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# Self-Heal (*Prunella vulgaris* var. *lanceolata*)

Family: Lamiaceae

**Description:** This perennial herb is native throughout much of the Northern Hemisphere and is an early successional species often found in moist, disturbed areas. Like other members of the mint family, this plant has square stems and opposite leaves. In self-heal, the stems are unbranched and upright, and the leaves are lance shaped. Purple, two-petaled flowers form dense clusters at stem ends, with the upper petal resembling a hood.

**Pollinator and Wildlife Use:** Flowers provide nectar and pollen to butterflies such as whites, sulfurs, and skippers, as well as native bees such as bumblebees, digger bees, small carpenter bees, long-horned bees, and green sweat bees. Caterpillars of the Gray Marvel moth sometimes feed on the foliage. The leaves are generally not eaten by herbivorous mammals but ground-foraging birds sometimes eat the nutlets.

**Ethnobotany:** This plant was used by many North American tribes and is still used medicinally today. Studies have shown that self-heal has antibiotic properties, lowers blood pressure, and contains a compound (ursolic acid) that is believed to increase urination and fight tumors. Self-heal is edible, and can be used in salads, soups, and stews.

**Erosion Prevention:** Due to its fibrous, rhizomatous roots and spreading growth habit, self-heal can be used to control erosion along roadsides, streambanks, and pond edges.

**Other Facts:** This plant may become weedy or invasive in some regions or habitats and may outcompete, displace, or overrun desirable vegetation if not properly managed.



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## References and Useful Websites:

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