

PLANT LIST OF MEDICINAL AND POISON PLANTS FOR
THE 21st CENTURY NORTHUMBRIA HERBAL PROJECT

We have here a list of medicinal healing plants (in an excel spreadsheet) – wild, homeopathic, garden, and poisonous – prepared by Ron Burn and supplemented by Anne Larvin. It is not an exhaustive list since most plants have been used at one time or another for medicinal purposes but is a good starting point for plants which you are most likely to find here in the Northumbria region. It can be used to identify which plants you are likely to come across if undertaking a walk in different types of locations, say, a riverside or hedgerow walk, or a walk along the coast or in woodland.

The list can be ‘sorted’ using various criteria, according to the column headings:

- Botanical name
 - This is the 2-part Latin name, according to the Linnaean system. Don’t let this put you off as it does become second nature and you may even find that you can remember the Latin name long after you need to look up its common name.
- Common name
 - Most plants have a plethora of common names which vary by region but here we have only included one – hopefully the most common of common names.
- Family
 - Family names can change too! For example, Labiatae has become Lamiaceae; other plants may be re-categorised completely. So, if you have an older botany book, you may become confused. If in doubt, check at least 2 sources.
- Podlech Page number
 - This refers to the Collins Nature Guide ‘Herbs and Healing Plants of Britain and Europe’ whose author is Dieter Podlech. There are a number of plant guides/identifiers available (including apps for computer/phone etc). It’s best to go with what you prefer and find easiest to use.
- Colour
 - This is the usual colour of the flowers and can therefore be used as a starting point for identifying a plant (assuming it is in flower at the time!). However, there are variations. For example, in the wild, *Achillea millefolium* (Yarrow) is not only creamy white but may also be pink or pinkish white. This medicinal yarrow should not be confused with many varieties of *Achillea millefolium* available as garden plants.

- Flowering Period
 - Self-explanatory maybe but, given the variability in the weather, some latitude in flowering times is necessary. The width of the latitude will change from year to year.
- Habitat
 - This refers to the usual habitat where the plant may be found. Sorting plants by the habitat in which they are most likely found can be a useful starting point for any plant/herb walk. But it is worth remembering that plants have minds of their own and you may find plants in locations you do not expect!
- VCs (Vice-Counties)
 - This classification refers to Durham (D); South Northumberland (S); North Northumberland (N). The setting of plants within these areas is based on a) George Swan's 1993 book 'The Flora of Northumberland' and b) GG Graham's 1988 book 'The Flora and Vegetation of County Durham'. Some herbs listed are not found in the wild in Northumbria but are purely garden herbs or even kitchen herbs such as ginger.
- Parts Used
 - This refers to the part(s) of the plant used for medicinal purposes. It is for information purposes only.
- Print
 - The print (sort) codes are: M = Wild medicinal herb; G = Garden medicinal herb; H = plant used in homeopathy; P = poison. It is important to remember that some plants fit in one category only, but many others in 2 or more.