

## Hyoscyamus niger - L.

<b>Common Name</b>	Henbane
<b>Family</b>	<b>Solanaceae</b>
<b>Known Hazards</b>	All parts of the plant are very toxic[7, 10, 19, 65, 76]. Symptoms of poisoning include impaired vision, convulsions, coma and death from heart or respiratory failure[238].
<b>Habitats</b>	By the walls of fields, waste ground, near buildings and in stony places from low-lying ground near the sea to lower mountain slopes[7].
<b>Range</b>	Much of Europe, including Britain, south and east to N. Africa and W. Asia.
<b>Edibility Rating</b>	
<b>Medicinal Rating</b>	very useful plants
<b>Care</b>	   



### Summary

### Physical Characteristics

ANNUAL/BIENNIAL growing to 1 m (3ft 3in) by 1 m (3ft 3in). It is hardy to zone 5 and is not frost tender. It is in flower from Jun to August, and the seeds ripen from Aug to September. The flowers are hermaphrodite (have both male and female organs) and are pollinated by Insects.

The plant prefers light (sandy), medium (loamy) and heavy (clay) soils and requires well-drained soil. The plant prefers acid, neutral and basic (alkaline) soils..It cannot grow in the shade. It requires dry or moist soil. The plant can tolerate maritime exposure.

### Habitats

Cultivated Beds; East Wall. In.

### Edible Uses

None known

### Medicinal Uses

*Plants For A Future can not take any responsibility for any adverse effects from the use of plants. Always seek advice from a professional before using a plant medicinally.*

**Anodyne; Anthelmintic; Antispasmodic; Antitumor; Diuretic; Febrifuge; Hallucinogenic; Hypnotic; Mydriatic; Narcotic; Sedative.**

Henbane has a very long history of use as a medicinal herb, and has been widely cultivated to meet the demand for its use[4]. It is used extensively as a sedative and pain killer and is specifically used for pain affecting the urinary tract, especially when due to kidney stones[254]. Its sedative and antispasmodic effect makes it a valuable treatment for the symptoms of Parkinson's disease, relieving tremor and rigidity during the early stages of the disease[254]. This species is the form generally considered best for external use, whilst the white henbane (*H. albus*) is considered the most appropriate for internal use[4]. All parts of the plant, but especially the leaves and the seeds, can be used - they are anodyne, antispasmodic, mildly diuretic, hallucinogenic, hypnotic, mydriatic, narcotic and sedative[4, 9, 13, 21, 100, 165, 192, 218]. The plant is used internally in the treatment of asthma, whooping cough, motion sickness, Meniere's syndrome, tremor in senility or paralysis and as a pre-operative medication[238]. Henbane reduces mucous secretions, as well as saliva and other digestive juices[254]. Externally, it is used as an oil to relieve painful conditions such as neuralgia, dental and rheumatic pains[238, 254]. The leaves should be harvested when the plant is in full flower and they can then be dried for later use[4]. There is an annual and a biennial form of this species, both can be used medicinally but the biennial form is considered to be superior[4]. This is a very poisonous plant that should be used with great caution, and only under the supervision of a qualified practitioner[21, 238]. See the notes above on toxicity. The seed is used in the treatment of asthma, cough, epilepsy, myalgia and toothache[218]. The seeds are used in Tibetan medicine, they are said to have a bitter, acrid taste with a neutral and poisonous potency[241]. Anthelmintic, antitumor and febrifuge, they are used in the treatment of stomach/intestinal pain due to worm infestation, toothache, inflammation of the pulmonary region and tumours[241].

### Other Uses

#### Repellent.

The leaves scattered about a house will drive away mice[207].

### Cultivation details

Prefers a sunny position[4] and a dry soil[19]. Succeeds in ordinary garden soil[1] but prefers an alkaline soil[200]. Plants succeed in sandy spots near the sea[4]. Cultivated commercially as a medicinal plant[57], only the biennial form is considered officinal[4]. Grows well in maritime areas, often self-sowing freely[200]. Older plants do not transplant well due to a brittle taproot[200]. The growing plant inhibits the growth of clover[18]. The flowers emit a sickly fishy smell[245].

### Propagation

Seed - sow summer in a cold frame and pot on as soon as possible before the taproot is too long[200].