

COMMON YARROW

Achillea millefolium L.

plant symbol = ACMI2

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Alternate Names

Milfoil

Key Web Sites

Extensive information about this species is linked to the Plants web site. To access this information, go to the Plants web site, select this plant, and utilize the links at the bottom of the Plants Profile for this species.

Uses

Ethnobotanic: Several tribes of the Plains region of the United States including the Pawnee and

Chippewa tribes used common yarrow. The Pawnee used the stalk in a treatment for pain relief. The Chippewa used the leaves in a steam inhalant for headaches. They also chewed the roots and applied the saliva to their appendages as a stimulant. The Cherokee drank a tea of common yarrow to reduce fever and aid in restful sleep.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Weediness

This plant may become weedy or invasive in some regions or habitats and may displace desirable vegetation if not properly managed. Please consult with your local NRCS Field Office, Cooperative Extension Service office, or state natural resource or agriculture department regarding its status and use. Weed information is also available from the PLANTS Web site at plants.usda.gov.

Description

Common yarrow is a perennial herb that produces one to several stems (8 to 16 inches tall) from a fibrous underground horizontal rootstock (rhizome). It is known to be both native and introduced. Leaves are evenly distributed along the stem, with the leaves near the middle and bottom of the stem being the largest. The leaves have varying degrees of hairiness (pubescence). Leaf blades are lance-shaped in outline, but are finely divided. Overall leaf dimensions range from ¼ to 1¼ inch wide by 1¼ to 6 inches long. The flower heads (inflorescence) have a flattened dome shape (with approximately 10-20 ray flowers). The flowers are whitish to yellowish-white. The plant commonly persists from May through June.

Adaptation and Distribution

Common yarrow is frequently found in the mildly disturbed soil of grasslands and open forests.

Common yarrow occurs throughout the United States. For a current distribution map, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Establishment

Common yarrow is a drought tolerant species of which there are several different ornamental cultivars. Plant the seeds no more than ¼ inch deep;

they require light for germination. The seeds also require a temperature range of 65-75 degrees Fahrenheit.

Management

Common yarrow responds best to soil that is poorly developed and well drained. The plant has a relatively short life. To prolong the life of the plant, divide the plant every other year and plant 12-18 inches apart.

Common yarrow is a weedy species and can become invasive. Proper care should be used to control the spread of the plant from its desired growing location.

Pests and Potential Problems

Common yarrow may suffer from mildew or root rot if not planted in well-drained soil.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

These materials are readily available from commercial plant sources.

Control

Please contact your local agricultural extension specialist or county weed specialist to learn what works best in your area and how to use it safely. Always read label and safety instructions for each control method. Trade names and control measures appear in this document only to provide specific information. USDA, NRCS does not guarantee or warranty the products and control methods named, and other products may be equally effective.

References

See the plant guide for this species to obtain a complete list of text references.

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For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS <<http://plants.usda.gov>> and Plant Materials Program Web sites <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>.

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