



Hawthorn

Facts and Figures

NAME HAWTHORN -

Crataegus monogyna.
Maythorn or Maytree, Quick thorn, Bread and Cheese.

HABITAT Widespread in hedgerows, scrub and woodland margins.

GROWING SEASON –

Flowers appear in May followed by red berries in autumn (not to be mistaken for blackthorn which flowers earlier and has black sloes in Autumn).

HOW TO RECOGNISE

Thorny shrubs or trees with clusters of white or pink flowers followed by red berries. Deeply lobed green leaves with flowers appearing after the leaves. Red berry with a single small stone.

FOOD SOURCE Supports hundreds of species, including many moths and the large red and green hawthorn shield bug. Dormice will eat the flowers and birds love the haws in Autumn. Flowers, leaves and ripe berries also good for human consumption.

Further information:

<http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>



Judy Berry

May brings the heady scent of Hawthorn blossom- But did you know about it's ancient and modern herbal uses ?

In May, walking in the local fields and lanes, the air is full of a heady scent of Hawthorn blossom, the hedges covered in white pillowy flowers. But did you know that Hawthorn has a long history in Britain and is able to help us, if we care for her.

Hawthorn or Maythorn is one of Britain's ancient trees, sacred to the Druids and often planted over holy wells. As the tree flowers in May, the pre-Christian celebration of Beltane welcoming fecundity of life as well as folktales of faeries have been associated with Hawthorn. Hawthorn has also been recognised as important in the Christian tradition and preported to be the thorns of 'Jesus's crown of thorns'.

Old European herbal documents first prescribed Hawthorns as a diuretic to help with passing kidney and bladder stones. It was also documented for the use of drawing thorns out. In the late 1880's an Irish Doctor found great benefit of Hawthorn in his patients with heart disease; the first documented use in Western medicine; but it was used in this way in ancient Eastern medicine.

Modern herbal medicine use

In modern herbal medicine Hawthorn is recognised as an excellent heart and circulatory tonic helping in a wide range of circulatory problems from hypertension to early stages of heart failure. There is growing medical research to substantiate these finding. The flower leaves and berries can be used as tea tincture, jellies or in wines but a **WORD of CAUTION:** Please consult a medical practitioner if you are taking heart or blood pressure medication.

There are many recipes and folk tales about Hawthorn and we would love to hear your stories and read your recipes.

Hawthorn Tea: Pour hot water (just off the boil) onto fresh flowers and leaves & let brew for a few mins.

Reference: **Hedgerow Medicine** by Julie Bruton-Seal and Matthew Seal