

Galium triflorum

[Synonyms : *Galium brachiatum*, *Galium flaviflorum*, *Galium jalapense*, *Galium pennsylvanicum*, *Galium triflorum* var. *asprelliforme*, *Galium triflorum* var. *viridiflorum*]

SWEET-SCENTED BEDSTRAW is a perennial. Native to western North America it has greenish-white flowers.

It is also known as Cleavers, Fragrant bedstraw, Fragrant cleavers, Fragrant cleavers bedstraw, *Myskmåra* (Swedish), Three-flowered bedstraw, Three-petal bedstraw, and Wild woodruff.

The plant has a sweet, vanilla-like fragrance that is especially noticeable when it is dried. The flowers are pollinated by flies and beetles.

Triflorum is made up of Latin *tri-* (three) and *-flora* (flowered) components meaning ‘three-flowered’.

Records show that the plant’s fragrance was enjoyed by several North American Indian tribes including the Makah. Apparently women in the Omaha and Ponca tribes tucked the fresh plant into their waistbands to enjoy its scent as it withered.

Perhaps this perfume was part of the reason why authorities note that women in the Karok, Quileute and Iroquois tribes are said to have used the plant to attract their lovers almost like a love charm.

For the Nitinaht tribe the plant offered a hair wash. The Makah, Klallam and Quinault Indians believed it could make their hair grow.

As a source of medicine sweet-scented bedstraw seems to have been sought after by several North American tribes. The Cherokee used it to treat gallstones and the Iroquois resorted to it for some urinary problems. It was a remedy for fluid retention among the Miwok Indians and the Menominee are said to have prescribed it for various kidney disorders.

According to records the Kwakiutl tribe turned to it as a cure for some lung ailments too.

Locally the leaves have been eaten raw or cooked and the flower stems have been used to make a tea.

The root yields a red dye – and the fragrant plant has been used as mattress stuffing.