



Common name Coltsfoot

Latin Name: *Tussilago Farfara*

Family Name Compositae

Coltsfoot grows throughout the Dell in March and early April as it loves to grow on old railway embankments, on poor hard soils.

The flowering stem comes before the leaves and consists of a single composite yellow flower, whilst other shoots develop into leaves, when the flower stems in their turn have died down.



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The leaves are long-stalked, hoof-shaped and about 4 inches across, with angular teeth on the margins. Both surfaces are covered, when young, with loose, white, felted woolly hairs, but those on the upper surface fall off as the leaf grows bigger. An old name for Coltsfoot was *Filius ante patrem* (the son before the father), because the flowers appear and wither before the leaves are produced.

The seeds are crowned with a tuft of silky hairs, which are often used by goldfinches to line their nests.

What it was used for in the past



<http://www.vic.org.uk/pro/aufram>
e.htm

The felty covering from the leaves rubs off easily and before the introduction of matches were wrapped in a rag dipped in a solution of saltpeter and dried in the sun.

Colts foot is one of the most popular of cough remedies and the botanical name, *Tussilago*, signifies 'cough dispeller,' and Coltsfoot has justly been termed 'nature's best herb for the lungs and her most eminent thoracic.' Coltsfoot tea is also made for the same purpose, and Coltsfoot Rock has long been a domestic remedy for coughs.

Culpepper says: 'The fresh leaves, or juice, or syrup thereof, is good for a bad dry cough, or wheezing and shortness of breath. The dry leaves are best for those who have their rheums and distillations upon their lungs causing a cough: for which also the dried

leaves taken as tobacco, or the root is very good. The distilled water hereof simply or with elder-flowers or nightshade is a singularly good remedy against all agues, to drink 2 oz. at a time and apply cloths wet therein to the head and stomach, which also does much good being applied to any hot swellings or inflammations. It helpeth St. Anthony's fire and burnings, and is singular good to take away wheals.'



Sources

<http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/identify/flowers/coltsfoot.htm>

<http://www.chatburnwildlife.org.uk/photos/coltsfoot.htm>

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<http://www.vic.org.uk/pro/auframe.htm>

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