

## WORMWOOD, MOUNTAIN



*Artemisia tilesii* (syn *Artemesia unalaskensis*)

**Family:** Compositae

**Names:** wormwood, Alaska Sagebrush, Kamtschat's Wormwood, Tilesius' Wormwood, Aleutina Mugwort

**Description:** *Artemisia tilesii* stems are erect, rising directly from the woody base of the plant to a height of 2 to 3 feet. The leaves are not silvery white; they're green and hair-covered only on the lower surface. The leaves of *A. tilesii* usually divide into narrow lobes having slender, sharp tips. The flowers are yellowish brown. Has basal leaves that tend to be the largest of the plant's leaves. In *A. alaskana* the basal leaves can form rosettes. Grows in sandy places in mountains and lowlands throughout most of Alaska and into Canada and Siberia.

**Cultivation:** Easily grown in a well-drained circumneutral or slightly alkaline loamy soil, preferring a warm sunny dry position. Established plants are drought tolerant. Plants are longer lived, more hardy and more aromatic when they are grown in a poor dry soil. Members of this genus are rarely if ever

troubled by browsing deer. Surface sow the seed from late winter to early summer in a greenhouse, making sure that the compost does not dry out. When large enough to handle, prick the seedlings out into individual pots and grow them on in the greenhouse for their first winter. Plant out in late spring or early summer. Division in spring or autumn. Basal cuttings in late spring. Harvest the young shoots when about 10 - 15cm long, pot up in a lightly shaded position in a greenhouse or cold frame and plant them out when well rooted. Very easy.

**Constituents:** This plant produces a substance with properties like codeine.

**Properties:** Analgesic; Antirheumatic; Antitumor; Disinfectant; Haemostatic; Laxative; Poultice; Skin; Stomachic; Tonic.

**Medicinal Uses:** The plant is used in the treatment of cancer and to prevent infections in wounds etc. An infusion of the leaves and flowering tops is used as a laxative and to treat stomach aches. An infusion is used internally to treat rheumatism and is also applied externally to swollen joints. A poultice of the leaves is applied to skin infections and to cuts to stop the bleeding. A decoction is used as an eyewash. The Tanainas soak *A. tilesii* leaves in water and rub them on the bodies of pregnant women or put them on the stomach as a poultice. They also make medicine switches to help arthritis and other aches. Boiled or soaked in hot water, it is made into a tea used as a wash for skin rash, cuts, blood poisoning, sore eyes, or any kind of infection. Use boiled or soaked leaves wrapped in cloth as a hot pack for toothache, earache, and snow-blindness. For athlete's foot, the Outer Cook Inlet people wear fresh leaves inside their socks. *Artemisia tilesii* is one of the

medicinal herbs used by Della Keats (a respected healer) in Kotzebue, and by the people of the northwestern region of Alaska. It is highly regarded as a tonic tea if you don't drink too much at a time. Dried leaves are powdered to use externally in a salve for burns or infections. The plant was used by western Eskimos as an antitumor agent in Unalakleet and as a fever and infection inhibitor in Aniak.

*Flower essence:*

*Indications:* unresolved anger and resentment; cannot easily forgive the self or others for past actions regardless of the intent behind them.

*Healing Qualities:* stimulates the healing of old wounds and the release of resentment; supports us in surrendering unforgiven areas within ourselves and in our relationships with others.

**Culinary Uses:** The leaves are used for flavoring rice dumplings. Raw shoots are peeled and eaten with seal oil by Eskimos

**Other Uses:** The freshly crushed leaves can be rubbed on the hands to remove odors. The plant is used as an incense and deodorant in the home.

## **References:**

Plants for a Future Database

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