

# Althea officinalis

**Althea officinalis**, commonly known as Marshmallow Root, is a perennial herb native to Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa. It has been traditionally used for centuries in herbal medicine to soothe irritated mucous membranes, support respiratory comfort, and aid digestive wellness. Today, Marshmallow Root remains widely used in herbal teas, lozenges, and gastrointestinal support products.

## Key facts

- **Scientific name:** *Althea officinalis*
- **Common names:** Marshmallow Root
- **Family:** Malvaceae
- **Active compounds:** Mucilage polysaccharides, flavonoids, pectins
- **Typical forms:** Teas, powders, capsules, syrups

## Botanical characteristics

*Althea officinalis* is a soft-stemmed perennial plant with velvety leaves and pale pink flowers. The roots and leaves are harvested and processed into herbal preparations valued for their soothing properties.

## Traditional and modern uses

Traditionally, Marshmallow Root has been used to soothe sore throats, calm coughs, support digestion, and relieve mucosal irritation. In modern herbal medicine, it is commonly promoted for respiratory comfort, gastrointestinal wellness, and throat-soothing formulations.

## Mechanism and research

Research suggests that the mucilage content of Marshmallow Root forms a protective coating over irritated tissues, potentially contributing to soothing and anti-inflammatory effects. Studies have explored its supportive role in respiratory and gastrointestinal comfort, although further clinical research remains ongoing.

## Safety and regulation

Marshmallow Root is generally considered safe when consumed in moderate amounts. Due to its mucilage content, it may affect the absorption of certain medications if taken simultaneously. Adequate hydration is recommended during use.

## Culinary and supplement context

*Althea officinalis* is widely available in herbal teas, syrups, lozenges, powders, and wellness supplements. Historically, the original marshmallow confection was inspired by preparations made from this plant's root.