

Kootenay Girl Apothecary

Plant Fact Sheet – Plantain (*Plantago major*)



Quick ID

Low-growing rosette of broad oval leaves with pronounced parallel veins. Tall, slender seed spikes rise from the center. Leaves are slightly rubbery, forming flat mats.

Where It Grows

- Found across lawns, pathways, disturbed soil, forest edges.
- Thrives in compacted soil—often found along trails and footpaths.
- Extremely widespread across North America.

Ethical Harvesting

- Harvest from clean areas away from footpaths, roads, pesticides.
- Only take healthy leaves; avoid dirty or damaged ones.
- Plantain is abundant—light harvesting is usually fine.

Best Parts to Use

Leaves – used fresh or dried.

Seeds – sometimes used as a mild bulk fiber.

Roots – occasionally used in poultices.

When to Harvest

- Leaves: spring–early fall, tender when young.
- Seed spikes: late summer when dry.

Common Uses

- Fresh leaf poultice for bites, stings, minor scrapes (traditional).
- Tea or infusion used for digestion and general wellness.
- Infused oil used for salves and skin support.

Basic Preparations

Poultice: Crush fresh leaf and apply directly to skin.

Tea: 1–2 tsp dried leaf, steep 10 minutes.

Infused oil: Cover dried leaves with oil; infuse warm for several hours.

Salve: Blend infused oil with beeswax.

Safety Notes

- Very safe herb; allergies are rare.
- Harvest clean leaves only.
- Avoid internal use of contaminated or older, tough leaves.
- Educational info only, not medical advice.

Summary

- Abundant and easy to identify.
- Traditional first-aid plant useful for stings, bites, and scrapes.
- Leaves make gentle teas, oils, and salves.