

Conyza canadensis

[Synonyms : *Conyza canadensis* var. *pusilla*, *Erigeron canadense*, *Erigeron canadensis*, *Erigeron paniculatus*, *Erigeron pusillis*, *Erigeron strictum*, *Leptilon canadense*, *Senecio canadense*, *Trimorpha canadensis*]

CANADIAN FLEABANE is an annual or biennial. Native to North America it has small yellow-centred, whitish flowers.

It is also known as *Amrhydlwyd Canada* (Welsh), Bittersweet, Bitterweed, Bloodstaunch, Butterweed, Buttonweed, Canada erigeron, Canada fleabane, Canadian horseweed, Cobbler's pegs, Cocash, Colt's tail, Cow's tail, *Dhail-as-saba'* (Arabic), Fireweed, Fleabane, Fleawort, *Hamo uteawe* (Zuni North American Indian), Hogweed, Horse tongue, Horseweed, Horseweed fleabane, *Kanadabinka* (Swedish), *Kanadischer Katzenschweif* (German), *Kanadisches Berufkraut* (German), Mare's tail, Mule tail, *Palita* (Sanskrit), Prideweed, Scabious, Squaw-weed, *Turanka kanadská* (Czech), and Wild tarragon.

Warning – it is alleged that handling the leaves may cause dermatitis.

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

Local American Indian tribes boiled the root for treating period problems – and the Cahuilla tribe used a leaf infusion as a remedy for diarrhoea.

Although not viewed anywhere with much favour, canadian fleabane has displayed considerable tenacity. Originally a native of North America, the plant was introduced to France in 1653 where it was grown in the Botanic Gardens in Paris. From there it spread like wildfire through Europe (including Britain, where it is believed to have arrived as part of the insides of a stuffed bird), even extending its encroachment to Asia, Australia and some of the Pacific Islands.

At one time the distilled oil from Canadian fleabane was popular as a mosquito repellent.

Medicinally, herbalists have used the fresh flowering plant to stem bleeding and to expel worms. They also used the plant in the treatment of diabetes and kidney disorders. In folk medicine it has been used in infusion as a remedy for rheumatism, dysentery, diarrhoea, intestinal inflammation and fluid retention. As a gargle it used also to be acclaimed as a cure for ulcerated or inflamed throats. Homoeopathic practitioners, not least today, have chosen Canadian fleabane to ease piles, or painful periods.