

- Nitrogen-efficient, deep tap-root breaks compact subsoil and draws up minerals.
- Long bloom period sustains bees, hoverflies, and other beneficial insects.
- Fibrous stems historically spun into cordage.

2 Planting Outdoors

1. **Site Selection** — Full sun to light shade; prefers moist, fertile, slightly alkaline loam (pH 6.5–8).
2. **Spacing** — 30–45 cm between plants in rows 60 cm apart.
3. **Soil Prep** — Loosen top 25 cm; incorporate 3–5 cm of compost or well-rotted manure.
4. **Pollination** — Insect-pollinated; clustering several plants increases seed set and supports pollinators.
5. **Companion Planting** — Thrives beside moisture-loving herbs (mint, meadowsweet) or along pond/ditch edges; avoid crowding with tall, aggressive grasses.

3 Ongoing Plant Care

1. **Watering** — Keep consistently moist, especially during flowering and root bulking; avoid waterlogging.
2. **Mulching** — 5 cm thick straw or leaf mold conserves moisture and suppresses weeds.
3. **Fertilisation** — Side-dress with compost each spring; excess nitrogen promotes foliage at expense of roots.
4. **Pruning** — Dead-head spent blooms to prolong flowering; cut stems to 5 cm after frost.
5. **Pest/Disease** — Generally resistant; occasional rust or leaf spot—improve airflow, remove infected material.

4 Harvesting and Storage

4.1 Leaves & Flowers

Pick fresh as needed from early summer; dry at 35 °C for winter teas.

4.2 Roots

Harvest after second-year frost once tops die back. Lift with a fork, wash, slice 1 cm thick, and dry at 40 °C until brittle. Store in airtight glass away from light for up to 24 months.

5 Propagation

- **Seed** — Cold-stratify 4 weeks at 4 °C; sow 5 mm deep in spring. Germination 2–3 weeks at 18 °C.
- **Division** — Split mature crowns in early spring; replant divisions immediately at original depth.
- **Root Cuttings** — Take 5–7 cm pencil-thick root sections in winter; pot horizontally under 1 cm soil, keep at 10 °C until shoots emerge.

6 Recipes and Uses

Marshmallow Root Tea: Simmer 2 g dried root per 250 mL water 15 min; drink warm for throat relief.

Natural Marshmallow Treat: Soak 25 g dried root overnight in 200 mL water; strain, whip the mucilaginous liquid with 60 mL warmed honey until fluffy; spoon onto parchment to dry.

Soothing Skin Gel: Steep 10 g fresh root in 100 mL hot water 30 min; cool, mix with 5 mL aloe gel, refrigerate 1 week. Apply to minor burns or rashes.

7 Summary

With its gentle medicine, culinary versatility, and pollinator charm, Marshmallow is a heritage staple for cottage gardens, herb spirals, and regenerative wetland edges. Plant once, nurture with moisture and mulch, and enjoy years of soothing roots, edible greens, and nostalgic sweetness.

Lyis: *Althaea officinalis* (Marshmallow)

Nursery in Owen Sound, run by Andrii Logan Zvorygin a Ukrainian-Canadian

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📖 LyisForestry

May 18, 2025

1 Introduction to *Althaea officinalis* (Marshmallow)

Contents

1 Introduction to *Althaea officinalis* (Marshmallow)

- 1.1 Description of the Plant . . . 1
- 1.2 Historical and Cultural Context 1
- 1.3 Edible, Medicinal, and Useful Properties 1

2 Planting Outdoors 2

3 Ongoing Plant Care 2

4 Harvesting and Storage 2

- 4.1 Leaves & Flowers 2
- 4.2 Roots 2

5 Propagation 2

6 Recipes and Uses 2

7 Summary 2

1.2 Historical and Cultural Context

1 Used since antiquity, Marshmallow was prized by Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans for its demulcent properties. Medieval apothecaries prescribed root infusions for sore throats and digestive ailments, while 19 -century French confectioners blended whipped root extract with egg whites and sugar to create the first marshmallow sweets. Today the plant enjoys a renaissance among herbalists, permaculturists, and cottage-scale confectioners for its gentle medicinal value and pollinator-friendly blooms.

1.3 Edible, Medicinal, and Useful Properties

Edible:

- Young leaves: mild flavour, good in salads or as pot-greens.

- Flowers: attractive edible garnish.

- Roots: contain up to 35 % mucilage—traditionally peeled, diced, and simmered to thicken soups or whipped (with honey) into rustic marshmallow treats.

Medicinal: Mucilage coats inflamed tissues; teas, syrups, or lozenges relieve coughs, gastritis, and minor burns. External poultices soothe insect bites and skin irritation.

Utility & Ecology:

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- 1.3 Edible, Medicinal, and Useful Properties 1

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3 Ongoing Plant Care 2

4 Harvesting and Storage 2

- 4.1 Leaves & Flowers 2
- 4.2 Roots 2

5 Propagation 2

6 Recipes and Uses 2

7 Summary 2

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