

# Plants

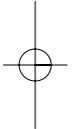
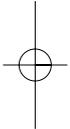
## Homeopathic and Medicinal Uses from a Botanical Family Perspective

FRANS VERMULEN

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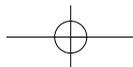
LINDA JOHNSTON MD

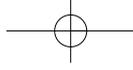
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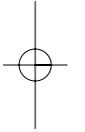
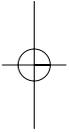
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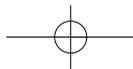
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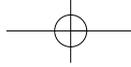
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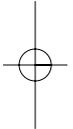
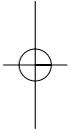
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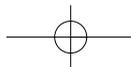
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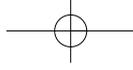
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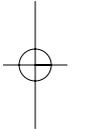
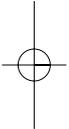
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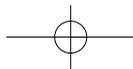
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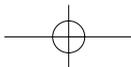
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## INTRODUCTION

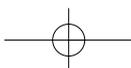
A wonderful development in homeopathy in recent years has been the recognition of the shared characteristics of remedies in groups, an idea that has continued to bear fruit. There have been various methods of making the grouping divisions, including biological, chemical, morphological and symptomatological. There are several important and productive purposes in homeopathy for these kinds of divisions. They facilitate differentiation, maximise individualisation and make accessible potential remedies that are usually overlooked.

In *Plants*, we have chosen to divide plants into their most up-to-date botanical divisions of families, orders or phyla and two functional groupings. The reasons for this will be elaborated below. Throughout the process of writing this book we have had three main missions, those of being the Corrector, Collector and Connector. Firstly, a great deal of information, especially plant identities, names and family memberships, had to be corrected. Secondly, botanical, medicinal, historical and symptomatological information was collected. A wide variety of sources, including some from very obscure places were pursued, then verified to assure reliability and authenticity. Finally, all the divergent information was connected to form a unity, a whole, an integrated life and therapeutic character of each grouping.

### CORRECTOR

As valuable as it is to group remedies together using certain criteria, we must also fulfill homeopathy's prime mandate of individualisation. Hahnemann wrote in his *Organon*, aphorism 119: 'As certainly as every species of plant differs in its external form, mode of life and growth, in its taste and smell from every other species and genus of plant, as certainly as every mineral and salt differs from all others, in its external as well as its internal physical and chemical properties [which alone should have sufficed to prevent any confounding of one with another], so certainly do they all differ and diverge among themselves in their pathogenetic – consequently also in their therapeutic – effects.' Hahnemann continues by saying in a footnote that 'Anyone who has a thorough knowledge of, and can appreciate the remarkable difference of effects on the health of man of every single substance from those of every other, will readily perceive that among them there can be . . . no equivalent remedies whatever, no surrogates.'

In Hahnemann's view it was 'undoubtedly the pure truth' that 'we ought to distinguish medicines carefully'. While certainly true theoretically, the reality of everyday practice is different. In order to distinguish medicines as carefully as Hahnemann's ideal, two things are required, which are accurate botanical knowledge to differentiate plants and astute scrutiny to observe the smallest



individual differences in what plants can cause or cure. These are high demands, the realisation of which depends to a large degree upon the level of botanical science and an individual homeopath's qualities of perception, knowledge and skill.

Science in general has vastly improved since the days of Hahnemann, including huge advances regarding the biology, chemical properties and systematics of plants. In Hahnemann's day plant classification or taxonomy and the naming of plants or nomenclature were both in their very early stages of development and still far from systematically consistent. This explains why so many of the old plant remedy names are not conform the currently accepted, formal system of binomial nomenclature in which the first name indicates the genus and the second denotes the species. For instance, Belladonna is used instead of *Atropa belladonna*, Stramonium instead of *Datura stramonium*, Dulcamara instead of *Solanum dulcamara* and Tabacum instead of *Nicotiana tabacum*.

This is a crucial point to understand. Genus refers to 'general' and species refers to 'specific'. This principle is easy to recognise when it is applied to people's names. Genus would be a family name, such as Smith and the species would be the individual name of each family member. In the Smith family or 'genus' there might be 5 members or 'species' such as John, Mary, Sarah, David and Sam. The binomial naming system would result in John Smith, Mary Smith and so forth. This convention of naming means that once hearing the name, it is known that the person is an individual in the Smith family. The same is true with the binomial naming of plants. Their genus or general group is evident as well as their individual designation. There are certain characteristics that belong to the family, such as the home address, relationships, habits and culture and certain qualities that belong exclusively to the individual that differentiate them from other members. When looking for the Smith's address, it is possible to use the genus Smith, but if you want to contact a distinct individual, there is no option but to use the species. It would be folly to suppose that John is the same as Mary in the same way that plant species within a genus would be interchangeable with another.

Having two names provides great help in the complementary processes of assembling and separating. The genus name helps to congregate, the specific name to segregate. For example, knowing that Stramonium is *Datura stramonium* would facilitate identification of *Datura metel* and *Datura ferox* as the remedies most closely related and thus the first options for comparison. Likewise, recognising that Dulcamara is *Solanum dulcamara* means that it is a species of *Solanum* being closest related to potato or *Solanum tuberosum*, tomato or *Solanum lycopersicum* and eggplant or *Solanum melongena*.

Other instances of old remedy names with just the genus name employed for designation are Thuja, Arnica, Lycopodium, Onosmodium and Bryonia, to list a few. No confusion is likely to occur as long as such a remedy is the sole representative of its genus, but that confidence is gone the moment a second species comes into play. There are two Thujas in the materia medica, both very similar in terms of chemical composition but a world apart morphologically. *Arnica montana* is European, but the fact that a plethora of other Arnica species are

native to western North America has led to erroneous statements in the literature that *Arnica montana* can be found in North America. There are two Bryonias in the materia medica, *Bryonia alba* and *Bryonia dioica*. At one time they were believed to be interchangeable so that the symptoms of the latter are included with the former.

The Bryonia pair is an example of the confounding of species sharing the same genus. Despite Hahnemann's self-evident truth that 'there can be no equivalent remedies', interchangeability of remedies occurs frequently in homeopathy. For various reasons, the idea arose that different species, especially within the same genus, could replace each other. There is plenty of evidence for this in the materia medica. Species in the following genera have been mistaken for each other or were employed interchangeably – Aloe, Bryonia, Cinnamomum, Cypripedium, Helonias, Lilium, Magnolia, Melilotus, Origanum, Polygonatum, Polygonum, Rhus, Tilia and Trillium. In light of this, it must be concluded that traditional homeopathic prescribing took place on a generic rather than a specific level. In other words, prescribing has been on a level less individualistic than is usually assumed. Moving to methods that require more specific information and precision has been part of the impetus for more accurate botanical information.

In addition to the absence of binomial names, there is a significant number of plant names listed in homeopathy that are inaccurate, misspelled, mistaken or misidentified. From our work, we have found that 30–35% of homeopathic botanical names are not in line with those of the source substances. Another critical issue concerns plant identity, which is of vital importance, especially now that characteristics of botanical families are playing an increasing part in remedy selection. The ongoing development of plant sciences means that species are reassigned to other genera and sometimes even to other families than where the homeopathic literature places them.

Plant systematics in homeopathy mostly follow the taxonomic classification systems of either Cronquist or Dahlgren. Both systems originated in the 1960s and were based on the morphological, anatomical and cytological features and other external characters of plants. The Cronquist system particularly was widely accepted and used for decades until detailed genetic evidence became available. This new knowledge arose in the late 1990s with the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group, or APG, comprising an international group of systematic botanists. They clarified and authenticated the relationships of flowering plants or angiosperms based upon phylogenetics, which is the study of evolutionary relatedness among groups of plants. A new classification system was established on the basis of molecular protein and DNA sequencing and genetic data, which confirmed or clarified some relationships in existing classification systems, but radically changed others. The first publication of the new system, APG I, appeared in 1998, with later updates to APG II in 2003 and to APG III in 2009.

The beauty and advantage of APG is that genetic underpinning of plant systematics results in pharmaceutical alignment of plant species according to their chemical constituents. The American taxonomist J.B. McNair predicted the significance of such systematics as early as 1935 in his paper titled *Angiosperm Phylogeny on a Chemical Basis*: 'Plants can be classified chemically in accordance

with the substances made by them. Such a chemical classification may be compared with or used as a supplement to morphological classification and may be of some importance in the development of the true natural system of angiosperm phylogeny.'

Implementation of APG and the delineation of phytochemical composition greatly benefit homeopathic systematics. It must not be forgotten that nearly all traditional provings of plant remedies were carried out with tinctures, very low potencies or the crude substances, in order to elicit physiological actions and reactions rather than dynamic ones. Most homeopaths are unaware of how much of the homeopathic materia medica of plants is actually based on herbal use, tinctures and unpotentised source material. From our investigations, we estimate that about 75–90% of plant symptoms are in this category. This is not to say the information should not be used, but only that we should be aware of exactly what kind of information we are relying upon.

The biological effects produced in such manner obviously depend upon the chemical constituents of the plants tested. Phylogenetically closely allied plants, grouped in families, are chemically and pharmacologically very alike and thus by definition must be very similar in the symptoms they cause or cure. Belladonna, Hyoscyamus, Stramonium and Mandragora of the Solanaceae so much resemble each other because their chemicals are very alike. Yet, for homeopathic purposes, they are distinct remedies because further details differentiate them from each other. Similar patterns can be observed in all other families of which the phytochemistry has been investigated.

It was said of the radical re-assignments and realignments proposed by APG that the taxonomic stability was 'rudely shattered'. This can equally be said of the effects it may have on homeopathic classification. Yet, correct classification and placement of remedies is essential for accurate differential diagnosis. Some examples:

- Gelsemium has been removed from the Loganiaceae or Nux vomica family and placed in a family of its own. Because Gelsemiaceae is most closely allied to Apocynaceae, both botanically and symptomatologically, it is included with this family.
- Curare has been removed from the Loganiaceae and included in the Menispermaceae due to similarity of chemical composition and biological effects with the latter family.
- Anagallis and Cyclamen have parted company with Primula in their former family Primulaceae and are now part of Myrsinaceae.
- Many genera of the previously large family Scrophulariaceae have been transferred to other families. Digitalis, Gratiola and Veronica are now in Plantaginaceae; Euphrasia and Pedicularis are in Orobanchaceae; while Buddleja, Scrophularia and Verbascum came to or remained in Scrophulariaceae.
- A number of genera in the former Verbenaceae, such as Vitex [agnus-castus], have been moved to Lamiaceae.
- Aletris farinosa, previously part of Melanthiaceae in Liliales, has been re-assigned to Nartheciaceae in Dioscoreales.

- Trillium and Paris previously belonged to Trilliaceae, but are now placed in the Melanthiaceae or Veratrum family.
- The genus Pulsatilla has disappeared. The former Pulsatilla species are now Anemone species.
- The genus Ledum has been dissolved, most species now being placed in Rhododendron.
- Great changes have taken place within Liliales, or Liliiflorae as the order was named in the Engler system of the 1920s. At one time the order Liliales was considered in homeopathy to be one of the largest groups of remedies. On the basis of molecular and morphological evidence, the redefinition of the group has resulted in the exclusion of Asparagales and Dioscoreales as separate orders, each with a number of families formerly lumped with the Liliales.

## COLLECTOR

The Plant Kingdom is by far the largest of the five kingdoms recognised in homeopathy. More than 2000 plant remedies are listed in the various materia medicas, repertories, encyclopedias and pharmacopoeias. They are all discussed in *Plants*.

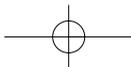
Collecting is easy, until one wants to be selective in what is chosen. Then collecting is quite a different expedition. What starts out as a trip to the market quickly becomes a trek in the Andes, a jungle exploration or a desert adventure.

It is easy to see that a great number of our sources and materia medicas are simply copies of one another without questioning their reliability. A mistake made decades ago will be repeated so often as to be enshrined with authenticity for no other reason than its numerous repetitions. It is startling how many errors there are in second, third and fourth-hand sources. Equally, it is unsettling that these mistakes are used for the basis of prescribing.

Since no serious collector would accept a photocopy of the Gutenberg Bible as the real thing, neither do we accept unauthenticated material. Each symptom entry has been verified as to its original source and is so indicated and referenced. Allen, Hering and Dake & Hughes are reliable and when original sources could not be found, their encyclopedias have been used.

Returning to original sources is an amazing experience and we encourage homeopaths to take the time to read them. The language is beautiful and descriptive to a degree rarely encountered anymore. Additionally, there can be a chasm in meaning between what was originally written and what later authors have made of it by interpretation, editing and turning into rubric form. In *Plants*, only that which has been completely corrected has been collected.

As we have discussed, in the course of the last century sciences such as taxonomy, plant biology, phytochemistry and pharmacology have changed dramatically and significantly. It has taken homeopathy a bit longer to begin integrating these changes and adapting to them. Happily, these advances are now well on their way. The last 20–30 years have demonstrated a definite movement towards more specific, individualised prescribing and a demand for information



to facilitate those methods. *Plants* has been written to provide just that and to exemplify the progression from generic to specific. In order to accomplish this the book is structured as follows:

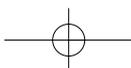
- 1 All plants are given their current accepted scientific name, in addition to possible synonyms and their homeopathic remedy name.
- 2 Plants are classified and categorised in families and orders according to APG III.

There are 139 groupings:

- 116 families – name ending with ‘ceae’.
  - 17 orders – name ending with ‘ales’.
  - 4 phyla – Ferns alias Pterophyta; Gnetophyta; Lycophyta; Mosses alias Bryophyta.
  - 2 behavioural groupings – Carnivorous plants and Parasitic plants.
- 3 The morphological, biological, cultural, chemical, medicinal and pharmacological aspects of each plant are detailed fully and in depth.
  - 4 Symptoms have been extracted unchanged from the original proving texts or from the encyclopedias of Allen, Hering and Dake & Hughes when the original manuscripts were not available.
  - 5 All proving symptoms, toxicological manifestations as well as clinical findings are referenced.
  - 6 Remedies are listed alphabetically in their correct families, orders or groupings including their vernacular name, abbreviation and number of symptoms as of repertory versions of 2010.
  - 7 Errors in the literature are indicated and corrections are proposed.
  - 8 Provings not yet found in materia medicas or repertories are marked and included.

Of the 2027 plant remedies in *Plants*, 714 or 35.2% have received one or more provings or self-experimentations. Some remedies, particularly those in large families, have up to six different provings. Provings are of all kinds. Far from the ‘one orthodox method’ that is assumed for provings, they demonstrate a remarkable variety and versatility. They range from small to large assemblages of provers, from brief solo undertakings to prolonged self-experimentations, from solely male participation to exclusively female input, from no effects to virtual toxicosis, from chewing of bark and leaves to sniffing and handling of flowers, from overdosing with tinctures to occasional dosing with single drop doses, from going down in potencies due to inactivity to going up in material quantities to boost activity, from fleeting observations to encounters drawn out over months, from flat nondescript accounts to detailed personal narratives, from unspecified proceedings to scrupulous sequencing of events and from ultra short to comprehensive.

A total of 1176 provings of plant remedies have been conducted. They are divided into 747 traditional ‘Hahnemannian’ provings, 380 self-experimentations, 27 meditative provings, 18 dream provings and four C-4 triturations. There are 166 provings that are either new or have been overlooked that are not yet found in materia medicas or repertories. Large families or orders have the largest



numbers of provings. In the following list the number of remedies a group contains and the number and type of provings, either as self-experimentation or other types is compared.

<i>Group</i>	<i>Remedies</i>	<i>Provings</i>	<i>S-E</i>	<i>Others</i>
• Apiaceae	69	40	16	24
• Apocynaceae	57	42	17	25
• Asteraceae	154	80	31	49
• Brassicales	50	18	6	12
• Cucurbitaceae	23	23	8	15
• Euphorbiaceae	51	25	8	17
• Fabaceae	134	64	13	51
• Lamiaceae	99	30	9	21
• Papaveraceae	36	22	5	17
• Pinales	49	35	1	34
• Poales	51	16	2	14
• Ranunculaceae	59	53	24	29
• Rosaceae	63	31	5	26
• Rubiaceae	53	28	10	18
• Rutaceae	29	30	16	14
• Solanaceae	53	45	19	26

Nearly all proven remedies have also clinically observed symptoms. The symptom picture of 67 remedies, about 3.3% of the total, is solely based on poisonings. Of the total number of remedies, 521 remedies or 25.7% of the total, have only clinically observed symptoms, without proving symptoms, obtained from empirical remedy use by eclectic physicians, which is often found in Boericke, as well as from herbal usage, folk-medicinal employment or homeopathic use unspecified as to source.

The remaining 725 remedies or 35.7% are as yet without symptoms in the materia medica. Nonetheless, they are described in full and useful information can be gathered there. Their potential use as remedies can be inferred from the use of the type remedy or type remedies of the family or order to which they belong. Type remedies are invariably the remedies with most symptoms in the grouping. They always appear first in repertorisation. Commonly known as polychrests, type remedies partly exemplify the themes of their group and partly display their individual characteristics. Part of their symptoms is generic and found in most or all members of the group and part is specific or typical for the individual species.

## CONNECTOR

Once information has been collected and corrected, the last stage is to have it connected. Materia medicas comprise lists of symptoms from various sources. Particularly noteworthy or reliable symptoms are called keynotes. Studying materia medica and understanding the actions of remedies came down to

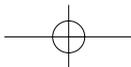
memorising lists of individual symptoms. This has been the situation for as long as people have been learning homeopathy. The image of raking up a field full of fallen leaves comes to mind. Thousands of individual, separate leaves without any particular connection to each other are piled up. A stiff wind would scatter them all again. This is contrasted to leaves still on a tree. They are connected to a branch, which is connected to a larger branch and eventually the trunk. The trunk is the unifying part that connects every single leaf with the whole, resulting in the tree. Like leaves, individual symptoms, unrelated and disperse as they may seem, are all connected to their own version of a trunk, which is the source from which the remedy is made.

A fundamental principle of homeopathic prescribing is totality of symptoms. Hahnemann's aphorism 18 is explicit; the totality of symptoms comprises the whole of the disease and is the sole indication for the choice of a curative remedy. This clearly states that symptoms are all united in a whole as one cohesive picture, which represents one distinct remedy. If symptoms are so connected in patients, then it follows that the symptoms of any individual remedy in the materia medica must also be connected, equally presenting a united totality.

Throughout the history of homeopathy there have been those who have understood this idea and incorporated it in their practice, teaching and writings. William Gutman wrote in his 1937 book *Homeopathy: The Fundamentals of its Philosophy and the Essence of its Remedies*: 'The aim of a future materia medica should be to conform with the principle of unity which underlies homeopathy, by adding to the tenets of a single remedy, as a therapeutic unity, and the single dosage in prescribing, the presentation of a remedy as an integrated entity. In such a presentation all facts are organically interrelated, conforming with the actual unity of the mineral or plant from which the remedy is derived and the unity of the individual to which it is applied.'

Fortunately in recent years, this concept has quite rightly been gaining more attention and is currently the mainstay of several of homeopathy's leading lights. The same notion of unity is being applied to remedy groupings or families. In *Plants*, we have elaborated this idea to a great extent. As explained above, with the exception of two behavioural groups, each of the 139 groupings, here presented as chapters, encompass a botanical group of like-constituted plants according to APG III.

By thoroughly studying and incorporating information within each grouping regarding chemical constituents, botanical features, medicinal uses, history, mythology, cases histories, and a variety of other materia medica aspects, certain distinct patterns and themes arise spontaneously and naturally. Chemical constituents have specific effects involving specific organ systems. Long years of experience of medicinal usages by native populations, eclectic doctors, clinicians, herbalists and others provides empirical information. Mythology, folklore, cultural attitudes, symbolism and associations are not detached, random formulations. They all build on subconscious reactions, associations and thoughts as well as experiences pertaining to various plants. When having stood the test of time, this information dips deep into the well of human consciousness, providing valuable insights that may otherwise be inaccessible.



As a result of connecting all of this information, themes and affinities have been surmised for each grouping. They are offered as starting points, suggestions and possibilities to help understand the family or grouping as well as to better understand patients, facilitating prescribing remedies within the various groups. One of the most astounding features of having done this work is the realisation of the amazing variety, nuance, precision, distinction, depth and reach of our materia medica. There is a dazzling feast of possibilities, of which we are partaking only a small nibble. Often a remedy is prescribed because it seems accurate yet another grouping would offer even better possibilities, but is unknown or neglected. There is a whole wide world of prospective choices and all that is needed is to open our minds to the opportunities.

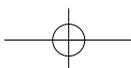
## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

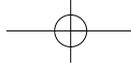
The best way to utilise the information available is to rely on the idea discussed above about generic and specific, genus and species. The family themes and affinities are drawn on the amalgamation of qualities shared throughout the whole group. In that regard, they are generic, general, of the 'genus'. The utility of themes comes when a homeopath can identify those characteristics in a patient, thereby pointing to a particular grouping. Often at this point, the most known or familiar remedy in a grouping, the so-called 'type remedy', is prescribed. This is generic prescribing as discussed above. We encourage homeopaths not to stop here but to take the next step, going from generic to specific.

Symptoms that do not belong to the generic or family qualities are often ignored, probably due to the appreciation of how effective the match to the group is. These leftover symptoms constitute the specifics or species-related indications for the individual plant within the group. Carrying on from the discussion above about the Smiths, this step is like identifying an individual person by first name within their family. The house of the Smith family has been found but the birthday present has yet to be delivered to the right person.

Each individual plant member of its grouping has particular qualities all its own. The perception of such individualising characteristics makes prescribing more accurate and effective. When a grouping is identified, each member must be reviewed to find the one that most precisely reflects the patient's totality of symptoms. All family members should be considered carefully.

The question arises about how to utilise the plants that have virtually no homeopathic information. We have included plants for which little, if anything, is known outside of botanical features. As should be evident from individual plants and plant families rich in data, any information from any aspect of a plant's life, use, history and botany can be used to delineate its usefulness. The *Misodendron oblongifolium* case in the chapter Parasitic Plants may serve as an illustrative example. Once the grouping of parasitic plants was perceived, the next task was to determine which one. Since there were so few with any appreciable materia medica, the botanical information provided by the patient as to





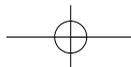
growing habitat and appearance of flowers led to the selection of the correct remedy, which incidentally was not yet in the materia medica.

As valuable as using non-traditional information for prescribing is, caution must be exercised. It is not enough to have one or two characteristics plucked from the patient or the plant to rationalise a prescription. Homeopathy's fundamental principles must not be forgotten. When expanding ideas, as group themes do, it is even more important than ever to stand on the firm ground of basic principles. Perceiving what is to be cured in the patient and what is curative in remedies based on the totality of symptoms and what is strange, rare and peculiar in each is still the bedrock of our healing art. With this firmly and constantly in mind, it is possible to benefit from the astounding and bountiful array of remedies as are described in *Plants*.

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*Thousand Oaks, California*

*August 7, 2011*



**ORDER ALISMATALES**  
Including families Alismataceae and Potamogetonaceae

**Botanical Keys Alismataceae**

- Arrowhead or Water Plantain family with 12 genera containing about 80 species of annual or perennial marsh and aquatic herbs in. Laticiferous – producing white latex.
- Distribution: Cosmopolitan, but centred in New World; family absent from Arctic and arid zones.
- Stems cormlike or stoloniferous.
- Leaves strap-shaped and submerged or broad and floating. Floating or aerial leaves stalked and have a prominent midrib, parallel veins and also cross veins.
- Flowers – 3 free, short-lived petals in white, pink or purple and 3 separate green sepals. Petals crumpled in bud.
- Economic uses: Ornamentals [poolside or aquarium plants]; food [corm of *S. sagittifolia* edible].
- Classified in order Alismatales by both Cronquist and Dahlgren.

**Botanical Keys Potamogetonaceae**

- Pondweed family with 4 genera and about 100 species of freshwater perennial and occasionally annual herbs, often inhabiting ditches and ponds.
- Distribution: Cosmopolitan, but esp. temperate regions.
- Like Alismataceae, most species have more or less stalked leaves with midrib and cross veins.
- Flowers small and inconspicuous, in spikes; bear 4 free tepals, 4 free stamens, 4 free carpels.
- Stems and leaves possess flexible joints.
- Members of the largest genus, *Potamogeton* with 60 species, are very important food sources for ducks in North America.
- Classified in order Najadales by both Cronquist and Dahlgren.
- *Compare* other family in order Alismatales; Araceae.

**ALISMATALES IN HOMEOPATHY**

Homeopathic name	Common name	Abbreviation	Symptoms
<i>Alisma plantago</i>	Water plantain	Alis-p.	Less than 5
<i>Potamogeton natans</i>	Floating-leaf pondweed	Pota.	None
<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>	Arrowhead	Sag-s.	None

## THEMES & AFFINITIES ALISMATALES

Following the traditional Chinese medicine's lead, it is easy to see water themes throughout this family, small though it may be. The Alismatales are imbued with water – saturated, submerged, sodden and soaked. The name *Potamogeton natans* means 'floating river neighbour'. From hydrophobia to diuresis to the sensation of walking on water, fluidity is everywhere.

The other theme is wound healing including snakes bites and insect stings. This is not surprising since one member is known to have antibacterial effects against common wound pathogens in the genus *Staphylococcus*. The family's antimicrobial action extends to Hydrophobia, which is a viral mediated illness.

- 1 Water, submerged, diuretic, fluid excretion.
- 2 Kidney, urine.
- 3 Hydrophobia.
- 4 Wounds, insect stings, snakebites.

### *Alisma plantago-aquatica*

*Alisma plantago-aquatica* L.; syns. *Alisma triviale* Pursh.; *Alisma parviflorum* Pursh.; *Alisma orientale* (Sam.) Juz. Water plantain. Mad-dog weed. Devil-spoons. Marsh drain. Alismataceae.

**Native range:** Most of Northern Hemisphere. **Habitat:** Ditches, damp ground and shallow pond margins in water up to 25 cm deep. Herbaceous aquatic perennial, fast growing, with a fibrous root, several basal leaves 15–30 cm long, and a triangular stem up to 1 m tall. Roots in mud, holds leaves and flowers above water. Plant often self-sows aggressively; seeds dispersed on water or by waterfowl. One of the first water plants to break winter dormancy in early spring. Flowers small, white or pale pink, in clusters, bisexual; pollinated by flies. The fresh leaves and roots are toxic but the toxic principle is destroyed by heat or by drying.

According to the Chinese Materia Medica, any disease of the nature of a flux or dropsy or disease of the hydrology of the system is supposedly benefited by this water plant. It is also stated that, 'If taken for a long time, the eye and ear become acute, hunger is not felt, life is prolonged, the body becomes light, the visage radiant, and one can walk upon water.' [Stuart 1911]

The leaves have been used to treat cystitis and renal calculus in addition to dysentery and diarrhoea. 'The leaves, when fresh, are highly stimulating, and even vesicant. When dry, a strong infusion of them proves relaxing and stimulating, acting on the skin and kidneys. Used warm, this will secure gentle moisture on the surface, and quiet nervous agitation. Used cold, it procures a free discharge of urine; and has been considered of service in lithic-acid gravel, and torpor of the kidneys connected with common colds, dysentery, and typhoid. A fomentation of the dried leaves is good in bruises; and the outward and inward use of the plant has a popular reputation for the treatment of hydrophobia. It is

not likely that it can be relied upon in such a connection; but no doubt it will prove deserving of confidence as a mild nervine depurator. The insignificant appearance of the plant has led to its being slighted.' [Cook 1869]

Fresh leaves are a rubefacient and employed in treatment of leprosy or applied locally to bruises and swellings. The dried stem bases are eaten, or grated and taken with water in treating digestive disorders such as heartburn, cramps and stomach flu. The seeds are believed to act as a contraceptive, while the whole plant is said to promote conception. Powdered seeds are astringent and used as a haemostatic. The root is said to lower blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar levels. It is also claimed to have an antibacterial action against *Staphylococcus*, *Streptococcus pneumoniae* and *Mycobacterium*. [Plants for a Future]

The plant is used as an antibacterial agent, astringent, contraceptive, diaphoretic, diuretic, hypoglycaemic, hypotensive and an antidote to opium. [Duke 2002]

'The *Alisma*, or water plantain, is lauded in Russia as a remedy for hydrophobia. The plant flowers during the summer and should be collected in August. The roots must be dried and grated, then spread on bread and butter, and a good dose taken night and morning. Two or three doses are said to be sufficient to effect a cure.' [Hom. Rec. 1886 no. 4]

- Symptom in MM:  
≈ Asthmatic respiration.

### **Potamogeton natans**

*Potamogeton natans* L.; syn. *Potamogeton hibernicus* (Hagstr.) Druce. Floating-leaf pondweed. Broad-leaved pondweed. Pickerel weed. Potamogetonaceae.

Native range: North temperate and circumboreal regions. Habitat: Shallow to rather deep water of lakes and ponds. Herbaceous aquatic perennial, growing to 1 m at a fast rate, tending to overrun ponds. Floating leaves long-stalked, oval, cordate at base; submerged leaves reduced to linear, usually without a blade, often disintegrating with age. Floating leaves formerly believed to give rise to young pikes. Flowers small, whorled in dense spikes; four green tepals, four stamens, and four ovaries. As they mature into achenes or nutlets the spike elongates. The fruit is green, and turns brown when ripe. Floating rootstocks and turions [winter buds] used as a source of starch. Name from Greek *potamos*, river, and *geiton*, neighbour. *Natans* means floating.

Navajo and Ramah Indians took a decoction of the plant as a ceremonial emetic. It has also been used as a febrifuge and resolvent.

- No symptoms in MM.

### **Sagittaria sagittifolia**

*Sagittaria sagittifolia* L.; syn. *Sagittaria japonica* Hort. Arrowhead. Old world arrowhead. Water archer. Alismataceae.

Native range: Europe, Asia. Habitat: Ponds, slow streams, ditches, freshwater wetlands. Herbaceous aquatic perennial, growing in water from 10–50 cm deep, with arrow-shaped leaves held high above water level and narrow linear

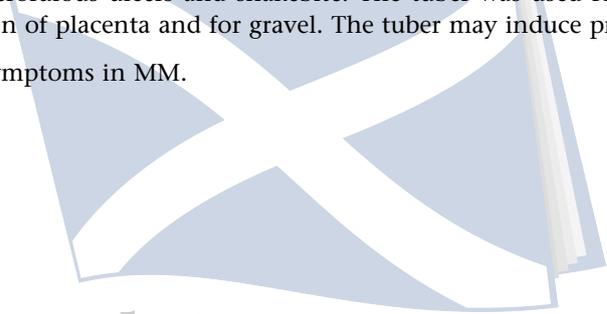
submerged leaves, up to 80 cm long and 2 cm broad. Flowers white, purple centre; petals 3, sepals 3. Seeds take two years to germinate due to a double dormancy requiring cold then warm then cold temperatures. Considered a noxious, invasive weed, yet cultivated as a decorative poolside plant. Most if not all members of the genus produce edible tubers and a number of them are cultivated for this, especially in the Orient. North American Indians used the tubers similarly to potatoes. Name from Latin *sagittarius*, armed with arrows, in allusion to the shape of the leaves.

Native Americans widely used the closely related species *Sagittaria cuneata*, called wapato, as a food source and for medicinal purposes. The Maidu of California used an infusion of arrowhead roots to clean and treat wounds. The Navaho used these plants for headaches. The Ojibwa and the Chippewa employed *Sagittaria* species as a remedy for indigestion. The Cherokee used an infusion of the leaves to bath feverish babies, with one sip given orally. The Iroquois employed wapato for rheumatism and as a dermatological aid, a laxative and a ceremonial blessing when they began planting corn.

In traditional Chinese medicine ingestion of raw tubers is considered deleterious, producing fluxes, weakness and haemorrhoids. However it was used for kidney affections accompanied by hearing loss, tinnitus and dizziness.

The plant is anti-scorbutic and diuretic and used with salt for rabies. A decoction was utilised for eye diseases and gonorrhoea. Leaves mashed with molasses were employed to treat breast inflammation and sore throat or were applied to the breast to dispel breast milk. Powdered leaves were used to treat itchiness and a variety of skin problems. Bruised leaves were good for treating bug bites, foul sores, scrofulous ulcers and snakebite. The tuber was used for deficient lochia, retention of placenta and for gravel. The tuber may induce premature birth.

- No symptoms in MM.



Saltire Books

## FAMILY PHRYMACEAE – ORDER LAMIALES

### Botanical Keys

- Lopseed or Monkey Flower family with 9 genera and some 230 species of annual or perennial herbs, formerly included in Scrophulariaceae.
- Distribution: Worldwide, but centred in western North America and Australasia.
- Habitat: Most diverse, ranging from deserts to riverbanks and mountains.
- Family mainly defined by the following three characteristics: (1) Tubular, toothed calyces (with five lobes). (2) Stigmas with two lamellas with sensitive inner surfaces that close together on contact with a pollinator. (3) Capsules that are readily dehiscent in the length between the partitions of the locule.
- Floral structures rather different, making morphological assessment difficult. Corolla bilaterally or radially symmetrical. Reproduction also rather different: asexual, self-fertilising, out-crossing or mixed mating. Some are pollinated by insects, others by hummingbirds.
- Fruit commonly a dehiscent capsule containing numerous seeds.
- Economic uses: Ornamentals.
- *Compare* other families in order Lamiales: Acanthaceae; Bignoniaceae; Lamiaceae [Labiatae]; Lentibulariaceae; Oleaceae; Orobanchaceae; Pedaliaceae; Plantaginaceae; Scrophulariaceae; Verbenaceae.

### PHRYMACEAE IN HOMEOPATHY

Homeopathic name	Common name	Abbreviation	Symptoms
Mimulus guttatus <sup>1</sup>	Common monkey flower	Miml-g.	5–10
Mimulus luteus	Yellow monkey flower	Miml-lu.	None

<sup>1</sup> = Bach Flower Mimulus [Mim.].

### THEMES & AFFINITIES PHRYMACEAE

This small family of two has a member with information on the emotional nature provided by Bach. Painfully shy and emotionally sensitive to the point of nervousness and anxieties, the least provocation or personal contact brings fright and dread. Most of what life brings touches the hypersensitivity, eliciting anxiety reactions. Interestingly these plants concentrate sodium chloride to such a degree that they taste salty and are used as a salt substitute.

It won't escape notice that the symptoms of the plant resemble those of its constituent, Natrum muriaticum.

- 1 Shy, sensitive. Aversion to being talked to.
- 2 Nervous, anxious, dread.
- 3 Salt and salty taste.

### **Mimulus guttatus**

*Mimulus guttatus* DC. Common monkey flower; seep monkey flower.

Native range: Western North America; naturalised in Britain and elsewhere in Europe. Habitat: Wetlands, streambanks and seeps. Invasive; colonises wet roadsides and adjacent areas. Herbaceous annual, or sometimes perennial, to 90 cm high. Very variable in stature and vigour, sometimes dwarf and small-leaved, sometimes robust and nearly a metre high. Leaves opposite, 1–5 cm long, irregularly toothed, hairy or hairless, ovate to rounded or kidney- to heart-shaped, palmately or sub-palmately veined, the 3–7 main veins all arising at or near the base. Lower leaves stalked, the upper becoming stalkless, those among the flowers reduced, relatively broad, tending to clasp the stem and sometimes joined at bases. Flowers few to several in terminal clusters, 2-lipped, 2–3 cm wide, 5-lobed, yellow, with orange spots on lower lip; calyx inflating after flowering. The stigma, the receptive tip of the carpel that receives pollen at pollination and on which the pollen grain germinates, is two-lipped and removes pollen from visiting insects by closing together like a forceps when touched. Fruit a broadly oblong capsule, 1–2 cm long, contained in inflated 'balloons' of fused sepals [calyx].

Strange, rare and peculiar is the plant's heavy metal tolerance, which includes copper, cadmium, nickel, and perhaps other heavy metals.

Native Americans used a decoction of stems and leaves as a steam bath for chest and back soreness. A decoction was taken as a tea for stomach pain, and a poultice of crushed leaves was applied to wounds or rope burns. The leaves were used as a substitute for lettuce.

'Mimulus species tend to concentrate sodium chloride and other salts absorbed from the soils in which they grow in their leaves and stem tissues. Native Americans and early travellers in the American West used this plant as a salt substitute to flavour wild game. The entire plant is edible, but reported to be very salty and bitter unless well cooked. The juice squeezed from the plants foliage was used as a soothing poultice for minor burns and skin irritations.' [Wikipedia]

It is the Bach Flower Remedy for known fears, described by Bach as 'Fear of worldly things, illness, pain, accidents, poverty, of dark, of being alone, of misfortune. The fears of everyday life. These people quietly and secretly bear their dread, they do not freely speak of it to others.'

Scheffer [1988] observes that 'Mimulus types are very sensitive physically and in the presence of others are apt to blush, stammer, or suddenly have a frog in the throat. Others talk far too much from sheer nervousness, giggle nervously, or suffer from damp palms of the hands. . . . One is hypersensitive to many things

in the environment when in the Mimulus state, feeling like a hummingbird caught up in a colony of rooks.' Scheffer adds a number of anxieties and fears to Bach's initial listing including health, losing friends, telephone, spiders, mice and dogs. Under 'all kinds of hypersensitivities' she includes 'cold, noise, unkindness, loud words, conflict, contradiction, aggression and does not want to be talked to.'

- Symptoms in MM from Farokh Master [India], based on Bach Flower Essence:
  - ≈ Anxiety about the future.
  - ≈ Fear of cancer, dark, death, about health.
  - ≈ Postponing everything to next day.
  - ≈ Restlessness.

### **Mimulus luteus**

*Mimulus luteus* L. Yellow monkey flower; monkey musk; blood-drop emlets; berro amarillo.

Native range: Chile; naturalised elsewhere. Habitat: Andes and coastal regions. Herbaceous perennial, to 50 cm high, with hairy or smooth, mid-green foliage, coarsely notched, and 2-lipped, yellow flowers with red or purple blotches on lower lip.

- No symptoms in MM.



## FAMILY SAPOTACEAE – ORDER ERICALES

### Botanical Keys

- Sapodilla family in 53 genera with more than 1200 species of laticiferous, evergreen trees and shrubs.
- Distribution: Worldwide, mostly in tropical and subtropical regions.
- Leaf-stalks bottle-shaped when fresh. Fruit a fleshy berry.
- Economic uses: Timber; resinous latex [chicle; balata; gutta-percha]; fruits [sapodilla; star-apple; canistel; Australian native plum; shea; armadillo fruit; ausubo; Spanish cherry; cinnamon apple; miracle fruit].
- Classified in order Ebenales by both Cronquist and Dahlgren.
- *Compare* other families in order Ericales: Actinidiaceae; Balsaminaceae; Ebenaceae; Ericaceae; Maesaceae; Polemoniaceae; Primulaceae; Sarraceniaceae; Theaceae.

### SAPOTACEAE IN HOMEOPATHY

Homeopathic name	Common name	Abbreviation	Symptoms
Achras sapota <sup>1</sup>	Sapodilla	Achras	None
Lucuma glycyphloea <sup>3</sup>	Monesia	Luc-g.	None
Sapota achras <sup>2</sup>	Sapodilla	Sapot-a.	None

1-2 = Sapota achras Mill. = Achras sapota L.; now classified as Manilkara zapota (L.) van Royen. 3 = Pradosia lactescens.

#### Switching and Confounding

Achras sapota and Sapora achras are the same plant. The homeopathic literature has simply switched the first and second names, creating two where there is really only one. Not only does this cause confusion, but both renditions are also inaccurate. The correct name is Manikara zapota.

## THEMES & AFFINITIES SAPOTACEAE

Both members of the Sapotaceae provide edible and tasty fruits. These tropical fruits are virtually unknown to the Western palate, but provide a sweet treat in their native habitats. One member, *Manilkara zapota*, provides latex to an extent reminiscent of the Euphorbiaceae. There are no homeopathic symptoms, cases or provings, so further understanding about themes must wait until such information is available.

- 1 Fruits, tropical and sweet.
- 2 Latex.

### *Lucuma glycyphloea*

*Pradosia lactescens* (Vell.) Radlk.; syn. *Lucuma glycyphloea* (Casar.) Mart. & Eichler ex Miq. *Monesia*; buranhém; guaranhém; pau-de-remo.

Native range: Brazil. Habitat: Damp floodplains. Evergreen tree with leathery, shiny, entire leaves grouped on branch tips in alternate spirals. New branches puberulous. Flowers small, bell-shaped, in fascicles arranged directly on trunk and thicker branches; fruit an ellipsoid, smooth-skinned berry with slightly sweet, gelatinous pulp.

'Monesia appears to possess slightly stimulating and astringent properties. In doses of from 2 to 10 grains, repeated 2 or 3 times a day, it acts as a gentle excitant of the stomach, improving the appetite and the digestive functions. In larger doses, it causes a burning sensation in the epigastric region, gastric uneasiness, and costiveness. It has been found advantageous in certain atonic forms of dyspepsia, as a stimulant and tonic; and as a tonic and astringent in diarrhoea and haemorrhages, as from the lungs, stomach, and kidneys, in haemorrhoids, and in profuse menstruation. In chronic bronchitis, attended with considerable expectoration, and in the catarrhal affections and winter cough of persons in advanced years, it has proved useful. As an alterative, it has been advised in scrofulous and scorbutic affections, though it is somewhat doubtful as to its good effect in these cases, although it is stated to have been effectual in the purpura of scurvy. It has been advised as a tonic in convalescence from malarial fevers and in incipient consumption.' [King 1898]

- No symptoms in MM.

### *Manilkara zapota*

*Manilkara zapota* (L.) P. Royen. Sapodilla; sapota; chico; naseberry; chicle.

Native range: Mexico, Belize, Guatemala; now commercially grown throughout tropics and subtropics. Slow-growing, long-lived, evergreen tree, 15–30 m high, rich in white, gummy latex. Leaves elliptic to ovate, medium green, glossy, alternate, 7–15 cm long, and spirally clustered at tips of forked twigs. Flowers white to pale green, small, axillary, bell-shaped. Fruit a large globose berry, 4–8 cm across, brown and scruffy, but smooth-skinned when fully ripe, and

yellowish to brown flesh with a sweet flavour akin to that of a ripe pear with a dash of brown sugar.

The unripe fruit rich in tannins and is very astringent. The dried and purified gummy latex, known as 'chicle', was formerly widely employed as the base in the manufacture of chewing gum. The Mayan Indians of Mexico and Central America traditionally chewed raw chicle latex. Aztec prostitutes loudly snapped their chewing gum to advertise their trade during the height of pre-Columbian Aztec civilisation.

'Medicinal Uses: Because of the tannin content, young fruits are boiled and the decoction taken to stop diarrhoea. An infusion of the young fruits and the flowers is drunk to relieve pulmonary complaints. A decoction of old, yellowed leaves is drunk as a remedy for coughs, colds and diarrhoea. An infusion of the bark is regarded as a febrifuge and is said to halt diarrhoea and dysentery. The crushed seeds have a diuretic action and are claimed to expel bladder and kidney stones. A fluid extract of the crushed seeds is employed in Yucatan as a sedative and soporific. A combined decoction of sapodilla and chayote leaves is sweetened and taken daily to lower blood pressure. A paste of the seeds is applied on stings and bites from venomous animals. The latex is used in the tropics as a crude filling for tooth cavities.' [Morton 1987]

- No symptoms in MM.

