

351. *TUSSILAGO FARFARA* L. (ASTERACEAE) — Coltsfoot, Coughwort, Horse-Hoof

Silky seed once used for stuffing pillows and mattresses. Young leaves occasionally used in soups, and older leaves consumed as a vegetable or as a "tea". In England it is used with buckbean, eyebright, wood betony, rosemary, thyme, lavender, and rose petals. Leaves and flowers used in preparing coltsfoot candy, and as a tobacco substitute. Gibbons³⁹ gives recipes for coltsfoot cough drops, cough syrup, smoking mixture, and tea.

The root, with wine, is a folk remedy for liver indurations. Bruised leaves are applied as a poultice to scrofulous tumors.⁴⁴ The flower, in distilled water, is said to be a cure for cancer. Chinese dig next year's flower bud in winter, let it air-dry, unwashed, then shake the half-dry herb to remove the dirt, allowing it then to dry further. Such buds, demulcent and lung-tonic according to the Chinese, are prescribed for asthma, hemoptysis, and lung cancer. Coltsfoot is also used in the Orient for apoplexy, cough, influenza, lung congestion, and phthisis.¹⁶ Suggested as antihistamine, antitussive, bactericide, collyrium, demulcent, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, pectoral, spasmolytic, styptic, sudorific, coltsfoot occurs in folk "remedies" for apoplexy, asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, cold, cough, diarrhea, dyspepsia, fever, hoarseness, mucous congestion, neuroses, ophthalmia, phthisis, rheumatism, scrofula, and tumor. According to the FDA, "The only therapeutic value the leaves possess is a demulcent effect due to their mucilage. They were used in a pectoral tea called *Species Pectorales*, which also contains five other herbs." According to Grieve's *Herbal*,² it was one of the most popular of cough remedies. Dried leaves used medicinally in cough medicines for colds and bronchial catarrh, or smoked with other herbs for asthma and coughs. Smoke