

Botanic name : *Prunella vulgaris* L. -- Sp. Pl. 2: 600. 1753 [1 May 1753] (IK)

Common name: Self heal

Family: Lamiaceae (Labiatae)

Habitat: Terrestrial (wetlands)

Distribution : It is native to India (Himalayas) found in Afghanistan to Bhutan and also throughout Europe, Asia and North America. Holarctic in distribution. Although still tagged as least concern by IUCN Red Data list, extensive exploitation for its medicinal value, habitat fragmentation, and ignorance by local people to its conservation have made the plant vulnerable in many countries including India

Description: Erect perennial herb, square, reddish stems; stems often square, crimson tinged, and erect to decumbent; leaves are lance shaped, short petiolate, serrate at margin, and reddish at tip, growing in opposite pairs down the square stem; Flowers are bright blue-violet, rarely pink or white, two lipped and tubular, top lip is a purple hood, and the bottom lip is often white; stamens 4 ,free; fruit dry, nutlets 4. The genus name, *Prunella*, comes from the German word for quinsy, a severe sore throat caused by a tonsil abscess for which self-heal is said to be a cure. The species name *vulgaris*, meaning “common,” indicates the plant’s ubiquitous nature.

Phytochemicals: Bioactive compounds include alkaloid (1120 mg %), saponins (350 mg %), phenolics (55.785 mg %) and tannins (52.25 mg %). Betulinic-acid, D-Camphor, Delphinidin, Hyperoside, Manganese, Oleanolic-acid, Rosmarinic-acid, Rutin, Ursolic-acid.

Medicinal/Economic use : The 17th-century botanist Nicholas Culpeper wrote that the plant is called selfheal because ‘when you are hurt, you may heal yourself’. Leaves are externally applied to wounds to promote healing. Traditionally the whole plant is medicinal as alterative, antiviral, anticancer (China), antibacterial, antipyretic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, carminative, diuretic, febrifuge, hypotensive, stomachic, styptic, tonic, vermifuge and vulnerary. Plant part/s are used to staunch bleeding and for treating heart disease. A decoction of the leaves is used to treat sore throats and internal bleeding. Also used as an anti-inflammatory and has anti-allergic activity. In Chinese medicine plant is mainly used for treating liver complaints, and as a stimulant in the liver and gall bladder. In western medicine it is used externally for treating minor injuries, high blood pressure, sores, burns, bruises and can also be used as a mouthwash to treat mouth ulcers. The Algonquin of Quebec used it as a fever reducer (New England Wild Flower Society 2011-2015).