

**Common Name:** Meadowsweet

**Scientific Name:** *Filipendula ulmaria*

**Family:** *Rosaceae*

**Alternative Names:** Bitter-Sweet, New Mown Hay, Meadwort, Mead Sweet.

**Range:** Throughout the British Isles.

**Habitat:** Marshy areas. Commonly found along irrigation ditches and the banks of waterways as well as damp meadows and wet woodland rides.

**Key Identification Features:** Tall perennial growing to 120cm tall. Pinnate leaf structure with leaflets alternating between large pointed oval shape (up to 8cm long) and tiny pairs of leaflets from (1mm – 1cm long) all along the leaf stem. Both young leaf and flower stem are green which quickly changes to dark red as the plant matures the long stems growing to 30cm-60cm long. When broken the leaf and stem smell very strongly of Germalene and cucumber. Creamy white flowers growing in irregular umbel-like structure up to 15cm across fragrant sweet smelling reminiscent of marzipan. The root is pink coloured and is especially strong smelling.

**Confusion Species:** superficially looks similar to silverweed however grows in completely different habitats and does not have the distinct smell of winter green oil. Silverweed has a silvery/white appearance unlike meadow sweet.

**Edible Uses:** Long history of being used as flavouring mainly alcohol hence the name 'mead' or 'Mead-ow' sweet. Can also be used as favouring in other dishes however very strong and can be over powering. Flowers much more delicate and very sweet honey like flavour and can be used to flavour syrups, ice creams and custards.

**Medicinal Uses:** This plant contains large amounts of salicylic acid which is used today in aspirin as a pain killer. This plant can be used in the same way simply make a tea from the flowers and leaves. It is also very effective against stomach conditions such as indigestion, heartburn, stomach ulcers etc.

**Other Uses:** The strong fragrance of the leaves and flowers has led to its use both as an ingredient of pot pourri and as a "strewing herb". It has also been used as a dye.









**References:**

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