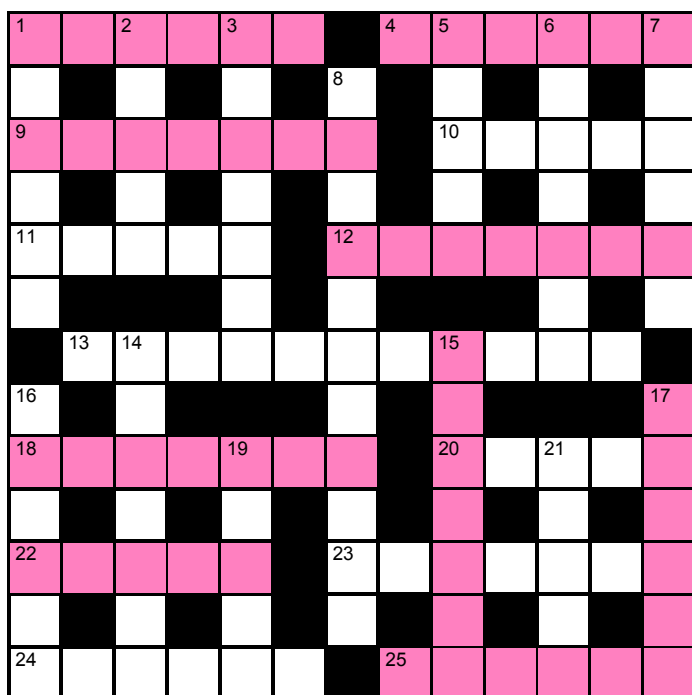


Crossword no 246 by Chalicea

Nine characters appearing in the grid have a feature in common and are clued with word play only.



Across

- 1 See oil in a mess (6)
- 4 Unexpectedly judge utile (6)
- 9 Second son with primitive type of plough (7)
- 10 Mercurial Indian (not international) fertility symbol (5)
- 11 Singular cry for a gambling method (5)
- 12 Reviewed supremacy with church absent (7)
- 13 Cassia roots sorted out for for consorts (11)
- 18 Disorganised transit (7)
- 20 Muslim lord's sacred syllable and cheer of encouragement (5)
- 22 Italy's capital (old) (5)
- 23 Salt marshes where Steinbeck was born (7)
- 24 Latin tense produces surprising satori (6)
- 25 Mistreated oldies (6)

Down

- 1 Coral snake on alert, essentially to glide away (6)
- 2 Fat to be set, sides trimmed (5)
- 3 Revolutionary homeopaths dropping the substance used for cleansing hair (7)
- 5 Of an arm bone university lecturer hunted up (5)
- 6 Romeo in insane product of bonding (7)
- 7 Strong desire for crumpled T-shirt (6)
- 8 Christian doctrine's unusually mad position (11)
- 14 Be close to anger about western natator (Leander, for example) (7)
- 15 Unhappy suitor securing love primarily (7)
- 16 Inflexible and principally articulated parts of skeleton (6)
- 17 Shakespeare said "If error and upon me proved, I never writ, and no man ever loved." (6)

19 Sweetheart's sharp sounds (5)

21 Bizarrely learn of the kidneys (5)