend, Collinsonia, Collinson's flower, Gravel root, *Grieswurzel* (German), Hardback, Hardhack, Heal-all, Horseweed, Knob grass, Knob root, Knobweed, Knot root, Mountain balm, Oxbalm, Rattlesnake root, Richleaf, Richweed, *Steinwurz* (German), Stone foot, and Stone root.

Canadensis means 'of or from Canada or north-eastern North America'.

It gained the name Clergyman's friend as it was used to ease sore throats and hoarseness (bringing to mind perhaps consequences of giving long, haranguing sermons).

The roots, which have a reputation for being the hardest to grind (however fresh), have been used in veterinary medicine, particularly in North America – not least by the Cherokee tribe who relied upon the plant for easing wind in their horses.

Some North American Indian tribes used the leaves to scent their skin, and the leaves have also been made into a tea.

Crushed flowers and leaves provided a deodorant for Cherokee Indians.

The Iroquois Indians appear to have placed faith in the plant's ability to rouse listless children, and they have also prescribed it as a remedy for some blood disorders, heart ailments and kidney problems, as well as using it to ease headaches and rheumatism. On the other hand the Cherokee, apart from using horsebalm to cause vomiting, have turned to it in treatments for swollen breasts.

Medicinally, herbalists used the leaves to treat wounds, bruises and sores, and a decoction of the fresh root was recommended as a remedy for fluid retention and urinal disorders.

Today it can be used for treating fluid retention and kidney stones.