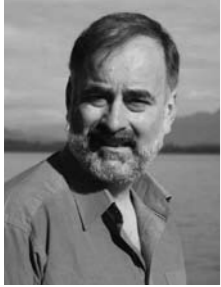


Dualchas coitcheann

Common heritage



In Scottish Gaelic tradition, the meadowsweet plant is linked to Cuchullin, one of the greatest of all our legendary heroes. Ruairidh MacIlleathain explains the link

Lus gaisgich

Chleachd muinntir Shasainn an lus seo (*Filipendula ulmaria*) anns an t-seann aimsir airson mìl-dheoch a mhilseachadh agus 's e sin as coireach ri ainm ann am Beurla. Ach ann an Gàidhlig canar 'Crios Chù Chulainn' ris – no uaireannan 'Cneas Chù Chulainn' – agus tha e gu làidir co-cheangailte nar dualchas fhèin ris an t-seann ghaisgeach sin a tha a' nochdadh cho fada air ais ann an eachdraidh nan Gàidheal ri *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, nuair a bha e a' sabaid às leth nan Ultach an aghaidh arm Chonnacht.

Ged a bhuineadh Cù Chulainn do dh'Ulaidh, a rèir beul-aithris ann an Alba, dh'ionnsaich e na sgilean cogaidh aige aig a' Bhànrigh Sgàthach anns an Eilean Sgitheanach. Gabhaidh an caisteal aice (Dùn Sgàthaich) faicinn fhathast air taobh an iar Shlèite ann an ceann a deas an eilein. Bidh fios aig a' chuid mhòir de Ghàidheil gur e Setanta an t-ainm-baistidh a bh' air, ach gun do ghabh e Cù Chulainn air fhèin (agus obair a' choin mhairbh) nuair a mharbh e an cù-faire aig fear air an robh Culann. Ach is iongantach ma tha fios air sin aig a' mhòr-chuid a choimheadas ball-coise Albannach air an t-sianal

¹
Crios Chù Chulainn –
lus le ceangal don
t-seann ghaisgeach
ainmeil
Ghàidhealach.

Crios Chù Chulainn
(‘Cuchullin’s belt’) –
the name and folklore
link this species to one
of the most famous
characters in Gaelic
tradition.

telebhisein dhen aon ainm!

Bhathar a' cleachdadh an luis seo le bhith ga chur air an ùrlar airson deagh fhàileadh a sgaoileadh anns an taigh. Bhathar cuideachd ga chleachdadh airson fiabhras a lughdachadh agus 's e sin a tha ga cheangal do Chù Chulainn. Ged a bha e na ghaisgeach, bha e iomraiteach airson a chuid riasraidh – bhiodh e a' dol às a rian le fearg. A rèir beul-aithris, bha an dearg chuthach air latha a bha seo, agus bha dragh air buidheann de bhoireannaich gum faigheadh e bàs. Thug iad air ionnlad fhèin ann an amar a bha làn dhen lus seo, agus chaidh e am feabhas. Bho sin a-mach, chumadh e bad dhen lus na chrios – airson a bhith a' cuimhneachadh mar a shàbhail e a bheatha.

Chan eil fios dè cho sean 's a tha an ceangal eadar an gaisgeach agus an lus, ach tha e beagan cheudan bhliadhnaichean aig a' char as lugha. Ann an *Òran an t-Samhraidh* le Alasdair Mac Mhaighstir Alasdair, a sgrìobhadh timcheall air 1738, tha am bàrd a-mach air 'S cùbhraidh fàileadh do mhuineil, a Chrios Cho-chulainn nan càrn.



A hero's plant

The English name for the meadowsweet derives from Anglo-Saxon times when it was used for sweetening mead. The Gaelic name is completely different, as it ties the plant to a legendary figure in Celtic tradition – Cuchullin.

Although an Ulsterman, Cuchullin is intimately linked to Scotland as he's said to have learned his fighting skills from the warrior queen Sgàthach on the Isle of Skye. The meadowsweet in Gaelic Scotland is *crios Chù Chulainn* – 'Cuchullin's belt' – an association that's credited to the plant's use in treating fevers.

Cuchullin suffered horrendous rages, when he became unbeatable on the field of battle, but observers were often worried that he would die of apoplexy. During one of these bouts, some women convinced him to bathe in meadowsweet. He was calmed and, from that point on, he carried a sprig of the plant tucked in his belt to remind him of how it saved his life.