

Prunella vulgaris

Prunella vulgaris, the common self-heal, heal-all, woundwort, heart-of-the-earth, carpenter's herb, brownwort or blue curls,[2][3][4][5] is an herbaceous plant in the mint family Lamiaceae.

Prunella vulgaris grows 5–30 cm (2.0–11.8 in) high,[6] with creeping, self-rooting, tough, square, reddish stems branching at the leaf axes.[7]

The leaves are lance-shaped, serrated and reddish at the tip, about 2.5 cm (0.98 in) long and 1.5 cm (0.59 in) broad, and growing in opposite pairs down the square stem.[7] Each leaf has 3-7 veins that shoot off the middle vein to the margin. The stalks of the leaves are generally short, but can be up to 5 cm (2.0 in) long.[8]

The flowers grow from a clublike, somewhat square, whirled cluster; immediately below this club is a pair of stalkless leaves standing out on either side like a collar. The flowers are two-lipped and tubular. The top lip is a purple hood, and the bottom lip is often white; it has three lobes, with the middle lobe being larger and fringed upwardly. Flowers bloom at different times depending on climate and other conditions, but mostly in summer (from June to August in the USA).[7]

Self-heal propagates both by seed and vegetatively by creeping stems that root at the nodes.[9]

Two subspecies of *Prunella vulgaris* have been identified: var. *vulgaris* and var. *lanceolata*. [10][11]

Prunella vulgaris is a perennial herb native in Europe, Asia, Africa, and North America, and is common in most temperate climates.[2] It was introduced to many countries in the 1800s and has become invasive in the Pacific Islands, including Australia, New Zealand, and Hawaii.[2][12] In Ireland, it is generally abundant.[13][14] This herb also grows in Kashmir where it is known as kalyuth. It is boiled in water, which is used to wash and bathe in order to relieve muscle pain.[15]

It grows on roadsides, gardens, waste-places,[13] and woodland edges, and usually in basic and neutral soils.[7][16]

Prunella vulgaris is edible.[2] The young leaves and stems can be eaten raw in salads; the plant as a whole can be boiled and eaten as a leaf vegetable; and the aerial parts of the plant can be powdered and brewed in a cold infusion to make a beverage.[2][17][18]

The herb, which is called xia ku cao (夏枯草) in Chinese, is used in traditional Chinese medicine to treat dizziness, red eyes, dry cough, and dermatitis and boils.[19] It is also a main ingredient in several herbal teas in southern China, including commercial beverages such as Wong Lo Kat.[20]

The Nlaka'pamux drink a cold infusion of the whole plant as a common beverage.[21] The plant is traditionally used by some Indigenous cultures to treat various physical ailments.[22]

Phytochemicals include betulinic acid, D-camphor, D-fenchone, cyanidin, delphinidin,

hyperoside, manganese, lauric acid, oleanolic acid, rosmarinic acid, myristic acid, rutin, linoleic acid, ursolic acid, beta-sitosterol, lupeol, and tannins.[23][24]

Prunella is derived from 'Brunella', a word which is itself a derivative, taken from "die Bräune", the German name for diphtheria, which Prunella was historically used to cure.[25] Vulgaris means 'usual', 'common', or 'vulgar'.[25]

Self-heal and heal-all refer to its uses in traditional medicine.

