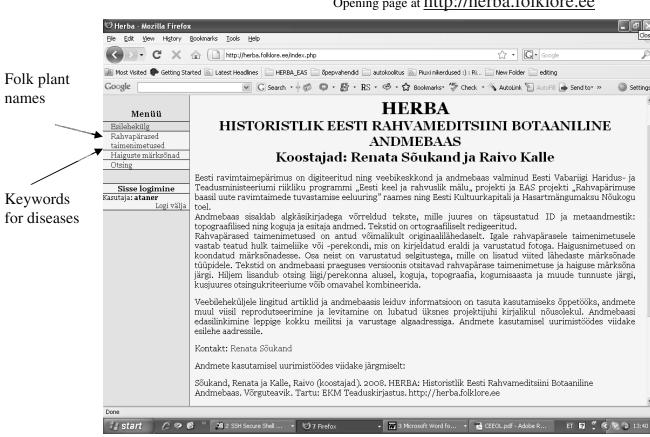
HERBA Database of Historical Estonian Herbal Folk Medicine

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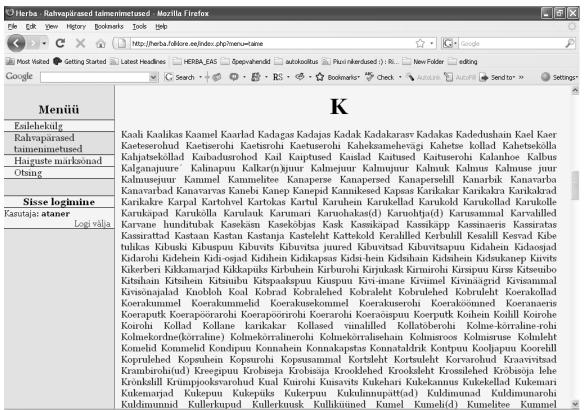
Contact: renata@folklore.ee

HERBA, the Estonian folk medicine database of herbal treatment (available at <u>http://herba.folklore.ee</u>), is an Internet-based source of lore texts about the use of plants and herbs as popular remedies. The database was created since 2006 with the financial help of national program "Estonian language and national memory" (2004–2008), Estonian Cultural Endowenment and Enterprise Estonia preliminary research grant.



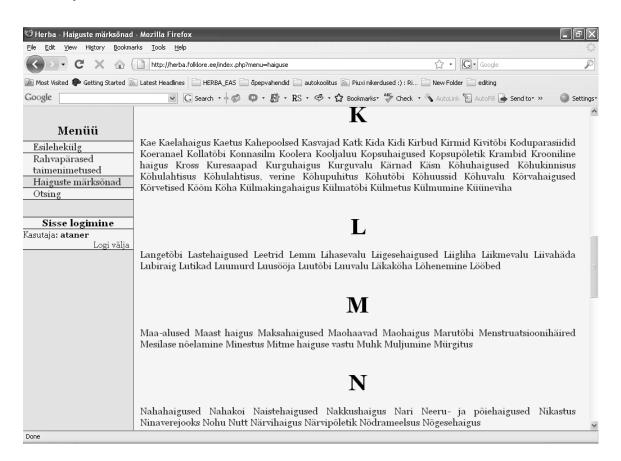
Opening page at http://herba.folklore.ee

In the database, plants are organized by folk plant names

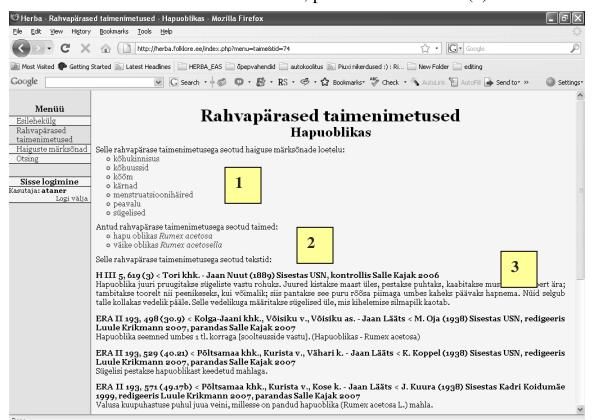


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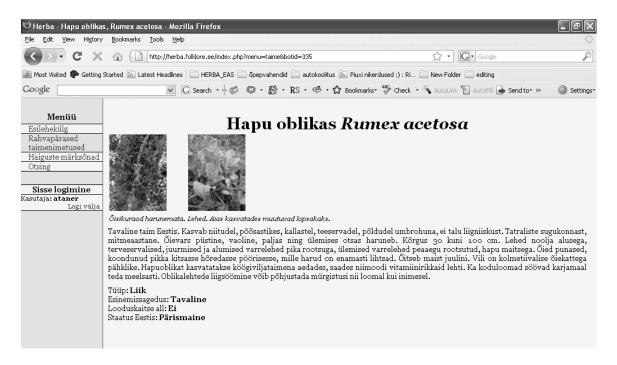
and keywords for diseases.



Under the file of folk plant name is the list of the disease healed with the plant bearing the name (1), the list of botanical species attributed the name (2) and texts with full details on collection date, place and informant (3).



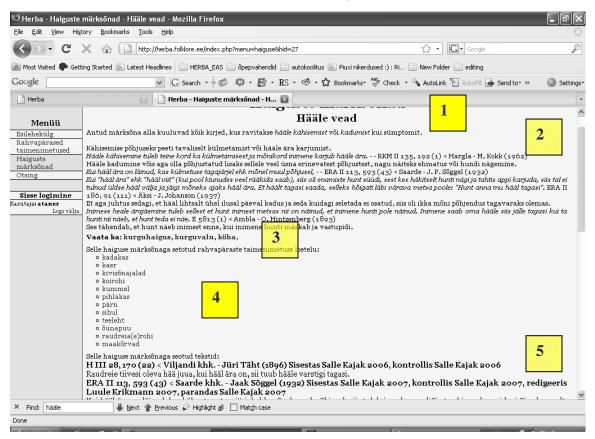
All botanical species and genus presented in the database have special file, including picture, description and other important parameters.



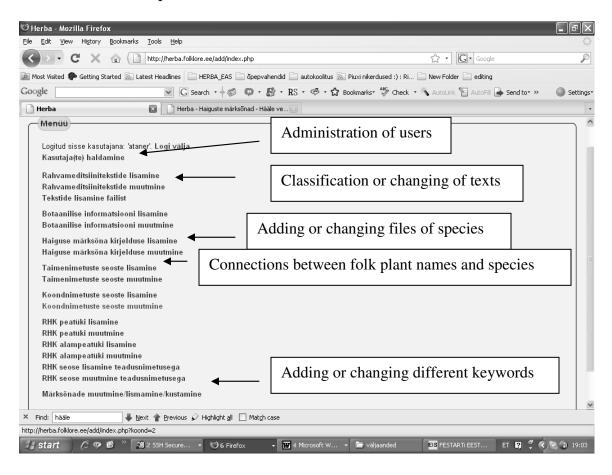
Pictures can be viewed also in full resolution.



The file of keywords for disease include the description (2) of the diseases or symptoms (1) within keyword, related diseases and symptoms (3), list of folk plant names, attributed to the plants used for healing this group of diseases (4) and texts with full details on collection date, place and informant (5).



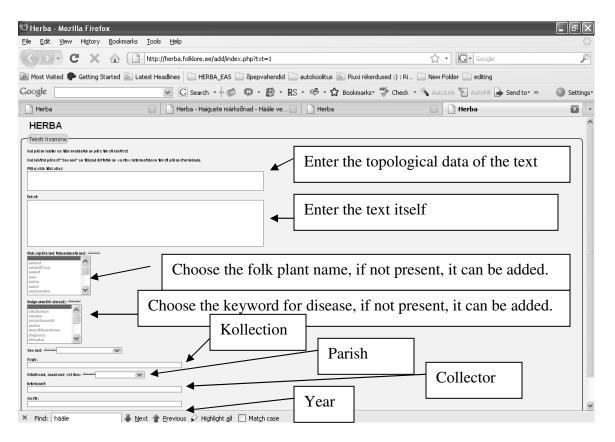
That was the surface of the database. From inside it is more complicated. The opening page of administration tool (can be accessed only with password) contains several inputs.



The tool for keyword entering

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Koondnimetused - Lisa uus (1) Tagasi								
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Texts are entered in the database and classified at the same time.



After classification texts take their place in a table containing several columns that divide the text into more analyzable bits of information. The entry can be easily deleted or changed

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	H I 2, 481 (1) < Åksi khk Karl Blaubrik (1889) Sisestas Renata Sõukand 2004, kontrollis Salle Kajak 2005	Kui kellegil kärnad kuskil ihu peal on, siis lugegu nad ära, lõikugu pajupulga pääle igaühe jauks üks märk (sämps) ja viskagu risttee peale, siis kauvad ära.	'Paju'	'Käsn'	H I 2, 481 (1)	Äks i	Karl Blaubrik	1889	Sümboliline vahendaja
Suda Kustuta	H I 2, 541 (I) < Otepää khk., Meeruti – Hans Mugin (1888) Sisestas Renata Sõukand 2004, kontrollis Salle Kajak 2006	Arstimine. Vanaema murd kolme kadaja küljest 9 ossa, keetatas ummussin ära; mõstas selle veega last ja andas peo päält kolm kõtad lastele juvva ja üteldas "silma sitta, nõna mutta, hanba ahju otta külge".	'Kadajas'	'Lastehaigused'	H I 2, 541 (I)	Otepii	Hans Nugin	1888	Sümbol il ine
fuuda Kustuta	H I 2, 541 (VIII) < Otepää khk., Neeruti – Hans Nugin (1808) Sisestas Renata Sõukand 2004, kontrollis	Laits viias sanna ja Võetas harjassit. Võetas niuguidi jahu, Silesepp, sulatedu maarjasi ja sedi vetty, neitt tehas taignas, määritas laits taignasa kohku, pandas liname mähi latsele ümbta, edimalt vihutas, peraatu mõstas ärä, ja laits om puhas.	'Eisu'	'Harjased'	H I 2, 541 (VIII)	Otepää	Hans Nugin	1888	Seos puudub
fuuda Kustuta	H I 2, 574 (20) < Rõuge khk., Vastse-Kasaritsa v Jaan Orav (1888) Sisestas Salle Kajak 2004, kontrollis Salle Kajak 2006	- Paiselehed on paise peäle panemiseks, rohuks.	'Paiselehu'	'Paise'	H I 2, 574 (20)	Rõuge	Jaan Orav	1888	Ikoonil ine nimi

Similar system works for entering the keywords of diseases and files for species and genus. The connections between folk plant names and botanical names of species and genus need more explanation.

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aaloe - Aloe	Choose folk plant name				
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The identification of plant names in the texts are largely based on the monograph Eesti taimenimetused ('Estonian Plant Names') by Gustav Vilbaste (1993). Even though most of the collected Estonian plant names have been identified by Vilbaste, new ethnobotanical names emerge while processing the lore material. The database text can be also associated with the species on the basis of three criteria: folk plant name (according to Vilbaste's monograph), the Latin name included in the text, and the plant description. Some texts may correspond to nearly all the criteria, but this is an exception rather than a rule.

The most time-consuming section of the work is to establish connections according to other plant names and/or description and habitat represented in the texts. Usually, if the name is unknown, the plant it corresponds to cannot be identified on the basis of a single text and the results are unreliable. For identification, texts from different collections were gathered together and were analyzed according to different parameters, such as the origin of the text, informant's background, other names mentioned in the text and so on; in addition, the results were compared against the data of plant geography. As to the more complicated texts, mycologists and more experienced botanists had to be consulted with.

The data on plant geography are often very important, because even if Estonia is small country (total area is $45,228 \text{ km}^2$), differs climate and vegetation of it's part notably. Estonia lies on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea immediately across the Gulf of Finland from Finland on the level northwestern part of the rising east European platform between 57.3° and 59.5° N and 21.5° and 28.1°E.

By the beginning of 2009, the database includes the earliest archive texts from 1886 up to the year 1994. HERBA contains a bit less than 9000 texts of folk medical herbal use that is estimated to constitute slightly less than half of the total number of texts available, and covers over 600 potential medicinal plants and fungi (indigenous, migrated and cultivated). The indigenous flora of Estonia includes 1441 species (incl. hybridogenic species) of vascular plants. The number also covers taxa with unclear existence in present Estonian flora (herbarium evidence provided, but no fresh findings). The total number of species and subspecies migrated or cultured and run wild (including naturalized) is 718. (Kukk 1999).

References:

- Kukk, Toomas 1999. *Eesti taimestik*. [Estonian flora.] Tallinn: Estonian Academy of Sciences.
- Vilbaste, Gustav. (1993) *Eesti taimenimetused*. [Estonian plant names.]Tallinn: Emakeele Selts.