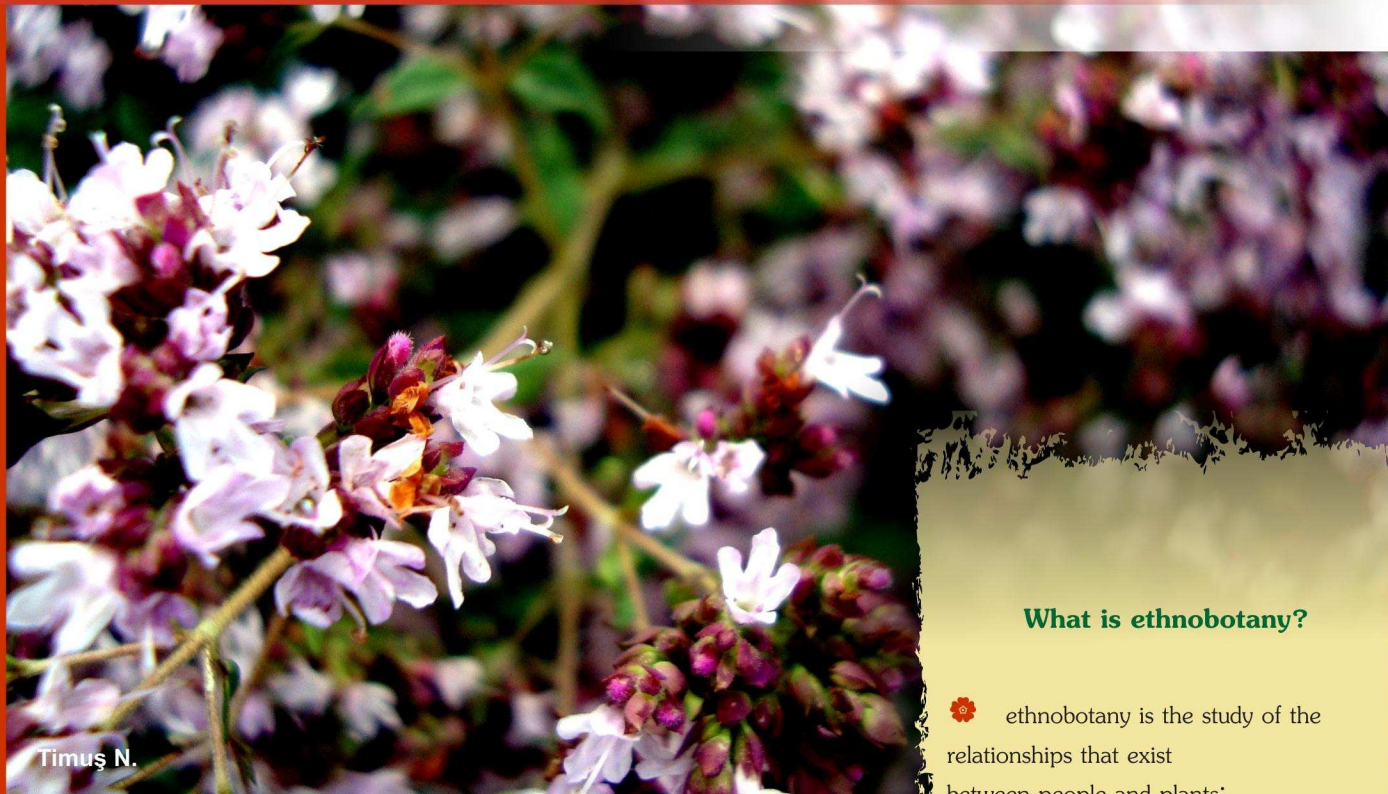


# Traditional knowledge about plants in Borșa and Dăbâca



Timuș N.

So-called 'traditional knowledge' represents an important part of human communities' cultural identities. Wild plants are particularly important for populations in rural areas, because they depend directly on the use of local species to fulfill part of their daily needs, such as firewood, food, medicine, and construction materials. Change and abandonment of traditional customs and thus loss of plant knowledge through time has been recorded in many local communities.



Timuș N.

## What is ethnobotany?

- ethnobotany is the study of the relationships that exist between people and plants;
- ethnobotanical research can provide a wealth of information regarding both past and present use and management of local flora.

## Ways in which local people use wild plants:

- as food;
- forage for farm animals;
- construction materials;
- for healing purposes;
- in ceremonies linked with popular holidays, life stages, and religious beliefs.

## Sources of traditional knowledge in Borsă and Dabâca:

- it is mainly handed down through generations by verbal storytelling;
- however, also books are used: for example, "Health Through God's Pharmacy" by Maria Treben.

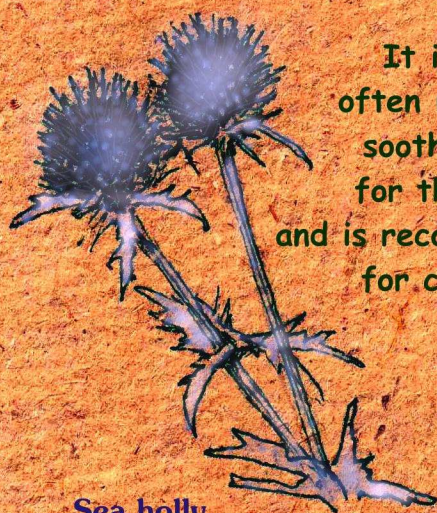


# Plants of Borsă and Dăbâca with ethnobotanical use

Dog rose  
(*Rosa canina*)

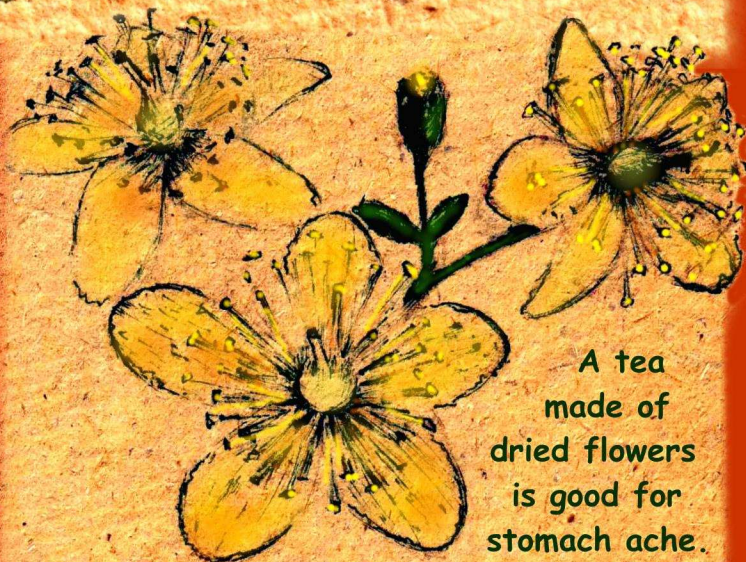


The fruits (rosehips) are pureed and made into jam.



Sea holly  
(*Eryngium planum*)

It is often used as a soothing agent for the throat, and is recommended for coughs.



St. John's wort  
(*Hypericum perforatum*)

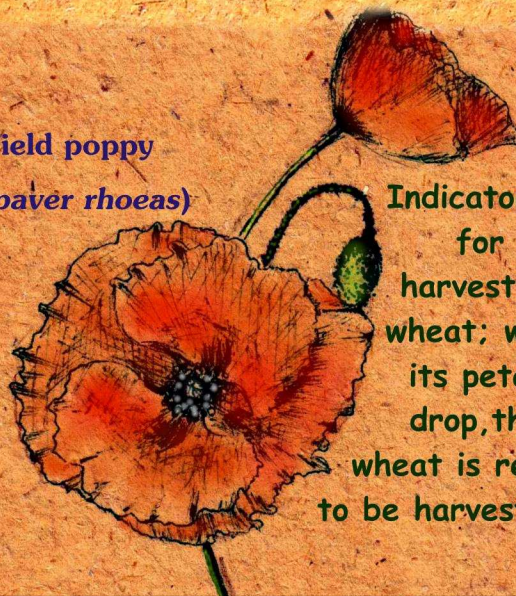
A tea made of dried flowers is good for stomach ache.

Camomile  
(*Matricaria chamomilla*)



The tea is used as a disinfectant.

Field poppy  
(*Papaver rhoeas*)



Indicator for harvesting wheat; when its petals drop, the wheat is ready to be harvested.



# TRADITIONS AND STORIES LINKED TO PLANTS



Stoianov E.

## Plum (*Prunus domestica*)

When someone died, at their burial, a plum sapling was planted beside the cross. If the family didn't take enough care of the burial site, and the writing on the cross deteriorated, the plum would remain as an indicator of the burial place.



## Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*)

People celebrate the Sânziene holiday annually, on June 24. During the day they pick flowers of Lady's Bedstraw and create floral crowns. It is said that throwing the crowns on the roofs of houses chases away bad spirits. However, if the crown slides back to you, you'll have bad luck that year.

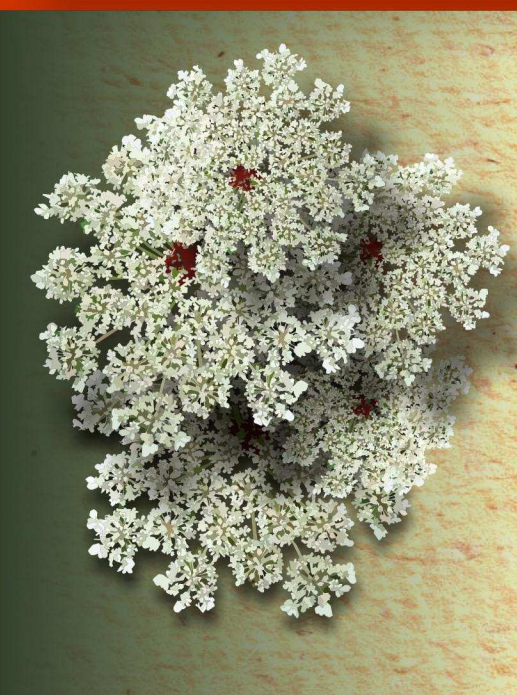


Stoianov E.



## Wild carrot (*Daucus carota*)

Wild carrot has a large flat-topped inflorescence comprised of many small white flowers, except for two or three flowers in the middle of the inflorescence which are red. People say that in the past, when the girls still had dignity, the inflorescence was completely red. But now, since the world has decayed, and the girls have lost their dignity, the flowers have faded and turned white. The Romanian common name of this plant, „ruşinea-fetei” („the girl's embarrassment”) arose from this anecdote.





## Did you know...?

... The tea made from field poppy (*Papaver rhoeas*) seed pods was used in the past by some women to help their children to fall asleep: the walls of the dried pods contain trace amounts of opiate alkaloids; these can have effects varying from very light relaxation to sleepiness;

... Plants like curled peppermint (*Menta crispa*) can be used as odorants: leaves are placed on the floor in corridors of the house in such a way that people step on them and spread the smell in the rooms;

... The flowers of dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) are used mostly by the young girls to make floral jewellery: earrings, chains, rings, crowns for the children who are top of the form;

... Wild thyme (*Thymus pulegioides*) and stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), applied as a shampoo, can be used to promote hair growth and thickening;

... There are many different and suggestive popular names of plants as: „rabbit's bush” (*Asparagus officinalis*), „pope's head” (*Trifolium pratense*), „swallow's dress” (*Calystegia sepium*), „lamb's tail” (*Filipendula ulmaria*), etc.



[www.mozaic-romania.org](http://www.mozaic-romania.org)

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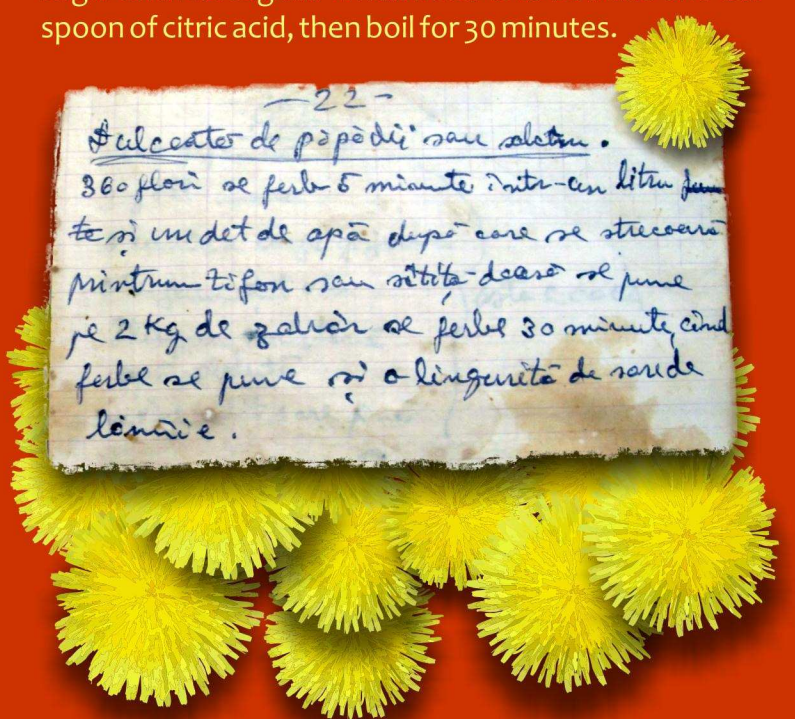
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This publication does not necessarily reflect the views of the funders.

## Black locust or dandelion syrup recipe

- original recipe from Ana Biris' cookbook

Boil 360 flowers in one liter of water for 5 minutes. Then filter the liquid through a dense cloth. Add 2 kg of sugar and heat again. When it starts to boil add one tea spoon of citric acid, then boil for 30 minutes.



-22-  
Dulceata de papadie sau saltem.  
360 flori se fierb 5 minute intr-un litru apa  
si un det de apa dupa care se strecoara  
intr-un tifon sau sita-deasa si pune  
pe 2 kg de zahar se fierb 30 minute cand  
se pune si o lingurita de sare de  
lenorie.

## Toxic plants in Borșa and Dăbâca

The roots of the toxic hellebore (*Helleborus purpurascens*) were used for healing purposes. If a pig was ill, a small piece of the root was inserted into a hole in its ear, made with the help of an instrument called a “sula” (a sharp needle mounted in a piece of wood).



We are grateful to the families of Adrian Biriș and Vasile Rus from Luna de Jos for the useful information that contributed to the accuracy of this material! Other sources of information: Bălțeanu, C., Sărac, S., 2010, *Ethnobotanical research in Dăbâca and Borșa* (unpublished).

Links: <http://www.erowid.org>