

BWSR Featured Plant

Name: Lance Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*) Also known as: Heal-all

Plant Family: Lamiaceae (Mint)

Statewide Wetland
Indicator Status:

- FAC



Selfheal flower

Image by Peter Dziuk of Minnesota Wildflowers

A member of the mint family, Lance Selfheal is a favorite of bumblebees and butterflies that use its nectar as a food source. Unlike most other mints, it has virtually no scent from the flowers or the leaves. In landscaped areas, it is usually mowed before flowers can bloom in mid-to-late summer. Also known as 'Heal-all' or 'Allheal', its name derives from the medicinal use of some species to treat ailments.

Identification

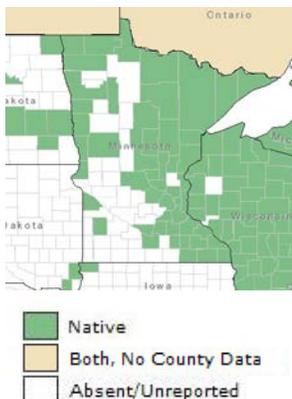
Flowers bloom along a one to two inch long, thick spike. One plant may have multiple spikes. Each flower is irregular and divided into an upper and lower lip. The upper lip is light to dark lavender while the lower lip is fringed and white to lavender. Like other mint species, the stem is square, sometimes hairy, and typically branches.

Leaves are opposite, up to two inches long and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch across. Lance Selfheal has lance-shaped to ovate leaves that are rounded at the base and pointed or blunt at the tip. Leaf surfaces are sparsely hairy and edges are either smooth or may have serrated or blunt teeth. The plant reaches an overall height of one-half to one foot, although it will stay much shorter if frequently mowed or trimmed in landscapes.



Lance shaped leaves

Image by Katy Chayka of Minnesota Wildflowers



Range based on University of MN Herbarium data

Range

Selfheal species are native in every state across the U.S. There is debate about which varieties or subspecies are native to Minnesota. According to the University of Minnesota Herbarium, Lance Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris ssp. lanceolata*) is native to Minnesota and Common Selfheal, (*Prunella vulgaris ssp. vulgaris*) is found in Minnesota, but introduced from Europe. Lance Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris ssp. lanceolata*), is found in most counties in Minnesota, mostly in the eastern half and northwest edge of the state. Common Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris ssp. vulgaris*), is not as common, but found in the same range.

Uses

Pollinators such as bumblebees, small carpenter bees (*Ceratina spp.*), long-horned bees (*Melissodes spp.*), and sweat bees (family *Halictidae*) use the nectar and pollen of Lance Selfheal and it has been promoted as a species for pollinator lawns. It has been used for skin inflammation, digestive conditions, and cold sores, and is known to contain vitamins C and K, thiamine.

Primary Uses:

- Pollinator nectar/pollen source
- Medicinal herb



Community of plants

Image by Peter Dziuk of Minnesota Wildflowers

Planting Recommendations

Lance Selfheal is an easy to grow plant that can become aggressive in open areas. Because of its ability to easily spread, it can be used as groundcover or planted in containers. It prefers moist to mesic soil with high organic content. It does best in full or partial sun. Each flower produces four seeds enclosed in the calyx. Seeds are best planted in spring after the last frost and may take one or two months to germinate. They can be stored and dormant seeded in late fall. The seeds require

Planting Methods

- Seed
- Dividing plant clumps
- Ground cover

light for germination, so only a very thin cover of soil is tolerated. Plant clumps can be divided and propagated in spring or early fall.

Similar Species



Wild Germander

Image Dan Shaw

Wild Germander (*Teucrium canadense*) is also a member of the mint (Lamiaceae) family with irregular flowers along a spike-like raceme and opposite lance-shaped leaves. The flowers are $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch long, pink to lavender or white. The plant is typically taller, 1 to 4 feet. It is a native facultative wetland species in Minnesota, found in most of the southern two-thirds of the state.

Blue Giant Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*), another native mint family member, and shares the same square stem and spike of clustered flowers, which are blue to violet. The flowers are distinguished by their 4



Blue Giant Hyssop

Image by Dan Shaw

long stamen that extend well past the flower.

Flower spikes are 1 to 6 inches long and the plant reaches a total of 2 to 4 feet.

Leaves of Common Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris ssp. vulgaris*) are twice as long as wide, compared to the lance shaped leaves of Lance Selfheal.



Common Selfheal leaves

Image ©2016 Zoya Akulova

References

<https://www.bellmuseum.umn.edu/>, <https://www.minnesotawildflowers.info>,
<http://www.illinoiswildflowers.info>, <https://plants.usda.gov>, www.wedmd.com.

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