

Hedeoma pulegioides

[Synonyms : *Cunila pulegioides*, *Melissa pulegioides*, *Ziziphora pulegioides*]

AMERICAN PENNYROYAL is an annual. Native to North America it has small, purplish or lavender flowers.

It is also known as American falsepennyroyal, *Amerikansk poleja* (Swedish), Lurk-in-the-ditch, Mock pennyroyal, Mosquito plant, Pennyrile, Pennyroyal, Pudding grass, Squaw balm, Squawmint, Squaw weed, Stinking balm, Thick weed, Tick-seed, Tickweed, and *Vallmynta* (Swedish).

Warning – it should not be taken medicinally during pregnancy.

Pulegioides is made up of the species name *pulegium* and Greek *-oides* (like) components meaning ‘like pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*)’.

Like the Old World pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium*) this species can be laid as a lawn.

The North American Rappahannock and Cherokee Indian tribes both used the leaves as an insect repellent. The former used them dried, indoors, to repel fleas and the latter rubbed them on the body.

As a source of medicine American pennyroyal seems to have been fairly popular among quite a few North American Indian tribes for many different ailments. The Cherokee Indians used it for treating influenza, coughs generally and whooping-cough, and they and the Catawba tribe took it for easing colds. It was a remedy for headaches among both the Iroquois and the Cherokee tribes,, the latter also used it for toothache and the Shinnecock Indians seem to have prescribed it generally for pain. Rappahannock and Cherokee Indians treated some period problems with the plant. Both the Nanticoke Indians and the Cherokee used American pennyroyal to cause sweating, and the latter (as well as some of the Chippewa Indians) chose it to ease fever. The plant was a remedy for various stomach problems for the Delaware and Mohican tribes, and some of the Chippewa together with the Nanticoke Indians used it for kidney and liver disorders. The Mahuna tribe turned to it for treating dysentery. In addition it was used by the Chickasaw Indians for soothing itching eyes.

In North America vets have sprinkled the leaves around dog kennels to kill any fleas.

Medicinally, herbalists have used American pennyroyal to treat period disorders, headaches, nausea and constipation.