

Wood Avens

Geum urbanum

Plants · In flower May–Sep



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An upright perennial of shady places with pinnate, irregularly lobed leaves and small yellow five-petalled flowers held well apart on wiry branching stems. The seedheads are the distinctive part: a round bur of hooked styles. Wood avens is common in woodland, shaded hedge banks, lanes and neglected garden corners around Dumfries.

BEHAVIOUR

Each seed carries a hooked tip that catches on fur and clothing, which is how the plant travels — an early natural model for how burdock inspired Velcro. The root smells of cloves and was once hung in doorways and used to flavour ale, and the plant carried strong protective associations, its old name herb bennet deriving from herba benedicta, the blessed herb.

WHEN TO SEE IT

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QUICK FACTS

FAMILY	Roses (Rosaceae)
HEIGHT	20–60 cm
STATUS	Native; common in shaded ground

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