Achillea millefolium L.
Asteraceae

Narel Y. Paniagua-Zambrana, Rainer W. Bussmann, and Carolina Romero

Synonyms

***Achillea millefolium* L.:** *Achillea alpicola* (Rydb.) Rydb.; *Achillea arenaria* A. Heller; *Achillea borealis* subsp. *arenicola* (A. Heller) D.D. Keck; *Achillea borealis* subsp. *californica* (Pollard) D.D. Keck; *Achillea californica* Pollard; *Achillea gigantea* Pollard; *Achillea lanulosa* Nutt.; *Achillea lanulosa* subsp. *alpicol*a (Rydb.) D.D. Keck; *Achillea lanulosa* var. *alpicola* Rydb.; *Achillea laxiflora* Pollard & Cockerell; *Achillea megacephala* Raup; *Achillea millefolium* subsp. *borealis* (Bong.) Breitung; *Achillea millefolium* subsp. *occidentalis* (DC.) Hyl.; *Achillea millefolium* var. *alpicola* (Rydb.) Garrett; *Achillea millefolium* var. *arenicola* (A. Heller) Nobs; *Achillea millefolium* var. *asplenifolia* (Vent.) Farw.; *Achillea*

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millefolium var. *borealis* (Bong.) Farw.; *Achillea millefolium* var. *californica* (Pollard) Jeps.; *Achillea millefolium* var. *gigantea* (Pollard) Nobs; *Achillea millefolium* var. *lanulosa* (Nutt.) Piper; *Achillea millefolium* var. *litoralis* Ehrend. ex Nobs.; *Achillea millefolium* var. *maritima* Jeps.; *Achillea millefolium* var. *megacephala* B. Boivin; *Achillea millefolium* var. *nigrescens* E. Mey.; *Achillea millefolium* var. *occidentalis* DC.; *Achillea millefolium* var. *pacifica* (Rydb.) G.N. Jones; *Achillea millefolium* var. *puberula* (Rydb.) Nobs; *Achillea nigrescens* (E. Mey.) Rydb.; *Achillea occidentalis* (DC.) Raf. ex Rydb.; *Achillea pecten-veneris* Pollard; *Achillea puberula* Rydb.; *Achillea rosea* Desf.; *Achillea subalpina* Greene; *Achillea sudetica* Opitz; *Chamaemelum millefoilum* (L.) E.H.L. Krause

Local Names

Colombia: Altamisa, Milenrama (Bussmann et al. 2018), Milefolio, Mil de rama, Yerba de carpintero, Flor de pluma, Colchón de pobre, Manzanilla de los montes, Milenrama, Yarrow, Altamisa; **Ecuador**, **Peru:** Milenrama, Chonchon (Spanish); **English:** Yarrow

Botany and Ecology

Perennial. Rhizome slender, creeping, branched; whole plant more or less covered with fine white hairs; stems few or solitary, usually weakly pubescent (finely floccose), (5)20–60(120) cm high, erect or ascending from base, erect, less often flexuous, simple or branched above, cylindrical, finely sulcate, with short leafy branches in axils of upper and middle cauline leaves. Leaves lanceolate, oblong-lanceolate, or almost linear, punctate-alveolate, twice or thrice pinnately cut, with numerous more or less remote segments (1.5–10 mm apart); lower cauline leaves and leaves of nonflowering branches 10–40 cm long, 0.8–5 cm wide, rachis 1–2 mm wide, leaves usually in upper part with solitary teeth between basal segments; lobes and teeth lanceolate, less often linear, 0.5–1.5 mm long, 0.3–0.4(0.5) mm wide, terminating in short cartilagenous cusp. Capitula in numerous, unequal, compound corymbs, 2–15 cm in diameter. Involucre oblong to almost ovoid, 3–4(6) mm long, (2)3–4(5) mm in diameter; involucral bracts green, carinate, with prominent midrib, membranous along margin, often brownish; bracts ovate to oblong-elliptical, membranous, floccose above, with scattered hairs on dorsal surface. Ligules of outer florets white, pink, or red. (1)2–4 mm long, 1.5–3.0(4.5) mm wide, more or less rotund, 2–3-toothed at apex, limb a half as long as involucre; tubular florets up to 20, glandular-hairy on outside. Flowering July–October. Ural, Caucasus, Altai, Middle Asia, on dry forest edges, clearings, in open forests, on dry meadows, slopes, railroad embankments, along roads, on the outskirts of fields (Macbride and Weberbauer 1936–1995) (Figs. 1, 2, and 3).

Fig. 1 *Achillea millefolium* (Asteraceae), Tbilisi, Georgia. (Photo R.W. Bussmann and N.Y. Paniagua-Zambrana)

Fig. 2 *Achillea millefolium* (Asteraceae), Chicani, Bolivia. (Photo R.W. Bussmann and N.Y. Paniagua-Zambrana)

Fig. 3 *Achillea millefolium* (Asteraceae), Chicani, Bolivia. (Photo R.W. Bussmann and N.Y. Paniagua-Zambrana)

Local Medicinal Uses

The species has decongestant, astringent, healing, diaphoretic, antipyretic, and anti-inflammatory properties. The whole plant (including flowers) is prepared in infusion and is taken to promote menstruation, as a stimulant, and against hemorrhoids. It is also used to relieve the symptoms of indigestion, flatulence, and colitis (Fonnegra-Gómez and Villa-Londoño 2011; Fonnegra Gómez et al. 2012; García Barriga 1975; Ministerio de Protección Social 2008; Pérez Arbeláez 1996). **Colombia:** The whole plant is used to treat acne, boils, bot fly infestations, bruises, gallbladder, gastritis, strengthens digestive system, healing wounds, hemorrhage, hemorrhoids, lack of appetite, menstrual colic, nosebleed, skin ulcers, sores, and as analgesic and tonic; the whole plant, leaves, and flowers are used to treat indigestion, inflammation, spasms, and as emmenagogue; leaves and flowers are used for blood cleansing. **Ecuador:** The infusion of flowers and roots is used to treat diarrhea and empacho (Kichwa de la Sierra-Cotopaxi) (de la Torre et al. 2008). **Peru:** Fresh flowers and leaves are used to treat gastritis, diabetes, blood, and cholesterol. The plant is also widely used for psychosomatic and nervous system disorders, gastrointestinal problems, liver and gallbladder ailments, and spiritual cleansing, as well as inflammations, and shows antibacterial and antifungal properties. It is also used as remedy for diabetes and cancer (Bussmann et al. 2007, 2010, 2011a; Bussmann and Glenn 2010a, b, 2011a, b; Bussmann and Sharon 2006, 2007, 2014, 2015a, b). The preparations exhibit low toxicity (Bussmann et al. 2011b). Species of *Artemisia* are also widely used in the Caucasus (Bussmann et al. 2016).

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