

Peucedanum ostruthium

[Synonyms : *Imperatoria ostruthium*, *Selenium ostruthium*]

MASTERWORT is a biennial or perennial. Native to central Europe it has small white (or pink) flowers.

It is also known as *Benzoin français* (French), *Falsches Spanischer Glaskraut* (German), False pellitory of Spain, Fellon grass, Fellon wood, Fellon wort, Felon grass, Felonwort, Great masterwort, Hogfennel, Horestrong, *Impératoire des montagnes* (French), *Imperatoria* (Italian), *Imperatoria della montagna* (Italian), *Imperator otu* (Turkish), Imperial masterwort, *Istrican* (Turkish), *Llysiaw'r Ddannoedd* (Welsh), *Mästerrot* (Swedish), *Meisterwurz* (German), Sulphur root, and *Suoputki-laji* (Finnish).

Ostruthium is derived from Latin *struthiocamelus* (ostrich) with reference to the feathery foliage.

In the Middle Ages masterwort was so highly acclaimed as a panacea that it was considered to be the king or emperor of all roots at that time and as a result gained its common name Imperial masterwort.

In some parts of Europe masterwort has been added as a flavouring to cheeses.

Masterwort has been used in veterinary medicine.

Today the drinks industry uses the root in the preparation of some alcoholic drinks.

Medicinally, the roots have been recommended by herbalists for the treatment of fluid retention, gout, cramp and kidney and uterine disorders. More recently it has been used for treating indigestion, wind, asthma and period problems – and is also used in homoeopathic treatments.