

The Medicinal Properties of Parsley

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Parsley (*Petroselinum crispum*) [Apiaceae] (McGuffin 2000)

Other common names

French: Persil

German: Petersilie

Italian: Prezzemolo

Spanish: Perejil

Russian: Petrushka

United Kingdom: Garden parsley, common parsley, rock parsley
(Nickell 1976)

Indian: Bilati (Bartram 1998)

Former Latin names

Apium crispum, *Apium petroselinum*, *Carum petroselinum*, *Petroselinum hortense*, *Petroselinum sativum*, *Petroselinum vulgare* (Duke 1985).

Petroselinum comes from the Greek, *petros* – stone, and *selinon* – wild celery (Fournier 1948)

Part Used: Leaf, root, seed, essential oil (Uphof 1968)

Parsley and its Origin

Many herbal authors suggest parsley is native to the Eastern Mediterranean (Wren 1988). Other authors, including the botanist Linnaeus, point toward Sardinia, while still others (De Candolle) state the herb is a native of Turkey, Algeria, and Lebanon. It has been imported and grown in many Northern hemisphere countries of the world. Since its introduction into Britain in the sixteenth century, it has naturalized in various parts of England and Scotland, where it can be found on old walls and rocks (Grieve 1971).



Second-year 'Italian Giant' going to seed. *Pat Kenny*

It is generally thought that parsley leaves were used to braid crowns for the winners of the Nemean games in ancient Greece. The athletic and musical competitions were held in July in honor of Zeus at the Temple of Zeus at Nemea in Argolis, the southeastern region of Greece. These games occurred biennially in the same years as the Isthmian games held in the Isthmus of Corinth (Leclerc 1976). However, there is ongoing controversy among academics as to whether the braided crowns were made from parsley or wild celery (*Apium graveolens*) leaves (Encyclopedia Britannica 2020, Rodriguez 2020).

The two main varieties grown for their leaves are divided into plain leaf and curly leaf. Other varieties include extra double curled, moss curled, and curled dwarf. In Europe, turnip-rooted parsley produces large roots that are eaten when cooked (Uphof 1968).

Parsley as Food

Parsley is known as a healthful garnish. However, make parsley more than a beautiful garnish and eat it to get the health benefits described below. The leaves and roots, fresh or dried, are served as vegetables or condiments. In Europe, parsley is often used in egg, fish, fowl, meat, shellfish, and soup dishes. In France, it has maintained a ubiquitous presence for centuries. For example, a mixture of finely chopped parsley and shallot is added as a *persillade* toward the end of cooking a dish. It is also important in *bouquet garni*, in butters and vinegars, in *vinaigrette*, as well as in sauces *ravigote*, *tartare*, and *verte*. In the Middle East, tabbouleh made with finely chopped parsley is a culturally important dish. The minced parsley is mixed with mint, onion, and chopped tomatoes, as well as bulgur, and seasoned with olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and bell pepper (Duke 1985).

The top five states producing parsley leaf as a food in the United States are California, New Jersey, Texas, Florida, and Hawaii, with California producing over 40 percent of the parsley leaf sold in American supermarkets (Western Institute for Food Safety and Security 2016).

A Short Herbal Medicine History of Parsley

Parsley has been used for its medicinal properties for centuries. Hippocrates (460-370 BCE) is known as the father of Western medicine. He wrote about parsley as an herb capable of causing an abortion. Greek native, Theophrastus (371 to 287 BCE) is considered the father of botany. He advocated parsley to fight painful or difficult urination and to get rid of kidney stones. Both Pliny

the Elder (23 to 79 AD), a naturalist, and Dioscorides (40 to 90 AD), a Greek physician, used parsley seeds and roots to favor the elimination of urine and to induce menstruation. Another Greek physician named Galen (129 to 210 AD) advocated the use of parsley for water retention. He also suggested it for disorders of the womb and bladder (Leclerc 1976).

Ibn Rushd (1126 to 1198 AD), known in the Western world as Averroes, was a Muslim Andalusian who prescribed the use of parsley to induce copious urination. Some historians report that the Romans would give parsley to gladiators before fights as the plant was reputed to give strength, reflex, and cunning (Mésségué 1975). Constantine the African, who died around 1098 AD, was a North African Muslim who converted to Christianity, moved to Italy, and translated many books of the great masters of Arabic medicine into Latin. His books were used as textbooks for physicians from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth centuries. He suggested parsley for renal abscesses and bladder problems (Leclerc 1976).

More recently, Henri Leclerc, a French physician who coined the word *phytotherapy* in 1913, advocated for the use of fresh parsley root to induce the production and elimination of urine (Leclerc 1976).

Parsley's Constituents

The chemical composition of herbs is often of interest to individuals who want to gain a better understanding of how herbal constituents may influence the function of the human body. The following are some of the known constituents found in parsley.

The fresh parsley leaf contains appreciable amounts of vitamins A (as beta-carotene), B (including folic acid and B6), C, E, and K as well as bioflavonoids. The leaf is also a rich source of dietary fiber and minerals including calcium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, silica, and sulfur (Kirschmann 1996, Bartram 1998).

The nutritional benefits from parsley are easily accessed when eating fresh parsley leaves in foods such as tabbouleh. One ounce (30 g) of fresh parsley, an amount easily ingested in a tabbouleh serving, provides 72 mg of vitamin C, the minimum daily intake of this essential nutrient required to prevent deficiency symptoms. In the same serving of tabbouleh, parsley leaf delivers four times the amount of vitamin A needed by the human body on a daily basis.

Parsley leaves are rich in fibers and minerals, important dietary factors that

help maintain health. Dietary fibers are essential for intestinal regularity as well as to maintain healthy cholesterol and blood sugar levels. Potassium is an important component of cells and body fluids that help regulate heart rate and blood pressure. Iron is essential for healthy red blood cell production. Manganese is used by the body as a co-factor to manufacture a powerful antioxidant enzyme, *superoxide dismutase*. The other minerals found in parsley help to strengthen hair, nails, and skin. A full serving of foods rich in fresh parsley leaves, such as tabbouleh, provides the necessary amounts of the nutrients described above. But keep in mind that very small amounts of dried leaf used sparingly in cooking offer negligible amounts of nutrients to the diet.

Parsley leaf water extract, as found in a cup of parsley tea, provides bioflavonoids, such as apigenin, luteolin, quercetin, and kampferol. These bioflavonoids have been shown to possess substantial antihistaminic properties which help to reduce the severity of allergies (Duke 1985).

Parsley herb also contains small amounts of volatile oil (0.05% to 0.3%), furocoumarins, consisting mostly of bergapten (up to 0.02%), with smaller amounts of xanthotoxin and isopimpinellin, flavonoids (apiin, luteolin-7-diglucoside, luteolin-7-apiolglucoside, apigenin 7-glucoside, and luteolin-7-diglucoside and others), 2-22% proteins, 4% fat, sugars, and others (Duke 1985, Leung 1996).

Parsley seed contains a considerable amount of volatile oil (2-7%), 13 to 22% fixed oil consisting mainly of petroselinic acid (up to 70%), with small amounts of palmitic, myristic, stearic, oleic, linoleic, and myristolic acids. It also contains flavonoids, apiin, and traces of bergapten (Duke 1985).

The Indications of Parsley in Herbal Medicine

Parsley has been used in herbal medicine for thousands of years. The most common indications for this plant include water retention, edema, cystitis, gravel, kidney inflammation, painful urination, and renal abscesses. Women have long used parsley for the absence of menstruation, delayed menstruation, painful menstruation, leucorrhea, and PMS. Parsley has the ability to stimulate the uterus and promote delayed menstruation. It is used against digestive troubles, dyspepsia, swelling or engorgement of internal organs, gallbladder weakness, gallstones and jaundice as well as liver and spleen diseases. The root and the entire plant are used in decoctions against circulatory weaknesses, hemorrhoids, and diverse skin afflictions. It has been recommended for respiratory issues such as dyspnea (difficulty or



This row of healthy and thriving, second-year parsley plants is beginning to bloom in the vegetable garden. *Susan Belsinger*

labored breathing), persistent coughs, and in humid asthma (Leclerc 1976, Ellingwood 1983, Kirschmann 1996).

Parsley is used for allergies, asthma, itching of the skin and scalp, eczema, and other allergic manifestations (Duke 1985, Menzies-Trull 2003). Even though it has long been used as a laxative, parsley leaf tea was once served in the trenches during the First World War to troops suffering from dysentery (Duke 1985). The seed has traditionally been used as an abortifacient (Leung 1996).

Parsley seed works primarily on the kidneys and urogenital organs, strongly moves stagnation, and clears spasms and infections. (Holmes 1989). Parsley leaf is also an excellent breath freshener when chewed and is especially useful to eliminate garlic and onion breath (Duke 1997).

Parsley's Herbal Actions

The plant offers anti-allergic, aperitive (increases gastric juice secretion), aquaretic (a diuretic that doesn't deplete the body's mineral levels), anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant, antirheumatic, antispasmodic, carminative (expels gas from the digestive system), emmenagogue (starts or stimulates the menstrual flow), expectorant (increases the expulsion of mucus from the respiratory system), febrifuge (reduces fevers), gastric tonic, hypotensive (reduces blood pressure), and laxative properties. Parsley is also a mild brain tonic, mild sudorific (increases sweating), and offers uterine tonic properties. In addition, it is a mild adrenal and thyroid gland activator (Fournier 1948, Leung 1996, Bartram 1998, Stansbury 2018).

Parsley seed actions are quite different from the action of the root or the leaf and offer stimulant, antispasmodic, and antiseptic properties (Holmes 1989).

The Medicinal Proprieties of Parsley

Parsley has significant medicinal properties and offers substantial health benefits. Here are eight major medicinal areas where parsley can be of use to achieve and maintain human health.

Parsley and the Urinary System

Parsley is best known for its effects on the human urinary system. Practitioners of herbal medicine use parsley leaf and root in renal congestion, inflammation of the kidneys and bladder (nephritis, cystitis, and urethritis), renal abscesses, as well as for urinary stones and urine retention. It is a specific for urinary pain,

burning and tingling, perineal pain and sensation, and “voluptuous” itching of genitals. It has been used for anuria (failure of the kidneys to produce urine) which may be associated with renal failure and/or heavy metal toxicity (Stansbury 2018). An infusion of parsley leaf is beneficial when urination is painful, and irritating to mucous membranes, such as in cases of nephritis. It is also useful in bladder inflammation especially when there is a scalding sensation of the urinary passages during urination. One of the advantages of using parsley leaf infusion during an acute urinary tract infection is that it will not create additional inflammation. Not all diuretics work that way; some are contraindicated during acute urinary tract inflammation as they can produce more inflammation (Ellingwood 1983). The root has been used effectively to relieve edema from poor blood circulation (Felter 1983).

There are many herbs that may be used for painful urination (dysuria). Parsley herb or root is often used with other urinary tract specific plants such as buchu (*Agathosma betulina*) leaf, burdock (*Arctium lappa*) seed, cornsilk (*Zea mays*), silky flower thread, couchgrass (*Agropyron repens*) root, dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) leaf, goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) herb, gravel root (*Eupatorium purpureum*) root, and marshmallow (*Althea officinalis*) root (Stansbury 2018). Make a tea from any of these and drink as much as 3 cupfuls per day.

Parsley’s diuretic activity is seemingly due to constituents called apiole and flavones. These constituents stimulate the urinary system, specifically the functional part of the kidneys called the renal parenchyma (Van Hellemont 1986). Many of the Apiaceae family members also have the effect of relaxing urinary smooth muscles. Herbs with these properties include celery (*Apium graveolens*), parsley, and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*). They are often featured in folkloric formulations for renal pain, hypertension, and bronchospasm due to muscle-relaxing effects on the urinary, vascular and respiratory muscle fibers (Stansbury 2018).

Keep in mind that the leaf and root are less active than the fruit (seed). The fruit possesses an energetic diuretic action. Excellent results are obtained with seed infusion even in total anuria (situations where the kidneys do not produce urine, for example, in mercury intoxication cases) (Van Hellemont 1986).

Parsley Leaf, Female Health, Breast Pain, and Breast-feeding

Parsley has been a friend for centuries. It has been used for amenorrhoea (the absence of menstruation), delayed menstruation, painful menstruation, leukorrhoea (thick, whitish or yellowish vaginal discharge often due to an

estrogen imbalance), and PMS. It has the ability to stimulate the uterus and promote delayed menstruation. For painful menstruation, it is often combined with other herbs such as buchu (*Agathosma betulina*) leaf, black haw (*Viburnum prunifolium*), and cramp bark (*Viburnum opulus*). Parsley leaf has also been used for premenstrual tension (PMT) and menopausal hot flushes. Drink up to 3 cupfuls per day (Hutchens 1973).

The medical term for breast pain is mastalgia. There are two main types of mastalgia. The first type is called cyclical mastalgia and is a recurring pain that is most often linked to the menstrual cycle. It is almost always hormonal in nature. The second type is called non-cyclical mastalgia and the pain may come from the breast itself or from the nearby muscle or joint and is felt in the breast. Breast pain can range from merely being bothersome to excruciating and can be treated effectively using a parsley leaf anti-inflammatory poultice as a first-line treatment. This treatment is most beneficial in cases where the cause of the pain is not yet obvious and symptomatic relief is needed. Perhaps the best part of this treatment is that a parsley leaf poultice carries no risk of adverse effects (Yarnell 2003).

Cyclical breast disorders are often caused by a number of interrelated hormonal factors which can lead to breast pain, swelling, and breast tissue changes. An herb called chaste tree (*Vitex agnus-castus*) berries taken internally is an excellent addition to parsley leaf poultices to resolve the issue. The benefits of this herb are achieved by taking 40 drops of the extract daily over a period of three to nine months. Long-term administration of chaste tree is sometimes necessary to maintain the benefits of this herb. Positive changes to the menstrual cycle are usually seen within the first month. However, some women report longer or shorter menstrual cycles than usual at the beginning of treatment until hormonal balance is achieved (Trickey 1998).

Mashed and unheated parsley leaves were once applied to the breasts of nursing mothers to stop the flow of milk when they were done with breast feeding (Bartram 1998). Additionally, taking a tea made from sage (*Salvia officinalis*) leaves assisted in the drying up of breast milk production (Nissim 1986).

Prior to the advent of antibiotics, herbal medicine treatment often saved patients' lives. Dr. Henri Leclerc reports in his book *Précis de phytothérapie* (1929) about a doctor who consulted with a woman suffering from anuria as a consequence of puerperal fever, an often fatal postpartum infection. In the days prior to antibiotics, women commonly died from such an infection, leaving helpless children without mothers. However, in this case, the patient was restored to health by using a strong decoction of fresh parsley root (100

grams per kilogram of water). Within a few days, the patient experienced an abundant diuresis, the fever completely dissipated, and she was quickly restored to health.

Parsley and Digestive Issues

In Europe, aperitive roots have been used to improve digestive health. They help to restore the appetite, stimulate the secretion of gastric juices, increase the flow of bile, revitalize the production of pancreatic enzymes and other digestive fluids, and open up the bowel. Parsley root is one of the five major aperitive roots. The others include fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*) root, butcher's broom (*Ruscus aculeatus*) root, wild celery (*Apium graveolens*) root, and asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*) root. These five roots, individually or collectively, are reputed to help individuals who are anemic, listless, or convalescent as well as those who lack energy and need a spring in their step. They are highly recommended against liver issues, jaundice, eczema, cellulitis, rheumatism, gout, flatulence, and poor digestion (Mésségué 1975).

Parsley leaf plays an important role in the prevention and/or treatment of duodenal or gastric ulcers. Modern science has shown that oxidative stress plays a key role in stress-induced gastric injury. A recent study investigated the effect of fresh parsley leaf on gastric damage from duodenal or gastric ulcers. The study was inspired by, and based on, the experience of one of the authors whose gastric burning and pain induced by stress were relieved shortly after eating fresh parsley. A healthy mucus layer covering the surface of the stomach and intestinal tract is an important protective layer against injuries that lead to ulcers. The researcher showed that adding parsley leaf to the diet was effective in reducing stress-induced gastric injury by supporting the body's cellular antioxidant defense system. Parsley is well known to contain high levels of powerful antioxidants including flavonoids, carotenoids, and ascorbic acid (vitamin C). By providing these essential nutrients, the researcher witnessed a significant increase in gastric tissue levels of protective compounds including glutathione, superoxide dismutase, and catalase activities. They concluded that a diet rich in fresh parsley leaf accelerates the healing process of duodenal or gastric ulcers (Akinci 2017). Making parsley leaf a regular addition to your diet may actually prevent the gastric injury that occurs as a consequence of a stress-filled lifestyle by protecting the mucus-producing layer of the gastrointestinal tract (Nielsen 1999, Teuscher 2005).

Parsley leaf is also used in traditional herbal medicine to treat intestinal disorders. This is especially true in spasm of the intestines. A recent laboratory study examined the effect of aqueous (water) and ethanolic (alcohol) extracts

of parsley on spontaneous and acetylcholine-induced contractions on isolated rat intestinal tissue. Results showed that both water and ethanol extracts of parsley decreased spontaneous contractions of the intestinal tissues. Although both extracts were effective, the intestinal spasm reduction was greater with the ethanol extract than with the aqueous one (Brankovic 2010).

Parsley is also well known to help eliminate the smell of onion or garlic on the breath. James Duke (1997) writes about a friend who attended a high-class Persian dinner in the Washington D.C. area. At the center of the table, four large bowls were filled with the fresh leaves of coriander, parsley, spearmint, and tarragon. The guests rolled these leaves in pita bread, eating it to cleanse their palate between courses and to freshen their breath. Interestingly, these four herbs have been used as breath fresheners for centuries. Taking a hint from herbal medicine history, some manufacturers of garlic supplements add parsley to their products to minimize the smell of garlic on the breath. It is thought that chlorophyll found in parsley leaf may be responsible for its breath deodorant action (Duke 1997, Mésségué 1975).

Parsley seeds also possess substantial carminative and stomachic properties (Van Hellemont 1986). An infusion of the crushed seed expels intestinal gas, reduces flatulence, and soothes stomach and intestinal irritation and inflammation.

Parsley, Its Aquaretic Activity, and Simple Blood Pressure

In herbal medicine, an *aquaretic* herb is an herb that increases the excretion of water without causing the elimination of electrolytes. Many drugs used to increase the excretion of water also lead to the loss of important electrolytes such as sodium, chlorides, and potassium. These drugs may lead to serious negative health implications. For example, the loss of potassium may cause a dangerous, irregular heartbeat. Two herbs that have been most studied in the context of their aquaretic activity are asparagus (*Asparagus officinalis*) root and parsley leaf. In clinical trials, a combination of these two herbs caused significant weight loss in overweight patients who were also suffering from hypertension. More importantly, the water loss was achieved without leading to the loss of electrolytes (Bone 2013, Brankovic 2008).

Parsley and Anemia

Parsley leaf is known as a rich source of chlorophyll (Valnet 1977). In herbal medicine, plants that are rich in chlorophyll are used in as anti-anemic agents. This is based on the fact that chlorophyll has a structure that is very similar to hemoglobin, the oxygen-carrying portion of red blood cells. Chlorophyll

provides the building blocks essential for our body to produce the hemoglobin we need.

Additionally, parsley leaf is also a rich source of iron; this mineral is essential for healthy red blood cell production. Since both chlorophyll and iron are needed by the body to build healthy blood, parsley leaf is an excellent addition to the diet. Greens, including parsley leaves, are regularly given to anemic people. Over a period of a few weeks, these individuals generally experience a healthy elevation of blood hemoglobin and total red blood cell levels (Valnet 1977) (Kirschmann 1996).

Parsley and Allergies

Parsley leaves are very rich in antihistaminic compounds called bioflavonoids, including apigenin, luteolin, quercetin, and kampferol. Bioflavonoids are known to stabilize mast cells, the cells responsible for allergic reactions located throughout the mucous membranes of the respiratory, digestive, and urinary system as well as in the skin. When mast cells become hypersensitized, they become trigger happy. At the slightest provocation, like a grain of pollen, they release histamines, leukotrienes, and other substances that produce inflammation of the sinuses, lungs, digestive system, and skin. Eating parsley leaves on a regular basis provides your body with substantial amounts of bioflavonoids. These bioflavonoids stabilize mast cells and reduce allergies, asthma, itching of the skin and scalp, eczema, and other allergic manifestations (Duke 1985, Menzies-Trull 2003).

You know what that means, right? More parsley-laden tabbouleh, please.

Parsley Leaves, Coriander Leaves, and Heavy Metal Detoxification

Starting in the early 1990s, the use of cilantro (*Coriandrum sativum*) leaf has been advocated as a strategy to eliminate heavy metal accumulations, particularly those of mercury, from the human body. Many health advocates maintain that parsley leaf can be used for the same purpose as cilantro leaf.

The rationale behind the use of cilantro leaf for heavy metal chelation is that the constituents found in the leaf are thought to attach to heavy metals and promote their excretion out of the body. Much has been written about this controversial therapy. Proponents are staunchly adamant that ingestion of cilantro leaf results in a lessening of heavy metal load while opponents of the therapy argue that there is no scientific basis for the claims made by those advocating its use. In 1995 and 1996, Dr. Omura, MD, published two papers where he introduced the use of a bidigital O-ring test claimed to measure

heavy metal levels in the body. He also proposed a protocol to remove heavy metals from the human body. In his clinical practice, Dr. Omura observed mercury blood levels rise after his patients had mercury dental amalgams removed. He had also noted that individuals who ate Vietnamese soup made with cilantro leaf experienced increasing excretion of mercury, lead, and aluminum. From these two observations, he started to treat patients exhibiting high heavy metal loads with 100 mg cilantro leaf tablets four times a day. He observed that levels of heavy metals dropped substantially (Omura 1995, Omura 1996). In the United States, Dr. Deitrich Klinghardt, MD., became a proponent of Dr. Omura's method and began teaching health professionals about his own specific protocol for heavy metals removal, including the use of cilantro extract.

Furthermore, Dr. Omura observed that eating cilantro leaf may reduce the absorption of heavy metals when it occurs at the same time as the heavy metal exposure. There is increasing evidence in animal studies that cilantro leaf used either prior to or at the same time as heavy metal or toxin exposure may protect the liver and other tissues from these exposures. In an animal study where mice were fed lead and cilantro leaves together, the study showed that ingestion of cilantro leaf reduced the negative effects of lead on liver enzymes, testosterone levels, and sperm density as well as the concentration of lead in the mice's gonads (Sharma 2010). In another animal study, mice were exposed to lead in their drinking water. The study concluded that cilantro leaf seemed to contain some type of unidentified chelating agent that binds and stimulates the excretion of lead. Cilantro leaf was shown to suppress lead deposition in the mice's bones and kidneys (Aga 2001). Another animal study showed that feeding cilantro leaf extract to rats prior to exposing them to liver toxins offered significant liver protection (Sreelatha 2009).

These studies imply that eating cilantro leaf with foods that contain elevated amounts of heavy metals or toxins may prevent their absorption in our body. I believe the same can be said for parsley leaf. For example, eating cilantro and/or parsley leaves with tuna or other fish that may contain significant amounts of heavy metals, may protect you from the heavy metals found in these foods. Given that higher levels of heavy metals are increasingly found in many types of foods, it is an excellent idea to incorporate the regular use of cilantro leaf and/or parsley leaf into our everyday diet. Purchase organic cilantro and/or parsley leaf for this purpose. Growing these two herbs in your garden and using them regularly in cooking is an excellent idea.

Parsley, Skin, Hair Health, and Insect Bites

Parsley leaf can be applied externally against fleeting pain, bruises, and contusions (injuries accompanied with blood vessel damages). The application of parsley leaf juice on the scalp has been shown to slow and stop the loss of hair. It is an excellent emergency remedy against insect bites (Mésségué 1975).

How to use Parsley as an Herbal Medicine

Internally:

Parsley Leaf: Pour boiling water over 1 gram (about 2/3 of a teaspoon) of the cut-and-sifted dried or fresh leaves. If using fresh, double the amount of parsley. Steep for 10 minutes in a covered cup, then strain. Take 30 drops of the liquid herbal extract in warm water 2 or 3 times a day at meal times. Add approximately 1 teaspoon to one tablespoon of the fresh leaves, minced, to your meal, sprinkled on your meal, or in your salad (Bartram 1998).

Juice from the fresh leaf can be made using a juicer. Use 5 drops of the fresh leaf juice directly in the ear to reduce the pain of an earache (Bartram 1998).

Parsley Seed: Fruits (although called commonly seeds) such as fennel, anise, caraway, dill, juniper, and parsley fruits contain volatile oils. To release these oils, these seeds need to be crushed or bruised before hot water is added (Schilcher 1997). To make the tea, steep one gram (about 2/3 of a teaspoon) of crushed parsley seeds in a cup of hot water for 5 to 10 minutes and filter. Take 2 or 3 cups per day. To use powdered parsley seed: take 1/2 teaspoon per dosage mixed well in water or juice, from 2 to 5 times a day. When making the tea of the seeds, do not boil (Van Hellemont 1986).

Parsley Root: Pour boiling water over 2 grams (about 1 heaping teaspoon) of finely cut dried or fresh root. Steep for 10 to 15 minutes in a covered cup. Strain. As a mild diuretic, drink 2 to 3 cups a day. In most instances, when making a tea from diverse medicinal roots, the usual recommendation is to boil them. However, when making the tea from parsley roots, it is recommended to not boil them but simply steep them (Van Hellemont 1986).

Externally:

Parsley leaf as a poultice: Often the bruised leaves are applied to swollen glands and swollen breasts to dry up milk. Hot fomentations wrung out of the tea will relieve insect bites and stings (Hutchens 1973).

Safety

The Botanical Safety Handbook classifies parsley leaf and root as a Class 1 herb, an herb that can be safely consumed when used appropriately (Gardner 2013). However, large doses of parsley should be avoided during pregnancy because parsley tends to stimulate the uterus (Mitchell 2003). Parsley seed and parsley essential oil in any amounts should **not** be used during pregnancy, since they are high in the constituent apiole making it unsafe during this period of time (Gardner 2013).

Contraindications

Pregnant women should eat only culinary or cooking amounts of parsley (Kirschmann 1996).

Side Effects

Allergic reactions of skin/mucosae (rarely) and phototoxicity may occur in some individuals. In one canning factory, the majority of the female workers handling and preparing parsley developed vesicular inflammation and purple discoloration of the skin and hands, followed by puberulent folliculitis and carbuncles. Oil of parsley used in perfumery has been known to cause dermatitis (Duke 1985, Teuscher 2005).



Parsley going to seed. *Stephanie Purello*

Drug Interactions

The Botanical Safety Handbook has classified parsley herb and root as a Class A herb, an herb for which no clinically relevant interactions are expected (Gardner 2013).

Kitchen tips

Do not buy powdered parsley seeds as they will lose their aroma and essential oils very quickly. Buy whole seeds and crush or powder them just before use. By following these recommendations, you'll access the full medicinal qualities of the seeds when you need them.

Whole dried seeds will keep for years when they are stored in hermetically-sealed glass or metal containers in an area low in moisture and free of light (Witchl 2004).

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Parsley Leaf Scan II. *Stephanie Parello*