

HEALING Herbal Teas

A Complete Guide to Making Delicious, Healthful Beverages

A renowned herbalist teaches the fine art of blending and brewing therapeutic teas, with profiles of 45 common yet extraordinary herbs that encourage healing, nourish the body, build the immune system, lift the spirits, and taste great!



BRIGITTE MARS, A.H.G.

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Beverages*

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The information contained in this book is based upon the research and personal and professional experiences of the author. It is not intended as a substitute for consulting with your physician or other healthcare provider. Any attempt to diagnose and treat an illness should be done under the direction of a healthcare professional.

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Dedicated to all those who share tea for friendship, health, and enjoyment.





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“Take some more tea,” the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

“I’ve had nothing yet,” Alice replied in an offending tone, “so I can’t take more.”

“You mean you can’t take less,” said the Hatter: “it’s very easy to take more than nothing.”

—*Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* by
Lewis Carroll



Introduction

It is through plants that we receive the solar energy that fuels the life process. Indeed, we enjoy a symbiotic relationship with the plant kingdom. Plants give off oxygen, a substance upon which we depend. In turn, the animal kingdom gives off carbon dioxide, upon which plants thrive. We also depend upon plants, which are able to transmute the elements of sunshine and earth into nourishing compounds, for sustenance. But sustenance is not all that humans require. Our bodies also require fluids, and our minds and spirits need uplifting. For these, we turn to tea, the marriage of plants and water.

By some definitions, the word “tea” pertains to the shrub *Camellia sinensis*, from which green and black tea are made. However, teas brewed from a wondrous variety of herbs were consumed long before green and black teas became popular, and have been enjoyed by millions of people for thousands of years. These herbal brews are rich in vitamins, minerals, and other nourishing, health-giving compounds. In an age when people are becoming ever more aware of the importance of taking responsibility for their own health, rather than relying on the bureaucratized medical system, herbal tea is an essential ally in the prevention and treatment of illness as well as the nourishment and support of the body, mind, and spirit. But it is up to us to educate ourselves on how to use herbs safely and effectively.

Healing Herbal Teas offers instruction, advice, and encouragement for brewing tea from forty-five common, readily available, wonderfully potent herbs. This book also discusses methods of using herbal teas that you may not have yet explored—from herb baths to steam inhalations to mouth-washes—so that you can learn to use herbs to nourish, soothe, and build immunity from the inside and the outside. By turning first to botanicals for medicine and sustenance, we are encouraging a greener world. And which would you rather have in your neighborhood: another chemical company or a field of rosemary?

The art of herbalism is at a point where we have the ability to bring together the wisdom of many cultures. We can make the most of new technologies that help our lives and also tap into the ancient healing power of plants. Still to come, but with every advocate of botanical medicine a step closer, is the best of healthcare: when we put our hearts and heads together and do what is best for people and the planet.

In today's complex world, the simple pleasures of tea bring us closer to nature and give us an opportunity to nurture ourselves. There's healing power, solar energy, and a wealth of nutrients in the leaves, flowers, roots, and seeds of the herbs explored in this book. Make friends with these herbs. Let them become a daily part of your life. Enjoy your herbal allies!

Many blessings!



The Fine Art of Tea

Nothing warms the body and soul like holding a fragrant, steaming cup of herbal tea, inhaling its subtle scents as you slowly sip. Tea is among the most ancient, basic, and simple methods of healing and nourishing body, mind, and spirit. As science has proven time and again, plants are endowed with important nutrients and potent healing compounds. Some of those elements come from the raw earth; for example, a plant grown in calcium- or iron-rich soil draws those elements into its own body. When you brew plants in water, the resulting beverage—herbal tea—is imbued with those constituents, carrying them into the body, where they are quickly absorbed. Even better, teas are easy to prepare, inexpensive, and delicious!

Plant constituents that release their properties into water include carbohydrates, protein, enzymes, mucilage, pectins, saponins, and polysaccharides. Essential oils are soluble but evaporate easily. Gums and tannins are partially soluble. All can play a role in improving and supporting human health.

Even though there is a wide array of medicinal herbal preparations, including capsules, tablets, and tinctures, drinking herbal tea offers unique benefits that should not be overlooked. To begin, teas are readily absorbed in the body. Also, teas are flavorful and aromatic. When we drink herbal tea, the brain is soothed and nourished by the aromas

inhaled through the nose and the tasty sensory messages received by the tongue.

Another important benefit of drinking herbal tea is that it gives us an opportunity in our busy day to take a bit of time out for ourselves. Taking time out to taste and savor herbal teas provides an opportunity for reflection. Rather than swallowing a couple tasteless capsules with a gulp of water as we run out the door, we can use our time drinking herbal tea to think about intention—"I'm nourishing my nervous system" or perhaps "I'm strengthening my immune system"—as our brain receives signals from the subtle qualities of the plants. "Time out for tea" can be a pleasant healing ritual, a way to let our bodies and minds know that we are taking care. Whether you're just getting started on a chilly morning, looking to improve your health, or welcoming a friend that drops by, tea is always appropriate.

SHOPPING FOR HERBS

Nowadays, most grocery stores offer a good-size selection of teas, both caffeinated and noncaffeinated. Most likely you have tried a variety of commercial products, already bagged and boxed. Now I hope to help you go further with the experience. Natural food stores, tea shops, and herb stores generally offer the best selections of quality tea herbs.

Shop Conscientiously



When you are shopping for herbs, support companies that support your ethical and environmental beliefs. That may mean they farm organically, use recycled packaging or hemp tea bags, employ

indigenous peoples to harvest herbs, and/or protect the rain forest rather than destroy it. A growing number of companies, especially those dealing with camellia-type teas, are part of the fair-trade movement, where plantation workers are paid a fair wage for their efforts. Fair-trade companies also pay a premium that goes directly to farmers, helping to curb poverty and labor-abuse issues.

Tea Bags

A New York tea merchant named William Sullivan invented tea bags accidentally in 1904. He had the idea of sending samples of tea to customers in hand-sewn silk bags rather than in a tin. He was soon flooded with orders for the convenient tea bags.

Making herbal blends from scratch might not be everyone's cup of tea, and for that reason, tea bags are a welcome convenience. Although true tea aficionados shun them, tea bags can make an acceptable cup of tea. They're also readily available and provide convenience for those with a go-go-go lifestyle, for newcomers to the world of herbal teas, and for those who are traveling or dining in restaurants. If you carry a few wrapped tea bags in your purse, briefcase, or backpack, you have only to request, "Hot water, please," when you are on the road or in places where herbal teas are not available.

Happily, herbal teas are now more available than ever. Yet, in order for the herbs to be put into tea bags, they are ground into a very fine cut that exposes the surface areas of the herbs thousands of times, thus allowing flavorful and therapeutic essential oils to evaporate more quickly. When the tea bags sit for many months before being used, the herbs they contain lose potency. Many companies compensate for this loss by adding natural or unnatural flavorings to the herbs. Read labels carefully when buying bagged tea. Your desire may be to consume raspberry leaf tea. However, what you may find yourself buying, if you don't read labels, is black tea with raspberry flavoring.

To make your own tea bags, you can simply tie some herbs in a piece of muslin. You can even buy empty tea bags that you can fill with your

favorite brew and seal with a hot iron. These types of tea bags work best for leaves and flowers. However, many commercial tea bags are glued together with a toxic plastic called polyvinyl chloride, which is best avoided. Ask the retailer from whom you're purchasing bags to provide you with ones that are free of polyvinyl chloride.

After steeping your tea bag in hot water, give the spent bag a squeeze between two spoons, or wrap the string around the spoon and the tea bag. This will extract any remaining therapeutic properties.

Bulk Herbs

Going into the bulk herbs section of a store may seem an overwhelming experience at first. But usually the staff is friendly, enjoying the company of both people and plants. When asked for assistance, they can instruct you on how to bag up the herbs you want, whether the price code needs to be marked on the bag, and any other procedures that are not clearly posted in the area.

Loose bulk herbs generally make a better cup of tea than tea bags. Because these herbs are in a more whole form, less surface area is exposed and the plants' essential oils are better protected, so they are more potent in terms of both flavor and therapeutic properties. Bulk herbs also tend to be less expensive, create less packaging waste, and offer a wider variety of flavors, as well as the opportunity to select exactly what you need and want.

Do your best to seek out organically cultivated herbs. Not only do they have the most healing properties (pesticides, which are used on nonorganic herbs, are designed to destroy, not heal), but organic cultivation is healthier for the planet and the creatures that live upon it. Sometimes you may find supplies of *wildcrafted* herbs; these are herbs that have been collected from the wild. If you use wildcrafted plants, be sure they were harvested in a sustainable method that respects the environment and ensures the continuation of that species. Avoid using plants that are endangered or at risk.

Dried herbs should look and smell almost like the fresh product. Look for good color. An herb that was originally green when fresh should not

look like yellow straw when dried. Bright golden calendula flowers should still show their hue. Nettles should still be bright green.

One way to determine whether you will enjoy the taste of an herb is to breathe in its aroma. Chances are good that if your nose is pleased, your tongue will agree.

If you are allergic to a particular herb, avoid using it even in tea form. And remember that herbs are potent; just because herbal tea is natural doesn't mean that you can drink it without regard to its effects.

WILDCRAFTING

Learning to collect wild plants from your area will greatly enhance your pleasure in drinking tea, as well as your sense of connection to the earth.

The most important rule of wildcrafting is to make sure you collect the proper species. Some plants have poisonous look-alikes. Be especially careful with mushrooms, as a mistake can easily be fatal. Also be sure to collect the correct plant part; for example, blue elderberries are wonderful, but the leaves are toxic. And know that animals have different physiologies; just because one animal eats a plant doesn't mean it is safe for humans to ingest.

Avoid collecting plants within fifty feet of a busy road, in areas that are sprayed with herbicides or pesticides, or in areas known to be polluted or contaminated. Ask permission before gathering on private land.

Any known endangered species must be left alone; do not harvest it from the wild. With any species, identify the grandfather, or mother, plant in a stand of plants—it's usually the largest or the first to flower—and leave it to ensure the continuation of the strongest of the species. Never take more than 10 percent of what's there. Vary the places you collect from.

Collect plants in a way to ensure the continued survival of the species. If all you need are the leaves and flowers, take only some tops from the plants; cutting back plants in this manner can actually help promote new growth. You might also thin plants growing together, as you would thin plants in your garden, to give the other plants more room. If you're

collecting roots, which will destroy the plants, plant ripe seeds in the hole you've dug and fill the holes with soil.

If possible, spray or water plants the day before you harvest them to clean off any extra dirt or debris. Gather leaves and flowers in the morning, after the dew has risen and before the sun is too hot.

The part of the plant you want to harvest determines when you should collect it, as follows:

- *Leaves* are best taken just as the plant begins to flower, when its energy is still in the leaves.
- *Flowers* are best taken when they are just starting to open.
- *Fruit* (such as rose hips) is best when it is fully ripe, and *seeds* are best when they are fully ripe and dry.
- *Bark* is best collected in the spring or fall. If taken after a spell of damp weather, bark will separate more easily. Never girdle (remove the bark from all the way around) a tree, as this will impair the sap's ability to rise.
- *Roots* generally are ideal in the fall, after the plant has completed its cycle and the life force of the plant goes back into its roots and inner bark. Biennial or perennial roots can also be collected in the spring of the second year. There are exceptions, of course. Echinacea is harvested only after three years and ginseng after seven years. Scrub roots well after collecting them.
- *Gums* and *resins* are best collected in hot, dry weather.

Leaves and flowers are usually collected during the full moon. Roots are said to be best when collected during the new moon.

Ask permission from and give thanks to the herbs you gather. My friend Debra St. Claire likes to remind people, "Bless it before you pick it." Sing while collecting! Be joyful!

DRYING HERBS

Drying herbs makes them available year-round. When herbs are dried, their cell walls break down, which enables the properties of the plants to be easily released when the herbs are rehydrated.

Dry herbs in the shade in a warm, well-ventilated area. They may be dried on a nylon or stainless-steel screen, in a shallow box, or loosely in a paper bag. (If you're drying the herbs in a paper bag, punch many holes in the bag for ventilation.) Some have found that drying herbs in a paper bag in the backseat of their car to be very effective. You also can tie herbs in small bunches and string them up in an attic or warm room to dry. For herbs that contain a lot of moisture, I sometimes spread a clean sheet on the top floor (the hottest area of our home) and spread the herbs out on the sheet until they are dry. Cut large roots in half lengthwise to ensure quicker drying.

Most herbs dry in four to seven days. When leaves and flowers crumble between your fingers, that is a good indication they are dry enough; if they bend and remain flexible, they probably still contain moisture that needs to evaporate. To test a root for dryness, slice into it in a couple of places; if the root is dry to the touch in its center, it's ready to be stored. Storing undried herbs in a glass jar is likely to result in mold growth. Another method to test for dryness is to seal a sample of the herb in a small, dry glass jar. If droplets of moisture appear on the lid, the herb's moisture content is still too high and the drying process must be resumed.

Store herbs as soon as they are fully dried. They don't need to become a collecting area for dust and cobwebs.

STORING HERBS

Whether your dried herbs were bought at the store or collected from your garden and dried in your attic, they must be stored properly. Clean, dry glass jars make the best storage containers for herbs. (Plastic does not make a good storage container, because it's permeable and does not protect the flavor of the herbs.) Be sure that the jars are completely dry—check for moisture especially under the rims—and remove any cardboard inner lid. Amber-colored glass bottles, which protect their contents from

light, are great (I've used recycled bottles that some types of vitamins are sold in).

Light and heat deteriorate the quality of dried herbs. Many people make the mistake of storing their herbs out on a sunny windowsill or on top of the stove, where they quickly degrade in quality. Instead, keep teas in a cupboard, where they will be protected from light and heat, to better conserve their flavors and therapeutic properties.

Be sure to label your storage containers. Six months from now, it might be difficult to recognize catnip from oregano! I also like to write the Latin name of the plant on the storage label. After you've written and said them a few times, these beautiful, poetic names become part of your memories. It is also a good idea to write the date you purchased or dried the plant material.

Many herb books will tell you that dried leaves and flowers keep for one year and roots and barks for two to three years. However, taste, color, and smell are the most reliable indicators of potency. You may find that some herbs, when stored properly, keep for much longer. Nature provides more herbs every year, so ideally you should purchase or harvest no more than you are likely to use within the year.

Other Uses for Herbal Teas



Herbal teas are great as flavorful beverages, as therapeutic topical applications (see [Chapter 4](#)), or as admixtures to various culinary treats. Try these other ideas for enjoying herbal tea:

- Use tasty herbal teas to make ice cubes.
- Add herbal tea to cider or fruit juice.

- Add herbal tea to carbonated water for mildly fizzy drinks.
- Add herbal tea to wine to make a sangria.
- Use herbal tea, instead of water, in recipes for breads, cakes, and cookies. Herbal teas that go well with baked goods include anise, cardamom, fennel, ginger, and peppermint.
- Use honey-sweetened herbal teas to make frozen Popsicle-type treats. (Hibiscus tea makes a pretty red color.)
- Use herbal teas to flavor soups. For example, rosemary tea makes a wonderful base for a vegetable soup.

BREWING HERBAL TEAS

When making tea, always start with fresh, cold water. Since herbal tea is an important aspect of healing, use pure water: distilled, spring, filtered, or from a well. Distilled water is the best medium for drawing out the therapeutic properties of the plants, as it is a more neutral medium.

However, I do not recommend using distilled water that has been stored in plastic jugs, because the plastic contains xenoestrogens, substances that mimic the effects of the hormone estrogen, which may be a carcinogenic risk. The plastic also imparts a plastic flavor to the water. I also do not recommend using municipal tap water, which contains chlorine, fluoride, and other components that should be avoided.

Equipment for Making Tea

You can find tea-making supplies in shops where herbs are sold, such as natural food stores, tea shops, and coffee shops, and also in kitchenware stores. Avoid cookware made from aluminum and copper, which are soft metals that tend to erode and may also have neurotoxic effects on the body. The best choices for kettles and other tea-making equipment are glass, cast iron, stainless steel, and unchipped enamel.

When you prepare tea from bulk herbs, rather than tea bags, you'll need a strainer of some sort to filter out the fibrous material of the herbs

after they have steeped. Simple tea strainers look like miniature kitchen strainers, with a long handle and an open strainer basket. Look for a fine-mesh nonaluminum or bamboo strainer. For those who can't be bothered with tea strainers, there are tea balls, strainer infusers, and strainer spoons. These utensils have small, clamped, perforated compartments that you fill with herbs, close, and place in the tea water for the designated amount of time. They work best for leaves and flowers. When you fill a tea ball or spoon, fill it only half full, as the herbs will expand severalfold as they steep.

Reusable, washable cotton or muslin tea bags are another option; you fill them with herbs and steep. Backpackers sometimes strain herbs out simply by pouring the tea through a clean cloth such as a bandana.

If you don't have a way to strain out the herbs, know that they will eventually sink to the bottom of the cup. You might even want to take up the art of tea-leaf reading! Folklore says that when a small amount of loose tea leaf floats to the top of your cup, an intriguing stranger will soon visit.

Before brewing leaves, flowers, or other delicate plant parts into teas, crush them a bit—by rubbing them between your fingers, using a mortar and pestle, or chopping them with a knife. This breaks up their tissue structure and helps release their constituents.

Miniature Tea Sets



Miniature tea sets, which are now beloved by children, originally were created in the nineteenth century by salesmen who used them as samples for homemakers. The demand was so great that children's tea sets became their own niche product.

When you are brewing seeds or larger pieces of roots or barks, put the ingredients in a mortar and crush the herbs with a pestle slightly. Mortar and pestles are sold as sets: a bowl and a rounded grinding apparatus. They are said to symbolize the sexual act, the yin and the yang, and are usually made of glass or marble. Wood ones tend to be too soft for grinding herbs.

Grinding herbs is sometimes necessary if you are using larger, hard pieces. A blender can be used for this purpose. A coffee grinder will also suffice; however, it should be a grinder that is reserved just for grinding herbs so that the herbs do not take on the strong taste of coffee. Work in small batches. Most blenders and grinders will not enjoy processing more than a cup of dried material at a time. If you need to grind resinous or sticky herbs, place the herbs in the freezer for a few hours first, so that they will shatter easily in a blender. It also helps to put the blender or grinder in the freezer, too. Some herbs, such as dried saw palmetto berries, are just too hard to powder with home equipment. You are better off buying them already ground, or you will be buying lots of expensive blenders. When grinding herbs, process them just enough to release some of their aromas. And thankfully, most of the herbs sold in bulk are sold cut and sifted, in small enough pieces for making teas.

Returning Herbs to the Earth



The herbs that you strain out of the tea (known as the marc) can be returned to the earth by composting them or by simply opening up your kitchen door and throwing the leftover herbs into your

peppermint or whatever patch. In this way, you can be conscious of giving something back to the planet rather than just taking from it.

Fresh versus Dried Herbs

Fresh herbs give the best flavor and excellent quality. I love to inhale the aroma of homegrown mint, catnip, roses, lemon balm, and anise hyssop and blend them into delicious beverages. When fresh herbs are available and abundant in your garden, the local farmers' market, or wild areas, they are wonderful to use in tea. What better way to guarantee herbicide-free, pesticide-free, high-quality herbs? Enjoy teas made from freshly harvested herbs throughout the months they are available!

However, drying herbs makes them available year-round, and dried herbs make very good teas. See [pages 8–9](#) for a discussion of drying and storing herbs at home.

When a recipe calls for dried herbs but you are using fresh ones, use three times as much as is called for. Conversely, when a recipe calls for fresh herbs but you are using dried, use one-third as much as is called for.

Infusions and Tisanes

Some people consider the words “infusion” and “tisane” to be synonymous, while others attribute slightly different meanings to each. The word “tisane” is derived from the Greek *ptisan*, which means “crushed barley,” and originally meant barley water. Later, “tisane” came to denote a noncaffeinated herbal tea, rather than a caffeine-containing tea. Some consider a tisane to be a tea made from fresh rather than dried plant material. In more recent years, “tisane” has come to mean a tea prepared from unfermented leaves, instead of the fermented leaves of black tea. However you choose to define it, a tisane is, indeed, an herbal infusion enjoyed for its therapeutic effects.

Infusions are an ideal method for brewing tea from herb leaves, flowers, seeds, and even those roots (such as ginger, osha, and valerian) that have delicate essential oils that would be evaporated if boiled. Before

being infused, seeds should be lightly bruised in a mortar and pestle to help release their flavor and properties.

To prepare an infusion, simply bring cold water to a boil, then remove it from the heat. Add about 1 heaping teaspoon of dried herb tea per cup of water, cover, and allow it to steep for ten to twenty minutes. To make a more medicinal blend, use up to ½ ounce of dried herb per cup of water, and allow the herbs to steep for twenty minutes to several hours. Strain the herbs from the liquid before serving.

Avoid oversteeping herbs, as some flavors can intensify and become rather medicinal instead of pleasant. Don't expect herbal teas to be identical in color to traditional black tea. Most herbal teas tend to have a more pale hue.

There are several variations of the standard infusion. The three most common are described below.

Teapot Infusion

The teapot is a Chinese invention. Teapots come in a wide variety of shapes and sizes and can delight even the most whimsical of tastes. I own several, my favorites being one in the shape of a wizard riding a dragon and another in the shape of a fairy sitting on a flower. Whatever type of teapot you own, make sure it has an airhole strategically located somewhere on its top so that tea will pour smoothly through the spout even when the lid is on.

Have Herb Will Travel



A thermos is a great container for bringing teas to work or school. Either put an appropriate number of tea bags into the thermos and fill with hot water, or make a pot of tea using your preferred method and pour the strained tea into the thermos. Make a day's supply of tea and you'll always have ready-to-drink health-giving fluids. If you carry a few tea bags or even some herbs in a tea ball when you're out and about, you're never more than a cup of hot water away from a fresh cup of tea, whether you're at a restaurant or even on an airplane. I always make it a point to ask for herbal tea when I'm traveling, even if I know it isn't available. I figure that if the restaurant, airline, and so on gets enough requests, they'll start making it available. So do your part!

To prepare an infusion in a teapot, fill the teapot with hot water and allow it to stand for a minute or so. This warms the pot so that the tea you pour into it will not cool down quickly; if you don't warm the teapot, the cold pot will absorb the heat of the hot water and impede the steeping process. Then empty the teapot, add the loose herbs (1 heaping teaspoon of dried herb per cup of water, plus 1 extra teaspoon "for the pot"), and fill the pot with just-boiled water. Cover and allow the herbs and water to steep for ten to fifteen minutes, or until the tea has cooled to a comfortable drinking temperature. To serve the tea, simply hold a strainer over each cup as you pour.

French Press Infusion

A French press is a gadget designed to make coffee but which also makes the art of herbal tea delightfully easy. It is essentially a glass pot protected by a metal frame, with an interior press that acts as a strainer and a spout for pouring. A French press allows for the pleasant visuals of the colorful herbs floating in the water.

Place the herbs in the glass portion, add the just-boiled water, cover, and let steep ten to fifteen minutes. Covering the spout with a clean cloth while the tea is steeping will hold in more of the plants' essential oils.

Then push down the press, straining the herbs from the tea; give the herbs at the bottom a good squeeze to further release therapeutic value.

If you break the glass pot, you can buy a replacement part without having to replace the entire press. Tea made with a French press will not be as strong as that made with the jar method (described below), but it is still excellent. I like to use a French press when serving clients tea during nutritional and herbal consultations.

It is best not to use the same French press that you use for making coffee, as the teas will taste like coffee (and the coffee like herbs).

Jar Infusion

Jar infusions are excellent for extracting the maximum amount of medicinal potential from an herb. It takes time but is well worth the effort. This method is more appropriate when the goal is therapeutic rather than social.

Add about 2 ounces of dried roots or bark—or 1 ounce of dried flowers, dried leaves, or seeds—to the bottom of a clean half-gallon glass canning jar. Cover the herbs with boiling water and put the lid on the jar. Allow the herbs to steep for as long as half an hour for seeds, two hours for flowers, four hours for leaves, and overnight for roots and barks. Strain out the herbs and enjoy the nutrient-rich brew.

This method is not suggested for licorice root or valerian root, which will taste too medicinal, or for slippery elm bark, which will become too mucilaginous, or sticky, to enjoy.

Cold-Water Infusions

I have been embracing the raw lifestyle, so I prefer not to apply heat to my herbs. With that in mind, these next three types of infusions, known as cold-water infusions or macerations, have become my favorite tea-making methods. They are also simple and help preserve delicate essential oils and water-soluble nutrients like vitamins B and C, which are decreased by heat.

If you desire a cold-water infusion to be sweet, some of the strained tea can be run through a blender with a bit of honey and added back to the rest of the batch.

Sun Tea

Sun teas work best with leaves and flowers. Place 1 cup of dried herbs or twelve tea bags in a glass gallon jug, fill with cool water, and allow the herbs to sit in sunlight for four to six hours. It is best to cover the top of the jar to prevent leaves and other debris from blowing into it. Then strain. Many believe that this method infuses the water with not only the herbs' properties but also the healing rays of the sun, as well as yang masculine properties.

Lunar Tea

Lunar tea is best made when the moon is full or close to full. Place 1 cup of dried herbs or twelve tea bags in a glass gallon jug, fill with cool water, cover, and allow the herbs to sit outside under the moonlight for four to twelve hours. (Of course, if the temperature is going to drop below freezing, avoid this method, or the water might freeze and break your container.) Some people believe that this method infuses the tea with the feminine, intuitive, mystical properties of the moon.

Refrigerator Tea

If the weather prevents you from making a sun tea or lunar tea, you can also use the refrigerator. Place your herbs (1 cup of dried herbs to 1 gallon of water) in a jar, fill with cold water, cover, and allow the herbs to steep in the refrigerator for about twelve hours. Strain before serving.

Decoctions

A decoction is the preferred method of making tea from those roots, barks, and seeds that are woodier and require more energy for their precious constituents, including minerals, to be extracted.



Best Herbs for Cold-Water Infusions

Anise hyssop herb
Catnip herb
Chamomile flower
Hawthorn leaf & flower
Lemon balm herb
Lemon verbena herb
Marshmallow root
Peppermint leaf
Red clover herb
Red raspberry leaf
Rooibos leaf
Rose flower
Rosemary herb
Spearmint leaf

To brew a decoction, bring cold water to a boil. Add 1 ounce of herb per quart of water, reduce heat, cover, and simmer for about twenty minutes. For large or whole roots, you can simmer for up to an hour. Be sure to keep the heat as low as possible and the cover on, as many constituents, such as essential oils, can be lost through evaporation. After being simmered, the herbs can be strained out immediately or left to steep overnight.

Decoctions are so potent that a serving size can be much less than for an infusion. An adequate portion would be $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of tea.

Infusion-Decoctions

What if you wanted to mix an herb that needed to be infused, such as peppermint leaf, with an herb that needed to be decocted, such as cinnamon bark? In this case, you'll use a hybrid method. Bring the water to a boil. Add the herbs that need to be decocted, such as the cinnamon bark. Cover and simmer for twenty minutes. Then remove from the heat and add the herbs that need to be infused, such as the peppermint leaf. Cover and allow the herbs to steep an additional ten minutes. Strain before serving.

Iced Teas

Iced teas have become a leading beverage in North America. About half the tea consumed in this country is in the iced form. The fad began in 1904, at the St. Louis World's Fair. Richard Blechyden, an Englishman, was in charge of a tea stand set up to introduce teas from the Far East. The heat was oppressive, and the crowds were not in the mood to try hot teas. Mr. Blechyden experimented by pouring hot tea into glasses filled with ice, and iced tea became an instant hit.

Unlike milk shakes, which leave you feeling heavy and sticky in the summer, teas can really help you maintain your cool. Hot teas tend to be more diaphoretic (increase perspiration), whereas iced teas tend to be more diuretic (increase urine flow). For a truly refreshing treat, brew up some tea using twice as much herb as usual, then pour it into a pitcher filled with an equal amount of ice. (If the pitcher is glass, allow the tea to cool a bit before pouring in the hot tea to avoid cracking the glass.)

You can also make iced tea to take on the road. Freeze the tea in a strong bottle, filling the container only three-quarters full so that the tea, as it freezes and expands, will not crack the bottle. The next day, use the frozen tea to chill your packed lunch, and drink the tea as it thaws out. Wrap the container with a dry cloth to catch any condensation; then you can use the damp cloth to refresh your face and hands before having your picnic.

For parties or other glamorous events, you can freeze a mint leaf or edible flower such as a rose petal or violet into each ice cube for a dash of elegance. It works best to fill the ice cube tray halfway, place the leaves or flowers in the tray, freeze, then fill the tray to the top with water and refreeze. This prevents the leaf or flower from floating to the top of the ice cube where it is not enclosed in the ice.

STORING TEA

If you make teas in batches larger than a cup, you'll save time and be encouraged to drink more of them. Leftover teas should be strained and stored in the refrigerator, where they'll keep for about four days. If you want to rewarm the tea, do so, but don't bring it to any higher than about 110°F to protect the tea's enzymes and constituents.

Tea is full of life force, and any microorganism that enters the tea can multiply. If there is any sign of spoilage, such as a fizziness or flatness to the taste, discard the tea and make a fresh batch.

Best Herbs for Iced Teas



Black tea leaf
Hibiscus flower
Lemon balm herb
Lemongrass leaf
Peppermint leaf
Raspberry leaf
Spearmint leaf

FLAVORING TEA

The world round, teas are flavored, and in myriad ways. The Chinese drink their tea plain, but in Arab countries, tea is flavored with mint, basil, sage, and sugar. In Tibet, yak butter is added. In Europe, the addition of milk and lemon or sugar is common. In Russia, a spoon of jam might be added. Anatolians might drink tea through a sugar cube held in the mouth. In Kashmir, a traditional blend is green and Darjeeling teas flavored with cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, chopped almonds, and pine nuts. But in North America, the most common flavoring agent is just plain sugar.

In comparison to the ubiquitous sweetness and saltiness in the typical North American diet, the many flavors of tea are an adventure to enjoy. To really get to know an herb, it's best to try it as a plain, unsweetened tea, especially at first. See how it feels. Notice the subtle flavors. If you feel you need a sweetener, by all means add one to the next cup. After you have used a sweetened tea for a few days, try it again without a sweetener. You may grow accustomed to the plant's flavor and enjoy it after a while, or you might find you want to use less sweetener.

When you do sweeten your tea, try using a touch of honey, agave nectar, apple juice (or its concentrate), maple syrup, or raw sugar; these are all better, or at least slightly better, for you than refined white sugar. Raw honey, for example, contains enzymes and has antibacterial properties. Darker honeys, with a greater mineral content, are more nutritious than lighter ones, while the lighter-colored honeys tend to have a milder flavor. Flavored honeys, carrying the slight scent and taste of the flowers from which the pollen was collected, are considered therapeutic in their own right and are my preference. Look for honeys such as blueberry, eucalyptus, fireweed, linden, rosemary, sage, thyme, and tupelo for a delectable delight. Since bees work so hard to produce honey and are such an important asset to this planet, helping to pollinate many of the foods we eat, we should purchase honey only from companies that treat the bees ethically. Also, avoid buying honey that has been heated; this process destroys the honey's enzymes. Remember that honey should

never be given to babies under one year of age, as there is a slight danger of botulism, to which babies are more sensitive.

Licorice root can also be added to teas to impart sweetness. Licorice, a natural antidiuretic, is often added to herbal-tea blends in Asia to help prevent the tea from being passed quickly from the body. However, use licorice with caution in cases of high blood pressure and water retention.

Another possible sweetener is stevia (*Stevia rebaudiana*), a member of the Asteraceae (daisy) family. Stevia has been used as a natural sweetener for centuries in South America. In Japan, stevia was approved as a sweetening agent in 1970 and makes up about 40 percent of the sweetener market. It is calorie-free and does not disrupt blood sugar levels. One of its glycosides, stevioside, is about 150 to 300 times sweeter than sugar. Stevia also only has one-three-hundredth the amount of calories contained in sugar. It is safe for those with candida infection and helps control sugar cravings. However, ingesting too much stevia can leave an aftertaste.

Sweeteners aside, tea can also be flavored with a squeeze of fresh lemon, lime, or orange juice. You can also add fresh or dried fruit, such as apples, cranberries, strawberries, or raspberries. I love to soak unsulfured dried apricots in water and then use the soak water for making tea. This tea is especially beloved by children. Feel free to experiment with adding chopped pieces of fresh or dried fruit to your tea blends. However, add fresh fruit only to blends you are planning to brew right away, not those you are planning on storing for any period of time, or else they'll get moldy. Dried fruit can be added to dried teas and stored for up to a year.

The practice of adding milk to tea dates back to the eighteenth century. In those days, pouring boiling water into delicate tea bowls would break the cups, unless milk was added first. Today, experts agree that if milk is used, it should indeed be poured in first. One reason is that if milk is added after the tea has been poured, it tends to form a fatty layer on the top of the cup. However, these days milk is falling out of favor as a flavor for tea. To start, it usually masks the delicate herbal flavors. Also, many people who are lactose intolerant find themselves getting congested from its consumption. And the proteins in milk tend to bind with the tannins

in various teas, rendering them inactive. There are dairy alternatives for those who still want a splash of milk but want to avoid dairy. My favorite is raw almond milk (see the recipe on [page 136](#)), and oat milk, rice milk, and soy milk are also good and widely available. (Be aware that some people cannot tolerate soy.)

At our home, we add cinnamon extract to flavor some teas. Some people use a cinnamon stick as a stirring tool, which imbues the tea with a touch of the cinnamon's flavor.

Generally, when you are using a tea to address a health concern, consuming it plain, without any flavoring, is the best choice. However, many people will drink a tea only if it is sweetened or flavored in some way. And, of course, the most important issue is that the tea gets consumed, so do what thou will.

THE FIVE FLAVORS: ENERGY THROUGH TASTE

All the flavors we are able to sense can be broken down into five categories: sour, bitter, sweet, pungent (spicy), and salty. In Oriental medicine, each of these five flavors is associated with a particular organ system of the body. When we experience a flavor, our taste sensors send signals to the brain, which in turn induces physiological effects in the organ system linked to that flavor. In this way, through flavor, we can affect the energy and function of our bodies.

Westerners tend to overemphasize the sweet and salty flavors. Yet, leaving out the other three flavors is like removing colors from the rainbow. All the flavors together help keep the body in balance.

The salty, sour, and bitter flavors are considered yin or cooling, with a downward-moving energy. These yin flavors tend to arise and subside quickly. The sweet and pungent flavors are usually considered yang or warming, with an upward-moving energy. These yang flavors are slower to be sensed and remain longer.

Chi



Chi, also spelled *qi*, is a continuous flow of energy that circulates in the body and permeates the universe. It is invisible, formless, odorless, and tasteless, yet it has consciousness. It can be construed of as the Hindu concept of prana, or life force. We receive chi from the sun, the earth, and the nutrients we ingest. In the body, chi flows from one meridian point to the next, bringing energy to every body part and system. Chi is warming, protects the body from harmful influences, and is the source (not the cause) of movement. Herbs that are chi tonics promote energy circulation.

The sour, bitter, and pungent flavors are considered to have a drying energy, meaning that they help correct imbalances such as abnormal fluid buildup, swelling, and other fluid obstructions in the body. Conditions caused by dampness, such as oily skin, edema, joint swelling, yeast overgrowth, and a “heavy” or fatigued feeling, can all benefit from drying.

The sweet and salty flavors are considered moistening and can help soothe conditions resulting from a deficiency of fluids. Herbs that have a moistening effect usually contain natural mucilage and are classified as demulcent and emollient. Dry skin, dry mucous membranes, dry cough, constipation, and irritated eyes can all benefit from moistening herbs. Moistening herbs also benefit the metabolism of fluids. Dryness can be a sign of yin deficiency, and many moistening herbs help build the yin fluids of the body.

Sour

The sour flavor is cooling, drying, and astringent. Sourness usually is due to the presence of acids such as ascorbic, citric, and malic acids. It

stimulates liver and gallbladder function as well as the appetite, increases saliva production, and can aid in fat metabolism. It restricts secretions such as seminal fluid, sweat, urine, blood, and diarrhea. The sour flavor is carminative (relieves colic or griping), diaphoretic (increases perspiration), and refreshing. It helps cleanse the skin and tonify tissue and may benefit conditions such as varicosities and hemorrhoids. Examples of sour herbs include lemongrass, orange peel, rose hips, and hawthorn berries. Those with diarrhea, hyperacidity, broken capillaries, or dark circles under their eyes should be careful of overdoing the sour flavor.

Bitter

The bitter taste is cooling, drying, strengthening, and draining. It also has anti-inflammatory and antibacterial effects. Most bitter herbs contain some sort of alkaloid. Bitter stimulates the small intestine, the pancreas, and digestive secretions. It strengthens the heart, lowers cholesterol and fevers, helps deter parasites in the body, reduces cravings for sweets, supports fat metabolism, helps strengthen those with food allergies, and helps eliminate heat and mucus, especially from the lungs. It can aid weight loss, decrease fat, detoxify the blood, and clear the mind and skin. Bitter herbs include angelica, chamomile, dandelion leaf, globe green tea, and yarrow. Bitter is beneficial for people who are lethargic, as well as those who are hot and aggressive. People who are deficient in energy, cold and dry, or suffering from ulcers should use bitter sparingly.

Sweet

The sweet flavor is regarded as a tonic, nourishing to the stomach and spleen. Carbohydrates are usually the contributors of this flavor. The sweet flavor helps to slow down acute symptoms and increase tolerance to stress and pain. It also is rejuvenating, builds tissue, and heals and tones muscles. It is considered energizing yet calming. The sweet flavor nourishes yin, or the fluids of the body, which helps to build up a person who is dry, has a weak immune system, and is frail. People who are dry,

cold, and spacey can benefit from good-quality sweet foods, such as whole grains, and sweet herbs, such as anise, fennel, licorice, and stevia.

Pungent

Pungent, or spicy, is warming and dispersing and stimulates the lungs and large intestine. It induces perspiration, stimulates the nerves, relieves nerve pain, clears chi stagnation, promotes circulation, and imparts a glow to the skin. It also stimulates hydrochloric acid production and thus aids digestion. Most pungent herbs contain some sort of essential oils that move internal energy to the surface. Many of these essential oils have antimicrobial activity. Pungent is cooling to the interior and warming to the exterior of the body. Basil, cinnamon, ginger, and mint all represent the pungent flavor and are good to use for a cold condition.

Salty

The salty flavor is cooling, softening, draining, and diuretic. It indicates the presence of mineral salts in a food. The salty flavor can help soften hardened masses in the body, such as tumors. If used in moderation, it can have a moistening effect. It especially affects the nerves, kidneys, and bladder. It aids fluid metabolism, helps strengthen the nerves, opens blocked chi channels, improves circulation, awakens the mind and senses, and strengthens the heart. Craving salt excessively may indicate adrenal exhaustion. Sea vegetables such as kelp and dulse are good examples of salty foods, as are the herbs nettle and plantain.



The Healing Herbs

Expand your herbal repertoire! The following forty-five herbs offer a wide range of health-giving properties. They all have good flavor and are widely available (some of them you'll find right on your spice shelf!), making them great selections for herbal teas.

Learning to use a few good herbs with versatility can open you to a wide range of healing and/or health-giving possibilities. Unlike many pharmaceuticals, herbs have multipurpose, multieffective applications; they aren't limited in action to a narrow physiological effect. And for a single health concern, you'll find that there often are dozens of botanicals that could be helpful. For this reason, it is better to know a few herbs well and to be able to enjoy the full scope of their various properties than to know a little about hundreds of herbs. You'll discover dozens of uses for each herb you master.

ALFALFA

Botanical Name and Family: *Medicago sativa*; Fabaceae (Pea) Family

Part Used: Aboveground plant

Medicinal Use

Alfalfa is an excellent nutritive. It has a wealth of vitamins and minerals and also improves the body's assimilation of nutrients. It is especially beneficial for people who are convalescing, and it can be used as a nutritive tonic during the second and third trimesters of pregnancy. It is so rich in chlorophyll that it is grown commercially as a source of this nutritive compound. Alfalfa also helps remove excess uric acid from the body.

Topically, alfalfa is used as a bath herb, facial steam, hair rinse, and wound compress. Green cuttings of alfalfa are said to deter bedbugs.

Physiological Character

Alterative, anti-inflammatory, diuretic, galactagogue, nutritive, phytoestrogenic, stomachic, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Anemia, arteriosclerosis, arthritis, blood pressure (high and low), bruising, celiac disease, colitis, diabetes, fatigue, fever, high cholesterol, indigestion, jaundice, menopause, menstrual problems, obesity, osteoporosis, peptic ulcers, varicose veins

Constituents

Chlorophyll, betaine (digestive enzyme), electrolytes, fiber, protein, beta-carotene, vitamin C, vitamin K, folic acid, octacosanol, calcium, chromium, copper, phosphorus, manganese, iron, zinc, silicon, fluorine electrolytes, isoflavones, coumarins, alkaloids (stachydrine), steroidal saponins (betasitosterol, alpha-spinasterol, and stigmasterol)

Contraindications

Alfalfa is considered very safe and is suitable for daily use. However, there has been some concern about the safety of eating large amounts of the sprouts, which contain the alkaloid canavanine. As a result, persons with lupus or rheumatoid arthritis should avoid eating alfalfa sprouts; the

leaves and flowers, however, as well as teas made from them, are safe for consumption.

Those on blood-thinning medications should avoid using alfalfa.

Flavor

As a tea, alfalfa has a neutral, somewhat bland grassy flavor, with an aroma of cut summer hay. Of the five flavors, it would be considered salty and bitter, with a cooling energy. It combines well with mint. It is often added to other teas to improve their flavor and nutrient profile.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Alfalfa can grow in a wide variety of climates, both moist and dry, and is often found by roadsides and in fields. This annual, biennial, or perennial plant can reach a height of two to three feet. Its three-part cloverlike leaf is alternate and compound. The alternate flowers are blue, lavender, or purple; they grow in short terminal clusters and bloom from June until August. The seedpods are coiled.

Wild alfalfa indicates rich soil. In their search for nutrients deep in the soil, its roots can reach 120 feet in depth. Alfalfa is often planted by farmers and turned under to fix nitrogen in and enrich the soil.

To cultivate alfalfa, sow the seeds directly in the garden. It likes to grow in full sun in soil that is rich in organic matter, and it requires only moderate watering. Repeated cuttings of the mature plant will encourage several cycles of blooming within the growing season.

ANGELICA

Botanical Name and Family: *Angelica atropurpurea* (American), *A. archangelica* (European; syn. *A. officinalis*), *A. sylvestris*; Apiaceae (Parsley) Family

Parts Used: Roots, leaf, stem, seed

Medicinal Use

Angelica improves digestive metabolism, strengthens the lungs and heart, and improves liver, gallbladder, and spleen function. Small amounts stimulate digestive secretions. Regular use of angelica is said to promote a distaste for alcohol, and it may be beneficial in the treatment of alcoholism. It is traditionally used to improve mental harmony and well-being.

As a bath herb, angelica can relieve muscle soreness and promote relaxation. An angelica sponge bath, using upward strokes, has been used to treat victims of electric shock.

Physiological Character

Alterative, anti-inflammatory, antirheumatic, aromatic, bitter, carminative, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, nervine, stimulant, stomachic, tonic, uterine stimulant

Traditional Targets of Application

Amenorrhea, anemia, anorexia, arthritis, asthma, bloating, bronchitis, colds, colic, coughs, depression, dysmenorrhea, dyspepsia, fever, flatulence, flu, gout, indigestion, irregular menses, migraine, placenta retention, poor appetite, poor circulation, typhus

Constituents

Vitamin C, flavonoids, volatile oil (beta-phellandrene, pinene, limonene, caryophyllene, linalool), coumarins, valerianic acid, angelic acid, caffeic acid, citric acid, fatty acids, resins, pectin, sterols, tannins

Contraindications

If you're using the root, it must be dried; do not use the fresh root. Diabetics should use angelica with caution, as the plant can increase blood sugar levels. Large doses can affect blood pressure and respiration and can stimulate the nervous system. Avoid in cases of excessive heat, such as fever or inflammation. Avoid during pregnancy and in cases of

heavy menstrual bleeding. In addition, there is a slight possibility that angelica can increase photosensitivity in some people.

Flavor

As a tea, angelica's flavor is reminiscent of that of juniper berries, celery, maple, and licorice. It is sweet, pungent, and slightly bitter, with a warm, drying energy. Adding a slice of lemon or some pieces of apple to angelica tea can improve its flavor.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Angelica, a biennial, is native to North America and thrives in meadows, swampy areas, and marshy woods from Canada to the Carolinas. It grows from five to eight and a half feet in height. Its thick, hollow stalk is purplish near its base. The large, pale green leaves are compound and triply divided. The small flowers range in color from white to yellow to green and grow in spherical umbels.

To cultivate angelica, sow its seeds as soon as they are mature, or store them in the freezer until planting time. Angelica prefers a rich, loamy soil, but it can tolerate clay or sand if the soil is amended with plenty of organic matter. Keep in mind that black flies and fruit flies are attracted to angelica and will congregate around it, so avoid planting it under your window or by the front door.

Wild angelica looks similar to water hemlock and poison hemlock, which are toxic. When collecting angelica from the wild, take care not to confuse it with these two plants.

ANISE

Botanical Name and Family: *Pimpinella anisum*; Apiaceae (Parsley)

Family

Part Used: Seed

Medicinal Use

Used in tea, anise seed improves digestion, freshens the breath, relieves flatulence and nausea, and even improves coughs due to its expectorant properties. It makes an excellent children's tea for coughs, nausea, and stomachaches. It helps curb appetite, as its natural sweetness satisfies.

Physiological Character

Antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, carminative, diuretic, expectorant, galactagogue, parturient and stimulant, stomachic, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Asthma, bloating, catarrh, colic, coughs, diarrhea, flatulence, halitosis, hiccups, indigestion, menstrual cramps, nausea, poor appetite, poor digestion, stomachache, whooping cough

Constituents

Volatile oils (anethole, methyl chavicol), furanocoumarins, flavonoid glycosides, fatty acids, phytoestrogens, starch, protein, choline, mucilage

Contraindications

Avoid therapeutic doses during pregnancy unless under the direction of a qualified healthcare professional.

Flavor

Anise has a sweet, warm character. It imparts its sweetness to herbal tea with a lovely licoricelike flavor.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

This annual is native to Egypt but now can be found wherever the climate is amenable. It grows easily in any well-drained soil that receives full sun, but it requires 120 frost-free days for its seeds to mature. The plant grows to about two feet in height and has feathery leaves divided into many

leaflets. The umbrellalike clusters of tiny white or yellow flowers bloom midsummer and produce small, downy, ribbed seeds in late summer.

The seeds can be planted directly in the soil. The plant repels aphids, so it is a welcome addition to the garden.

ANISE HYSSOP

Botanical Name and Family: *Agastache foeniculum*; Lamiaceae (Mint)
Family

Parts Used: Aboveground herb

Medicinal Use

Anise hyssop clears excessive dampness in the stomach and spleen and heaviness in the chest. It also stimulates the gastrointestinal system. It is used as a preventive for heat stroke and summer colds.

The leaves are used topically as a compress for angina, burns, fever, headache, heatstroke, and herpes. The plant is excellent in baths and footbaths for simply cooling off or for treating sunburn and fungal conditions such as athlete's foot and yeast overgrowth.

Physiological Character

Antibacterial, antiemetic, antifungal, breath freshener, diaphoretic

Traditional Targets of Application

Bloating, catarrh, colds, colic, diarrhea, fever, flu, morning sickness, nausea, poor appetite, vomiting

Constituents

Essential oil (cinnamic aldehyde, caryophyllene, pogostol, benzaldehyde, eugenol), marrubiin

Contraindications

Anise hyssop is considered a very safe herb.

Flavor

Anise hyssop is not truly an anise or hyssop. Its flavor combines licorice (or anise) and mint tones; of the five flavors, it would be considered pungent and sweet. It has a slightly warm, drying energy and a root-beer-like fragrance. It is delicious hot or iced and makes an excellent cold-water infusion.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

This perennial plant is native to North America and can be found in moist, open woods, along lakes and streams, and in wet ditches and prairies. It grows to about three feet in height. The opposite leaves are oval at the base, pointed at the tip, and roughly textured. The top surface of the leaves is green, but the bottom surface bears soft gray hair. The bluish purple flowers produce nectar throughout the day and are known to attract hummingbirds, butterflies, honeybees, and, at dusk, the elusive hummingbird moth.

The seeds can be sown directly into the soil in late spring. The plant will tolerate a range of conditions, from full sun to partial shade, as well as sandy, clayey, or gravelly soil. It requires light to moderate amounts of water.

BASIL

Botanical Name and Family: *Ocimum basilicum*; Lamiaceae (Mint)

Family

Part Used: Leaf

Medicinal Use

Basil tea stimulates the lungs, warms the body, calms the stomach, and dries dampness. It also can aid in the expulsion of the placenta after childbirth.

Topically, basil tea can be used as a compress on insect bites, acne, and ringworm. As a gargle or mouthwash, it will help eliminate thrush. And a bath infused with basil will energize the bather. Basil tea is also used as an eyewash for tired eyes.

Physiological Character

Antidepressant, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, carminative, circulatory stimulant, diaphoretic, digestive, emmenagogue, expectorant, febrifuge, galactagogue, nervine, sedative

Traditional Targets of Application

Anxiety, asthma, bronchitis, colds, constipation, coughs, depression, drug overdose and withdrawal, dysentery, exhaustion, flatulence, headache, nausea, rheumatism, stomachache, vomiting

Constituents

Volatile oil (estragol, eugenol, lineol, linalol), caffeic acid, tannins, beta-carotene, vitamin C

Contraindications

Although basil is very safe as a culinary herb, it is not recommended in therapeutic dosages for extended periods of time (more than a couple of weeks). It is not recommended in therapeutic dosages for infants or toddlers.

Flavor

Basil has an aromatic, minty, mildly clovelike flavor that could be characterized as pungent and bitter, with a warm, drying energy. Enhanced by a spoonful of honey, it makes a delicious hot or iced tea.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Native to India but now found worldwide, basil is a bushy annual with light green, oval opposite leaves on a square stem. The flowers range in color from white to pink to purple. The plant commonly reaches a height of fifteen inches to two feet.

Basil can be grown in most gardens, both temperate and tropical, and requires moderate amounts of water, warm temperatures, well-draining soil, and full sun. In temperate climates, start the seeds indoors two to three weeks before the final frost in your area, and transplant the young seedlings outdoors once all risk of frost has passed. Pinch off the flowers to prolong the life of the plant, as once it blooms, it is quickly spent. Harvest all the leaves before frost, as frost will destroy the leaves.

In the garden, basil is a natural insect repellent and also can enhance the flavor of tomatoes and peppers if it is grown near them. In the home, a pot of basil on the table will repel flies, mosquitoes, and cockroaches.

BLACKBERRY

Botanical Name and Family: *Rubus villosus*, *R. fruticosus*, *R. laciniatus*, *R. procerus*, *R. spp.*; Rosaceae (Rose) Family

Parts Used: Leaf, root bark (most potent), fruit

Medicinal Use

All parts of blackberry help clear heat, reduce inflammation, cool fever, and dry dampness.

Topically, blackberry leaf tea is used as a wash for oily skin, to treat wounds, as a mouthwash for sores and weak gums, and as gargle for a sore throat. The leaves can be applied as a compress to relieve the pain and itchiness of insect bites and to shrink hemorrhoids.

Physiological Character

Alterative, astringent, blood tonic, diuretic, hemostatic, nutritive, refrigerant, tonic, uterine tonic, yin tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Anemia, bleeding, cholera, diarrhea, dysentery, fevers, hemorrhoids, infertility

Constituents

Leaf and root: tannins, gallic acid, villain, iron

Fruit: vitamin C, niacin, pectin, sugars, anthocyanins, flavonoids (kaempferol, quercetin)

Contraindications

Blackberry is considered a very safe herb.

Flavor

Blackberry leaf tea is pleasant and fragrant, with a flavor similar to that of black tea (like black tea, it is rich in tannins). In fact, European peasants once brewed tea from blackberry leaves when Asian teas were prohibitively expensive. The tea is more flavorful when it is made from dried, rather than the fresh, herb. Its energy is cooling and drying.

Tea made from blackberry root bark has a stronger flavor and a cooling, drying energy. Tea made from the fruit is sweet and tart (sour), with a neutral (neither warming nor cooling) energy.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Blackberry is believed to be native to both Europe and North America. This perennial plant is found most often growing in hedges and open woods. Its woody stems have large hooks (thorns) and, erect or trailing, grow up to sixteen and a half feet in length. The leaves are palmate with three to five rounded, toothed leaflets. The five-petaled flowers can be white or pink.

In the garden, blackberry thrives in full sun but will tolerate partial shade. A well-draining soil that retains some moisture is ideal. To propagate blackberry plants, dig up the roots of well-established plants in

early spring, cut them into three-inch lengths, and bury the root pieces in trenches two or three inches deep. You can also purchase young plants at gardening stores.

BURDOCK

Botanical Name and Family: *Arctium lappa*, *A. minus*; Asteraceae
(Daisy) Family

Parts Used: Root, seed, leaf (topical use only)

Medicinal Use

As an anti-inflammatory demulcent agent, burdock soothes and clears internal heat. It improves the elimination of metabolic wastes through the liver, lymph nodes, large intestine, lungs, kidneys, and skin, making it an excellent choice for a spring detoxification or fasting tea. In addition, Japanese research indicates that burdock contains desmutagens, substances that inactivate cancer-causing agents.

Topically, burdock is used as a bath herb to relieve sore joints and gout. A compress made from root or leaves can be used to treat boils, bruises, ringworm, glandular swellings, knee swellings, sprains, and tumors. The plant can be prepared as a hair rinse or oil to prevent dandruff and hair loss and as a facial toner in cases of oily skin.

Physiological Character

Adaptogen, alterative, antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antitussive, aperient (mild laxative), aphrodisiac, choleric, chologogue, demulcent, diaphoretic, diuretic, expectorant, febrifuge, galactagogue, nutritive, rejuvenative

Traditional Targets of Application

Abscesses, acne, anger, boils, cancer, candida, chicken pox, cough (unproductive), cystitis, dandruff, diabetes, eczema, edema, fever, gonorrhea, gout, HIV, hives, hypoglycemia, indigestion, irritability,

jaundice, keratosis, lumbago, lymphatic congestion, measles, mumps, obesity, pain, premenstrual syndrome, prostate inflammation, psoriasis, rheumatism, smallpox, sore throat, staphylococcus (staph) infection, syphilis, urinary inflammation, uterine prolapse

Constituents

Vitamin C, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, zinc, polyacetylenes, chlorogenic acid, taraxosterol, arctigen, inulin, lactone, volatile oil, flavonoids, tannin, mucilage, resin, essential fatty acids (in the seeds only)

Contraindications

Avoid chewing the fresh seed if the sharp spines around it have not been removed. Avoid burdock seeds during the first trimester of pregnancy, during the later stages of measles, and in the presence of open sores.

Flavor

Burdock tea has an earthy flavor; of the five flavors, the root would be characterized as bitter and the seeds as pungent. The tea is alkalizing and very nutritive, with a cooling, drying energy. The roots can be roasted and used as a coffee substitute.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Burdock is a biennial native of Eurasia but now can be found growing throughout North America. It thrives in waste areas, by roadsides, and in damp ground. It has large, wavy, heart-shaped leaves and a stem that grows from three to six feet tall. The flowers are pink-to-purple globes and are followed in the autumn by a brown seed head with numerous prickly hooks. Burdock's deep, slender taproot is ten to thirty inches long and has a dark outer skin.

The seeds germinate best if they are stratified, though many will sprout even without it. Burdock prefers full sun to partial shade. Nearly any type of soil will suffice, though loam is preferable. One plant can easily become a colony by the third year. Roots ideally are collected in the summer or

fall of the plant's first year or in the spring of the second year. The seeds can be collected in the fall of the second year. Collect only the current year's seeds; seeds left over from the season before are likely to be full of bugs.

If you are collecting in the wild, avoid confusing burdock with rhubarb, which has similar-looking but toxic leaves.

CALENDULA

Botanical Name and Family: *Calendula officinalis*; Asteraceae (Daisy)
Family

Part Used: Flower

Medicinal Use

Calendula flower moves congestion, dries dampness, promotes tissue healing, curbs infection (by stimulating the production of white blood cells), increases peripheral circulation, and clears toxins and inflammation. Invitro studies have confirmed that calendula inhibits the growth of *E. coli*, staphylococcus, and some protozoa.

Topically, calendula flower has myriad uses. It is an ideal herb for warding off and getting rid of infection, especially an infection that has been trapped in the body for a long time. There is an old saying that goes, "Where calendula is, no pus will form." The flower promotes the formation of granulation tissue. It is used in skin creams for its nourishing, scar-preventing, and anti-inflammatory properties. It is often used in salves or compresses for the treatment of boils, bruises, bunions, burns, corns, cradle cap, diaper rash, eczema, chapped skin, hemorrhoids, herpes, inflammation, insect bites, sprains, sunburn, varicose veins, and wounds. It can be used as a nasal wash for sinus infections, as an eyewash for conjunctivitis, and as a mouthwash for gingivitis. Used as a mouth rinse after oral surgery, calendula can promote quick healing. Used as a hair rinse, it can prevent dandruff, mediate hair loss, relieve scalp irritation, and even add highlights to blond hair. It is an excellent herb for use in the bath to relieve skin inflammation and in a sitz bath for

hemorrhoids. It can even be used as a douche to get rid of *Trichomonas* and as a footbath to banish athlete's foot.

Physiological Character

Alterative, antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, antiviral, astringent, calmative, choleric, demulcent, diaphoretic, immune stimulant, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

Candida, cervical irritation, chicken pox, conjunctivitis, glandular swellings, hemorrhoids, herpes, infection, lymphatic inflammation, measles, menstrual cramps, mumps, smallpox, staph infection, stomach inflammation, thrush, ulcers

Constituents

Iodine, manganese, potassium, saponins, carotenoids (carotene, lycopene, calendulin, lutein), flavonoids, polysaccharides, mucilage, phytosterols, essential oil, resin

Contraindications

Calendula is considered a very safe herb.

Flavor

Calendula makes a mild, pleasantly floral tea. Of the five flavors, it would be categorized as sweet, bitter, and pungent, with a slightly cooling, drying energy.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

This native of Eurasia is an annual, though it can reseed readily, depending on weather conditions. It has hairy leaves and orange, daisylike flowers. It prefers open, sunny areas; the flowers often turn and face the path of the sun.

In the garden, calendula discourages Mexican bean beetles. It requires only low to moderate watering and is not particular about the type of soil it is planted in.

CARDAMOM

Botanical Name and Family: *Elettaria cardamomum*; Zingiberaceae
(Ginger) Family

Part Used: Ripe seed

Medicinal Use

Cardamom is used in Asian medicine to strengthen the bones and sinews. It reduces stomach acidity and strengthens the heart and lungs and is said to stimulate the mind and impart joy and clarity. Topically, cardamom can be enjoyed as an aphrodisiac bath herb.

Physiological Character

Antiseptic, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, aromatic, astringent, carminative, diaphoretic, digestive, expectorant, kidney yang tonic, mucolytic, sialagogue, stimulant, stomachic, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Anorexia, appetite loss, asthma, bloating, bronchitis, catarrh, celiac disease, colds, colic, congestion, cough, cramps, depression, diarrhea, digestive malabsorption, dysentery, emphysema, enuresis, erectile dysfunction, fainting, fatigue, fever, flatulence, halitosis, headache, heartburn, indigestion, kidney stones, laryngitis, lung congestion, mental alertness, morning sickness, overactive bladder, poor circulation, premature ejaculation, restless fetal activity, spermatorrhea, stomachache, vomiting, weak chi

Constituents

Volatile oils (borneol, camphor, carvone, cineole, eucalyptol, limonene, linalool, terpinine, sabinene), caprylic acid

Contraindications

Cardamom is considered very safe, though it should be avoided in cases of ulcers.

Flavor

Cardamom seed is one of the classic herbs of chai spice blends. It has a pleasant pungent slightly bitter but sweet flavor, reminiscent of that of eucalyptus and pine, and can improve the flavor of bitter herbs. It also is a great breath freshener. In Arabic cultures, serving a guest a cardamom brew, often mixed with coffee, is a sign of hospitality. Cardamom's energy is warming and drying.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Cardamom is a perennial, native to Asia, growing six to ten feet tall. The leaves are dark green and shaped like a lance, with silky, paler undersides. Small yellow flowers spread along the ground above the rhizome. The seed capsules are irregular in shape and grayish brown in color. Each capsule contains four to eight seeds.

Cardamom prefers a hot, humid environment and may require a greenhouse enclosure if being cultivated outside the tropics. If you're interested in growing cardamom, consult a good gardening reference guide.

Grinding Cardamom Seeds



In order to release their full flavor profile, it's best to grind cardamom seeds before use. However, the seeds' volatile oils evaporate easily once exposed to the air. For this reason, it is best to buy whole seeds and grind them as needed.

CATNIP

Botanical Name and Family: *Nepeta cataria*; Lamiaceae (Mint) Family

Part Used: Leaf

Medicinal Use

Catnip contains nepetalactones, which are both analgesic and sedative and affect the opioid receptor sites of the body. It moves chi, relaxes the nerves, and relieves inflammation. When served cold before a meal, catnip tea enhances appetite. When served hot after a meal, it improves digestion. When taken before bedtime, it promotes sleep, and in the case of a cold or fever, it helps the patient get the rest he or she needs. Catnip is an excellent herb for children and can help calm young ones, especially through the trials of teething and colic. It is also a good herb for people who don't like sharing, have a hard time revealing their feelings, and never complain.

Topically, catnip is used as a bath herb for relieving stress; its calming effect can soothe fussy babies. It also can be used as a compress or poultice in the treatment of pain, sprains, bruises, hemorrhoids, and toothache; as a hair rinse for scalp irritations; as a liniment for arthritis and rheumatism; as an eyewash for inflammation, irritated eyes due to allergies, and bloodshot eyes; and as an enema to cleanse the colon. As a steam inhalation, it can relieve congestion.

Physiological Character

Anodyne, antidiarrheal, antispasmodic, aromatic, carminative, diaphoretic, emetic (in large doses), emmenagogue, mucolytic, nervine,

refrigerant, sedative, stomachic, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Amenorrhea, anxiety, bronchitis, chicken pox, colds, colic, convulsions, cough, delayed menses, diarrhea, dyspepsia, fever, flatulence, headache, hives, hyperactivity, hysteria, indigestion, insanity, insomnia, measles, menstrual cramps, motion sickness, pain, pneumonia, restlessness, scarlet fever, smallpox, stomachache due to nerves, teething, toothache, worms

Constituents

Calcium, magnesium, B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, volatile oils (cavracol, citronellol, geraniol, nepetol, nepetalactone, pulegone, thymol), iridoids, tannins

Contraindications

Large doses of catnip tea can be emetic. The herb is not known to have any toxicity, although smoking it can produce mild hallucinogenic effects. Catnip is not recommended for use during pregnancy.

Flavor

Before *Camellia sinensis* became the popular tea in Europe, catnip tea was enjoyed as a common beverage. This highly aromatic tea has a pleasant minty, pungent, bitter flavor and cooling, drying energy. The flavor is enhanced by a dash of honey and lemon.

In addition to being prepared as a tea, young catnip leaves can be made into pesto, cooked in sauces, or added to salads. They also can be rubbed onto meat before cooking as a seasoning.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Native to Eurasia, this perennial plant has an erect, hairy, square stem. The leaves are grayish green, opposite, oval or heart shaped, strongly toothed, and whitish underneath, with a dentate margin. The white to

light pink or purplish dotted flowers grow in terminal clusters. The plant can now be found in the wild in North America; it prefers moist, disturbed sites, such as those along roadsides, old buildings, and streambeds.

In the garden, catnip should be grown from seeds. If you set out seedlings, the neighborhood cats will devour them—hence the saying, “If you set it, cats will eat it. If you sow it, cats won’t know it.” Catnip can grow in full sun or shade and thrives on low to moderate watering.

CHAMOMILE

Botanical Name and Family: *Matricaria recutita* (German; syn. *Chamomilla recutita*, *Matricaria chamomilla*) and *Chamaemelum nobile* (Roman; syn. *Anthemis nobilis*); Asteraceae (Daisy) Family

Part Used: Flower

Medicinal Use

Chamomile moves chi, relaxes the nerves, reduces inflammation, clears toxins, and promotes tissue repair. Part of its anti-inflammatory activity may be due to its ability to inhibit the metabolism of arachidonic acid. It can help restore an exhausted nervous system and is indispensable for calming the mind and relaxing the nerves in times of stress. In-vitro studies indicate chamomile has activity against *E. coli*, streptococcus, and staphylococcus bacteria. It is considered an excellent children’s herb.

Topically, chamomile can be used as a bath herb to relieve stress, nourish dry skin, and calm cranky children. Used in a sitz bath, chamomile can aid in the treatment of hemorrhoids. It is used as a hair rinse for highlighting and conditioning blond hair. Chamomile is excellent in compresses and salves for the treatment of skin inflammations, including burns, eczema, psoriasis, insect bites, and external ulcers and to accelerate wound healing. It can be used as a gargle to soothe a sore throat, as a mouthwash to treat gingivitis, as a poultice to relieve a toothache, and as an eyewash to treat conjunctivitis and sties. Stuffed into a bed pillow, chamomile aids sleep.

Physiological Character

Analgesic, anodyne, antibacterial, antifungal, antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aromatic, carminative, diaphoretic, digestive, emetic (in large doses), febrifuge, nervine, sedative, stomachic, tonic, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

Anxiety or nervousness, caffeine-withdrawal headache, candida, colic, convulsions, crankiness in infants, diverticulitis, dyspepsia, fever, flatulence, gastritis, gout, headache, heartburn, hives, hyperactivity, hysteria, indigestion or general digestive distress, insomnia, intestinal cramping, irritability, irritable bowel, liver stress, lumbago, menstrual cramps, migraines, morning sickness, overactive bladder, pain, restlessness, rheumatism, sciatica, teething, ulcers

Constituents

Calcium, magnesium, iodine, phosphorus, potassium, vitamin B₂, choline, essential oils (bisabolol, farnesene, proazulene, terpenes, chamazulene), flavonoid (apigenin), levomenol, sesquiterpene lactone (nobilin), coumarins, salicylates

Contraindications

Some people, especially those sensitive to ragweed, are severely allergic to chamomile. The herb can cause contact dermatitis in others. Roman chamomile is more likely to cause an allergic reaction than the German variety. On the other hand, chamomile is sometimes used to treat allergies. Use the herb with caution the first time you try it. Otherwise, chamomile is considered very safe.

Flavor

The flavor of chamomile flower tea is delicate, soothing, slightly sweet, and pleasantly bitter; German chamomile is slightly sweeter than the

Roman variety. The tea's aroma is reminiscent of that of apples, and its energy is neutral (in temperature) and moistening. Chamomile has long been one of the most popular herbal teas in Europe, where it is sometimes served in hospitals to calm patients. Europeans often take their chamomile tea with a bit of milk, which also has calming properties. As chamomile tea aids in digestion, it is often enjoyed after meals. The addition of ginger to the tea enhances its digestive-aiding properties and also imparts a spicy flavor.

Chamomile flowers should be steeped no longer than three to five minutes to prevent the development of a bitter flavor. Flowers that have been steeped more than seven minutes can sometimes effect nausea in the consumer.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

The flowers of both species of chamomile (*M. recutita* and *C. nobile*) are daisylike, with yellow centers and white ray petals. German chamomile, native to Europe but naturalized in North America, is an annual herb, taller than the Roman variety (growing to one to two feet in height), with pinnate leaves. It has a hollow disc in the center of its flower, which helps to identify it. German chamomile prefers moderate watering and full sun to partial shade; it will grow in a wide variety of soil types.

Roman chamomile, native to southern Europe, is a perennial low-growing plant with finely divided, doubly pinnate leaves. It prefers full sun to partial shade, moderate watering, and well-drained soil. It makes an excellent ground cover; as one old saying goes, "Like a chamomile bed, the more it is trodden, the more it will spread."

CINNAMON

Botanical Name and Family: *Cinnamomum zeylanicum* (true cinnamon), *C. cassia*, *C. aromaticum*, *C. saigoncum*; Lauraceae (Laurel) Family

Parts Used: Bark, wood

Medicinal Use

Cinnamon is warming and is known to stimulate the digestive tract. It has been shown to have activity against staphylococcus and botulism.

Topically, cinnamon can be used as a rinse for conditioning and highlighting dark hair. Used as a mouthwash, it freshens the breath. It can be used as a wash to treat fungal infections, such as athlete's foot, and in the bath to relieve chills and sore muscles. As a steam inhalation, it helps colds, coughs, and sore throat.

Physiological Character

Analgesic, anodyne, antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, aphrodisiac, aromatic, astringent, cardiac stimulant, carminative, circulatory stimulant, decongestant, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, hemostatic, mucolytic, stimulant, stomachic, vasodilator, yang tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Arthritis, bedwetting, cold, colic, coughs, diarrhea, digestive malabsorption, dysentery, dysmenorrhea, erectile dysfunction, fatigue, flatulence, flu, halitosis, headache, irregular menses, low blood pressure, lumbago, nausea, poor appetite, poor circulation, poor vision, prostatitis, rheumatism, tuberculosis

Constituents

Calcium, iron, magnesium, zinc, essential oil (cinnamic aldehyde, phellandrene), gum, tannin, catechin, mannitol, coumarins, mucilage

Contraindications

Avoid cinnamon in cases of fever, hemorrhoids, dry stools, blood in the urine, or excessive dryness. Avoid large amounts during pregnancy and while nursing. Do not ingest large doses over long periods of time. Doses

larger than 2 grams could cause delirium, hallucinations, and convulsions.

Cinnamon Sticks versus Powder



When making cinnamon tea, use cinnamon sticks that you can crush with a mortar and pestle or blender. Using cinnamon powder will make a muddy, overspiced tea.

Flavor

Cinnamon produces a warm, sweet, pungent tea with warming, drying energy. It combines well with other spices, such as cloves, ginger, and orange peel, as well as black tea.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Native to southern China, cinnamon is an evergreen tree, usually not taller than ten feet, with oval, oblong leaves that are five to nine inches long. It bears yellow-white flowers. The tree's thick bark is peeled away in layers and curls as it dries, becoming what we know familiarly as "cinnamon sticks." Cinnamon grows best in hot, humid conditions (the tropics) in sandy soils close to the sea.

CLOVES

Botanical Name and Family: *Syzygium aromaticum* (syn. *Eugenia aromatica*); Myrtaceae (Eucalyptus) Family

Part Used: Dried flower bud

Medicinal Use

Cloves stimulate circulation and digestion, warm the body, and disinfect the skin, liver, kidneys, and mucous membranes of the bronchioles. In in-vitro experiments, they have been shown to be effective against *E. coli*, streptococcus, staphylococcus, and pneumococcus.

Topically, cloves can be applied to the area of a toothache to stop pain. They are added to toothpaste as a flavoring, breath-freshening, and antiseptic agent, as this herb inhibits dental-plaque formation.

Physiological Character

Analgesic, anesthetic, anodyne, antibacterial, antiemetic, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, aromatic, astringent, carminative, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, rubefacient, stimulant, stomachic

Traditional Targets of Application

Altitude sickness, anorexia, appetite loss, candida, colds, colic, cough, depression, diarrhea, digestive malabsorption, dysentery, dyspepsia, erectile dysfunction, flatulence, flu, halitosis, hernia, hiccups, indigestion, laryngitis, low blood pressure, lupus, parasites, poor circulation, rheumatism, sinusitis, stomach cramps, vomiting, worms

Constituents

Calcium, magnesium, essential oil (eugenol, caryophyllene, pinene, vanillin, furfural), tannin, gum, lipids, wax

Contraindications

Avoid large amounts during pregnancy or in cases of fever or yin deficiency.

Flavor

Cloves have a pungent, bitter flavor with a warming, drying energy. Crush the cloves slightly before brewing to release their full flavor potential. Cloves combine well with cinnamon and ginger and are commonly added to chai blends.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

The clove tree is a small perennial evergreen native to Asia and the southern Philippines. Its large branches are covered with smooth, grayish bark. The leaves are opposite, about four inches long and two inches wide. The rose-colored, bell-shaped flowers grow in bunches at the ends of the branches.

Clove trees grow well in the rich, loamy soils of the humid tropics, in areas with well-distributed rainfall and good drainage.

DANDELION

Botanical Name and Family: *Taraxacum officinale*; Asteraceae (Daisy)
Family

Parts Used: Flower, leaf, root

Medicinal Use

Dandelion is a blood purifier, meaning that it aids in the process of filtering and straining wastes from the bloodstream. It is useful in treating obstructions of the gallbladder, liver, pancreas, and spleen. It also can be used to help clear the body of stored negative emotions, such as anger and fear, that can be stored in the liver and kidneys.

Use the root primarily for problems related to the liver, spleen, stomach, and kidneys. Use the leaf for liver, kidney, and bladder concerns. When prepared as a cold-water infusion, dandelion root tea improves liver function, and dandelion leaf tea aids in the elimination of uric acid. Both the leaf and the root are cancer preventives. In Germany, an over-the-counter drug called Hepatichol, which is made primarily from dandelion along with nettles and several other herbs, is recommended for liver and gallbladder problems, including gallstones.

Dandelion leaf or root tea enhances the entire digestive tract. It is excellent especially after a high-fat meal and can help relieve indigestion. Dandelion leaf and/or root tea is highly recommended for those embarking on a cleanse or fast. Many Europeans commonly follow “the cure,” a cleansing routine that entails drinking three cups of dandelion root tea daily for six to eight weeks. They may do this twice a year, in the spring and again in the autumn. Dandelion is also an excellent herb for weight loss, as the leaves are diuretic and the root improves fat metabolism.

Ingesting dandelion root in the last few weeks of pregnancy can help prevent pathological jaundice in the newborn. Jaundice in an infant can be treated with dandelion root tea taken by the nursing mother or given to the infant directly; the mother can drink as much as she is able, while the infant should be given only about 1 teaspoon daily. As dandelion leaf is a galactagogue, it is excellent for nursing mothers: it increases the nursing mother’s milk supply and also bolsters the milk’s nutritional quality—a boon for the infant! The mineral-rich leaf and root make excellent food or tea for growing children. Because dandelion leaves and roots help cleanse the liver and kidneys and purify the blood, they are excellent for teenagers concerned about acne.

Topically, the leaf can be made into a wash to treat fungal infections.

Physiological Character

Flower: Anodyne, cardioprotective, emollient, hepatic, vulnerary

Leaf: Alterative, anodyne, antacid, antilithic, antioxidant, antirheumatic, aperient, astringent, bitter, decongestant, depurative, digestive, diuretic, febrifuge, galactagogue, hepatic, hypotensive, immune stimulant, laxative, lithotriptic, nutritive, restorative, stomachic, tonic, vulnerary

Root: Alterative, anodyne, antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antirheumatic, aperient, astringent, bitter, choleric, chologogue, decongestant, deobstruent, depurative, digestive, discutient, diuretic, galactagogue, hepatic, hypnotic, immune stimulant, laxative, lithotriptic, nutritive, purgative, sedative, stomachic, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Flower: Backache, depression, headache, menstrual cramps, night blindness

Leaf: Amenorrhea, anemia, anorexia, appetite loss, arthritis, bedwetting, breast cancer, breast tenderness, bronchitis, candida, cellulite, colitis, congestive heart failure, cysts, debility, diabetes, dropsy, dyspepsia, edema, endometriosis, eye strain (from too much time in front of a computer screen), fatigue, flatulence, gallstones, hangover, high cholesterol, hypertension, hypochondria, insomnia, kidney stones, mastitis, mononucleosis, muscular rheumatism, nervousness, obesity, poison oak and ivy, prostatitis, rash, rheumatism, scrofula, scurvy, sinusitis, spleen enlargement, stomachache, tonsillitis, ulcers, urinary tract infection, uterine fibroids

Dandelion Coffee



A wonderful beverage is dandelion coffee. Made from roasted dandelion roots, it has a rich, earthy, coffeelike flavor but is caffeine-free, nonaddictive, and much kinder to the stomach. To make dandelion coffee, gather a good supply of dandelion roots. Scrub them clean with a vegetable brush, slice them lengthwise, and allow them to dry in a warm place for two weeks. Then roast the dried roots either by setting them in an oven for four hours at 200°F or by placing them in a cast-iron skillet and dry-sautéing them over medium heat, stirring constantly, until they become dark brown. Let the roots cool completely, then store them in a glass jar. To brew, simmer 1 heaping teaspoon of the root in 1 pint of water for ten minutes, or grind the

roots and use them in a percolator or drip coffee maker just as you would use coffee grounds.

Dandelion coffee can be drunk black or mixed with cream and sugar or honey and milk. Some people use it to continue to enjoy “coffee” throughout the day but decrease the amount of caffeine they are ingesting. To give up coffee, gradually use less coffee and more dandelion root over a period of time. By doing this gradually, you can bypass the caffeine-withdrawal headache.

Root: Abscess, acne, age spots, alcoholism, allergies, anorexia, appetite loss, arthritis, boils, breast cancer, breast tenderness, bronchitis, candida, cellulite, chicken pox, cirrhosis, colitis, congestive heart failure, constipation, cysts, depression, diabetes, dizziness, dyspepsia, eczema, endometriosis, eye strain (from too much time in front of a computer screen), fatigue, flatulence, gallstones, gout, hangover, hay fever, headache, heartburn, hemorrhoids, hepatitis, herpes, high cholesterol, hypertension, hypochondria, hypoglycemia, jaundice, kidney stones, mastitis, measles, mononucleosis, morning sickness, mumps, obesity, osteoarthritis, ovarian cysts, poison oak and ivy, premenstrual syndrome, prostatitis, psoriasis, rash, rheumatism, sinusitis, spleen enlargement, tonsillitis, tuberculosis, tumors, ulcers, uterine fibroids, varicose veins, venereal warts

Constituents

Flower: Carotenoids (taraxanthin, a mixture of lutein, flavoxanthin, and chrysanthemaxanthin), lecithin

Leaf: Beta-carotene, vitamins B₁ and B₂, choline, inositol, folic acid, vitamin C, calcium, iron, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, taraxacin, bitter glycosides, terpenoids

Root: Calcium, iron, phosphorus, zinc, choline, flavonoids (lutein, luteolin, flavoxanthin, violaxanthin), pectin, inulin, taraxacin, taraxacerin, triterpenes (taraxol, taraxerol, taraxosterol, amyrrin), coumestrol, levulin, mucilage, tannin, essential oil, asparagine,

lactupicrine, phenolic acids (quinic, chlorogenic), caffeic acid, gallic acid, fatty acids (myristic, palmitic, stearic, lauric)

Contraindications

Dandelion is generally regarded as safe, even in large amounts; however, as with all substances, there is always a possibility of allergy. Before using the root, either dry it or cook it, rather than consuming it fresh, to make it less laxative and easier to digest. There have been rare reports of abdominal discomfort, loose stools, nausea, and heartburn associated with dandelion. The latex in the fresh plant can cause contact dermatitis in some individuals. Consult with a physician prior to using dandelion if you suffer from an obstructed bile duct or gallstones. Some individuals with gastric hyperacidity may find excessive use of dandelion leaf aggravates that condition.

Flavor

Dandelion leaf and root have an earthy, slightly bitter, slightly salty flavor and cooling energy. To make the tea more palatable, add pieces of dried apple or fresh orange slices.

Dandelion flower has a sweet, bitter, slightly salty flavor and neutral (neither warming nor cooling) energy.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Dandelion, a native of Eurasia that is now naturalized across North America, is a perennial growing two to eighteen inches tall on a hollow, unbranched stem with a basal rosette of shiny, hairless, coarsely toothed green leaves that broaden from the base toward the top. The leaves' teeth are usually downward directed. Each plant bears a single yellow flower (which is actually composed of many tiny bisexual flowers). Each floret has five tiny teeth on its edge. Beneath the dandelion flower is a green calyx with downward-curving outer bracts. The seeds are achenes (one-seeded fruits); they bear a feathery pappus and are carried on the wind, in some cases landing as far as five miles from their origin.

Dandelion grows well in full sun to partial shade, requires only low to moderate water, and will thrive in a wide variety of soils. It is incredibly hardy and has one of the longest flowering seasons of any plant; when a warm spell occurs in an off-season, it is not unusual to see the plant in flower.

Instead of spending your summers trying to eradicate dandelion from your lawn, learn to utilize this valuable, health-giving plant. But as is the case with all herbs, do not collect dandelion from areas that have been sprayed with herbicide in the past two years.

ECHINACEA

Botanical Name and Family: *Echinacea purpurea*, *E. angustifolia*, *E. pallida*; Asteraceae (Daisy) Family

Parts Used: Root, rhizome, leaf, flower, seed

Medicinal Use

Echinacea stimulates the formation of leukocytes and enhances phagocytosis. It inhibits the enzyme hyaluronidase, which aids the infection process by thinning cellular matrix, thereby making cells less permeable to infection. It also stimulates wound healing and has cortisonelike activity. One of its constituents, echinacin, exhibits interferonlike activity. Another ingredient, properdin, helps neutralize bacterial and viral blood toxins; it also increases the total number of immune cells developing in the bone marrow. Echinacea also exhibits some antitumor activity. All in all, echinacea is an excellent anti-infection agent. It is most effective when taken at the onset of symptoms.

The herb dilates the peripheral blood vessels and has a cooling energy. It was used in Native American sweat lodges to help the participants endure extreme temperature.

Applied topically, echinacea stimulates the reticuloepithelial layers of skin, increases the formation of antibodies, and speeds tissue repair. It is excellent in salves, compresses, and washes to treat cuts, infected wounds, boils, burns, carbuncles, hives, sties, tendonitis, gangrenous tissue, and

venomous bites such as those from scorpions and spiders. It can be used in mouthwashes to treat canker sores, gingivitis, and pyorrhea.

Physiological Character

Alterative, anodyne, antibacterial, anticatarrhal, antifungal, anti-inflammatory (mild), antioxidant, antiseptic, antitumor, antivenom, antiviral, astringent, carminative, depurative, diaphoretic, digestive, febrifuge, immune stimulant, sialagogue, stimulant, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

Abscess, acne, allergy, blood poisoning, boils, bronchitis, cancer, chicken pox, chronic fatigue, colds, diphtheria, ear infection, eczema, fever, flu, herpes, laryngitis, Lyme disease, lymphatic congestion, mastitis, measles, mumps, pneumonia, prostatitis, scarlet fever, sinusitis, smallpox, sore throat, tonsillitis, tuberculosis, typhoid, vaccination side effects

Constituents

Vitamin C, calcium, chromium, mucopolysaccharides, echinacoside, echinaceine, isobutylamides, caffeic acid, chicoric acid, linoleic and palmetic acids, volatile oils, glycosides, inulin, polyacetylenes, sesquiterpenes, betaine, tannin

Contraindications

Excessive use of echinacea can cause throat irritation, nausea, dizziness, and excessive salivation. Rare cases of allergic reactions have been reported. Those that have compromised immune systems, such as might result from lupus, should use echinacea only under the advice of a healthcare professional. It can be taken frequently (every couple of hours) during acute infection, but this sort of dosing should not exceed a few days. Herbalists disagree about the effectiveness of the herb's long-term use; many say to use it for cycles of ten days to three weeks, with breaks in between, while others recommend it for continuous long-term use.

Although echinacea can often be used in place of antibiotics, it does not strongly affect the genitourinary system, so don't rely on it to treat infections for that part of the body.

Flavor

Echinacea has an aromatic, earthy flavor; of the five flavors, it would be characterized as pungent and bitter, and has a cooling, drying energy. It commonly produces a slightly tingly sensation on the tongue, which is a harmless reaction.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

This perennial herb, native to the prairies of North America, usually attains a height of about three feet. The stiff, hairy flower is a cone-shaped disc surrounded by spreading rays that are white to pale to deep purple. *E. angustifolia* has narrow, lance-shaped leaves. *E. pallida* can grow up to four feet tall, and its flower has strongly drooping rays. *E. purpurea* has oval leaves that are coarsely toothed, and the inner bristly disc of its flower is more orange than that of other species. Echinacea prefers full sun, has low water requirements, and will grow in a wide variety of soil conditions.

Overharvesting from the wild, especially of *E. angustifolia*, is leading to endangerment of the species. When you purchase this herb, please make sure it has been organically cultivated rather than wildcrafted.

ELDER

Botanical Name and Family: *Sambucus nigra*, *S. canadensis*;
Caprifoliaceae (Honeysuckle) Family

Parts Used: Flower, berry, leaf (topical use only)

Medicinal Use

Elder flower and berry relieve fluid congestion by cleansing the kidneys, clear infection and inflammation, help the body release toxins through

the skin by gently dilating pores, and break up mucous congestion. They have been used for centuries in juice, syrup, and tea form in the treatment of colds, flu, and coughs; they make a delightful decongestant and beneficial brew at the onset of a cold or fever.

Topically, elder flower can be used to make an anti-inflammatory wash, eyewash, and gargle. Elder flower is sometimes used as a bath herb and in skin washes, toners, and hair rinses to soothe and nourish the skin and hair. A headache can be relieved by a cool elderflower compress.

Elder leaf is used topically primarily as a compress, with emollient and vulnerary effects, for the treatment of blemishes, bruises, burns, chilblains, eczema, gout, hemorrhoids, hives, sprains, tumors, and wounds. In a footbath, elder leaf can soothe swollen feet. When warmed and applied to the temples, elder leaf can relieve a headache brought on by nerves.

Physiological Character

Flower: Alterative, anticatarrhal, anti-inflammatory, antirheumatic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antitumor, astringent, carminative, decongestant, depurative, diaphoretic, digestive, discutient, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, febrifuge, galactagogue, laxative, nervine, rejuvenative, restorative, stimulant (gentle), tonic, vasodilator, vulnerary

Berry: Alterative, anticatarrhal, anti-inflammatory, antirheumatic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiviral, decongestant, depurative, diaphoretic, digestive, discutient, diuretic, expectorant, laxative, rejuvenative, restorative, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Acne, asthma, boils, catarrh, chicken pox, chills, colds, cough, eczema, fever, flu, gout, hay fever, headache, measles, neuralgia, respiratory infection, rheumatism, sore throat, tonsillitis

Constituents

Natural Bug Deterrent



A tea prepared from elder leaves, then cooled and strained, can be applied to garden plants or house-plants to repel aphids.

Flower: Flavonoids (rutin, quercetin, kaempferol), viburnic acid, phenolic compounds (chlorogenic acid, caffeic acid, p-coumaric acid), triterpenes (including ursolic acid, 30-b-hydroxyursolic acid, oleanolic acid, a- and b- amyrin, free esterified solids, fixed oil), tannins, volatile oils, phytosterols (sitosterol, stigmasterol, campesterol)

Berry: Beta-carotene, vitamin C, iron, potassium

Contraindications

Avoid elder in cases of fluid depletion, as elder activates the release of fluids. Use only the flower and berry internally. Avoid using red-berried elder, as many such varieties are poisonous. Although elder bark and root are used medicinally, they can be strongly purgative and emetic and are best used only under the guidance of a competent healthcare practitioner. Elder leaf contains the alkaloid sambucine, which can produce hydrocyanic acid and is somewhat toxic.

Flavor

Elderflower tea, an English favorite, has a pleasant floral, sweet, mildly bitter, astringent flavor. Its flavor can be enhanced by the addition of a bit of peppermint or spearmint. The berry makes a tea that is fruity, slightly sweet, and tart. Both teas have a cooling, drying energy.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Elder is a small, deciduous, soft-wood perennial tree growing to a height of five to twenty-five feet, depending on the species (of which there are more than thirty). Elder grows in clumps, with ten to thirty canes (stems) in an area. The leaves are shiny green on their tops and a duller light green underneath; they are each about three and a half inches long and grow in opposite pairs, often with an extra leaf. Each leaf is divided into five to eleven slender leaflets. The small white or pink flowers form a flat-topped cluster. The purplish black berries contain ovate greenish brown seeds. Sometimes the black berries have a powdery blush on them, which makes them appear to be blue.

Elder can be grown from seed, but it would take a long time. The quickest method of propagation is to take cuttings from leafless shoots. Elder likes a sunny, moist location but will thrive in any good garden soil.

FENNEL

Botanical Name and Family: *Foeniculum vulgare*, *F. officinale*;
Umbelliferae (Carrot) Family

Part Used: Seed

Medicinal Use

Fennel seed improves the body's energy by enhancing the digestion and assimilation of food. It clears phlegm, stimulates interferon production, relaxes the bronchi, loosens bronchial secretions, decongests the liver, and clears stagnation. It aids the digestion of fatty foods and is often added to laxative blends to ease gripe. It also helps stabilize blood sugar levels, thus curbing appetite. It is considered an excellent herb for children.

Fennel seed tea can be used as a soothing anti-inflammatory eyewash. It also can be used as a compress, bath herb, or facial steam to moisten dry skin and as a mouthwash to freshen the breath.

Physiological Character

Anesthetic, antibacterial, antiemetic, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, anti-spasmodic, antitussive, aperient, aromatic, calmative, carminative, digestive, diuretic, expectorant, galactagogue, laxative (mild), mucolytic, phytoestrogenic, stimulant, stomachic

Traditional Targets of Application

Amenorrhea, asthma, bloatedness, breast enhancement, colic, cough, diabetes, dyspepsia, endometriosis, fatigue, fevers, flatulence, gout, halitosis, hangover, heartburn, hernia, hiccups, hypertension, indigestion, jaundice, kidney stones, laryngitis, low libido, malabsorption, menstrual cramps, nausea, obesity, premenstrual syndrome, rheumatism, stomachache, teething, weak vision (including floaters), vomiting

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamin C, calcium, iron, magnesium, potassium, phosphorus, silicon, zinc, volatile oil (anethole, fenchone, pinene, limonene), phenolic ether, flavonoids, coumarins, stigmasterol

Contraindications

Excessive use of fennel seed can overstimulate the nervous system. Avoid therapeutic dosages during pregnancy.

Flavor

Fennel seed makes for sweet breath and sweet tea. The tea prepared from it is pungent, sweet, warming, and moistening, with a flavor similar to that of anise seed and licorice.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Fennel, native to the Middle East and Mediterranean, is a perennial that can grow up to five to six feet in height. The plant has a bluish green hue and grows in colonies in waste areas, on roadsides, along fences, and in vacant lots. When crushed, it gives off a distinct licoricelike aroma. Its

pinnate, fernlike leaves are compounded three or four times; the basal leaves are clustered, while the stem leaves are alternate. The yellow flowers grow in flat-topped umbels.

Fennel prefers full sun and low to moderate amounts of water, and it thrives best in well-worked, well-drained soil.

FENUGREEK

Botanical Name and Family: *Trigonella foenum-graecum*; Fabaceae (Legume) Family

Part Used: Seed (but in Ayurvedic medicine, the entire plant)

Medicinal Use

Fenugreek contains six compounds that help stabilize blood sugar levels. It increases levels of the “good cholesterol” HDL (high-density lipoprotein) and reduces blood glucose levels. It warms the kidneys, lubricates the intestines, nourishes the glands, and stimulates the nerves to produce more digestive secretions.

Topically, fenugreek can be used as a compress to treat abscesses, boils, burns, cellulitis, and swollen glands. It makes a fine gargle for sore throat, douche for leukorrhea, eyewash for inflamed eyes, and compress for chapped hands, and it also can be used as a facial wash.

Physiological Character

Alterative, anthelmintic, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, aphrodisiac, aromatic, carminative, demulcent, digestive, diuretic, emmenagogue, emollient, expectorant, febrifuge, galactagogue, hypoglycemic, mucolytic, nutritive, phytoestrogenic, restorative, stimulant, vulnerary, yang tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Anorexia, bronchitis, catarrh, constipation, cough, debility, diabetes, diarrhea, dyspepsia, erectile dysfunction, fever, flatulence, gout, hernia, high cholesterol, kidney chi deficiency, menopause, menstrual cramps,

neuralgia, pain, premature ejaculation, sciatica, scrofula, sore throat, swollen glands, tuberculosis, vaginal dryness

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamin B complex (especially niacin and choline), vitamin C, vitamin E, calcium, iron, lysine, tryptophan, glutamic acid, aspartic acid, lecithin, steroidal saponins (diosgenin), alkaloids (trigonelline, carpaine, gentianine), glycosides (gitogenin, yamogenin), flavonoids (quercetin, luteolin), coumarin, mucilage, protein, fatty acids (linoleic, linolenic, oleic)

Contraindications

Avoid use during pregnancy, as fenugreek can be a uterine stimulant. Diabetics should seek advice from their healthcare provider before using it to lower blood sugar levels.

Flavor

Aromatic fenugreek tea is bitter, warming, and moistening, with a flavor somewhere between that of bitter celery, burnt sugar, and maple syrup. It combines well with a bit of cinnamon bark or a spoonful of honey. The roasted seeds can be brewed as a coffee substitute.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Fenugreek, an annual plant, native to western Asia and the Middle East, grows to about one to two feet in height and resembles a large clover. The leaves are trifoliate and toothed; the flowers, which grow in the leaf axils, have a yellow-violet corolla. The brownish seeds are contained in long, narrow, sickle-shaped pods. Each seed is oblong, with a deep furrow dividing it into two unequal lobes.

To grow, sow the seeds thickly in the spring in an area that receives full sun and has dry, fertile soil. Avoid cold, wet soil or the seeds will rot before germinating.

Herbal Manure



Both fenugreek and licorice make good green manures. Cultivating these plants and then turning under the crop will help fix nitrogen in the soil.

GINGER

Botanical Name and Family: *Zingiber officinale*; Zingiberaceae (Ginger)
Family

Part Used: Rhizome

Medicinal Use

Ginger has been found to be even more effective than Dramamine in curbing motion sickness, without causing drowsiness. As a digestive aid, it warms the digestive organs, stimulates digestive secretions, increases the amylase concentration in saliva, and facilitates the digestion of starches and fatty foods. It also strengthens the tissue of the heart muscle, activates the immune system, prevents blood platelet aggregation and leukotriene formation, and inhibits prostaglandin production, thus reducing inflammation and pain. Ginger is often included in other herbal formulas, especially those that contain laxative herbs to reduce gripe.

The dried root is hotter than the fresh root and is more effective in relieving nausea and warming the body. Fresh ginger is considered best for respiratory problems and dried ginger for digestive ailments.

Topically, ginger can be prepared as a compress and applied over arthritic joints, bunions, sore muscles, and toothaches to relieve pain;

over the kidneys to relieve the pain of and assist in the passage of stones; over the chest and back to relieve asthma symptoms; and over the temples to relieve headache. Ginger is wonderful in the bath in cases of chills, muscle soreness, sciatica, and poor circulation. It can be used in foot soaks to treat athlete's foot and to relieve head congestion associated with colds and flu. Try a ginger tea gargle to soothe a sore throat.

Physiological Character

Analgesic, antibacterial, antiemetic, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiparasitic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antitussive, antiviral, aperient, aphrodisiac, aromatic, cardioprotective, carminative, choleric, circulatory stimulant, diaphoretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, febrifuge, hepatoprotective, rubefacient, sialagogue, stimulant, stomachic, vermifuge, yang tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Amenorrhea, angina, ankylosing spondylitis, anxiety, arthritis, asthma, atherosclerosis, bloating, blood clot prevention, bronchitis, cancer, catarrh, chemotherapy, chills, claudication (intermittent), colds, colic, cough (with white phlegm), cramps, delayed menses, depression, dyspepsia, erectile dysfunction, fatigue, flatulence, flu, food poisoning, gastritis, headache, heart attack risk, high cholesterol, hypertension, hypothyroid, indigestion, irritable bowel, laryngitis, low libido, lumbago, menstrual cramps, migraines, morning sickness, nausea, obesity, pain, poor circulation, post-anesthesia nausea, Raynaud's disease, low sperm count and motility, stomachache, stroke risk, vertigo, weight loss, wheezing, worms

Constituents

Sulfur, protein, proteolytic enzyme (zingibain), bisabolene, oleoresins, starch, volatile oils (zingiberene, zingiberole, gingerol, shogaol, camphene, cineol, borneol, citral), acetic acid, mucilage

Contraindications

Although ginger powder can relieve morning sickness, pregnant women should not ingest more than 1 gram daily. Avoid in cases of peptic ulcers, hyperacidity, or other hot, inflammatory conditions. Avoid excessive amounts of ginger in cases of acne, eczema, and herpes. Ginger may cause adverse reactions when used in combination with anticoagulant drugs such as Coumadin or aspirin; if you are using such medications, seek the advice of your healthcare practitioner before commencing use of ginger.

Flavor

Ginger makes an aromatic, pungent, sweet, bitter tea with a pleasant zesty bite. It is both warming and drying. The flowers can also be made into a tea, which has a spicy but milder flavor.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Ginger, native to tropical eastern Asia, is a perennial with long green stalks, which can grow to four feet in height, and long, narrow, alternate leaves. The greenish, yellow, or white flowers are streaked with purple and are borne on short, dense spikes. The root, which is commonly sold fresh in grocery stores, is a creeping tuber with several fingerlike protrusions and a pale skin that turns brown upon drying.

The plant thrives in partial shade in fertile, moist, well-drained soils. In temperate climates, it will need to be brought indoors when the cold weather begins.

Do not confuse ginger with wild ginger (*Asarum canadensis*), which is totally unrelated.

HAWTHORN

Botanical Name and Family: *Crataegus oxycantha*, *C. laevigata*, *C. douglasii*, *C. columbiana*, *C. spp.*; Rosaceae (Rose) Family

Parts Used: Leaf, flower, berry

Medicinal Use

In Asian medicine hawthorn is used more as a digestive aid, whereas in Western medicine it is considered more of a heart tonic. In Europe, hawthorn is often prescribed in place of digitalis as a cardioprotective. It strengthens the heart muscles, dilates the blood vessels, improves circulation, lowers cholesterol, and improves the contractions of the heart muscles. It protects the heart muscle during times of oxygen deprivation, helps soften deposits, reduces blood vessel inflammation, and strengthens connective tissues. It also calms the spirit. The heart is put under a lot of stress during times of serious infection; drinking hawthorn tea during and after these periods helps protect the heart from pathogens.

Hawthorn also can be used to strengthen joint lining, collagen, and discs in the back. It can also help one retain a chiropractic adjustment.

Topically, hawthorn tea is used as a gargle to treat sore throats.

Physiological Character

Adaptogen, anthelmintic, antibacterial, antilithic, antioxidant, antispasmodic, astringent, cardioprotective, carminative, circulatory stimulant, digestive, diuretic, hypotensive, nervine, nutritive, rejuvenative, sedative, stimulant, vasodilator, yin tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Altitude sickness, amenorrhea, angina, anxiety, arrhythmia, arteriosclerosis, arthritis, blood clots, Buerger's disease, claudication (intermittent), congestive heart failure, coronary insufficiency, diabetes, diarrhea, dropsy, dysentery, dyspepsia, gout, heartache (emotional), heart attack prevention and recovery, heart palpitations, heart weakness, hemorrhoids, hernia, high cholesterol, hypertension, hypotension, indigestion, infertility, irregular pulse, ligament injury, loose teeth, macular degeneration, miscarriage (threat of), obesity, shortness of breath, slipped discs, tachycardia, tendonitis, thrombosis, urinary stones, tapeworm, varicose veins

Constituents

Vitamin C, choline, acetylcholine, vitamins B₁ and B₂, calcium, tartaric acid, flavonoids (proanthocyanidin, anthocyanidin, hyperoside, vitexin, epicatechin, rutin, quercetin) glycosides (oxycanthine), saponins, triterpenoids (amygdalin, ursolic, chlorogenic acid), tannin, pectin, amines, purines (adenosine, adenine, guanine), cratetegin (alkaloid; most prevalent in the flowers, then the leaves, then the berries)

Contraindications

Using hawthorn may potentiate the effects of heart medications such as beta blockers, digoxin, or Lanoxin. If you are using heart medication, consult a competent healthcare professional before commencing use of hawthorn. Use hawthorn with caution in cases of poor digestion and acid stomach. Hawthorn's effects are slow to manifest; the herb may need to be taken for four to eight weeks before results are observed. It is generally considered extremely safe.

Flavor

Hawthorn leaves and flowers have a sweet, pleasant, astringent flavor, similar to that of green tea. In Germany, the leaves are often used in place of green and black tea.

The berries taste somewhat sour, sweet, and sometimes bitter, yet fruity. When making a tea of the berries, first soak them for about twelve hours, as they will then more easily release their properties.

Hawthorn tea is considered warming and drying; the flowers are cooler than the berries and leaves.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Hawthorn, native to northern Asia, Europe, and temperate America, is a deciduous shrub having more than a hundred species that hybridize easily. The shrub's stems have multiple branches and stiff thorns. The leaves can be simple, toothed, lobed, or cut, and alternate, obovate, or

obovate-elliptical. The five-petaled white or pink flowers grow in corymb inflorescences. The reddish fruits resemble rose hips, grow in clusters, and contain one to five hard seeds. Hawthorn grows by streams and in meadows, forests, and open spaces. It prefers full sun to partial shade and moist, well-drained soil, although it will tolerate drought.

HIBISCUS

Botanical Name and Family: *Hibiscus sabdariffa*, *H. rosa-sinensis*;

Malvaceae (Mallow) Family

Parts Used: Flower or calix

Medicinal Use

Hibiscus cools the body and nourishes and soothes the tissues. It has mild infection-fighting properties and helps the body eliminate excess fluids. Topically, a wash made from hibiscus flowers can be used to treat wounds and eye infections.

Physiological Character

Alterative, antibacterial (mild), anti-inflammatory, antiparasitic, antiscorbutic, antispasmodic, astringent, diuretic, emmenagogue, febrifuge, hemostatic, refrigerant

Traditional Targets of Application

Cough, cystitis, diarrhea, dysentery, dysmenorrhea, fever, hypertension, leukorrhea, menorrhagia

Constituents

Vitamin C, hibiscic acid, citric acid, malic acid, tartaric acid

Contraindications

Persons who tend to get chills should avoid hibiscus, as it is cooling.

Flavor

Hibiscus flower makes a beautiful red, rose, or pink tea. The flavor is tart, lemonlike, and refreshing. Of the five flavors, it would be considered sour, sweet, and bitter, with a cooling energy. Hibiscus tea is popular both hot and iced, and it is often combined with rose hips to make a bright-colored antioxidant tea.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

There are more than two hundred species of deciduous trees and shrubs in the hibiscus genus. The taller species can grow to about nine feet in height. The entire plant is covered with fine grayish hairs. The alternate, ovate leaves are palmately veined or lobed. The flowers can be white, pink, red, or purple.

Hibiscus is native to Africa but can be cultivated in North America. It will tolerate frost as long as there is adequate moisture, and it prefers full sun and well-drained soil.

HYSSOP

Botanical Name and Family: *Hyssopus officinalis*; Lamiaceae (Mint)
Family

Part Used: Aboveground plant

Medicinal Use

Hyssop warms and stimulates the lungs, expels phlegm, increases respiratory capacity, balances circulation, and cleanses the kidneys. It is being researched for its beneficial effects in cases of HIV.

Topically, hyssop tea can be used as a gargle to soothe sore throat; as a compress to treat black eyes, bruises, sprains, wounds, and insect bites; and as deodorant wash. Hyssop as a bath herb or compress can be used to relieve rheumatism and muscle soreness.

Physiological Character

Anthelmintic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiviral, aperient, aromatic, astringent, carminative, chologogue, circulatory stimulant, diaphoretic, diuretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, febrifuge, lithotriptic, mucolytic, pectoral, sedative, stimulant, stomachic, sudorific, tonic (chi, lung, and spleen), vermifuge, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

Amenorrhea, anxiety, asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, chicken pox, colds, congestion, cough, debility, depression, dropsy, dyspepsia, fever, flatulence, flu, grief, hay fever, headache, herpes, hoarseness, hysteria, indigestion, jaundice, parasites, phlegm, rheumatism, scarlet fever, scrofula, shortness of breath, smallpox, sore throat, tuberculosis, whooping cough

Constituents

Potassium, silicon, malic acid, flavonoids (hesperidin, hyssopin), volatile oils (borneol, limonene, geraniol, thujone, pinene, camphene, terpinine), tannin, glycoside (diosmin), bitter lactones (marrubiin, ursolic acid)

Contraindications

Pregnant women and those with epilepsy or high blood pressure should avoid hyssop.

Flavor

As a tea, hyssop is light, aromatic, bitter, pungent, warming, and drying. Many enjoy it warm to brighten a cold winter's day.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Hyssop is a highly aromatic, mostly evergreen perennial native to Eurasia. It is woody at the base, has square stems and rodlike branches, and can grow to two feet in height. The leaves are opposite, lance-shaped to linear, and thick, with one rib underneath. The flowers are usually purplish blue

but sometimes are white or pink, and they grow in whorls of six to fifteen flowers.

The plant prefers full sun to partial shade, has low water requirements, and does well in sandy, well-drained soil. The flowers are much relished by bees and butterflies.

LEMON BALM

Botanical Name and Family: *Melissa officinalis*; Lamiaceae (Mint)

Family

Part Used: Aboveground plant

Medicinal Use

Lemon balm clears heat, calms the heart, improves concentration, cleans the liver, improves chi circulation, and lifts the spirit. German studies indicate that lemon balm's essential oils help protect the cerebrum from excess external stimuli. It is a good herb for children: A cup of tea before bed can help prevent nightmares and allow for a good night's sleep. Plus, it is excellent for calming the nerves and boosting the mood of schoolchildren who are anxious about upcoming tests.

Topically, lemon balm can be used as a compress for swellings such as boils, burns, eczema, gout, headache, insect bites, sunburn, tumors, and wounds. It makes an uplifting bath herb.

Physiological Character

Antibacterial, antidepressant, antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antispasmodic, antiviral, aromatic, carminative, cephalic, chologogue, diaphoretic, digestive, emmenagogue, febrifuge, hypotensive (mild), nervine, parturient, rejuvenative, sedative, stomachic, tonic, vasodilator

Traditional Targets of Application

Allergies, amenorrhea, anxiety, asthma, attention deficit disorder, bronchitis, chicken pox, chronic fatigue, colds, colic, depression, fever, flatulence, flu, Graves' disease, headache, heart palpitations, herpes, homesickness, hyperactivity, hypertension, hysteria, indigestion, insomnia, menstrual cramps, migraine, mumps, muscle spasms, nausea, nervousness, Newcastle disease, nightmares, pain, restlessness, senility, shingles, smallpox, stomachache, teething

Constituents

Vitamin C, calcium, magnesium, volatile oils (citral, linalol, eugenol, citronellal, geraniol), tannins (catechin), bitter principle, resin, polyphenols, flavonoids, succinic acid, rosmarinic acid

Contraindications

Lemon balm is generally considered a safe herb. It can lower thyroid function, which is beneficial in some cases but not for those with hypothyroid conditions.

Flavor

The dried leaves are not as flavorful as the fresh, so use the fresh plant whenever possible. The tea made from the fresh leaves is flavorful, refreshing, cooling, and drying, with a lemon scent. Of the five flavors, it would be considered sour, but it is very pleasant. The herb can be steeped for ten minutes or longer, as it does not become bitter with longer steeping. The tea is lovely hot or iced and is suitable for daily use. It goes well with the addition of mint or a squeeze of lime.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Lemon balm, a perennial native to Europe but widely cultivated in North America, prefers to grow in disturbed areas and open woods. The plant grows to about two feet in height and has a four-sided stem. Its lemon-scented leaves are opposite, oval, pointed, and round toothed. The light yellow, white, or lavender flowers are borne on auxiliary stems.

The herb thrives in full sun to partial shade, needs only moderate watering, and prefers well-drained soil. Bees love it; growing lemon balm in the garden and/or rubbing the leaves inside bee hives will help keep the bees close to home.

LEMON VERBENA

Botanical Name and Family: *Aloysia triphylla* (formerly *Lippia citriodora*); Verbenaceae (Teak) Family

Part Used: Aboveground plant

Medicinal Use

Lemon verbena clears heat, relaxes the nerves, and fights infection. Topically, it makes a refreshing lemon-scented bath herb, and it can be used as a compress to treat puffy eyes and as a gargle for sore throats and tonsillitis.

Physiological Character

Antibacterial, antispasmodic, aromatic, febrifuge, sedative, stomachic

Traditional Targets of Application

Asthma, colds, diarrhea, dyspepsia, fever, flatulence, flu, heart palpitations, indigestion, menstrual cramps, migraines, nausea, neuralgia, restlessness, sinus congestion, stomachache, vertigo

Constituents

Flavonoids, volatile oils (borneol, cineole, citral, geraniol, limonene, linalool), mucilage, tannin

Contraindications

Large or prolonged dosages can irritate the digestive tract.

Flavor

Lemon verbena has a lemony aroma and flavor, stronger and sweeter than that of lemon balm, with a hint of vanilla in the taste. Of the five flavors, it would be categorized as sour, with a cooling, drying energy. Lemon verbena tea sweetened and served iced is popular in Spain. It is also lovely with the addition of mint.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

A perennial native to Argentina, Peru, and Chile, lemon verbena has pale green, fragrant, lanceolate leaves that are three to four inches long and arranged in threes. The leaves have parallel veins at right angles to the midrib. The flowers are pale purple and grow in terminal panicles. The plant prefers full sun, moderate to high watering, and light, well-drained, alkaline soil.

LEMONGRASS

Botanical Name and Family: *Cymbopogon citratus* (formerly *Andropogon nardus*); Poaceae (Grass) Family

Part Used: Leaf

Medicinal Use

Lemongrass essential oil has exhibited activity against *E. coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. The herb contains five components that help prevent blood platelet aggregation. Topically, lemongrass can be used as a compress to relieve arthritis pain and as a bath herb to soothe sore muscles.

Physiological Character

Antibacterial, antifungal, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiviral, aromatic, astringent, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, febrifuge, refrigerant, rubefacient, sedative, stimulant, sudorific

Traditional Targets of Application

Cancer prevention, cholera, colds, colic, diarrhea, fevers, flatulence, flu, headache, herpes, insomnia, parasites (especially nematodes), stomachache

Constituents

Vitamin C, silica, volatile oils (borneol, citral, citronellal, geraniol), monoterpene (myrcene), alkaloids, saponins

Contraindications

Avoid large doses during pregnancy.

Flavor

Lemongrass tea has a delightful lemonadelike flavor loved by most everyone. Of the five flavors, it would be considered sour, pungent, and bitter, and it has a cooling energy. It can be enjoyed either hot or cold.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Native to the tropics of Southeast Asia, lemongrass, a tender perennial, can grow up to six feet in height. It has long, narrow, pointed leaves that are rough and sawlike to the touch. The leaves grow in groups and sheath the stem at the plant's base, which is bulbous and fibrous. When the leaves are crushed they give off a distinct aroma of lemon. The flowers grow in a bunched panicle.

Lemongrass thrives in a hot, sunny environment with sandy soil, but it will tolerate full sun to full shade. It requires moderate to high amounts of water and rich loam or sandy soil.

LICORICE

Botanical Name and Family: *Glycyrrhiza glabra* (European), *G. uralensis* (Chinese), *G. glandulifera* (Russian), *G. inflata* and *G. lepidota* (American); Fabaceae (Pea) Family

Part Used: Root or stolon

Medicinal Use

Licorice clears heat and encourages the movement of leukocytes toward areas of inflammation. It stimulates interferon production, soothes irritated mucous membranes, and restores pituitary activity. It helps normalize hyper- or hypo-functions of glands and organs and also promotes positive emotions. Its constituent glycyrrhizin (which is very similar to the human hormone cortisol) inhibits prostaglandin E2 production and is fifty times sweeter than sugar.

Licorice is a sweetener that can be safely consumed by most diabetics. However, most licorice candies contain essential oil of anise or synthetic flavorings and not licorice—so don't depend on "licorice" bonbons for therapeutic value.

Topically, licorice can be used as a wash to treat inflamed eyelids and dry eyes, eczema, itchy skin, psoriasis, rashes, shingles, and wounds. It can be used in mouthwashes for tooth decay prevention, gingivitis, and mouth sores. In hair rinses, licorice can help prevent hair loss and dandruff. It also can be used as a lubricating enema or douche.

Physiological Character

Adrenal tonic, alterative, antiarthritic, antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antimutagenic, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antitumor, antitussive, antivenom, antiviral, aperient, aphrodisiac, chi tonic, demulcent, emollient, expectorant, febrifuge, galactagogue, hepatoprotective, immune tonic, laxative (mild), lung tonic, nutritive, pectoral, phytoestrogenic, rejuvenative, antirheumatic, sedative, sialagogue, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Acid indigestion, Addison's disease, adrenal weakness, age spots, AIDS, alcoholism, allergies, arthritis, asthma, bladder infection, bronchitis, bursitis, cancer, candida, carbuncles, catarrh, chronic fatigue, cirrhosis,

colds, constipation, debility, depression, diarrhea, dropsy, dry cough, dyspnea, dysuria, eczema, emotional instability, emphysema, Epstein-Barr virus, fatigue, fever, gallbladder inflammation, gastritis, gout, Graves' disease, hair loss, hay fever, heartburn, hemorrhoids, hepatitis, herpes, HIV, hives, hoarseness, hypoglycemia, hysteria, immune system weakness, infertility (male and female), irregular ovulation, irritability, irritable bowel, laryngitis, Lyme disease, menstrual cramps, Parkinson's disease, pharyngitis, poisoning (from food or chemicals), prostatitis, psoriasis, shortness of breath, sore throat, stomachache, stress, tendonitis, thirst, tuberculosis, tumors, ulcers, underweight, wheezing

Constituents

Vitamin B complex, choline, phosphorus, potassium, glycosides (glycyrrhizin, also known as glycyrrhizic acid), saponins, phytoestrogens, coumarins, flavonoids (isoflavones, liquiritin, isoliquiritin), amines (asparagine, betaine), volatile oil, protein, fat

Contraindications

Avoid licorice in cases of edema, nausea, vomiting, and rapid heartbeat. Licorice is not recommended during pregnancy or in combination with steroid or digoxin medications. Large doses may cause sodium retention and potassium depletion and may be emetic. Prolonged or excessive use may elevate blood pressure and cause headache and vertigo. Continuous use is not recommended in excess of six weeks. Chinese licorice (*G. uralensis*) is said to be less likely to cause side effects than the European variety (*G. glabra*).

All these precautions notwithstanding, licorice is often added in very small amounts to other herbal formulas to harmonize them and prevent undesirable side effects.

Flavor

Licorice root contains glycyrrhizin, which is many times sweeter than sugar. The tea has a sweet, woody flavor and is an excellent thirst

quencher. Of the five flavors, it would be categorized as sweet and slightly bitter, with a neutral, moistening energy. Licorice is often added to other herbs and medicines to improve their flavor.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

There are about twenty species of licorice native to Eurasia, Australia, and North and South America. These perennial herbs or small shrubs have alternate, oddly pinnate leaves. Many of the species have sticky hairs. The small, whitish, yellow, or purplish pealike flowers grow in spikes or racemes from the leaf axils. Licorice is often found in the wild in grassy areas with salty, alkaline soil. It prefers full sun to partial shade, moderate amounts of water, and well-drained or sandy soil.

LINDEN

Botanical Name and Family: *Tilia platyphylla*, *T. cordata*, *T. europea*, *T. americana*; Tiliaceae (Tilia) Family

Part Used: Flower

Medicinal Use

Linden moves stagnant chi, calms the nerves, and promotes rest. It helps heal blood vessel walls, and its high mucilage content helps soothe irritated respiratory passages.

Topically, linden helps regenerate the skin. Linden can be used as a compress to treat boils, burns, and rashes and as a gargle for mouth sores. It is included in facial washes to clear acne, freckles, and wrinkles. As a bath herb, it promotes relaxation and is often used to calm restless children.

Physiological Character

Antidepressant, antispasmodic, cephalic, choleric, diaphoretic, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, hypotensive, nervine, sedative, stomachic, sudorific, tonic, vasodilator, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

Anxiety, arteriosclerosis, asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, colds, cough, diarrhea, fever, flu, headache, high cholesterol, hypertension, hysteria, indigestion, insomnia, migraine, pain, sore throat, stress

Constituents

Vitamin C, iodine, manganese, volatile oil (farnesol), flavonoids (hesperidin, quercetin, kaempferol, astralagin), mucilage, phenolic acids (chlorogenic, caffeic), tannins

Contraindications

Tilia americana should be consumed only in moderation, as large doses may cause nausea and excess use may damage the heart.

Flavor

Linden tea has a fragrant, jasminelike aroma and a pleasant pungent, sweet flavor, with a warming, drying energy. It is one of the most popular herbal teas in Europe, where it is enjoyed to calm the nerves and aid digestion. It is a safe and suitable tea for children as well as adults.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Linden trees, of which about thirty species exist, can grow to 130 feet in height. The leaves are alternate, heart shaped, uneven, and darker green on top and paler green underneath. The yellowish white, five-petaled flowers hang in clusters from flattened stalks (peduncles).

MARSHMALLOW

Botanical Name and Family: *Althaea officinalis*, *Malva rotundifolia*, *M. sylvestris*; Malvaceae (Mallow) Family

Part Used: Root

Medicinal Use

Marshmallow has a high mucilage content, which calms inflammation, nourishes bone marrow, soothes and moistens the skin, and promotes tissue healing. It is especially effective in soothing irritation in the respiratory, urinary, and gastrointestinal tracts. As a tonifying herb it can aid children's growth and development. Marshmallow can help calm an overactive immune system and, because it helps stimulate production of white blood cells, it can function as an immune tonic. It decreases the nerve sensitivity that causes coughs.

Topically, the root can be used in compresses to treat burns, hemorrhoids, irritated eyes, mastitis, sunburn, varicose veins, wounds, and even gangrene. Marshmallow is a hydrating herb that can be used in the bath to moisturize dry skin and in hair rinses to moisturize and add luster to dry hair. It can be used as a gargle for sore throats, as a douche for vaginal irritation, and as an enema for rectal irritation.

Physiological Character

Alterative, antacid, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, demulcent, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, galactagogue, hemostatic, immune tonic, laxative, lung tonic, nutritive, rejuvenative, vulnerary, yin tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Acid indigestion, AIDS, asthma, blood in the urine, bladder stones, Bright's disease (dropsy), bronchitis, burns, catarrh, colitis, constipation, coughs, cystitis, diabetes, diarrhea, dysentery, dysuria, eczema, emaciation, gastritis, hemorrhoids, herpes, HIV, hot flashes, insomnia, kidney stones, laryngitis, mastitis, neuralgia, pharyngitis, pleurisy, pneumonia, prostatitis, psoriasis, rheumatism, rickets, sexual debility, sore throat, tuberculosis, ulcers, urinary tract infection, vaginal dryness, whooping cough

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamin B₁, vitamin B₂, niacin, vitamin B₅, vitamin C, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, unsaturated fatty acids, mucilage, polysaccharides, flavonoids (quercetin, kaempferol), betaine, asparagine, tannins, coumarin, phenolic acids, lecithin, pectin, malic acid

Contraindications

The mucilage in marshmallow may cause a delay in the effects of pharmaceuticals taken at the same time.

Flavor

Marshmallow makes pleasant, soothing, mucilaginous tea, with a sweet, bitter flavor and a cooling, moistening energy.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Native to Europe but naturalized in the eastern United States, this perennial herb can be found growing in cool, damp lowlands and lawns. It can grow to four to five feet in height and has downy, lobed leaves and large pink-to-purple flowers. The fruits mature into buttonlike achenes. Marshmallow thrives in rich loam in partial sun to full shade and requires only moderate amounts of water.

MINT

Botanical Name and Family: *Mentha piperita* (peppermint), *M. spicata* and *M. viridis* (spearmint), *M. spp.*; Lamiaceae (Mint) Family

Part Used: Aboveground plant

Medicinal Use

Mint relaxes the peripheral blood vessels, calms smooth-muscle spasms, dries dampness, expels phlegm, and clears the head. It is regarded as an excellent remedy for stomach cramps due to its ability to reduce hypercontractibility of the intestinal muscles. It is often added to formulas

that use laxative herbs, such as cascara sagrada, to prevent intestinal gripe.

Peppermint is considered the strongest mint, medicinally, though the other mints have medicinal benefits as well. Peppermint has activity against a wide range of pathogens, including streptococcus, staphylococcus, and candida. Spearmint is a better choice for culinary arts and is slightly less cooling than peppermint.

Topically, mint is analgesic and anesthetic. Warm compresses of mint can be used to treat back pain, hives, joint inflammation, lung infection, neuralgia, rheumatism, and sinusitis; cold compresses are beneficial in cases of fever or headache. Mint can be used as a bath herb to promote feelings of coolness and refreshment and also to treat bug bites, itchy skin, chicken pox, and measles. The herb can also be prepared as a steam inhalation for asthma, bronchitis, sinus congestion, shock, and nausea. In a mouthwash, mint can freshen the breath and prevent gingivitis.

Physiological Character

Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiparasitic, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiviral, aromatic, carminative, choleric, chologogue, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, stimulant, stomachic, vasodilator

Traditional Targets of Application

Colds, colic, cough, diverticulitis, dizziness, dyspepsia, earache, emphysema, fainting, fatigue, fever, flatulence, flu, gallstones, halitosis, headache, heart palpitations, herpes, hiccups, hives, indigestion, irritable bowel, laryngitis, lung inflammation, measles, menstrual cramps, morning sickness, nausea, rash, sinusitis, sore throat, stomachache, vomiting

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamin B complex, vitamin C, potassium, flavonoids (luteolin, rutin), volatile oils (menthol, menthene, methyl acetate,

limonene, pulegone, carvone; menthol is more predominant in peppermint, and carvone in spearmint), ketone (menthone), tannins, resin

Contraindications

Mint is contraindicated in cold conditions such as chills or yin deficiency and during acute gallstone attack. Pregnant women should ingest no more than one or two cups daily of peppermint tea. Nursing mothers should avoid large amounts of mint, which can dry breast milk, although small amounts help treat colic.

Flavor

Mint is a familiar, flavorful, fresh taste. Of the five flavors, it would be categorized as pungent and sweet, with an energy that is drying and at first cooling and then warming.

Spearmint has a milder flavor than peppermint. Other beloved mints that make wonderful teas include apple mint (*Mentha suaveolens*), cardinal mint (*Mentha cardinalis*), chocolate mint (*Mentha x piperita*), Corsican mint (*Mentha requienii*), ginger mint (*Mentha x gentilis variegata*), horsemint (*Mentha alopecuriodes*), orange mint (*Mentha piperita citrata*), pineapple mint (*Mentha suaveolens* var. *variegata*), and water mint (*Mentha aquatica*).

Mint makes a refreshing, cooling iced tea and works well as a sun tea or cold-water infusion. It is often used to improve the flavor of other teas. Use mint tea to dilute fruit juices or lemonade or to make ice cubes. Enjoy iced mint tea as a mild stimulant when studying or on long drives to invigorate your energy. However you use it, mint is way cool!

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

There are about twenty true mints, but because they hybridize readily there are now hundreds of species (with as many as 2,300 botanical name variations, about half of which are synonyms).

Peppermint is the result of crossing *M. spicata* and *M. aquatica* and was first described in 1696 by the English botanist John Ray. It grows to up to three feet in height and has an erect, four-sided, often purplish stem, with opposite, lanceolate, elliptical, dark green leaves. The pink flowers form in dense terminal spikes. This species has a distinct peppermint aroma.

Spearmint has a narrower spike of flowers, and its leaves are more wrinkled. The leaves are opposite and either have no stalks or very short ones. The flowers are pink to purple in slender elongated spikes, and the stem is green. Its fragrance is sweeter and less spicy than that of peppermint.

Field mint (*M. arvensis*, *M. canadensis*, and *M. aquatica*) is a perennial growing to about two feet in height. Its leaves are opposite and oval to round in shape. The flowers are pale lavender and grow in terminal clusters. Its fragrance is a cross between that of pennyroyal and peppermint.

Mints can thrive in partial shade to full sun. They like moderate to high amounts of water and are not particular about what kind of soil they will grow in.

Mints are perennials and tend to grow in colonies. Plant mint in your garden where you don't mind it spreading, as it has a tendency to take over. And if mint is threatening the rest of your garden, put handfuls of it to good use!

MULLEIN

Botanical Name and Family: *Verbascum thapsus*, *V. densiflorum*, *V. phlomoides*; Scrophulariaceae (Figwort) Family

Parts Used: Leaf, flower (without the calyx), root (rarely)

Medicinal Use

Mullein nourishes yin, stimulates and cleanses the lungs and lymph nodes, liquefies phlegm, relaxes the bronchioles, resolves swelling, relaxes spasms, and deters infection. It is often recommended for intense coughs.

The flower is more demulcent than the leaf, and the leaf more astringent than the flower.

Topically, the mucilaginous mullein leaf is used as a healing compress in cases of acne, boils, bruises, earache, eczema, glandular inflammation, hemorrhoids, mastitis, mumps, rheumatic joints, and tumors.

Physiological Character

Leaf: Alterative, anodyne, antibacterial, antiseptic, antispasmodic, astringent, demulcent, diuretic, emollient, expectorant, pectoral, yin tonic

Flower: Analgesic, anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, demulcent, emollient, nervine, sedative

Root: Diuretic

Constituents

Leaf: Carotene, choline, calcium, coumarin, magnesium, sulfur, resin, saponins, glycoside (aucubin), flavonoids (hesperidin, verbascoside), mucilage, rotenone, tannins (The root and flower have not yet been studied for their constituents.)

Traditional Targets of Application

Leaf: Asthma, bronchitis, catarrh, colds, congestion, coughs, cystitis, diarrhea, dysentery, dyspnea, eczema, emphysema, flu, hay fever, kidney infection, laryngitis, lung weakness, mumps, pharyngitis, pleurisy, rheumatism, scrofula, shortness of breath, swollen glands, tonsillitis, tuberculosis, tumors, whooping cough

Flower: Ear infection and pain, flu, laryngitis, pharyngitis

Root: Incontinence

Contraindications

Mullein is generally regarded as safe, though the leaf contains coumarin and rotenone, which in the past have drawn expressions of concern from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

Flavor

Mullein has a mild, pleasant, sweet, though slightly bitter flavor and a cooling, moistening energy. Be sure to strain mullein tea through a very fine strainer to remove the irritating hairs found on the leaves.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

There are some three hundred species of mullein native to Eurasia and North Africa; several are now naturalized in North America. This biennial plant can reach seven feet in height. In its first year, it forms a basal rosette of large, pointed leaves with woolly hairs. The second year, a long, un-branched stalk usually forms and produces a spike of yellow flowers and alternate, elliptical stem leaves. The hairiness of mullein enables it to survive in hot, dry conditions, and it is often found in waste areas and ditches.

In the garden, mullein thrives in full sun and well-drained soil, with low to moderate amounts of water.

NETTLE

Botanical Name and Family: *Urtica dioica*, *U. urens*; Urticaceae (Nettle)
Family

Parts Used: Leaf, root, seed

Medicinal Use

Nettle is an herb that improves just about everything! My friend David Hoffmann, author of *The Holistic Herbal*, says, “When in doubt, use nettles.”

Nettle improves the body’s resistance to pollens, molds, and environmental pollutants. It stabilizes mast cell walls, which stops the cycle of mucous membrane hyperactivity. Nettle nourishes and tones the veins, improves veinal elasticity, reduces inflammation, and helps prevent blood clots. It also helps curb the appetite, cleanses toxins from the body, and energizes—making it a motivating ally for those who seek to stay on

a healthy diet. Drinking nettle tea before and after surgery helps build the blood, promotes healthy blood clotting, speeds recovery, and helps the patient reclaim his or her energy.

Nettle leaf and root tone and firm tissues, muscles, arteries, and skin. Taken internally, they decrease uric acid buildup and increase circulation to the skin's surface. Nettle seed is detoxifying and improves the ability of the liver and kidneys to cleanse the blood; it, therefore, is not only an antidote to poisonous plants but also useful in cases of spider, bee, dog, and snake bites.

Topically, nettle can be used as a hair rinse to treat dandruff and hair loss, a cleanser for oily skin, a sitz bath for hemorrhoids, a wash for sunburn, a douche for vaginitis, and an enema for detoxification. Compresses prepared with nettle tea can be used to treat arthritic joints, burns, chilblains, eczema, gout, heat rash, insect bites, mastitis, neuralgia, rash, sciatica, tendonitis, varicose veins, and wounds.

Physiological Character

Adrenal tonic, alterative, anthelmintic (seed), antiallergenic, anticatarrhal, antihistamine, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antirheumatic, antiscorbutic, antiseptic (leaf and seed), astringent, blood tonic, carminative, chologogue, circulatory stimulant, decongestant, depurative, diuretic, endocrine tonic (seed), expectorant, febrifuge, galactagogue, hemostatic, hypoglycemic, kidney tonic, lithotriptic, mucolytic, nervine, nutritive, parturient, pectoral, rejuvenative (seed), styptic, thyroid tonic (seed), tonic (leaf, root, seed), uterine tonic, vermifuge (seed)

Traditional Targets of Application

Acne, amenorrhea (due to blood or kidney deficiency), anemia, arthritis, asthma, atherosclerosis, boils, bronchitis, candida, catarrh, cellulite, convalescence, cystitis, diabetes, dysentery, eczema, edema, erectile dysfunction (seed), food allergies, goiter (seed), hair loss (leaf and seed), hay fever, headache, hemorrhage, hemorrhoids, hives, hypoglycemia,

hypothyroidism (seed), infertility (men and women), jaundice, kidney stones, leukemia, lumbago, menorrhagia, mononucleosis, nephritis, night sweats, obesity, pleurisy, postpartum hemorrhage, premature gray hair, prostatitis (root), psoriasis, rheumatism, rickets, sciatica, sinusitis, tuberculosis, varicose veins, vitiligo

Constituents

Protein, beta-carotene and xanthophylls, vitamins B, C, E, and K, flavonoids (quercetin, rutin, kaempferol, rhamnetin), calcium, chromium, iron, silica, formic acid (which causes stinging), betaine, mucilage, tannin, chromium, chlorophyll, albuminoids, agglutinin, amines (histamine, acetylcholine, serotonin, 5-hydroxy-aliphatic acid), hydroxycoumarins, saponins (lignin, sitosterol), glycosides

Contraindications

Nettle is not known as stinging nettle for nothing; avoid touching or eating the fresh plant unless it is very young and/or you are very brave. Eating raw nettles can cause digestive disturbances, mouth and lip irritation, and urinary problems; however, these side effects are rare when the plant is pureed before ingestion and practically nonexistent when the plant is dried.

When used appropriately nettle is considered safe, even over an extended period of time, although those with overly cold, yin-deficient conditions should not use nettle for prolonged periods. When it comes to using nettles for food, select the younger leaves, as the older ones can be irritating to the kidneys and cause digestive disturbances. Teas can be made with the young tops and seeds, as well as with the roots.

Flavor

Nettle tea has a rich, pleasant, mineral-like flavor. Of the five flavors, it would be considered salty and slightly bitter, with a cooling, drying energy.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Nettles grow just about everywhere, from waste areas and roadsides to gardens, grasslands, and moist woods. This perennial herb has erect, somewhat branching stems and can grow to a height of three to ten feet. The coarsely serrated, veined, opposite leaves are heart shaped at their base, pointed at their tips, darker on their tops than underneath, and covered with thousands of stiff, stinging hairs. The tiny green flowers are minute and inconspicuous.

In the garden, nettle spreads widely and quickly. Where once I had a single plant given to me by a kind German lady, I now have at least a thousand. Nettle can adapt to light conditions ranging from full sun to full shade, loves soil that is high in organic matter, and enjoys moderate to high watering.

All fifty species of the genus *Urtica* can be used medicinally, but stick with the North American (*U. urens*) and European (*U. dioica*) species unless you have consulted local herb authorities on the safety of local varieties.

Touching the fresh plant can cause a burning rash. Wearing gloves when collecting can help prevent this, but the hairs in large plants may still pierce through. A nettle sting can be soothed with a poultice of yellow dock or plantain or even the juice of the nettle plant itself (but good luck obtaining this without getting many more stings). However, you can learn to love the sting. I admit to collecting nettles barehanded with a pair of scissors and a paper bag. The arthritis I was developing twenty years ago has now become a thing of the past—and I attribute its disappearance to nettle stings.

A Friend in the Garden



Nettle has many uses in the garden. When used to water plants in the garden, nettle tea stimulates their growth and makes them more resistant to bugs. Plants growing close to nettles tend to have more potent levels of volatile oils. And when added to the compost pile, nettle hastens the breakdown of organic materials.

OATS

Botanical Name and Family: *Avena sativa* (cultivated), *A. fatua* (wild);
Poaceae (Grass) Family

Parts Used: Seed (unripe), stem (also known as oatstraw)

Medicinal Use

With their high silicon content, oats help nourish the skin, nails, teeth, bones, and hair. They also build the blood, relax the nerves, and strengthen the nervous system, making tactile sensations more pleasurable. They even support the elasticity of blood vessels.

Oats are used topically as a bath herb to soften skin and relieve the itchiness of eczema, hives, rheumatism, and neuralgia. As a compress, oats can help heal stitches and relieve the pain of kidney stones.

Physiological Character

Alterative, antidepressant, antispasmodic, aphrodisiac, blood tonic, brain tonic, chi tonic, demulcent, diaphoretic, endocrine tonic, febrifuge,

laxative, mood elevator, nervine, nervous system tonic, nutritive, rejuvenative, restorative, sexual tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Addiction, anxiety, attention deficit disorder, bone cancer, broken bones, chronic colds, constipation, convalescence, convulsions, Crohn's disease, debility, depression, diabetes, dyspepsia, emotional distress, erectile dysfunction, exhaustion, gout, headache (stress related), hemorrhoids, incontinence, infertility (male and female), insomnia, low libido, lupus, menopause, multiple sclerosis, nervous breakdown, nervousness, osteoporosis, paralysis, postpartum recovery, post-traumatic stress, rheumatism, rickets, schizophrenia, sciatica, shingles, stress, ulcers, varicose veins, withdrawal (from tobacco, drugs, or alcohol)

Constituents

Beta-carotene, B vitamins, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, selenium, silicon, zinc, histamine, lysine, methionine, lipids, saponins, flavonoids, vanilloside, starch, gluten, alkaloids (trigonelline, avenine), phytosterols

Contraindications

Those with gluten allergies should use oat seed or oat straw teas cautiously.

Flavor

Oat tea has a pleasant, mild, slightly sweet flavor and a warming, moistening energy. A tea made from oat seed or oatstraw mixed with nettles is a mineral-rich brew.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Oat, believed to be native to the Mediterranean but naturalized in North America, is an annual grass that grows freely in the wild along roadsides

and in other disturbed areas. It also is cultivated as a field crop. Its hollow stems grow to about four feet in height. The leaves are long, broad, and slightly hairy. Two or three florets form small, elliptical, drooping spikelets in loose, open panicles on horizontal branches.

In the garden, oats enjoy full sun, soil that is rich in organic matter, and moderate amounts of water. Planted en masse, they will prevent soil erosion. When wildcrafting, avoid collecting fuzzy or blackish oat grains, which may be contaminated with ergot.

ORANGE

Botanical Name and Family: *Citrus reticulata* (mandarin or tangerine orange), *C. aurantium* (bitter or Seville orange), *C. vulgaris* (sweet orange); Rutaceae (Citrus) Family

Part Used: Peel (organic)

Medicinal Use

Orange peel moves chi and dries dampness. As a digestive aid, it stimulates the production of hydrochloric acid and strengthens the spleen. Its high content of bioflavonoids helps strengthen the capillaries and tissues of the body.

Physiological Character

Antibacterial, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, aromatic, astringent, bitter, carminative, choleric, chologogue, digestive, diuretic, expectorant, hypertensive, sedative, stomachic

Traditional Targets of Application

Abscesses, belching, bloating, breast cancer, catarrh, cellulite, flatulence, gallbladder congestion, hiccups, indigestion, liver congestion, nausea, tumors

Constituents

Carotene, vitamin B₁, vitamin C, volatile oil (limonene), flavonoid (hesperidin), aldehydes, coumarins, bitters (naringin, aurantiummarine)

Contraindications

Use bitter orange with caution during pregnancy, as large doses may stimulate contractions.

Flavor

Orange peel yields a zesty orange flavor to tea. Bitter orange's flavor is best described as sour and bitter, while other oranges are pungent and bitter. Both bitter and other oranges are drying, but bitter orange is cooling, while other oranges are warming. Adding a bit of fresh or dried, grated orange peel to herbal tea lends them an orangelike tartness.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Orange trees, native to South Asia but cultivated in many regions around the world, are small evergreens with grayish brown bark and hard yellow wood. The alternate leaves are three to four inches long, ovate, glossy, and dark green on their tops but pale underneath. The fragrant white flowers grow in small axillary cymes. The trees require dry soil and prefer full sun, though they can survive in partial shade.

PLANTAIN

Botanical Name and Family: *Plantago major* (broad-leaf plantain), *P. lanceolata* (lance-leaf plantain), *P. media* (hoary plantain, sweet plantain); Plantaginaceae (Plantain) Family

Parts Used: Leaf, seed

Medicinal Use

Plantago lanceolata is considered the most therapeutic and *P. major* the most diuretic. Plantain clears heat, reduces inflammation, clears toxins,

deters infection, promotes tissue repair, and soothes irritated mucous membranes. The seeds are used to lower cholesterol.

Topically, plantain is considered a supreme drawing agent in that it helps draw toxins from the body. It also is superb in the topical healing of damaged tissue. It can be employed as a poultice or compress in the treatment of toothache, bee stings, boils, bruises, burns, eczema, hemorrhoids, insect bites, mastitis, poison ivy or oak, ringworm, snakebite, splinters, sunburn, ulcers, and wounds. Plantain can also be made into a gargle to treat a sore throat or an eyewash to treat blepharitis (inflammation of the eyelids) and conjunctivitis. It can be used as a hair rinse for dandruff, a douche for leukorrhea and vaginitis, a wash for irritated eyes, and an enema for intestinal infection.

Physiological Character

Alterative, anthelmintic, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, anti-spasmodic, antivenom, astringent, decongestant, demulcent, deobstruent, depurative, diuretic, expectorant, febrifuge, hemostatic, kidney yin tonic, laxative (seed), refrigerant, restorative, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

AIDS, allergic rhinitis, bedwetting, blood in the urine, blood poisoning, bronchitis, catarrh, colitis, cough, cystitis, debility, diarrhea, dropsy (seed), dysentery, dysuria, earaches, eczema, fever, hay fever, herpes, infertility (seed), injury, laryngitis, menorrhagia, neuralgia, psoriasis, scrofula, sore throat, thirst, tuberculosis, ulcers, urinary stones, urinary tract infection, weak vision

Constituents

Leaf: Vitamin C, vitamin K, tannins, flavonoid (apigenin), mucilage, allantoin, glycoside (aucubin), silicic acid, oxalic acid

Seed: B vitamins, protein, starch, oils, mucilage

Contraindications

Plantain is generally regarded as safe.

Flavor

Plantain tea has a pleasant “green” flavor; of the five flavors, it would be considered sweet, salty, and bitter. It has a cooling, drying energy, with secondary moistening properties.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Plantain is a low-growing perennial widely naturalized in North America; it can be found growing everywhere from roadsides to lawns and even between the cracks in sidewalks. The five to seven leaves grow in a basal rosette and are ovate and somewhat toothed, with strong parallel fibers. *P. major* has broad leaves, *P. lanceolata* has narrow leaves, and *P. media* has leaves somewhere between the widths of the other two. The flowers are inconspicuous and are borne on a cylindrical spike that can be up to fifteen inches tall. Later this spike becomes filled with numerous seeds. In the garden, plantain prefers full sun to partial shade and moist soil.

RASPBERRY

Botanical Name and Family: *Rubus* spp.; Rosaceae (Rose) Family

Part Used: Leaf

Medicinal Use

Raspberry leaf is considered a supreme tonic for pregnant women because it can tonify the uterus, nourish the mother and the growing baby, prevent miscarriage and false labor, and facilitate birth and placental delivery. When used after birth, it can decrease uterine swelling and minimize postpartum hemorrhaging, as well as enhance the quality of colostrum, the protein- and antibody-rich breast milk secreted for the first few days after delivery. Raspberry leaf reduces inflammation and excess dampness. With its nourishing mineral content and ability to support the reproductive and nervous systems, it can even be used to

encourage healing after sexual trauma or abuse. And though it is often regarded as an herb for women, raspberry leaf is also nourishing for men.

Topically, raspberry leaf can be used as a mouthwash for canker sores, gingivitis, sore throat, and tonsillitis or as a douche for leukorrhea or organ prolapse. As an eyewash, it helps reduce discharge and inflammation. It also can be used as a hair rinse to condition and highlight dark hair.

Physiological Character

Adrenal tonic, alterative, antacid, antiabortive, antiemetic, antiseptic, anti-spasmodic, astringent, digestive, hemostatic, hormonal tonic, hypotensive, immune tonic, kidney tonic, liver tonic, mucous-membrane tonic, nutritive, parturient, phytoestrogenic, postpartum tonic, prostate tonic, stimulant, stomachic, uterine tonic, vision tonic, yin tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Anemia, diarrhea (even in infants), dysentery, hemorrhage, herpes, incontinence, infertility, laryngitis, menorrhagia, miscarriage (threat of), morning sickness, mumps, muscle cramps, nausea, overactive bladder, ovulation difficulty, prolapse of the uterus or anus, rheumatism, sore throat, stomachache, thrush, weak vision

Constituents

Vitamins B₁ and E, calcium chloride, iron citrate, magnesium, manganese, potassium, phosphorus, selenium, sulfur, flavonoids, pectin, alkaloid (fragarine), organic acids (citric, malic, gallic, ellagic), furanones, and tannins

Contraindications

There are no known toxic levels. Once nursing is established, excessive consumption of raspberry leaf should be avoided, as its astringent properties could lessen the amount of breast milk produced.

Flavor

Raspberry leaf has a robust, astringent, mildly bitter flavor similar to that of green or black tea, but of course with no caffeine. Its energy is considered drying. Women in labor can suck on chips of frozen, sweetened raspberry leaf tea to facilitate the process and absorb nutrients.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Raspberry bushes are native to Eurasia and North America and can be found growing in the wild in woodland clearings, along roadsides, and in neglected fields where the soil is rich in nutrients. These biennial or perennial plants grow from three to six feet in height. The stems are bristly and thorned. The pinnately divided leaves are green on their tops and gray and velvety underneath. The small, white, roselike flowers bloom in early spring and summer; the compound fruits follow.

Raspberry bushes are easy to cultivate, and there are many guides to growing them. They prefer full sun but will tolerate partial shade and require moderate amounts of water.

RED CLOVER

Botanical Name and Family: *Trifolium pratense*; Fabaceae (Pea) Family

Parts Used: Flower, leaf (young)

Medicinal Use

This blood-purifying plant has a special affinity for the skin, throat, lungs, and salivary glands. It contains an isoflavone, biochanin, that exhibits anticancer properties. Red clover is helpful in supporting all the organs of elimination, expelling phlegm from the lungs, and improving health in general. It cleanses and clears toxins, nourishes and moves the blood, stimulates lymphatic movement, reduces swelling and inflammation, reduces respiratory irritation, and promotes tissue repair.

Topically, red clover can be used as a compress or bath herb in the treatment of athlete's foot, arthritic pain, burns, cancers, eczema, gout,

insect bites, lymphatic swelling, psoriasis, tumors, and wounds. It can be prepared as an eyewash for conjunctivitis, as a gargle for sore throat, as a douche for vaginitis, or as an enema for bowel inflammation.

Physiological Character

Alterative, antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antitumor, antitussive, deobstruent, depurative, diuretic, expectorant, galactagogue, nutritive, phytoestrogenic, sedative, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

Acne, arthritis, asthma, blood clots, boils, bronchitis, cancer prevention and treatment, chorea, cough, cystitis, cysts, diarrhea, dysentery, eczema, gout, heavy-metal toxicity, hepatitis, laryngitis, leprosy, measles, menopause (hot flashes, bone density), menstrual cramps, mononucleosis, phlebitis, phlegm, psoriasis, salivary gland congestion, scrofula, skin inflammation, tuberculosis, tumors, ulcers, wheezing, whooping cough

Constituents

Protein, beta-carotene, vitamin B complex, vitamin C, calcium, chromium, copper, iron, magnesium, manganese, selenium, silicon, flavonoids, phenolic glycosides (salicylic acid), volatile oil (methyl salicylate), polysaccharides, phytoestrogens (sitosterol, genistein, biochanin, formononetin), salicylates, coumarins, cyanogenic glycosides

Contraindications

Red clover is not recommended for use during pregnancy, though it can be used prior to pregnancy as a fertility tonic. Avoid red clover for at least a week prior to surgery.

Flavor

Red clover has a sweet, pleasant, honeylike flavor. Of the five flavors, it would be categorized as sweet and salty, with a cooling, moistening energy. Because it has a high mineral content, many vegan mothers give red clover tea to their children instead of milk.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Red clover is a biennial or perennial with several hairy stems rising from its root. It can grow to two feet in height. It bears three oval leaflets; a pale V shape often appears in the middle of each leaf. The flowers are pink to red and occur in sessile spikes or heads. Before being pollinated, the flowers stand erect; after having been pollinated by a bee, they turn down to indicate that such attentions are no longer needed. Red clover is prevalent in the wild and can be found growing in grassy areas ranging from lawns to roadsides. It prefers full sun to partial shade and moderate amounts of water, and thrives in a wide variety of soils.

ROOIBOS

Botanical Name and Family: *Aspalathus linearis* (syn. *A. contaminatus*);
Fabaceae (Pea) Family

Parts Used: Leaf, stem

Medicinal Use

Rooibos (pronounced *roo-ih-bus*) leaves and stems are chopped and allowed to ferment naturally before they are dried. The dried herb contains over forty polyphenol compounds that exhibit antioxidant effects.

Topically, rooibos can be used as a compress to relieve acne, diaper rash, eczema, and other rashes. It contains alpha-hydroxy acid, which promotes healthy skin.

Physiological Character

Adaptogen, anti-inflammatory, antimutagenic, antioxidant, antispasmodic, antiviral, astringent, cardioprotective, carminative, diuretic, rejuvenative, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Allergies (including milk allergy), anemia, asthma, cancer prevention, cavity prevention, colic, constipation, cramps, depression, diarrhea, eczema, hay fever, headache, high blood pressure, indigestion, insomnia, memory loss, nausea, nervousness, skin disorders, stomachache, ulcers, vomiting

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamin C, vitamin E, calcium, copper, fluoride, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, sodium, zinc, superoxide dismutase, flavonoids (aspalathin, quercetin, rutin, luteolin, catechin, vitexin), caffeic acid, ferulic acid, polysaccharides (uronic acid), oligosaccharides

Contraindications

Rooibos is considered safe even for children and those suffering from cardiac and kidney problems.

Flavor

Rooibos tea has a pleasant bitter, sweet, sour, black-tea-like flavor, with citrusy overtones, yet no caffeine. Its energy is considered cooling and drying. This rich reddish brew is high in vitamin C, minerals, and antioxidants. Though rooibos is more expensive than other herbs, to make a good brew you need only about half as much of it as you would need of other herbs, so it's more economical than it seems.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Rooibos grows in the western region of South Africa's Cape Province, mainly in the Cedar Mountains. It is a small shrub with slender stems.

The branches are reddish brown, the leaves long and linear. The yellow flowers are typical of the pea family and grow in short clusters. The seedpods are downy and lanceolate and contain a tiny, hard, kidney-shaped yellow seed. Under cultivation, rooibos is grown from seeds planted during the African winter. After eighteen months, the plants are ready to be harvested.

ROSE

Botanical Name and Family: *Rosa canina* (dog rose), *R. spp.*; Rosaceae (Rose) Family

Parts Used: Flower, hip

Medicinal Use

Rose flower moves congestion, dries mucus, stops bleeding, clears heat, calms the heart, enhances positive emotions, and regulates the menstrual cycle. It also promotes bile flow. Rose hip is rich in flavonoids that help strengthen the capillaries of the body. It also improves the body's assimilation of vitamin C.

Physiological Character

Flower: Antibacterial, antidepressant, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antiviral, aphrodisiac, aromatic, astringent, blood tonic, cardioprotective, carminative, decongestant, emmenagogue, expectorant, hemostatic, hepatic, kidney tonic, refrigerant, sedative

Hip: Antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antimutagenic, antioxidant, antiviral, astringent, blood tonic, cardioprotective, digestive, diuretic (mild), emmenagogue, kidney tonic, laxative, nutritive, stimulant, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Flower: Anger, anxiety, colic, depression, diarrhea, erectile dysfunction, hemorrhage, hepatitis, irregular menses, leukorrhea

Hip: Atherosclerosis, bedwetting, bruising (tendency to bruise easily), colds, cough, diarrhea, exhaustion, flu, gingivitis, hemorrhoids, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, night sweats, overactive bladder, spermatorrhea, urinary tract infections

Constituents

Flower: Malic acid, tartaric acid, quercetrin, volatile oils (eugenol, geranic acid, citronellol, geraniol, nerol, terpenes)

Hip: Vitamins B₁, B₂, C, E, and K, beta-carotene, flavonoids, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon, sulfur, zinc, polyphenols, tannin, malic acid, pectin, vanillin

Contraindications

As with all herbs, avoid using rose flowers or hips that have been sprayed with toxic chemicals. Remove the irritating hairs from the rose hips before eating them, or if you're brewing a tea from them, use a strainer fine enough to filter out the hairs.

Flavor

Rose petals have a delicate, astringent, sweet, bitter, flowery flavor, sometimes described as that of scented rainwater, when made into tea. The tea is excellent for daily use.

Rose hip tea, long a staple in Scandinavia, has a tart, fruity, sour, sweet flavor. Adding a bit of hibiscus makes it even more rose colored and lemon flavored. Prepare the tea as an infusion; boiling the rose hips will dissipate their vitamin C content.

Rose flower tea has a cooling, moistening energy. Rose hip tea has a drying energy. Red roses are more warming and astringent than white ones. White roses tend to be more cooling and laxative than red ones.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

There are at least 10,000 species of roses, and they are cultivated worldwide. These thorny, woody shrubs or vines have flowers in varying

colors and sizes. The hips are actually accessory fruits; they are ovoid, swollen looking, and red or orange in color. Roses bloom best in full sun to partial shade. They prefer well-drained, claylike soil. They need frequent watering but do not like to be standing in water. If you've collected rose hips yourself, remove their seeds before drying them or brewing them as tea.

ROSEMARY

Botanical Name and Family: *Rosmarinus officinalis*; Lamiaceae (Mint)
Family

Part Used: Aboveground plant

Medicinal Use

Rosemary tonifies the nervous system and improves peripheral circulation. It promotes warmth, invigorates the lungs, uplifts the spirits, curbs infection, and promotes immunity. Because it improves digestion, circulation, and memory, it is a wonderful tea for the elderly.

Topically, rosemary can be used as a rejuvenative skin wash to prevent wrinkles and strengthen the capillaries. Rosemary tea can be used as a compress in cases of bruises, eczema, sprains, and rheumatism. In a bath or footbath, rosemary rejuvenates the body and mind and also helps relieve pain and sore muscles. As a gargle, it can be used to treat sore throat, gum ailments, and canker sores and to freshen the breath. It makes a stimulating eyewash. Used in hair rinses, rosemary deters dandruff, graying, and hair loss.

Physiological Character

Anodyne, antibacterial, antidepressant, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antimutagenic, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aromatic, astringent, bitter, cardioprotective, carminative, cephalic, choleric, chologogue, circulatory stimulant, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, emmenagogue, hypertensive, nervine, rejuvenative, stimulant, stomachic, yang tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Alzheimer's disease, amenorrhea, anxiety, asthma, bronchitis, cancer prevention, cataracts, cellulite, colds, debility, delayed menses, depression, dyspepsia, epilepsy, fatigue, flatulence, gallstones, halitosis, headache, high blood pressure, jaundice, low blood pressure, memory loss, menstrual cramps, migraine, pain, palsy, poor circulation, poor vision, rheumatism, stress, vertigo

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamin C, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, volatile oils (borneol, camphor, cineole, eucalyptol, linalol, pinene, thymol, verbenol), tannins, flavonoids (apigenin, diosmin, heterosides, luteolin), rosmarinic acid, rosmarinic acid, triterpenes (ursolic acid, oleanic acid), resin

Contraindications

Avoid large doses during pregnancy. Though rosemary is generally considered so safe that it is a common kitchen herb, extremely large doses of this herb could cause convulsions and death.

Flavor

Rosemary makes an aromatic, refreshing, pleasant, somewhat bitter-pungent piney tea with a warming, drying energy. The tea is good hot or iced. Try adding a bit of ginger to make an excellent digestive tea.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Rosemary is a small evergreen shrub reaching three to six feet in height. The small, thin leaves are about one inch long, dark green, thick, leathery, and lanceolate. The small, two-lipped flowers are whitish, blue, or purple. This tender perennial grows best in full sun. It needs low to moderate amounts of water and well-drained soil.

SAGE

Botanical Name and Family: *Salvia officinalis*; Lamiaceae (Mint) Family

Part Used: Aboveground plant

Medicinal Use

Sage's bitter principles stimulate digestive secretions, and its tannin content improves resistance to infection. Sage tends to have a drying effect; it helps to thin mucous secretions and has been used to mitigate excessive saliva production in those with Parkinson's disease. It also improves the digestion of fatty foods and acts as a natural preservative. And even just the aroma of sage helps promote mental alertness.

Sage can be prepared as a compress or wash to treat insect bites, eczema, poison ivy or oak, psoriasis, and wounds. As a gargle, it can be used to treat halitosis, mouth sores, laryngitis, sore throat, sore gums, and tonsillitis. Sage can also be used as a bath herb to relieve skin eruptions; as a hair rinse to treat dandruff and oily scalp and to help darken gray hair; as a douche to treat leukorrhea; as a facial steam to treat oily or blemished skin; and as a mouthwash to freshen the breath.

Physiological Character

Anaphrodisiac, antifungal, antilactagogue, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antisudorific, aromatic, astringent, brain tonic, carminative, choleric, emmenagogue, expectorant, diaphoretic, hypoglycemic, nervine, phytoestrogenic, tonic, vermifuge

Traditional Targets of Application

Anxiety, blood clots, colds, cystitis, depression, diarrhea, dyspepsia, fever, flatulence, flu, hot flashes, indigestion, irregular menses, menopause, menorrhagia, migraines, night sweats, poor memory, profuse perspiration, respiratory congestion, rheumatic pain, staphylococcus infection

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamins B₁ and B₂, niacin, vitamin C, calcium, iron, magnesium, volatile oils (thujone, borneol, cineol, camphor, pinene), bitter principle (picrosalvine), flavonoids, tannin, phenolic acids (rosmarinic, caffeic, labiatic), phytoestrogens, resin

Contraindications

Avoid large doses during pregnancy or for extended periods. Those with epilepsy may be adversely affected by the thujone content, so should avoid large doses of sage.

Flavor

Sage tea is very aromatic, with a camphorlike pungent, bitter, astringent flavor. It is often served sweetened with honey. The tea has a warming, drying energy.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Sage is a beautiful plant that grows to one foot or more in height. It has a squarish stem and gray-green, slightly hairy leaves that grow in pairs and have a visible network of veins. The purplish flowers grow in whorls. Sage, a perennial, does best in full sun and well-drained soil, with low to moderate amounts of water.

TEA

Botanical Name and Family: *Camellia sinensis* (syn. *Thea sinensis*);
Theaceae (Tea) Family

Parts Used: Leaf bud, young leaf

Medicinal Use

It is the constituent polyphenols—flavonoids containing catechins and proanthocyanidins—that have earned tea such a reputation for imbuing good health. Of all the types of tea, green tea contains the most polyphenols—about 15 to 30 percent by weight. About half of that is epigallocatechin gallate (EGCC).

Tea's polyphenols, especially EGCC, are recognized as antioxidant and anticarcinogenic. They prevent free-radical damage and have even been found to lower levels of free radicals produced by the environmental toxin paraquat. EGCC has been found to be twenty times stronger than vitamin E in protecting brain lipids, which are very susceptible to oxidative stress. The polyphenols, along with the vitamin C in tea, also help strengthen blood vessel walls.

The consumption of green tea with meals has been shown to reduce the occurrence of arterial disease. Green tea prevents blood platelet aggregation, the "clumping together" of blood that can lead to blood clots, heart attacks, and stroke. A study of six thousand Japanese women who were nondrinkers and nonsmokers over the age of forty found that those who drank about five cups of green tea daily had a 50 percent lower risk of stroke. Surveys of Japanese tea drinkers also show that those consuming four to six cups daily have lower rates of breast, esophageal, liver, lung, and skin cancers than those who consume less or none at all. Other studies support these findings, indicating that consuming green tea can reduce the occurrence of a wide range of cancers.

Whereas coffee can elevate cholesterol levels, green tea helps lower them. The catechin content of green tea helps break down cholesterol and increase its elimination through the bowels. Green tea also helps keep blood sugar levels moderate.

Even though caffeine gets a bad rap, it has many healthful benefits. Green tea has about 25 milligrams (mg) of caffeine per cup; black tea has about 35 to 40 mg. The caffeine content of green tea is about as much as that of a can of soda and one-third to half as much as that of a cup of coffee. Caffeine blocks the naturally occurring tranquilizer adenosine, so that the brain becomes stimulated. It also increases the synthesis of catecholamines, which are stimulant chemicals that relay nerve impulses in the brain. It is believed that the tannins and vitamin C in tea help moderate the effects of the caffeine content, so that the deleterious side effects—jitteriness, irritability, and (after the effect has worn off) fatigue—are minimal compared to other caffeine sources, which may explain why Zen monks rely on green tea to help them remain alert yet calm during

long periods of meditation. Tea also stimulates the metabolism and is used as an aid in weight loss.

Many other of tea's constituent compounds have been and are being studied. One of the widely researched components in tea is the alkaloid theanine. It is an amino acid and has been found to decrease anxiety, aid sleep, and promote mental focus. Russian research indicates that the tannins in tea can help the body excrete strontium 90, a radioactive substance that can build up in the bones. And flavonoids, antioxidant compounds in tea, are being studied to determine whether they can slow down the aging process.

The xanthines in green tea help relax bronchial spasms. They can also help relieve the symptoms of allergies and asthma, which can be especially useful in emergencies when other remedies are not available.

Green tea helps prevent dental decay by inhibiting the bacterium *Streptococcus mutans*, which is responsible for plaque formation. Green tea is also a rich source of natural fluoride, which helps strengthen tooth enamel. A cup of green tea a day has been found to decrease cavities in children by half. It can also help inhibit the bacteria that cause halitosis.

Topically, green tea is styptic, meaning that it stops bleeding. It can be applied as a lukewarm compress or poultice to treat open wounds, acne, athlete's foot, and sunburn. Compresses of cooled black tea can be applied on puffy eyes, herpes lesions, insect bites, shingles, and sunburn to reduce inflammation.

Varieties of Tea

There are more than three thousand tea varieties. They are often named for the areas in which they are grown, such as Assam or Darjeeling. Cultivation in different regions, soils, altitudes, and climates produces different flavors in tea. Teas grown at a higher altitude tend to mature more slowly and produce a lower yield; these teas are considered to be higher quality. The best-quality tea uses just the tender young leaves and buds.

Green Teas

Green teas are made from unfermented leaves. Soon after the leaves are collected, they are left to wither, until their moisture is gone. The whole leaves are then steamed and rolled, resulting in grayish green balls. This process allows the herb to retain its enzymes, thus preventing it from oxidizing. Green tea is higher in essential oils than the black variety.

Dragonwell. A high-grade tea with jade green leaves and a nutlike flavor.

Gunpowder Green. One of the most popular and highest grades of green tea. Its name comes from early British colonists in China, who thought the tea resembled lead ball shots. The leaves are tightly rolled into small, ball-like pellets. This type of compaction helps protect the flavor and essential oil content of the tea. It has a slightly bitter flavor and is also known as pearl tea.

Jasmine. A green tea produced by drying tea leaves along with jasmine flowers. It is considered a semifermented tea, having the color of black tea but the flavor of green tea. It has a sweet, distinct flavor.

Sencha. A Japanese green tea made from long green leaves and used for everyday consumption.

Young Hyson. A high-grade tea whose middle-aged leaves are either rolled or twisted.

Black Teas

Black teas are produced in India and China. Their leaves are withered and rolled and then fermented. This process breaks down the enzymes, producing a varnishlike coating on the tea. The leaves are then dried. The fermentation process also causes black tea to lose some of its medicinal activity; green tea, which is not fermented, has more therapeutic properties.

Assam. A tea grown in northeast India. It has a full-bodied, malty, rich, strong flavor and a dark copper color. It is used as a base to make many other tea blends, such as Irish and English breakfast blends.

Ceylon. A tea grown in Sri Lanka and one of the most popular of the black teas. It has a bright color and is flavorful hot or iced, with or without milk.

Darjeeling. A tea from a mountainous region in northern India. It is prepared from small, broken leaves and is considered medium strong, with a light golden color and an aftertaste that has been compared to that of almonds, fruit, and muscatel. It is often considered the champagne of teas and usually is consumed unblended.

Earl Grey. A black tea flavored with essential oil of bergamot, a citrus fruit that grows in the Mediterranean region.

Keemun. A tea from northern China that has a light, delicate aroma, low tannin content, and rich, deep flavor.

Lapsang Souchong. A smoky, tarry-flavored, large-leafed tea from China. Its smoky, pungent flavor comes from the leaves being smoked over pinewood fires. The smoking causes the leaves to dry more quickly than through sun drying. It is considered one of China's best black teas.

Oolong Teas

Oolong teas come mainly from the southeast coasts of China and Taiwan. After harvesting, the leaves are left to wither to remove some of their moisture. They are then rolled by a machine to release their juices, followed by a partial fermenting process and oven firing. The tea's color is copperish, its hue somewhere between that of green and black teas. Oolong tea's flavor is milder than that of black tea but stronger than that of green tea. It contains the same cancer-fighting properties as green and black teas.

Formosa Oolong. The most popular of the oolongs. This product of Taiwan is allowed to ferment longer than most other oolongs. It has a balanced, fruity, peachlike flavor and is usually consumed black, without any milk or sweetener.

Pouchong. A tea fermented for less time than most other oolongs. It is sometimes used to make jasmine tea.

Ti Kuan Yin. A highly prized oolong tea with a smooth flavor. The name means “iron goddess of mercy” in Chinese.

White Teas

Of all the teas prepared from *Camellia sinensis*, white tea undergoes the least amount of processing and so contains the highest levels of antioxidants. It also is very rare and expensive. It has a sweet, subtle flavor.

Physiological Character

Analgesic, antibacterial, antioxidant, antiseptic, antitumor, antiviral, astringent, decongestant, diaphoretic, diuretic, hypotensive, immune stimulant, nervine, stimulant

Traditional Targets of Application

Allergies, arteriosclerosis, asthma, cancer, catarrh, cholera, colds, congestion, coughs, depression, diarrhea, digestive tract infection, dysentery, external viral conditions (black tea), fatigue, fever, flu, hangovers, hepatitis, high cholesterol, influenza (green tea), migraines, obesity, tooth decay, typhus, tumors

Constituents

Carotenoids, vitamin C, vitamin E, manganese, potassium, zinc, fluoride, xanthines (caffeine, theophylline, theobromine), tannins (polyphenol, epigallocatechin, epicatechin, epigallocatechin gallate, proanthocyanidins), flavonoids (kaempferol, quercetin), fats, gamma-amino butyric acid, polysaccharides, alkaloids (theanine)

Contraindications

Excessive use of tea may cause nervous irritability and digestive distress such as ulcers. Some believe tea to be addictive. Avoid tea in cases of

hypertension and insomnia; avoid large doses during pregnancy and while breast-feeding.

Flavor

Of the five flavors, tea would be categorized as bitter and sweet. The processing of and amount of essential oils and tannins in tea leaves, which varies depending on where and how the tea was cultivated, create a variety of flavor nuances. In general, green tea has a milder flavor than black tea. All teas are drying, but green and oolong teas are cooling, while black tea is warming.

Tea benefits from the addition of lemon, lemon balm, chamomile, jasmine flowers, mint, nettles, and wild oregano.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Left to their own devices, evergreen tea shrubs are capable of growing to heights of twenty-five to thirty feet, but when cultivated they are pruned to about four feet to facilitate the harvesting of the leaves. The alternate leaves are oval or lanceolate and have short stalks. The small white or pink flowers are solitary or grouped in twos or threes, and they have five to nine petals formed in a corolla. Tea shrubs, native to Asia, grow best in warm, humid climates. Each bush produces about a quarter pound of tea leaves a year and can continue producing for twenty-five to fifty years and even up to one hundred years, especially if organically cultivated. The leaves are harvested every six to fourteen days.

THYME

Botanical Name and Family: *Thymus vulgaris* (garden thyme), *T. serpyllum* (wild thyme), *T. spp.*; Lamiaceae (Mint) Family

Part Used: Aboveground plant

Medicinal Use

Thyme helps loosen mucus and soothes inflamed mucous membranes. It strengthens immunity and nourishes and warms the lungs, nerves, and

adrenal glands. It also relaxes the bronchioles and promotes tissue repair.

Topically, thyme cleanses infection and increases circulation in the area to which it is applied. It can be used as a gargle or mouthwash to treat dental decay, laryngitis, mouth sores, plaque formation, sore throat, thrush, tonsillitis, and bad breath. As a compress, thyme treats lung congestion, bronchitis, bruises, colds, flu, insect bites, mastitis, and wounds. It can be prepared as a soak for fungal infections such as athlete's foot, ringworm, and parasites such as crabs, lice, and scabies. As a douche, it deters candida. Thyme tea can be used as an eyewash for sore eyes and as a hair rinse for dandruff. As a bath herb, it relieves sore muscles, arthritis, and the congestion and achiness of colds and flu.

Physiological Character

Anthelmintic, antibacterial, antifungal, antiseptic, antispasmodic, antitussive, aromatic, astringent, bronchiodilator, carminative, decongestant, diaphoretic, diuretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, immune tonic, rejuvenative, rubefacient, sedative (in small amounts), stimulant (in larger amounts), vermifuge, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

Alcoholism, asthma, bronchitis, colds, colic, coughs, depression, diarrhea, dyspepsia, flatulence, flu, hangover, hay fever, headaches, herpes, hysteria, indigestion, laryngitis, menstrual cramps, pleurisy, rheumatism, shingles, sinusitis, sore throat, stomachaches, tetanus, tuberculosis, whooping cough, worms (hookworm, roundworms, threadworms)

Constituents

Vitamin B, vitamin C, chromium, manganese, volatile oils (borneol, carvacrol, cymol, linalool, thymol), bitter principle, tannin, flavonoids (apigenin, luteolin), saponins, triterpenic acids

Contraindications

Avoid therapeutic doses during pregnancy.

Flavor

Thyme makes a congestion-relieving, stimulating, aromatic tea. Of the five flavors, it would be categorized as pungent and mildly bitter, with a warming, drying energy.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Thyme is a perennial that grows in waste areas and on sunny banks. It is a semiwoody plant, growing between six and eight inches tall, with small, flat, oval leaves that can range from gray-green to dark green. The tiny flowers are lilac, white, or pink and grow in loose spikes.

Thyme prefers light, warmth, and well-drained, somewhat dry soil. Once established in the garden, it requires little care.

VIOLET

Botanical Name and Family: *Viola odorata* (sweet violet); Violaceae (Violet) Family

Parts Used: Leaf, flower, root

Medicinal Use

Violet clears heat and reduces swelling. Topically, it can be used as a compress for boils, conjunctivitis, breast cysts, cancers, and hemorrhoids. Apply a cloth soaked in violet tea to the back of the neck to treat headaches.

Physiological Character

Alterative, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antiscorbutic, antiseptic, astringent, cathartic (root), demulcent, discutient, diuretic, emetic (root, of most species), emollient, expectorant, febrifuge, laxative (mild), nutritive, pectoral, restorative (after surgery), vulnerary

Other Healing Violets



There are over one hundred herbs of the *Viola* genus. Other violets used medicinally include *Viola pendula* (blue violet, bird's-foot violet), *V. tricolor* (pansy), *V. cucullata* (common blue violet), *V. orbiculata* (evergreen violet), *V. canina* (dog violet), *V. adunca* (western dog violet), *V. canadensis* (Canada violet), and *V. patrinii* and *V. yedoensis* (wild Chinese violets), among others.

Traditional Targets of Application

Abscess, acne, anger, asthma, boils, bronchitis, cancer (breast, lung, skin, throat, tongue), carbuncles, colds, cysts, eczema, fevers, fibrocystic breast disease, grief, headache, heartbreak, lymphatic congestion, mastitis, mumps, psoriasis, sore throat, tuberculosis, tumors, ulcers, urinary tract infection, varicose veins, whooping cough

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamin C, salicylates, saponins (highest in roots), alkaloid (violene), flavonoid (rutin), mucilage, volatile oil

Contraindications

Violet is not recommended for cold-related conditions, such as chills. Otherwise, violet leaf tea is safe and gentle; it even can be used as a substitute for baby aspirin.

Flavor

Violet tea is somewhat bland, with pungent, bitter notes and a cooling, moistening energy. The tea is most often prepared from the leaves.

However, the flowers can be used to make a beautifully aromatic cold-water infusion.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Most violets are perennial, though there are a few annuals in the *Viola* genus. They usually have five petals, two on the upper portion, two laterals, and one on the bottom. *Viola odorata* grows to about six inches in height and has heart-shaped leaves. The flowers are cleistogamous (self-pollinating) and purple, pink, or white in color. Though flowers appear in early spring, the true seed-producing flower is inconspicuous and appears in autumn.

In the garden, violets provide nectar for early butterflies. They prefer full to partial shade, thrive in soil that is rich in organic matter, and enjoy moderate to high amounts of water.

YARROW

Botanical Name and Family: *Achillea millefolium*, *A. lanulosa*;
Asteraceae (Daisy) Family

Part Used: Flower top

Medicinal Use

Yarrow opens the pores, purifies the blood, soothes inflammation, circulates chi, regulates liver function, relaxes spasms, strengthens the venous system, and calms the nerves. It also helps relax peripheral blood vessels, thereby improving circulation. Drinking yarrow as a hot tea increases body temperature and produces sweating. Drinking it cold has more of a diuretic effect.

Topically, yarrow is an excellent herb for promoting tissue repair. A poultice of fresh leaves helps stop the bleeding of wounds, and fresh leaves placed in the nose will stop a nosebleed. Yarrow can be prepared as a compress to treat migraines, varicose veins, hemorrhoids, and blood blisters. A steam inhalation of yarrow treats asthma and hay fever and is useful for clearing up oily or blemished skin. Yarrow can be used as a

wash for acne, blemishes, oily skin, and eczema; as a hair rinse for hair loss; as a bath herb for skin complaints; as a douche or sitz bath for female complaints; and as a mouthwash for inflamed gums.

Physiological Character

Analgesic, anodyne, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic, antispasmodic, aromatic, astringent, circulatory stimulant, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, emmenagogue, expectorant, febrifuge, hemostatic, hypotensive, nerve relaxant, parturient, stimulant, stomachic, styptic, tonic, urinary antiseptic, uterine decongestant, uterine stimulant, sudorific, vulnerary

Traditional Targets of Application

Amenorrhea, anorexia, Bright's disease, catarrh (due to allergies), chicken pox, colds, coronary thrombosis, cystitis, diarrhea, dysentery, dysmenorrhea, dyspepsia, eczema, fever, flatulence, flu, hay fever, headache, hemorrhage, hyperacidity, incontinence, indigestion, irregular menses, jaundice, leukorrhea, measles, menorrhagia, nephritis, pneumonia, postpartum hemorrhage, rheumatism, stomachache, tuberculosis, typhoid, ulcers, urethritis, varicose veins

Constituents

Beta-carotene, B-complex vitamins, vitamin C, vitamin E, choline, inositol, calcium, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, silicon, volatile oils (proazulene, azulene, borneol, camphor, cineole, eugenol, linalool, pinene, sabinene, thujone), isovalerianic acid, formic acid, salicylic acid, polyacetylenes, asparagine, sterols, glycoalkaloid (achilleine), flavonoids (apigenin, luteolin, quercetin), coumarins, tannins

Contraindications

Overuse may cause skin photosensitivity, dizziness, and headaches in some people. In rare cases, individuals may be sensitive to yarrow and experience dermatitis after use. Avoid yarrow during pregnancy.

Flavor

Yarrow tea has a bitter, sweet, pungent, mildly astringent flavor, with a cooling, drying energy. A classic tea to relieve cold-and-flu symptoms is prepared from yarrow, peppermint, and ginger.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

Yarrow, a perennial native to Europe, thrives in meadows and pastures and by roadsides. It grows to one to three feet in height. The feathery, alternate leaves are three to four inches long and clasp the angular stem at its base. The pink to pale purple flowers are five-petaled rays that grow in flattened, terminal, loose heads; they look like miniature daisy flowers.

Yarrow enjoys partial shade to full sun, low to moderate amounts of water, and well-drained soil. Added to a compost pile, yarrow will accelerate its breakdown. When grown in the garden, it helps other plants nearby be more disease resistant.

YERBA MATÉ

Botanical Name and Family: *Ilex paraguariensis*; Aquifoliaceae (Holly)
Family

Part Used: Leaf

Medicinal Use

Yerba maté, or maté, cleanses the blood, decreases the appetite, and stimulates the mind, the respiratory system, and the nervous system. It is said to help users better tolerate hot, humid weather. Because maté helps cleanse the body of wastes without harming beneficial intestinal flora, some people drink it when they are on a cleanse, diet, or fast. It is often used to improve memory and concentration. It also delays the buildup of uric acid after a workout, thereby improving motor response. The tea's saponin and tannin content make it useful as a wash for cleansing wounds and as a compress to speed the healing process.

Physiological Character

Alterative, antibacterial, antioxidant, antiscorbutic, aperient, aphrodisiac, astringent, cardioprotective, depurative, diaphoretic, digestive, diuretic, immune stimulant, nerve stimulant, purgative (in large amounts), rejuvenative, stimulant, stomachic, sudorific, tonic

Traditional Targets of Application

Allergies, arthritis, colds, constipation, depression, diabetes, fatigue, hay fever, headaches, hemorrhoids, low blood pressure, heavy-metal toxicity, migraines, neuralgia, obesity, rheumatic pain, scurvy, stress

Constituents

Beta-carotene, vitamin B, vitamin C, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, silicon, sulfur, xanthine derivatives (caffeine citrate, theobromine, theophylline), neochlorogenic acid, chlorogenic acid, tannins

Contraindications

Maté contains caffeine; however, its tannins tend to bind with the caffeine, thereby reducing both compounds' effects. Most people who find that caffeine impairs their sleep will not experience this effect with maté. But those suffering from anxiety, heart palpitations, or insomnia should use this herb cautiously. It is best to avoid consuming maté with meals, as the high tannin content can impair nutrient assimilation.

Flavor

Yerba maté has a slightly bitter, smooth, and woody taste and a cooling, drying energy. It comes in green and black varieties. In hot weather, try it iced with a bit of lemon. In South America it is often served with burnt sugar and lemon juice, and it is traditionally sipped through a metal straw called a *bombilla*, which strains out the herbs.

Wildcrafting and Cultivation

This South American shrub grows from four to twenty feet in height. It has four-petaled white flowers with alternate, oval or lanceolate, broadly toothed leaves. It bears a red, yellow, or black fruit the size of a peppercorn. In general, the leaves are collected when the berries are ripe, then heated briefly to preserve their color. However, maté grows in a wide variety of conditions and, like green and black tea, has many different methods of cultivation and processing, each contributing to the tea's flavor.



Herbal Formulas

Years before the age of herbalists, people who lived close to the earth and used herbs for healing were called “simplers.” The lovely art of simpling involves the use of a local mild herb over an extended period. Simpling is a great way to connect deeply with all the aspects of a plant’s power and to learn more about the unique flavor and properties of that individual plant. Any of the herbs profiled in [Chapter 2](#) can be taken as a simple. One of my favorite simples is nettles.

But tea need not be limited to a beverage made from only one plant. Many wonderful teas with great flavor and therapeutic potential can be made by blending herbs. The recipes for some of my favorite herbal blends can be found in this chapter.

When a recipe calls for “parts,” you can use any measure of volume you desire. However, make sure you use the same measure for each part. For example, if a recipe calls for one part fennel seed and two parts ginger root, you can measure by the teaspoon, cup, handful, or quart. Just use the same measure for each herb, such as one teaspoon fennel and two teaspoons ginger.

MAKING YOUR OWN HERBAL FORMULAS

When you are creating your own formulas by mixing herbs together, it is helpful to know as much as possible about their effects, and of course

about any possible side effects, in order to evaluate their potential synergy. However, don't be afraid to play around with combinations of herbs that are generally regarded as safe. Contemplate the flavor, feeling, or healing property you want to create, and then get to work trying to create it.

It's fine to combine fresh and dried herbs in a formula. For example, dried store-bought cinnamon can be paired with fresh spearmint from the garden. You also can mix tea-bagged herbs with loose herbs, allowing them to steep together.

Formulation is not a rigid science—there are many different ways to create a formula, and a certain formula may have a different effect on different people. Skill comes with study and experience. The following points should help beginners get started:

- In general, a standard herbal formula consists of one part roots, two parts leaves, and three parts flowers and/or seeds.
- Ten percent of any herbal formula usually consists of a stimulating herb that will help transport the benefit of the other herbs to where it is needed. Some examples of stimulating carriers are angelica, cinnamon, cloves, and ginger.
- It may help to determine the main organ that needs help (for example, the skin) and then add herbs to support three parts of the body that affect that organ (for example, the lungs, liver, and large intestine).
- Study the physiology of the health concern you want to address. Understand its energy, and understand the energy of the person experiencing the health concern. For example, a person who feels cold all the time may benefit from warming herbs like cinnamon and ginger, and an overly warm person might appreciate cooling herbs like peppermint and spearmint.
- See the whole being, not just the health concern. A healthier lifestyle, in terms of emotional health, diet, and exercise, can do as much to encourage healing as an herbal therapeutic.

- Try to create formulas using a few herbs that cover several purposes. For example, ginger can warm a person who feels cold all the time, and it also will relieve his or her indigestion or rheumatism.
- When you're developing formulas, make small batches the first time around. Label each batch with its ingredients, its intended use, and the date of its creation. You don't want to serve up something fantastic and not be able to recreate such a pleasure! I love to purchase colorful label books from Dover Publications; see Resources for more details. They feature stick-on labels with angels, fairies, seasonal themes, antique themes, and more. When you have a blend you like, make up a fun or catchy name for it and add it to your recipe file. I once created a line of teas with names like Mental ClariTea, SereniTea, and SensualiTea.

The Theory of Three Levels

The theory of three levels dates back to medieval times. It proposes that different plant parts correspond to the three different levels of the human body: The first level is the head, which correlates to the fruits, seeds, and flowers of a plant. The second level is the torso, which corresponds to the leaves and bark. The third level is the limbs, which correspond to the roots. The three levels could also be configured as the mind, body, and spirit, with the same correlations to plant parts. According to the theory, an ideal herbal formula would consist of plant parts corresponding to each of the three different levels. An example of a three-level formula might be elder flower, peppermint leaf, and echinacea root combined to make a cold remedy.

Chinese Formulation: The King, Minister, Assistant, and Servant

The Chinese have a very sophisticated method for creating herbal formulas. The first selection is the King or main herb. The King has the desired therapeutic effect and is usually a powerful herb; it is usually called for in the amount of ½ to 1 part. There may be more than one King in a formula. The Minister helps reinforce the action of the King, and it is usually called for in the amount of ½ part. As with the King, there may be

more than one Minister. The Assistant is selected for its tonifying, harmonizing, and balancing ability. It is usually called for in the amount of $\frac{1}{4}$ part. Licorice root, often referred to as “the great harmonizer” in Chinese medicine, often plays the role of the Assistant. The Servant is also harmonizing, but it also endows quick relief. It is usually called for in the amount of $\frac{1}{4}$ part.

Triangular Formulation

Herbalist William LeSassier, one of my very dear teachers, demonstrated a way of creating herbal formulas based on the triangle that he claimed was taught to him by a mystical vision of Pythagoras. Imagine a triangle with its corners sectioned off into smaller triangles. The three small triangles represent a primary herb, a building herb, and a catalyst, also known as an eliminating or cleansing herb. The primary herb, at the top of the triangle, composes 70 to 80 percent of a formula; it most directly addresses the ailment. The building herb, at one bottom corner of the triangle, is most often a nourishing tonic and composes 10 to 15 percent of a formula. The catalyst, at the other bottom corner, gets things going; it is often a diuretic, laxative, or diaphoretic and composes 10 to 15 percent of a formula. The building and catalyst herbs support the work of the primary herb, and as a trio they benefit all the body systems that may need help when a health problem is at hand.

Formulation theories aside, you can also make teas spontaneously, walking through the garden, gathering a handful of this and that, letting your tea blends evolve during the seasons to reflect the freshness of the harvest that nature provides. Formulation does not have to follow strict rules. It is, instead, an opportunity to weave together the synergistic potencies of plants. Experiment, taste, learn, and experience!

DOSAGE GUIDELINES

For an acute, serious, right-there-in-your-face type of illness, one cup of tea every two hours would be an appropriate dosage—except while sleeping, of course. Rest is good medicine in its own right.

For a chronic health concern, an appropriate dosage might be one cup of tea three or four times daily. Some herbalists recommend pulsing remedies for chronic conditions, which means ten days on, then three days off, in a continuing cycle. Pulsing helps the body acclimate and learn to respond even without the herbs. Another pulsing regimen is six days on, one day off, with a three-day break every two or three weeks.

Building teas should be taken near, but not during, mealtime. Cleansing teas should be taken between meals. When you are using teas for healing, continue with the appropriate dosage for at least a week, then evaluate your progress. If your health concern has been remedied, you can stop taking the herbal formula on a regular basis. However, you might wish to have a cup of it from time to time for a tonic tune-up.

Be aware that some herbs should not be combined with some medications because they can cause exacerbated or unpredictable effects. This is especially the case when you are using an herb for the same purpose as a drug. You may end up with a double dose! Apply the following general rules:

- If you're taking prescription medication, check with your healthcare practitioner first before taking any herbs that are not regarded as safe for all persons.
- If you're taking medication for a particular ailment, you shouldn't also take herbs for that ailment without first checking with your healthcare practitioner.

Of course, many herbal teas, especially those that are nutritive and flavorful, can simply be a delight in their own right. Enjoy them whenever you like! Experience the simple pleasures in life!

Dosage Adjustments for Specific Individuals



The general dosage guidelines discussed in this section are applicable to most adults. However, dosages may need to be adjusted for different people or different categories of people. For example,

- Large people need more than small people.
- Women may need less than men.
- For dosages for the elderly, reduce the dose by one-fourth for those over age sixty-five and by one-half for those over age seventy.

Through breast milk, a nursing infant can reap the benefits of the teas the mother drinks. An infant will most benefit from drinking the mother's milk fifteen to thirty minutes after she has had her tea.

To figure out a dosage for children, you can follow one of two rules:

- *Cowling's rule*: Take the child's age at his or her next birthday and divide by 24. The resulting fraction is the amount of the adult dosage the child can have. For example, a five-year-old will be six at his next birthday. The number 6 divided by 24 equals $\frac{1}{4}$; this child should have $\frac{1}{4}$ of the adult dosage.
- *Clark's rule*: Divide the child's weight by 150. The resulting fraction is the amount of the adult dosage the child can have. For example, for a fifty-pound child, 50 divided by 150 equals $\frac{1}{3}$; this child can have $\frac{1}{3}$ of the adult dosage.

TIME-TESTED THERAPEUTIC TEAS

With just a medium-size repertoire of herbs, you can create effective, safe, and delicious healing blends that nourish, cleanse, and support the body in a multitude of ways. If you lack one herb, make the formula without it, or add another favorite herb to take its place. You can be your very own tea designer!

Here are some of my favorite formulas made only with herbs from the forty-five described in-depth in [Chapter 2](#). Note that in these recipes the term “herb” refers to any or all portions of the aboveground plant.

Acid Reflux Tea

If you suffer from acid reflux, pay attention to your diet, and try to avoid foods that contribute to this condition. These herbs can help you through a difficult period.

2 parts chamomile flower

2 parts marshmallow root

1 part catnip herb

1 part fennel seed

1 part plantain leaf

Addiction-Free Tea

The following herbs help reduce cravings for harmful substances.

2 parts basil leaf

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

1 part catnip leaf

1 part cinnamon bark

1 part lemon balm herb

1 part spearmint leaf
½ part clove bud
½ part dandelion root
½ part fennel seed
½ part orange peel

Allergy Relief Tea

Help your body ease through the high pollen season with the following allies.

2 parts elder flower
2 parts mullein leaf
2 parts nettle leaf
1 part dandelion root
1 part marshmallow root
1 part rooibos leaf
½ part licorice root
½ part thyme herb

Antiflatulence Tea

These delicious herbs help calm intestinal wind.

2 parts peppermint leaf
1 part cinnamon bark
1 part fennel seed
1 part ginger root

Antioxidant Tea

*These herbs provide a wealth of
antioxidant nutrients!*

2 parts dandelion leaf

1 part green tea leaf

½ part rose hip

½ part rosemary leaf

½ part sage leaf

Appetite-Stimulant Tea

*Get your digestive juices flowing with
the following herbs.*

2 parts lemon balm herb

1 part peppermint leaf

½ part orange peel

½ part sage leaf

Arthritis Relief Tea

*Reduce joint pain and inflammation
with the following herbs.*

2 parts alfalfa leaf

2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

1 part dandelion root

1 part ginger root

1 part rosemary leaf

1 part cherry fruit (dried)

½ part thyme herb

Asthma Relief Tea

Breathe deep the breath of life.

2 parts green tea leaf

1 part elder berry

1 part fennel seed

½ part fenugreek seed

½ part licorice root

Athlete's Tea

*These herbs help improve endurance
and rapid recovery.*

2 parts yerba maté leaf

1 part ginger root

1 part hawthorn berry

½ part licorice root

Better Body Odor Tea

*Herbs rich in chlorophyll help purify the
system from within.*

2 parts peppermint leaf

2 parts spearmint leaf

1 part alfalfa leaf

1 part nettle leaf

Blood-Building Tea

*The following herbs are rich in iron,
folic acid, and vitamin C.*

2 parts blackberry leaf
2 parts nettle leaf
1 part dandelion leaf
1 part raspberry leaf
1 part red clover blossom
1 part rose hip

Four Teas Just for Fun!

Flower Power Tea

Create your own Summer of Love.

2 parts elder flower
2 parts hibiscus flower
1 part hawthorn flower
1 part linden flower
1 part red clover blossom

Very Berry Tea

Antioxidant rich!

1 part elder berry
1 part hawthorn berry
1 part rose hip

Roots, Rock, Reggae

Get grounded with deep roots!

1 part burdock root

1 part dandelion root

1 part ginger root

Holiday Tea Blend

You can add cranberry, orange, or apple juice to this tea, chill, and serve as a punch.

2 parts hibiscus flower

1 part apple, fresh or dried

1 part cinnamon bark

1 part orange peel

1 part rose hip

Blood Pressure Tea

Promote healthy blood pressure, at a safe level, with the following herbs.

2 parts chamomile flower

2 parts hawthorn leaf and flower

1 part ginger root

1 part green tea leaf

1 part linden flower

Blood Sugar Stabilizer Tea

Help stabilize the highs and lows of blood glucose levels.

1 part burdock root

1 part cinnamon bark
1 part dandelion root
1 part marshmallow root
1 part blueberries, fresh or dried, unsweetened
½ part fennel seed
½ part fenugreek seed

Bone Strength Tea

Herbs rich in minerals help promote bone density.

1 part nettle leaf
1 part alfalfa leaf
1 part oat seed and/or oatstraw
1 part red raspberry leaf
½ part green tea leaf

Brain Booster

Sharpen your wits with classic “smart” herbs.

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw
2 parts rosemary herb
2 parts yerba maté leaf
1 part sage herb
1 part nettle leaf

Breath-Freshening Tea

Take a taste to refresh your mouth and spirits.

- 2 parts anise seed
- 2 parts dandelion leaf
- 2 parts peppermint herb
- 1 part cardamom seed
- 1 part cinnamon chips
- ½ part orange peel

Calming Antistress Tea

Sip a cup of soothing stress-relieving tea.

- 2 parts chamomile flower
- 2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw
- 1 part lemon balm leaf
- 1 part catnip leaf

Canker-Sore-Be-Gone Tea

Antiviral herbs can reduce inflammation and encourage cold sores to disappear quickly.

- 2 parts calendula flower
 - 2 parts lemon balm
 - 1 part green tea leaf
 - 1 part raspberry leaf
 - 1 part sage herb
 - ½ part licorice root
-

Cellulite-Be-Gone Tea

Herbs that improve the elimination of metabolic waste can help reduce cellulite when used over a period of time. Of course, a good diet and exercise must be included!

2 parts burdock root

2 parts dandelion leaf

2 parts dandelion root

2 parts nettle leaf

1 part ginger root

1 part hawthorn berry

1 part rosemary leaf

Chai

An herbal classic without caffeine. Sweeten to taste with raw honey or raw agave syrup, and add a splash of milk.

2 parts freshly grated ginger root

2 parts cinnamon bark

2 parts rooibos leaf or black tea

1 part anise seed

1 part cardamom seed, outer pod removed

½ part clove bud

Cholesterol-Lowering Tea

Along with a diet low in animal fats and refined carbohydrates, these herbs

*help the body metabolize elevated levels
of fats.*

2 parts burdock root

2 parts dandelion root

2 parts hawthorn leaf, flower, or berry

1 part ginger root

Circulation Flow Tea

*These herbs help improve peripheral
circulation.*

2 parts burdock root

2 parts ginger root

1 part cinnamon bark

1 part rosemary leaf

½ part licorice root

Cold-and-Flu Relief Tea

*This tea can help relieve fever, infection,
and chills.*

2 parts echinacea root

2 parts peppermint leaf

2 parts yarrow flower

1 part elder flower and berry

1 part ginger root

Cough Stop Tea

Calm a cough with these antitussive herbs.

- 2 parts elder berry
- 2 parts peppermint leaf
- 1 part marshmallow root
- 1 part mullein leaf
- 1 part red clover blossom
- 1 part thyme leaf
- ½ part licorice root

Decongest Tea

Help open the lungs and sinuses with these herbs.

- 2 parts green tea leaf
- 2 parts nettle leaf
- 1 part dandelion leaf
- ½ part thyme leaf

Depression Uplift Tea

These herbs help raise your spirits when you're feeling blue.

- 2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw
 - 2 parts lemon balm herb
 - 2 parts spearmint leaf
 - 1 part dandelion root
 - 1 part nettle leaf
-

Diarrhea-Be-Gone Tea

Diarrhea helps cleanse the body, but once started, it can continue longer than is necessary. These herbs can help put a stop to runs that have overstayed their welcome.

2 parts blackberry root

1 part fenugreek seed

1 part green tea leaf

Digestive Aid Tea

Enjoy a cup of this tea after a meal or when you need some help preventing digestive distress.

2 parts anise seed

2 parts peppermint leaf

1 part angelica root

½ part orange peel

Diuretic Tea

This tea, composed of herbs that help eliminate excess fluids, is useful in cases of fluid retention.

2 parts dandelion leaf

2 parts nettle leaf

1 part peppermint leaf

1 part yerba maté herb

Energy Tea

These herbs help you buzz around.

- 2 parts nettle leaf
- 2 parts oat seed, herb, and/or oatstraw
- 2 parts yerba maté leaf
- 1 part green tea leaf
- 1 part hawthorn leaf and flower
- ½ part licorice root

Fasting Tea

This tea will help cleanse the body and curb the appetite.

- 2 parts nettle leaf
- 2 parts peppermint leaf
- 2 parts red clover blossom
- 1 part dandelion root
- 1 part fennel seed

Fungi-Be-Gone Tea

Try this tea to inhibit the overgrowth of fungi such as candida.

- 2 parts cinnamon bark
- 2 parts lemongrass herb
- 1 part chamomile flower
- 1 part ginger root
- 1 part peppermint leaf

1 part thyme leaf

Headache Tea

This combination of herbs can help relieve the pain and inflammation of a throbbing head.

2 parts chamomile flower

2 parts peppermint leaf

2 parts lemon balm herb

1 part rosemary leaf

½ part dandelion root

Healthy Hair Tea

These mineral-rich herbs will encourage a glowing crown.

2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

1 part burdock root

1 part rosemary leaf

1 part sage herb

Healthy Heart Tea

Nurture your heart with these healing plants.

2 parts hawthorn berry

2 parts lemon balm herb

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

1 part ginger root
1 part linden flower
1 part rose hip

Herpes Resist Tea

These herbs have anti-inflammatory and antiviral properties that can help prevent and speed up the healing of cold sores.

2 parts echinacea root
2 parts lemon balm herb
1 part calendula flower
½ part licorice root

Immune Health Tea

Be more resistant to infection with this blend.

2 parts echinacea root
2 parts lemongrass herb
2 parts peppermint herb
1 part elder berry
1 part elder flower
1 part rose hip
½ part green tea leaf

Infection-Be-Gone Tea

There are indeed herbs that can fight infection.

2 parts calendula flower

2 parts echinacea root

2 parts elder berry

2 parts lemongrass herb

1 part thyme herb

1 part yarrow leaf and flower

Inflammation Reduction Tea

These herbs can help reduce swelling.

2 parts marshmallow root

2 parts plantain leaf

1 part calendula flower

1 part chamomile flower

1 part violet leaf

Irritable Bowel Tea

Pay attention to what foods contribute to an irritable bowel, and try to avoid them. Herbs can also help.

2 parts chamomile flower

2 parts marshmallow root

1 part fennel seed

1 part licorice root

1 part peppermint herb

Jaundice Relief Tea

*Improve liver function with these gentle
cleansing herbs.*

2 parts alfalfa leaf

2 parts yarrow herb

1 part burdock root

1 part dandelion root

1 part fennel seed

1 part hyssop herb

Kidney Strength Tea

*The kidneys love herbs rich in minerals,
such as these ones.*

2 parts dandelion leaf

2 parts nettle leaf

1 part cranberries, fresh or dried, unsweetened

1 part rose hip

Laxative Tea

Cleanse the colon from the inside out.

1 part burdock root

1 part dandelion root

1 part fennel seed

1 part raisins

½ part licorice root

Liver-Loving Tea

Help your liver perform its myriad functions with these supportive herbs.

- 2 parts catnip herb
- 2 parts dandelion root
- 1 part burdock root
- 1 part fennel seed

LongeviTea

These herbs have traditionally been used for promoting long life.

- 2 parts hawthorn leaf, flower, and/or berry
- 2 parts lemon balm herb
- 1 part licorice root
- 1 part rosemary herb
- 1 part sage herb

Lung Health Tea

These herbs increase respiratory capacity and strengthen and tonify the lungs.

- 2 parts elder flower
- 2 parts hyssop leaf
- 2 parts green tea leaf
- 2 parts mullein leaf
- 2 parts peppermint herb
- 1 part fennel seed
- 1 part ginger root

1 part licorice root

1 part rose hip

½ part thyme herb

Menopause Relief Tea

Count on your herbal allies to help you ease through the changes in life.

2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

2 parts raspberry leaf

2 parts red clover flower

1 part dandelion root

1 part fennel seed

½ part licorice root

Men's Health Tea

These herbs support the heart and prostate gland.

2 parts hawthorn berry

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

2 parts nettle leaf

1 part cinnamon bark

1 part fenugreek seed

1 part ginger root

Menstrual Cramp Tea

These herbs help calm spasms and relax the abdomen.

2 parts chamomile flower

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

2 parts peppermint leaf

2 parts raspberry leaf

1 part dandelion root

1 part ginger root

1 part rosemary leaf

Mineral-Rich Tea

These herbs provide the minerals needed for nourishing bones, teeth, hair, and nails.

2 parts alfalfa leaf

2 parts dandelion leaf

2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

2 parts raspberry leaf

Mucus Minimizer Tea

These herbs are mucolytic (phlegm dispelling). Curbing dairy and wheat in your diet will also help minimize congestion.

2 parts hyssop herb

2 parts mullein leaf

2 parts thyme leaf
1 part fenugreek seed

Nausea Relief Tea

Use these herbs to calm nausea or to settle the stomach after an episode of vomiting.

2 parts peppermint leaf
1 part cinnamon bark
1 part ginger root

Nursing Mother's Tea

These herbs are galactagogues, or herbs that increase breast milk supply.

2 parts nettle leaf
2 parts red clover flower
1 part alfalfa leaf
1 part dandelion leaf
1 part fennel seed
1 part marshmallow root

Nutrient-Dense Tea

Herbs help transform the earth's nutrients into a form digestible by our bodies.

2 parts alfalfa leaf
2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw
1 part rose hip

Pain Relief Tea

The following herbs are analgesic, anti-inflammatory, and calming.

2 parts chamomile flower
1 part ginger root
1 part linden flower
1 part marshmallow root
1 part peppermint leaf
1 part rosemary leaf
½ part clove bud

Pregnancy Tea

Nourish your growing baby's bones and teeth with this time-tested blend. The ginger can be omitted if you don't have morning sickness.

2 parts nettle leaf
2 parts raspberry leaf
1 part peppermint herb
1 part ginger root

Recovery Tea

Nutrient dense, healing, and building, this tea is what's needed after a difficult

*life experience, such as surgery, illness,
or accident.*

- 2 parts nettle leaf
- 2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw
- 2 parts plantain leaf
- 1 part dandelion root
- 1 part marshmallow root
- 1 part rose hip
- 1 part violet leaf

Sexual Tonic Tea

*Share this tea with someone you want
to enjoy passion and pleasure with.*

- 1 part cardamom seed
- 1 part cinnamon bark
- 1 part fennel seed
- 1 part ginger root
- 1 part rose flower
- ½ part fenugreek seed

Skin Clear Tea

*This tea can help banish acne, eczema,
and psoriasis.*

- 2 parts nettle leaf
- 1 part burdock root
- 1 part dandelion root
- 1 part red clover

½ part rose hip

Sore Throat Relief Tea

Soothe a sore throat and help curb the infection causing it with this tea.

2 parts echinacea root

2 parts marshmallow root

2 parts plantain leaf

1 part calendula flower

1 part licorice root

1 part sage leaf

Stomach-Soothing Tea

Enjoy this tea after a meal or whenever your digestive tract is in need of comfort.

2 parts alfalfa leaf

2 parts peppermint leaf

1 part anise seed

1 part cardamom seed

1 part ginger root

Swollen Glands Tea

This tea can help relieve mumps, tonsillitis, and other glandular swellings.

2 parts dandelion leaf

2 parts echinacea root
2 parts mullein leaf
1 part dandelion root
1 part red clover flower
½ part fenugreek seed
½ part licorice root

Tooth Tonic Tea

These mineral-dense herbs nourish the teeth.

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw
1 part alfalfa leaf
1 part green tea leaf
1 part nettle leaf
1 part peppermint leaf

Ulcer Relief Tea

Soothing and antibacterial herbs help decrease ulcers.

2 parts marshmallow root
2 parts nettle leaf
1 part fennel seed
½ part licorice root

Urinary Tract Infection Tea

Help prevent and treat genitourinary infections and irritation.

- 2 parts marshmallow root
- 1 part cranberries, fresh or dried, unsweetened
- 1 part dandelion leaf
- 1 part thyme leaf
- 1 part violet leaf

Vision Health Tea

*These herbs invigorate the eyes and
your vision.*

- 2 parts calendula flower
- 1 part blueberries, fresh or dried, unsweetened
- 1 part dandelion leaf
- 1 part fennel seed
- 1 part nettle leaf

Vitamin C Tea

*Be sure not to boil any of these vitamin
C-rich herbs.*

- 2 parts hibiscus flower
- 2 parts rose hip
- 1 part dandelion leaf
- 1 part raspberry leaf
- 1 part violet leaf

Voice Beautiful Tea

*A tea to help you sing and speak more
clearly.*

2 parts marshmallow root

1 part fennel seed

1 part hyssop herb

1 part peppermint herb

1 part thyme herb

Honey to taste

Lemon juice to taste

Weight-Loss Tea

Try these herbs to satisfy cravings and improve the body's natural processes of elimination.

2 parts alfalfa leaf

2 parts dandelion leaf

2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts yerba maté herb

1 part cinnamon bark

1 part fennel seed

1 part ginger root

Women's Health Tea

These herbs truly nourish the needs of women of all ages.

2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts raspberry leaf

1 part chamomile flower

1 part dandelion root

1 part rosemary leaf

½ part ginger root

½ part licorice root

Yeast Relief Tea

Candida can't have a chance to thrive with regular use of these antifungal herbs.

2 parts calendula flower

2 parts cinnamon bark

2 parts thyme herb

1 part ginger root

Children's Therapeutic Teas

Here are various blends specifically designed to give relief to children, from babies with colic to older kids with colds or other childhood ailments.

Babies' Colic Tea

This can be consumed by the nursing mother as well as the babe.

2 parts catnip herb

2 parts peppermint herb

1 part anise or fennel seed

1 part chamomile flower

Happy Tummy for Kids

What to drink when the stomach needs help.

2 parts spearmint herb

1 part fennel seed

½ part ginger root

Kids' Cold Care

Little ones will enjoy a special tea to help relieve their sniffles.

2 parts elder berry

2 parts lemon balm herb

1 part peppermint leaf

1 part rose hip

A Tea for Common Childhood Disorders

A feel-better tea that can be used for colds, measles, mumps, and chicken pox.

2 parts lemon balm herb

1 part calendula flower

1 part anise seed

1 part echinacea root

1 part elder berry and flower

1 part peppermint leaf

Zodiac Tea Blends

An astrological tea selection might be made based on your sun rising or moon sign. A cosmic choice might also be the herbal blend with attributes from the opposite end of the spectrum to help bring about balance. For example, an Aries who is “too much in his or her head”

might feel grounded by drinking Pisces Tea. Or you might want to consume a particular blend when the sun is in that sign to nourish every part of your body and psyche, one sign at a time.

Aries Tea

March 21–April 19/20. The Ram. Ruled by Mars. Fire element. Hot and dry.

Aries governs the head.

2 parts nettle herb

2 parts peppermint leaf

1 part cinnamon bark

1 part ginger root

Taurus Tea

April 20/21–May 20/21. The Bull. Ruled by Venus. Earth element. Cold and dry. Taurus governs the throat and thyroid gland.

2 parts marshmallow root

2 parts plantain herb

1 part sage leaf

1 part thyme herb

1 part violet leaf

Gemini Tea

May 21/22–June 21. The Twins. Ruled by Mercury. Air element. Hot and wet. Masculine. Gemini governs the lungs and nervous system.

2 parts elder flower
2 parts mullein leaf
2 parts red clover blossom
1 part fennel seed
½ part fenugreek seed

Cancer Tea

June 22–July 22. The Crab. Ruled by the Moon. Water element. Cold and wet. Cancer governs the stomach.

2 parts catnip herb
2 parts lemon balm herb
2 parts peppermint herb
1 part anise seed
1 part hyssop herb

Leo Tea

July 23/24–August 22/23. The Lion. Ruled by the Sun. Fire element. Hot and dry. Leo governs the heart, spine, and eyes.

2 parts calendula flower
2 parts chamomile flower
1 part cinnamon bark
1 part ginger root
½ part orange peel

Virgo Tea

August 23/24–September 22/23. The Virgin. Ruled by Mercury. Earth element. Cold and dry. Virgo governs the small intestines.

2 parts cinnamon bark

2 parts peppermint herb

1 part anise seed

1 part rosemary herb

Libra Tea

September 23/24–October 22/23. The Balance. Ruled by Venus. Air element. Hot and wet. Libra governs the kidneys.

2 parts marshmallow root

2 parts plantain herb

1 part violet herb

½ part rose petal

Scorpio Tea

October 23/24–November 21/22. The Scorpion. Ruled by Mars and Pluto. Water element. Cold and wet. Scorpio governs the genitals.

2 parts basil leaf

2 parts blackberry leaf

2 parts nettle leaf

1 part hawthorn berry

½ part clove bud

Sagittarius Tea

November 22/23–December 21. The Centaur. Ruled by Jupiter. Fire element (wood element in Chinese medicine). Hot and dry. Masculine. Sagittarius governs the hips and thighs.

2 parts hawthorn leaf and flower

1 part burdock root

1 part dandelion root

1 part fennel seed

1 part red clover flower

Capricorn Tea

December 22–January 19/20. The Goat. Ruled by Saturn. Earth element. Cold and dry. Capricorn governs the knees, teeth, and bones.

2 parts nettle herb

2 parts plantain herb

1 part mullein leaf

1 part peppermint herb

Aquarius Tea

January 20/21–February 18/19. The Water Pourer. Governed by Saturn and Uranus. Air element. Hot and wet.

Masculine. Aquarius governs the ankles.

2 parts peppermint leaf

1 part fennel seed

½ part cinnamon bark

½ part clove bud

Pisces Tea

February 19/20–March 20. The Fishes.

Ruled by Jupiter and Neptune. Water element. Cold and wet. Feminine. Pisces governs the feet.

2 parts basil herb

2 parts oatstraw

1 part hyssop herb

1 part lemon balm herb

Tea from Daybreak to Dark

Here are a few blends to see you through the day.

Good Morning Tea

Start your day with flavor and vitality.

2 parts rooibos leaf

2 parts yerba maté herb

1 part ginger root

½ part cardamom seed

½ part cinnamon bark

½ part orange peel

Afternoon Delight Tea

Take time for tea and good company.

2 parts hibiscus flower

2 parts spearmint herb

1 part hawthorn leaf, flower, and/or berry

1 part rose hip

1 part yerba maté herb

Evening Tea

Chill out with this tea, and whet your appetite for dinner.

2 parts elder flower

1 part angelica root

1 part chamomile flower

Bedtime Tea

Relax your mind and body before settling in for the night.

2 parts linden flower

2 parts oat seed and/or oatstraw

1 part catnip herb

1 part chamomile flower

1 part lemon balm herb

Teas for the Seasons

These blends help celebrate the seasons while nurturing elements of our planet, the body and spirit of our being.

Springtime Awakening

Greet new beginnings with herbs of the season.

2 parts lemon balm leaf

2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts spearmint leaf

1 part anise seed

1 part violet leaf

1 part rose petals

1 part strawberries

Summer Harmony

Keep your cool with these refrigerant herbs.

2 parts peppermint leaf

2 parts hibiscus flower

1 part elder flower

1 part lemon balm herb

Autumn Mist

Protect the lungs and acclimate to the cooler temperatures with this formula.

2 parts rosemary leaf

1 part cinnamon bark

1 part ginger root

1 part sage leaf

Warming Winter Tea

Heat your body and soul with a cup of this brew.

2 parts dandelion root, roasted

1 part cardamom pod

1 part cinnamon bark

½ part ginger root

½ part licorice root

Color Therapy Teas

Color is another property of foods and teas that can be employed to heal and nurture the body, mind, and spirit. Try the following color therapy formulas.

Follow the Yellow Brick Road Tea!

Yellow corresponds to the solar plexus, center of power and digestion.

2 parts calendula flower

1 part dandelion flower

½ part cinnamon bark

Green Energy Tea

Green is associated with the heart center and immunity.

2 parts nettle leaf

2 parts peppermint herb

1 part alfalfa leaf

1 part dandelion leaf

Orange Chakra Tea

Orange corresponds to sensuality and energy.

1 part cinnamon bark

1 part ginger root

½ part orange peel

Purple Haze

Purple corresponds to the crown chakra, center of god consciousness.

2 parts elder berry

2 parts violet flower

1 part hibiscus flower

1 part fresh blackberries

Red Radiance Tea

Red is the color corresponding to passion and vitality.

2 parts hibiscus flower

2 parts rooibos leaf

2 parts rose hip

1 part hawthorn berry

1 part fresh strawberries

True Blue Tea

Blue is the color of the throat chakra and relates to expression.

1 part blueberries, fresh or dried, unsweetened

1 part elder berry



Healing Teas Used Topically

Hydrotherapy, as healing with water is known, has been around for as long as humankind. And why not? Water is an adaptable conductor of many types of energies, from electricity to magnetism to heat. As discussed in earlier chapters, it is also a solvent, capable of leaching constituents away from other compounds and carrying them in itself. And as early humans no doubt learned, water is a communicator—it transfers to our bodies the energies and constituents it carries.

While it's simple to imagine how that transfer takes place when water is ingested, we must acknowledge that water—or, more appropriate to our discussion, herbal tea—is no less powerful when applied topically. The human skin not only is a barrier encasing and protecting the bones, organs, and tissues, but also is a large organ of elimination and absorption. The pores of the skin release waste through perspiration; they also take in constituents they come into contact with. Herbal teas, therefore, when applied topically, pass on to us the nutrients and healing elements they carry. Better yet, topical applications allow us to bring those constituents to the specific site where they are needed—to a wound via a compress, for example, or to an infection in the eye via an eyewash.

This chapter looks at a few ways to apply herbal teas topically. These applications can be used as simple, effective remedies or pure pleasure

treatments. As in [Chapter 3](#), the term “herb” applied to a recipe ingredient refers to any or all portions of the aboveground plant.

BATHS

Herbal baths are an opportunity to merge with herbs of your choice; the herbs’ constituents are absorbed through the pores of the skin. A bath before bedtime can help you sleep. A bath during the day can be refreshing and energizing. A bath right when you come home from a long day at work can be relaxing and make you more pleasant to be around.

To prepare a bath with herbal tea, brew a strong blend, using about half a cup of herbs in half a gallon of water. Then strain the tea into the tub. You also can simply tie a handful of herbs in a dark-colored washcloth and throw it, or a few ready-made tea bags, into very hot running water as you fill the tub. When the water has reached the right level, turn off the tap and allow the herbs to steep in the bath while you floss, do some yoga, or check your e-mail. When the bathwater has cooled to a comfortable temperature, get down into it. If you prepared the bath with an herb-filled cloth, use it to scrub your body as you deeply inhale the herbs’ aromas, adding aromatherapeutic benefits to your bath. Close a curtain around the bathtub to hold in the scented steam.

The following are some of my favorite blends for herbal baths. Since these blends are for the bath and taste is not an issue, exact measurements are not essential. However, equal parts work fine, or consider what you have abundant access to in the herb garden and cupboard and select accordingly.

Calming and Colorful Kid’s Bath

Catnip herb

Hibiscus flower (makes the bathwater pink)

Rose flower

Cold-and-Flu Bath

Ginger root

Thyme herb

Yarrow herb

Dry Skin Bath

Calendula flower

Chamomile flower

Elder flower

Fennel seed

Marshmallow root

Oat seed or oatstraw

Rose flower

Energizing Bath

Basil herb

Peppermint herb

Rosemary herb

Thyme herb

Hot Weather Bath

Lemons, cut (you can even throw in a few used lemon halves from a batch of fresh lemonade)

Peppermint herb

Itchy and Inflamed Skin Bath

Calendula flower

Fennel seed

Oat seed or oatstraw

Red clover blossom

Sage herb

Yarrow herb

Lover's Bath

Cardamom seed

Cinnamon bark

Ginger root

Rose flower

Premenstrual Bath

Chamomile flower

Rose flower

Rosemary herb

Relax Bath

Catnip herb

Chamomile flower

Linden flowers

Sore Muscle Bath

Angelica root

Anise hyssop leaf

Burdock root

Ginger root

Lemongrass herb

Rosemary herb

Thyme herb

Sunburn Bath

*Make sure the water in this bath is cool
before you get in.*

Black tea leaf or lavender herb

Warm-the-Chills Bath

Cinnamon bark

Ginger root

COMPRESSES

Compresses are a way to use herbal teas topically to help heal wounds, inflammation, rashes, and skin infections; relieve pain, soreness, and spasms; improve circulation; and stimulate sweat glands and the lymphatic system.

To make a compress, soak a clean towel in hot or cold herbal tea, then wring it out and apply the cloth to the area needing treatment. Cover the damp cloth with a dry towel to help it stay hot or cold. When the compress temperature changes (the hot cools down or the cold warms up), resoak the cloth in the tea and reapply. Repeat several times.

A hot compress increases circulation and is especially beneficial in cases of backache, arthritic pain, and sore throat. A compress of hot ginger tea is particularly potent. After the final hot compress cools down, apply a cool compress to the area briefly.

A cold compress constricts blood flow and is best for hot, inflamed conditions such as swellings. After a cold-compress treatment, keep the treated area warm so the person receiving treatment does not become chilled. Peppermint tea makes an extremely potent cold compress.

The best indicator of whether a hot or cold compress is needed is the opinion of the patient; he or she should be asked whether hot or cold would give the best relief. In some cases, both hot and cold are needed. For example, a headache is best resolved by a hot compress on the back of the neck and a cold compress on the forehead. For acute injuries such as sprains, use only cold compresses for the first forty-eight to seventy-two hours, as heat would further aggravate inflammation. Later in the healing process, alternate heat with cold—always ending with cold—to enhance the healing process.

Almost all of the herbs mentioned in this book can be used as compresses for specific conditions; see [Chapter 2](#) for more details.

EYEWASHES

Eyewashes can be used to soothe tired, inflamed, and/or infected eyes. Some people even claim that eyewashes can improve vision. The wash causes the blood vessels of the eyes to contract and then relax. They are an excellent therapeutic practice for eyes that are getting lots of use from reading and sitting in front of a computer.

Herbal teas used as eyewashes should be somewhat weaker than teas for ingestion. Use just 1 scant teaspoon of herb per cup of water, and simmer at a low boil for ten minutes to assure sterility. Use a strainer with a very fine mesh to strain the tea to avoid getting particles of herbs in your eyes, and cool the tea to body temperature before administering.

To administer an eyewash, you'll need an eyecup, available at any pharmacy. Especially in cases of eye infections, it is important to sterilize the eyecup between uses. Sterilize the cup either by running it through a dishwasher with a heated drying cycle or by bringing water to a boil, pouring it into the eyecup, and letting it sit for one minute.

Fill the sterilized eyecup with the strained tea. Lean back and pour the mixture into one of your eyes, being sure to blink several times so the eye is well bathed. Repeat with the other eye.

Make eyewashes fresh for each day of use to avoid introducing bacteria into the eyes. If you're repeating treatment through the day, you can brew the tea in the morning and refrigerate any extra. Allow the

refrigerated tea to reach room temperature before using it, and discard whatever is left over at the end of the day.

Use only those herbs that are recommended for eyewashes. Herbs that are traditionally used as eyewashes include basil herb, calendula flower, catnip herb, chamomile flower, elder flower, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, plantain leaf, raspberry leaf, red clover blossom, rosemary herb, and thyme herb.

FACIAL STEAMS

A facial steam is an excellent way to cleanse your skin deeply, relax facial muscles, and improve circulation, all the while giving yourself an invigorating rosy glow. It's a lovely treatment to indulge in before a special party or when you want to look your best. At most, facial steams should be done once or twice a week.

Undergoing a facial steam is like absorbing an herbal tea through the pores of your skin. First, wash your face. Then pour 1 quart of boiling water over a handful of herbs in a glass bowl. Tie back your hair. Lean over the bowl and drape a towel over your head. Keep your face about ten inches away from the water to avoid getting burned. Inhale the sensuous steam for five to seven minutes, lifting the towel to vent steam as necessary.

Select the appropriate herbs for your skin type or skin condition.

- *Acne*: lavender flower, red clover flower
- *Blackheads*: elder flower, rosemary herb
- *Combination skin*: chamomile flower, lavender flower, licorice root, mint herb
- *Dry skin*: chamomile flower, elder flower, fennel seed, lavender flower, licorice root, red clover flower, rose flower
- *Oily skin*: lavender flower, lemongrass herb, mint herb, raspberry leaf, sage herb
- *Sensitive skin*: calendula flower, chamomile flower

FOOTBATHS

Many of the body's nerve endings are in the feet, so footbaths can feel especially delicious. In particular, they can help improve conditions of the lungs, bladder, prostate, and uterus. Other therapeutic uses include treating odoriferous and aching feet, as well as helping to reduce cellulite, swelling, calluses, leg cramps, and varicose veins. Additionally, they are an excellent preventive treatment when used at the first signs of a cold, sore throat, headache, or congestion in the eyes and ears, as the heat draws congestion away from the respiratory system.

Depending on the health concern being addressed and the ambient temperature, footbaths can be hot or cold, or they can alternate between hot and cold. They are a lovely precursor to a foot massage, or better yet, massage the feet while soaking them.

To prepare the bath, make about a gallon of standard herbal tea by adding about 16 heaping teaspoons of herb per gallon of water. Strain out the herbs and pour the tea into a wide basin. Place your bare feet in the basin, and enjoy the relaxing sensation until the water cools down. If you have a warm condition—inflammation, such as from a sprain, or fever or headache—a cool washcloth on the forehead can be a nice addition; refresh it every two to three minutes. Afterward, pour cold water over the top and bottom of the feet. Dry the skin thoroughly and put on clean socks.

The following herbs are good candidates for footbaths:

- *To relieve soreness and deodorize:* anise hyssop herb, rosemary herb, sage herb
- *To soften:* calendula flower, marshmallow root, oat seed or oatstraw
- *To warm:* cinnamon bark, ginger root

HAIR RINSES

A hair rinse is a wonderful treatment both therapeutically and cosmetically. Bring 1 quart of water to a boil and add 4 heaping teaspoons of your choice of herbs. Stir, cover, and let sit for one hour. Strain into a large plastic squeeze bottle. Add 1 tablespoon of apple-cider vinegar. Pour

the strained tea slowly over your hair. Don't rinse it out; just let it dry and enjoy the subtle radiance.

Select the appropriate herbs for your hair type or scalp condition:

- *Balding*: nettle herb, rosemary herb, sage herb
- *Blond hair*: calendula flower, chamomile flower, mullein flower, orange peel
- *Dandruff*: nettle herb, mint herb, rosemary herb, sage herb, thyme herb
- *Dark hair (to help keep it dark)*: clove bud (use just a small amount or your head will feel numb), elder berry, nettle herb, rosemary herb, sage herb, black tea leaf
- *Dry hair*: chamomile flower, elder flower, marshmallow root, nettle herb, red clover flower, rosemary herb
- *Oily hair*: lemon balm herb, lemongrass herb, mint herb, nettle herb, orange peel, rosemary herb, sage herb, yarrow herb
- *Red hair*: beet powder, ginger root, hibiscus flower
- *Scalp irritation*: calendula flower, chamomile flower

HANDBATHS

There are many nerve ending in the hands, and soaking them in hot herbal teas can help conditions such as arthritis, colds, flu, and poor circulation. Make about a half gallon of standard herbal tea by adding about 8 heaping teaspoons of herb to a half gallon of water. Pour the tea into a basin and soak your hands in it. An especially potent treatment is to soak your hands for eight minutes in the morning and to soak your feet for eight minutes in the evening. For children, half that amount of time is sufficient.

The following herbs are good candidates for handbaths:

- *To relieve soreness*: rosemary, sage
- *To clear up eczema*: calendula, chamomile, oatstraw or oat seed
- *To relieve hand pain or increase circulation*: ginger root, rosemary herb

MOUThWASHES AND GARGLES

Gargles and mouthwashes are made by preparing a standard tea by adding one heaping teaspoon of herb per cup of water, allowing it to cool, swishing it around in the mouth or gargling it, and then spitting it out.

(For a gargle to be effective, it should be continued for ten minutes.)

Some of my favorite herbs for mouthwashes and gargles include basil leaf, blackberry leaf, calendula flower, chamomile flower, echinacea root, fennel seed, lemon balm herb, licorice root, marshmallow root, mint, raspberry leaf, sage herb, thyme herb, and yarrow herb.

SITZ BATHS

A sitz bath is a method of treating many gynecological problems, pelvic pain, and hemorrhoids. A sitz bath is made the same way as an herbal bath (see the bath section above), although in this case you are localizing the benefits of the water temperature and herbs. You can take a sitz bath in a full-size bathtub or in a smaller basin. In general, the water level should be below the knees and not above the navel. Pour the hot or chilled herbal tea into the tub and soak your hip area in it for about three minutes.

A cold sitz bath tonifies the pelvis and bowel. Use cold-water sitz baths for back and lower organ problems such as menstrual pain, pelvic inflammatory disease, hemorrhoids, and congestion in the liver and spleen. A cold compress can be applied to the forehead to improve the effect. A hot sitz bath increases circulation to the area and can break up congestion and relieve pain.

Sitz baths can be taken alternating hot and cold, with three minutes in hot water followed by two minutes in cold, repeating up to three times but always ending with cold. When you're finished, keep warm. These alternating baths help move toxins from the area and bring in fresh nutrients and deep healing power.

STEAM INHALATIONS

Steam inhalations can benefit conditions such as asthma, bronchitis, coughs, laryngitis, nasal congestion, and sinus infections by helping to

warm, increase circulation in, and loosen mucus from the respiratory tract.

To prepare a steam inhalation, bring 1 quart of water to a boil and add 4 heaping teaspoons of herbs. Remove the pot from the stove and place it on a counter or table on a heatproof pad. Leaning over the pot, drape a towel over both your head and the pot. Breathe in the steam for about seven minutes or so. If the water cools enough that the steam starts to dissipate, gently blow into the herb pot and more steam will rise.

Herbs that are often used in steam inhalations include cinnamon bark, mint herb, oregano herb, thyme herb, and yarrow herb.



Fun with Tea Parties

Meanwhile, let us have a sip of tea.

*The afternoon glow is brightening the bamboos, the fountains are
bubbling with delight, and the sighing of the pines is heard in our kettle.
Let us dream of evanescence, and linger in the beautiful foolishness of
things.*

—KAKUZO OKAKURA, *THE BOOK OF TEA* (1906)

Around the world, people savor the pleasant experience of having a cup of tea with friends or in one's own company. In Japan, the preparation and serving of tea has been ritualized in tea ceremonies. In Morocco, shop customers are welcomed with sweet mint tea. Down South, a tall glass of iced tea or sweet tea is offered to guests. And in Britain, the average person drinks six cups of tea daily.

The high culture of tea is based primarily on two events: afternoon tea, at which tea and lighter fare such as cucumber sandwiches are traditionally served; and high tea, an evening supper at which tea and hearty food are served (Welsh rabbit and shepherd's pie are the classics in England).

The afternoon tea party was the early-nineteenth-century invention of the seventh duchess of Bedford, who was also a lady-in-waiting to Queen Victoria. The duchess, who suffered from afternoon hunger, began calling

for tea with light snacks in the afternoon. After enjoying the ritual greatly herself, she began inviting guests to share it with her. Soon, all of London was sipping afternoon tea with little sandwiches.

Here in Boulder we sometimes have wild tea parties, the Literary Ladies High SocieTea. As my friend Cha Cha says on her tea party invitations, “Hats assured. Gloves optional.” We have dressed up in costumes (and once even in lingerie) and are always prepared to share a story, poem, or secret.

TEA PARTY RECIPES

Here are a few of my favorite recipes for a healthier version of the traditional ritual. I’ve included recipes for both raw and cooked delights, as well as many luscious herbal treats.

Almond Milk

It’s easy to make your own almond milk, and it’s a great vegan alternative to dairy products.

Yield: 1 quart.

1 cup almonds, soaked overnight, then rinsed

1 quart water

Combine the almonds and the water in a blender. Blend for about 1 minute. Strain through cheesecloth, squeezing the nourishment of the nuts into the water.

Sunflower Pâté

Sunflower seeds are a nourishing adrenal tonic. Try this pâté on sliced cucumbers or as a filling for celery sticks. Use it to stuff tomatoes and

peppers, making a decorative scalloped edge. This pâté is excellent when mixed with chopped celery; the mixture can be used as a sandwich filling or salad topping.

Yield: 2½ cups.

1½ cups raw sunflower seeds, soaked overnight, then rinsed

½ cup freshly squeezed lemon juice

¼ cup tahini

3 tablespoons chopped parsley

1 teaspoon fresh ginger root

1 teaspoon sea salt

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and puree.

Guacamole

This classic recipe can be served with slices of carrot, celery, jicama, and red pepper or with your favorite chips or crackers.

Yield: about 1½ cups.

2 avocados, peeled and seeded

1 tomato, chopped fine

1 tablespoon lemon juice

½ teaspoon chili powder

¼ teaspoon sea salt

Mash the avocado flesh with a fork. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well.

Jicama Crunch Sticks

Enjoy a platter of these with your best friend. You'll never miss the French fries!

Yield: 2 servings.

1 jicama, peeled and cut into French-fry shapes

2 tablespoons olive oil

1 teaspoon chili powder

½ teaspoon Celtic salt

Toss the jicama sticks with the oil and seasonings.

Zucchini Hummus

Serve with raw vegetable chips.

Yield: about 2½ cups.

2 cups chopped zucchini

⅔ cup tahini

½ cup water

¼ cup chopped parsley

¼ cup chopped spearmint

Juice of 2 lemons

2 cloves garlic (optional)

½ teaspoon sea salt

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and puree.

Spicy Unroasted Nuts

*You'll need a food dehydrator to
prepare this tasty mix.*

Yield: about 4 cups.

1 cup each almonds, pecans, hazelnuts, and sunflower seeds, soaked
overnight, then rinsed

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 teaspoon chili powder

1 teaspoon Nama Shoyu

Place the nuts and seeds in a bowl. Combine the olive oil, chili powder,
and Nama Shoyu in a separate bowl and blend. Pour the oil mixture over
the nuts and mix well, so that all the nuts are coated. Spread on a
dehydrator sheet and dehydrate 10 to 12 hours, stirring occasionally.

Violet-Filled Crepes

*Serve these crepes with maple syrup
and garnish with a few fresh violet
flowers. Ooh là là!*

Yield: 4 servings.

Crepes

1 cup milk or milk substitute

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup unbleached flour

2 large eggs

1 tablespoon honey

Nonstick cooking spray

Filling

1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups cottage cheese

1 cup violet flowers
3 tablespoons unrefined sugar or honey
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon cardamom seeds

1. To make the crepes, combine all the ingredients in a blender and blend. Place in refrigerator to chill for 30 minutes. Heat a skillet over medium heat. Spray the skillet surface with nonstick cooking spray and drop $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of batter into it. Flip the crepe when it is just beginning to brown on one side. When the crepe is finished, transfer to a warm plate. Repeat until all the batter is used up.
2. To make the filling, combine all the ingredients in a blender and blend.
3. Spoon about $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of the filling into each crepe and roll them up.

Dandelion Green Florentine

*Serve with a slice of whole-grain toast
and salsa.*

Yield: 2 large or 4 small servings.

4 cups chopped dandelion greens
3 tablespoons cream cheese
4 eggs
Sea salt
Freshly ground pepper

Warm a skillet over medium heat. Stir in the greens and cream cheese and cook for about 3 minutes. Then make four little “nests” in the greens and crack an egg into each of the indentations. Cover and cook until the eggs are done.

Dandelion Green Quiche

Yield: 6 servings.

Crust

½ cup vegetable oil

2 tablespoons milk

¾ cup cornmeal

¾ cup unbleached white flour

1 tablespoon sage

½ teaspoon salt

¼ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

Filling

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1 medium onion, chopped

2½ cups chopped wild greens

1 cup grated cheese

2 eggs

2 ounces cottage cheese

¼ teaspoon salt

Freshly ground pepper to taste

1. To make the crust, preheat the oven to 425°F. Mix the vegetable oil and milk together, then stir in the dry ingredients. Press the mixture into a 10-inch pie pan. Bake 5 minutes.
2. To make the filling, lower the oven to 350°F. Warm the oil in a large skillet. Add the onion and lightly sauté. Spread the cooked onions in the prebaked pie shell. Top with the grated cheese and greens. Combine the eggs, cottage cheese, salt, and pepper in a blender and whiz together. Pour over the greens.

3. Bake for 35 minutes. Let stand a few minutes before serving.

Dandelion “Mushrooms”

This dish is excellent with a side dish of rice. Tastes like mushrooms!

Yield: 2 servings.

15 freshly picked dandelion flowers, washed and still damp

½ cup unbleached white flour

¼ teaspoon sea salt

2 tablespoons olive oil or butter

Mix the flowers with the flour and salt. Heat the olive oil or butter in a pan, add the coated flowers, and sauté, turning the flowers so that they brown on all sides. Serve hot.

Dandelion Loaf

Yield: 4 to 6 servings.

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 onion, chopped

1 stalk celery, chopped

1 teaspoon chopped fresh sage, or 2 teaspoons dried

1 cup dandelion flowers

1½ cups day-old bread, broken up into 1-inch pieces

1 tablespoon nutritional yeast

2 eggs, lightly beaten

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1 cup milk or milk substitute

Preheat the oven to 350°F and grease a loaf pan. Warm the oil in a skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and sauté 2 minutes. Stir in the sage, dandelion flowers, bread, nutritional yeast, eggs, salt, and pepper. Remove from heat, stir in the milk, and pour into the loaf pan. Bake for 45 minutes.

Dandelion Flower Muffins

Yield: 12 muffins.

¼ cup vegetable oil

½ cup honey

1 egg

1 tablespoon baking powder

2 teaspoons cinnamon

½ teaspoon salt

2 cups milk or milk substitute

3 cups unbleached white flour

1 cup cornmeal

1 cup dandelion petals (without the sepals)

½ cup chopped dandelion leaves

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Combine the oil and honey, then add the egg, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. Mix in the milk, flour, and cornmeal a little bit at a time, alternating among the three. Finally, add the dandelion petals and leaves. Stir just enough to combine the ingredients. Pour the batter into oiled muffin tins and bake for 35 minutes.

Herb Muffins

Yield: 12 muffins.

2 cups unbleached white flour

2 tablespoons baking powder

2 tablespoons dried herbs (basil, rosemary, sage, thyme, chives, and/or calendula flowers)

$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt

1 cup milk or milk substitute

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup honey

2 eggs

2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Combine the dry ingredients in one bowl and the liquid ingredients in another bowl. Then combine the dry ingredients and liquid ingredients and stir only until evenly mixed. Pour the batter into oiled muffin tins and bake 25 minutes.

Golden Biscuits

Yield: about 18 biscuits.

2 cups unbleached white flour

4 teaspoons baking powder

2 teaspoons honey or unrefined sugar

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup vegetable oil

1 cup cooked, mashed winter squash (butternut, acorn, or pumpkin) or carrot

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Sift together the flour and baking powder. Stir the honey and oil into the mixture, then add the squash. Knead the dough for 2 minutes. Roll out the dough to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thickness and cut into 3-inch round shapes using a cookie cutter or jar lid. Place the biscuits $\frac{1}{2}$

inch apart on an oiled baking sheet. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until puffed and browned.

Rosemary-Lemon Balm Biscuits

Yield: about 24 biscuits.

2 cups whole wheat flour

2 cups unbleached white flour

½ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 teaspoon baking soda

1 tablespoon unrefined sugar

4 tablespoons vegetable oil

4 tablespoons crushed rosemary

4 tablespoons chopped lemon balm

1½ cups milk or milk substitute

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Sift together the flours, salt, baking powder, baking soda, and sugar. Stir in the oil, herbs, and milk. Roll out the dough to ½-inch thickness and cut into 3-inch round shapes using a cookie cutter or jar lid. Place the biscuits ½ inch apart on an oiled baking sheet. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until puffed and browned.

Peppermint Cookies

Yield: about 50 cookies (depending on their size).

4 tablespoons butter, softened

1 cup honey

½ cup vegetable oil

3 eggs
1 teaspoon peppermint extract
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 cup dried, chopped peppermint leaves
4½ cups unbleached white flour

Cream together the softened butter, honey, and oil. Mix in the eggs and extracts. Add the baking soda, cream of tartar, and peppermint leaves. Gradually stir in the flour and mix well. Chill the dough for 1 hour. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Roll out the dough to about ⅓ inch in thickness and cut out shapes with a cookie cutter. Place the cookies on greased baking sheets and bake 7 to 10 minutes. Cool and enjoy!

Apricot Tea Bread

Yield: about 12 servings.

1½ cups water
1½ cups dried, pitted apricots
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
½ cup honey
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3½ cups unbleached white flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
½ teaspoon grated organic orange rind

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Bring the water to a boil. Add the apricots, reduce heat, and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes. Strain and cool the apricots completely. Combine the apricots, oil, honey, salt, and vanilla. Sift together the flour and baking powder and add to the apricot mixture. Mix well. Stir in the orange rind. Pour the batter into a greased loaf pan. Bake for 75 minutes. Remove from oven, let sit 10 minutes, then remove the loaf from the pan.

Poppy Seed Cake

Yield: about 12 servings.

1 cup poppy seeds
1½ cups milk or milk substitute
½ cup butter, softened
½ cup vegetable oil
1½ cups unrefined sugar
3 eggs
1¾ cups unbleached white flour
1 tablespoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
Juice of 1 lemon

Add the poppy seeds to the milk and heat in a pan until boiling. Remove from heat and allow to stand for 20 minutes. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Combine the oil, butter, sugar, and eggs and beat well. Add the flour, baking powder, and salt and mix well. Then add the milk and poppy seed mixture and mix just until blended. Stir in the lemon juice. Pour the batter into a greased 9-by-12-inch baking dish. Bake for 40 minutes, or until a toothpick, when inserted, comes out clean.

Anise Hyssop Cookies

Yield: about 36 cookies.

1 cup unrefined sugar

¼ cup finely chopped anise hyssop leaves and flowers

1 large egg

8 tablespoons butter, softened

½ cup almond butter

2 cups unbleached white flour

½ teaspoon salt

Mix together the sugar, anise hyssop, egg, butter, and almond butter. Mix in the flour and salt. Roll the dough into two cylinders each about 2 inches in diameter, place in a plastic container, and chill for 1 hour. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Slice the dough into ¼-inch-thick rounds. Place on an ungreased baking sheet and bake for 12 minutes.

Frosted Rose-Hazelnut Scones

Yield: about 24 scones.

Scones

2½ cups unbleached white flour

2 teaspoons unrefined sugar

¾ teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon baking powder

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon cardamom powder

½ teaspoon grated organic lemon peel

4 tablespoons butter

½ cup ground, toasted hazelnuts

1 cup milk or milk substitute
1 cup chopped (organic) rose petals, with the whitish bases removed

Frosting

1 cup confectioners sugar
1 teaspoon rose water
1 tablespoon rose jam (or strawberry or raspberry jam)

1. To make the scones, preheat the oven to 425°F. Combine all ingredients in a bowl and mix thoroughly. Drop tablespoon-size amounts of batter onto an ungreased baking sheet and bake for 10 minutes. Place the scones on a large platter and allow to cool.
2. To make the frosting, combine all ingredients and mix well.
3. Top the cooled scones with frosting.

Blueberry Cobbler

Yield: about 12 servings.

5 tablespoons butter
¼ teaspoon vegetable oil
1 cup chopped pecans or walnuts
1 cup brown or unrefined sugar
4 cups uncooked oatmeal
1 cup unbleached white flour
6 cups blueberries (or elder berries)
6 small apples, peeled and chopped
¾ cup honey
¼ teaspoon ground cardamom

¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon

¼ teaspoon ground anise

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Melt the butter in a skillet, then add the vegetable oil and the pecans and toast the nuts lightly. Add the sugar, oatmeal, and flour to the pan and cook, stirring frequently, for about 2 minutes, until browned. In a large baking pan, mix together the berries, apples, honey, and spices. Top with the oatmeal mixture. Bake for 35 minutes.

Lemon Pudding

*With recipes like this, it's quick and easy
to make delicious, healthful snacks.*

Yield: 2 servings.

1 cup Brazil nuts, soaked overnight, then rinsed

8 dates, soaked 20 minutes Juice of 3 lemons

1 teaspoon grated organic lemon peel

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and puree.

Wild Berry Kanten

*Kanten is a Jello-like dish that is cool
and refreshing for summertime tea
parties. In general, berries are cooling
and blood building. Raspberries contain
ellagic acid, an important anticancer
compound. Blueberries are especially
beneficial for the eyes. Elder berries
help the body fight off infection.
Mulberries help cool summer heat.*

Yield: 6 servings.

2 tablespoons agar-agar flakes
1 cup cold water
1 cup boiling water
1 cup unsweetened pineapple juice
½ cup honey
1 tablespoon lemon juice
2 cups wild berries

Combine the agar-agar with the cold water and let sit 1 minute. Then add the boiling water, bring the mixture to a boil, and keep boiling for 2 minutes. Let cool, then add the pineapple juice, honey, and lemon juice. Spread the berries over the bottom of a glass baking dish. Pour the liquid over the berries and allow to gel in the refrigerator.

Nutty as a Fruitcake

*This is the kind of fruitcake you'll want
to eat and share with others.*

Yield: 12 servings.

2 cups almonds, soaked overnight, rinsed, and dehydrated 12 hours
2 cups hazelnuts, soaked overnight, rinsed, and dehydrated 12 hours
2 cups pecans or walnuts, soaked overnight, rinsed, and dehydrated 12
hours
2 cups fresh coconut
1 cup dates, pitted and soaked 30 minutes
1 cup raisins
1 cup chopped, dried pineapple
1 cup chopped, dried Turkish apricots
¼ cup flax seeds

¼ cup honey

1 tablespoon grated organic orange peel

½ teaspoon Celtic salt

Combine all ingredients in a large bowl. Place half the mixture in a food processor and process. Then stir the two mixtures back together. Form into two round loaves, each about ½ inch high, on dehydrator sheets. Dehydrate about 12 hours, then turn over, remove the sheets, and dehydrate about another 12 hours. Chill before serving.

Nutty Brownies

A truly great treat for kids of all ages.

Yield: 12 servings.

2 cups pecans, soaked overnight, then rinsed

1 cup almonds, soaked overnight, then rinsed

1 cup pine nuts, soaked 2 hours

1 cup pitted dates

1 banana

½ cup raw carob powder

1 teaspoon vanilla extract (optional)

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and process using the S blade. Spread in a layer about ½ inch thick on dehydrator sheets. Dehydrate 6 hours, then turn over, remove the dehydrator sheets, and dehydrate another 4 hours.

Carob Crunch Balls

Keep a batch of these in the freezer and you'll always have a tasty treat to offer guests.

Yield: about 24 balls.

1 cup walnuts, soaked overnight, then rinsed

1 cup pitted dates, soaked about 20 minutes

1 cup almond butter

½ cup carob powder

½ cup raw sunflower seeds

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and process. Form into 1-inch balls and freeze. Store in the freezer.

Hawthorn Berry Chutney

*Excellent as a Thanksgiving condiment
alternative to cranberry sauce!*

Yield: about 2 cups.

4 cups hawthorn berries, collected after the first frost

2½ cups apple-cider vinegar

1 teaspoon salt

1 cup raisins

1½ cups unrefined sugar

1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon freshly grated ginger

¼ teaspoon ground cloves

1 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

Place the hawthorn berries in a large pan with the vinegar and salt, cover, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 1 hour. Run the berries and their liquid through a food mill or strainer, stirring so that you collect the hawthorn puree and discard the seeds. Afterward, you should have about 2½ cups of pulp. Add the remaining ingredients, bring to a boil, reduce

heat, and simmer, stirring continuously, for 15 minutes. Pour the chutney into sterilized glass jars. Store in the refrigerator, where the chutney will keep for about a month.

Rosemary Conserve

This recipe can also be prepared with sage, thyme, or borage flowers.

Yield: about 2 cups.

2½ cups rosemary leaves and flowers, with stems removed

2½ cups water

2 cups unrefined sugar Juice of 1 lemon

Place the rosemary in a pan with the water and sugar, bring to a boil, reduce heat, and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the lemon juice and pour into clean jars. Allow to cool and store in the refrigerator, where it will keep for about a month.

Dried Fruit Jam

Yield: about 1 cup.

½ cup raisins

½ cup dried, unsulfured apricots

½ inch fresh ginger root

Soak the raisins and apricots in enough water to cover for at least 2 hours. In a food processor or blender, puree the fruit with the ginger root and enough of the soak water to get a jam consistency. Pour into clean jars and store in the refrigerator, where the jam will keep about 2 weeks.

Violet Honey

Here is a recipe I learned from Susun Weed.

Yield: about 1 cup.

2 cups violet flowers, collected in spring

1 cup raw honey

Juice of 1 lemon

Combine all ingredients in a blender and blend. Store the honey in a glass jar in the freezer. Use as a spread on buttered toast or eat by the ½ teaspoon when feeling sad or heartbroken.

Honey-Orange-Rose Love Butter

This recipe can also be made with cream cheese instead of butter. It's lovely to use for dainty tea sandwiches!

Yield: about 1 cup.

½ cup butter, softened

2 teaspoons herbs of choice, such as rose petals (with white bases removed), rosemary, sage, or parsley

½ cup honey

1½ teaspoons grated organic orange peel

Combine all ingredients in a bowl and blend thoroughly.

Scented Sugar

Organic fresh rose petals or sliced vanilla bean

Unrefined sugar

Layer the rose petals or vanilla bean and the sugar in a jar, cover, and let stand for 3 weeks. Remove the rose petals or vanilla beans and store the

aromatic sugar in a cool, dry place in a sealed jar.

Celebration Punch

*For a truly celebratory presentation,
float strawberry slices, orange slices,
and edible flowers on top of this punch.*

Yield: about 1½ gallons.

1 gallon water

1 cup hibiscus flowers

1 cup rose hips

¼ cup cinnamon pieces

1 quart freshly squeezed orange juice

1 quart fresh pineapple juice

1 quart natural ginger ale

Bring the water to a boil, then remove from heat. Add the hibiscus flowers, rose hips, and cinnamon. Cover and let steep for 1 hour. Strain, then add the juices and ginger ale.

Better to be deprived of food for three days than of tea for one.

—ANCIENT CHINESE PROVERB

TABLE TIPS

No tea party is complete without finger food. Consider adding to your tea party table any of the following:

- Shish kebabs of cherry tomatoes, natural cheeses, and pitted olives on toothpicks
- Slices of cucumber or zucchini with raw almond butter spread on top

- Cherry tomatoes
- Bowls of raw nuts and seeds
- Fruit slices
- Dates or celery sticks stuffed with raw almond butter
- Small sandwiches cut with heart-shaped cookie cutters or other fun shapes

And let's not forget presentation! Theme parties are always fun, but even unthemed parties can be dressed up:

- Use your prettiest bowls and serving dishes.
- Serve entrées on a bed of colorful greens, grated carrots, or shredded cabbage.
- Decorate dishes with colorful shredded roots like beets, carrots, or sweet potatoes.
- For garnishes, try cucumber slices, radish roses, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower buds, carrot curls, sprouts, avocado balls, buckwheat lettuce, sunflower greens, watercress, chopped nuts, olives, chopped red pepper, shredded coconut, berries, citrus fruit slices, pomegranate seeds, star fruit slices, or fresh herbs from your garden.
- Make interesting designs on your flatter foods. Try placing a lace paper doily or a large maple leaf on top, sprinkling on a powdered seasoning, and then carefully removing the doily or leaf, leaving behind a beautiful pattern. Or use nuts, dried fruit, or edible flowers to trace a mandala design on your dish.

THE ART OF NAPKIN FOLDING

Take a large square napkin and fold it like an accordion or fan, with each fold about 1 inch wide. Tie the napkin in the middle with a pretty ribbon, and insert a sprig of dried lavender or rosemary through the ribbon.

When you place the napkin on the table, it will automatically fan out at the top and bottom. Make sure the decorative herb sprig faces up!

MAKING AN HERBAL TEA GIFT BASKET

A tea gift basket is a thoughtful gift that extends good wishes for comfort, health, and sharing good company. It's a gift with a healing feeling! It's also a nice gift to give away at tea parties.

Find a pretty basket, decorative bowl, or other interesting container. Line the basket with shredded material. We like to use homemade tie-dyed tissue wrapping paper, but craft stores have interesting material. Look for colored tissue paper, a tea towel, raffia, dried flowers, potpourri, or even moss. Fill the basket with any of the following:

- A variety of packaged herbal teas—better yet, your own blends, placed in clean recycled jars and decorated with pretty labels noting the ingredients and the date of creation
- A tea strainer
- An attractive tea cup or two
- A few homemade or store-bought treats
- Dried fruit and/or nuts
- A jar of raw honey or scented sugar
- A few seeds for growing tea herbs in the garden

Arrange the items in the basket. Add a bow and card. Cover with cellophane, especially if you're not going to deliver the basket right away, and tie on a bow.



Glossary

Adaptogen. An agent that increases the body's resistance to stress, working through the hormonal response. *Examples:* burdock root and rooibos leaf.

Alterative. An agent that alters one's condition. It usually increases blood flow to tissues, restores body functions, aids assimilation, stimulates metabolism, and promotes waste excretion. *Examples:* alfalfa herb, blackberry leaf, burdock root, dandelion leaf and root, echinacea root, elder flower and berry, licorice root, marshmallow root, nettle leaf, raspberry leaf, and red clover flower.

Analgesic. An agent that relieves pain. *Examples:* catnip herb, chamomile flower, cinnamon bark, clove bud, ginger root, green tea leaf, mint herb (used topically), mullein flower, and yarrow herb.

Anaphrodisiac. An agent that curbs sex drive. *Example:* sage herb.

Anesthetic. An agent that deadens sensation. *Examples:* clove bud, fennel seed, mints (used topically).

Anodyne. A strong pain reliever that lessens nerve excitability at nerve centers. *Examples:* catnip herb, chamomile flower, clove bud, dandelion flower, dandelion leaf, dandelion root, echinacea root, ginger root, mullein leaf, and rosemary herb.

Antacid. An agent that lessens stomach acidity. *Examples:* dandelion leaf, marshmallow root, and red raspberry leaf.

Anthelmintic. An agent that destroys or expels intestinal worms. *Examples:* clove bud, nettle seed, plantain herb, and thyme herb.

Antiabortive. An agent able to prevent threatened miscarriage. *Example:* raspberry leaf.

Antiallergenic. An agent that helps relieve the symptoms of allergies. *Example:* nettle leaf.

Antiarthritic. An agent that helps relieve inflammation caused by arthritis and helps protect the joints from further degeneration. *Example:* licorice root.

Antibacterial. An agent that destroys or suppresses the growth of microbes; also known as antibiotic. *Examples:* anise hyssop herb, burdock root, calendula flower, chamomile flower, cinnamon bark, clove bud, dandelion root, echinacea root, fennel seed, ginger root, green tea leaf, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, hibiscus flower and root bark, lemon balm herb, lemon verbena herb, lemongrass leaf, licorice root, mullein leaf, orange peel, plantain leaf, red clover flower, rose flower and hip, rosemary herb, and yerba maté leaf.

Anticatarrhal. An agent that reduces mucus in the body. *Examples:* angelica root, anise seed, anise hyssop herb, cardamom seed, elder flower, fenugreek seed, ginger root, green and black tea leaf, licorice root, linden flower, marshmallow root, mullein leaf, nettle leaf, orange peel, peppermint herb, plantain herb, red raspberry leaf, and yarrow herb.

Antidepressant. An agent that supports the nervous system and alleviates feelings of depression. *Examples:* basil leaf, lemon balm herb, linden flower, oat seed and oatstraw, rose flower, and rosemary herb.

Antidiarrheal. An agent that helps stop diarrhea. *Example:* catnip leaf.

Antiemetic. An agent that counteracts nausea and vomiting. *Examples:* alfalfa herb, anise seed, anise hyssop, chamomile flower, cinnamon bark, clove bud, fennel seed, ginger, peppermint herb, raspberry leaf, red clover flower, and spearmint herb.

Antifungal. An agent that inhibits the overgrowth of fungal organisms. *Examples:* anise hyssop herb, burdock root, chamomile flower, cinnamon bark, clove bud, dandelion root, echinacea root, ginger root, hibiscus flower, lemongrass herb, licorice root, orange peel, rose hip, rosemary herb, sage herb, thyme herb, violet leaf, and yarrow herb.

Antigalactagogue. An agent that helps decrease lactation in a nursing mother. *Example:* sage herb.

Antihistamine. An agent that helps reduce the production of histamines; useful in the treatment of allergies and colds. *Examples:* chamomile flower, lemon balm herb, and nettle leaf.

Anti-inflammatory. An agent that soothes and reduces inflammation. *Examples:* alfalfa herb, angelica root, anise seed, burdock root, calendula flower, chamomile flower, clove bud, dandelion root, echinacea root, elder flower and berry, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, ginger root, hibiscus flower, lemon balm herb, licorice root, marshmallow root, mullein flower and leaf, nettle herb, orange peel, plantain leaf, red clover flower, rooibos leaf, rose flower and hip, rosemary herb, sage herb, violet leaf, and yarrow leaf.

Antilithic. An agent that reduces, suppresses, or dissolves calculi (stones in the body). *Examples:* dandelion leaf and hawthorn leaf, flower, and berry.

Antimutagenic. An agent that helps prevent mutation. *Examples:* licorice root, rooibos leaf, rose hip, and rosemary herb.

Antioxidant. An agent that prevents free-radical damage. *Examples:* basil herb, clove bud, dandelion leaf, echinacea root, ginger root, green tea leaf, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, hibiscus flower, lemon balm herb, lemongrass herb, licorice root, mint herb, nettle leaf, rooibos leaf, rose hip, rosemary herb, sage herb, and yerba maté leaf.

Antiparasitic. An agent that destroys parasites and worms in the digestive tract and on the skin. *Examples:* clove bud, ginger root, hibiscus flower, hyssop herb, lemongrass leaf, mint herb, and thyme herb.

Antirheumatic. An agent that helps relieve pain and stiffness in joints and muscles. *Examples:* angelica root, dandelion root, elder flower and berry, ginger root, licorice root, and nettle leaf.

Antiscorbutic. A source of vitamin C, which can help prevent scurvy. *Examples:* hibiscus flower, violet leaf, and yerba maté leaf.

Antiseptic. An agent that prevents bacterial growth, inhibits pathogens, and counters sepsis. *Examples:* basil herb, calendula flower, cardamom seed, chamomile flower, clove bud, echinacea root, elder flower and berry, fenugreek seed, ginger root, green tea, hyssop herb, lemongrass herb, licorice root, mint herb, mullein leaf, nettle leaf and seed, plantain leaf, raspberry leaf, red clover blossom, rose flower, rosemary herb, sage herb, thyme leaf, violet leaf, and yarrow herb.

Antispasmodic. An agent that eases muscle cramps and psychological stress. *Examples:* anise seed, basil herb, calendula flower, cardamom seed, catnip herb, chamomile flower, clove bud, elder flower and berry, fennel seed, ginger root, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, hibiscus flower, hyssop herb, lemon balm herb, lemon verbena herb, lemongrass leaf, licorice root, linden flower, marshmallow root, mint herb, mullein leaf, oat seed and oatstraw, plantain leaf, raspberry leaf, red clover, rooibos leaf, rose flower, rosemary herb, sage herb, thyme herb, and yarrow herb.

Antisudorific. An agent that decreases the production of perspiration. *Example:* sage herb.

Antitumor. An agent that reduces tumors. *Examples:* elder flower, green tea leaf, licorice root, and red clover flower.

Antitussive. An agent that relieves coughing. *Examples:* anise seed, burdock root, fennel seed, ginger root, hyssop herb, licorice root, marshmallow root, mint herb, mullein leaf, red clover flower, rosemary herb, thyme leaf, and violet leaf.

Antivenom. An agent that reduces the harm caused by venom, such as that of a snake or insect. *Examples:* echinacea root, licorice root, and plantain leaf.

Antiviral. An agent that inhibits viral replication. *Examples:* calendula flower, cinnamon bark, echinacea root, ginger root, green tea leaf, hyssop herb, lemon balm herb, lemongrass leaf, licorice root, mint herb, rooibos herb, and rose flower and hip.

Aperient. An agent that is mildly laxative and stool softening. Aperients are typically used in cases of sluggish bowels. *Examples:* burdock root, dandelion leaf and root, fennel seed, ginger root, hyssop herb, licorice root, and yerba maté leaf.

Aphrodisiac. An agent that increases sexual desire and potency. *Examples:* anise seed, burdock root, cardamom seed, cinnamon bark, clove bud, fenugreek seed, ginger root, licorice root, marshmallow root, oat seed, rose flower, and yerba maté leaf.

Aromatic. An agent that is fragrant, often pungent, and often stimulating to the digestive tract. Aromatics improve the flavor of bitter herbs. *Examples:* anise seed, basil herb, cardamom seed, cinnamon bark, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, ginger root, hyssop herb, lemon balm herb, lemon verbena herb, lemon-grass leaf, mint herb, orange peel, rose flower, rosemary herb, sage herb, and thyme herb.

Astringent. An agent that tightens and tones tissues and dries secretions. Many astringents contain tannins. *Examples:* blackberry leaf and root, calendula flower, cardamom seed, cinnamon bark, clove bud, dandelion leaf, echinacea root, elder flower, green and black tea leaf, hawthorn leaf and flower, hibiscus flower, hyssop herb,

lemongrass leaf, mullein leaf, nettle leaf, orange peel, plantain leaf, raspberry leaf, rooibos leaf, rose leaf, rosemary leaf, sage leaf, thyme leaf, violet leaf, yarrow leaf, and yerba maté leaf.

Bitter. An agent that stimulates the flow of digestive secretions, as well as pituitary, liver, and duodenum secretions. Bitters clear heat and aid digestion. They can be tonic, aromatic, or pungent and usually have a contractive force. They are often considered cooling and drying.

Examples: angelica root, burdock root, chamomile flower, dandelion leaf and root, orange peel, and rosemary herb.

Bronchiodilator. An agent that relaxes the bronchial muscles, thus facilitating breathing. *Example:* thyme herb.

Calmative. An agent that gently relaxes the nerves. *Examples:* calendula flower and fennel seed.

Cardioprotective. An agent that benefits the heart. *Examples:* dandelion flower, ginger root, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, raspberry leaf, rooibos leaf, and yerba maté leaf.

Carminative. An agent that relieves gas and nausea and relaxes griping in the bowel. Carminatives are often used in cases of indigestion and lack of appetite. *Examples:* anise seed, cardamom seed, cinnamon bark, elder flower, fennel seed, ginger root, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, hyssop, lemon balm, mint herb, nettle leaf, orange peel, rooibos leaf, rose flower, rosemary herb, and thyme herb.

Cathartic. An agent that stimulates intense bowel evacuation. *Example:* violet root.

Cephalic. An agent that has an effect upon “head” functions, such as upon headache or memory. *Examples:* lemon balm herb, linden flower, and rosemary herb.

Choleretic. An agent that stimulates the liver to produce bile. *Examples:* burdock root, calendula flower, dandelion root, ginger root, linden flower, mint herb, orange peel, rosemary herb, and sage herb.

Chologogue. An agent that promotes bile flow from the liver.

Examples: calendula flower, dandelion root, ginger root, hyssop herb, licorice root, mint herb, nettle herb, orange peel, and rosemary herb.

Decongestant. An agent that decreases swelling and congestion.

Examples: cinnamon bark, dandelion leaf and root, elder flower and berry, green and black tea leaf, nettle herb, plantain leaf, rose flower, thyme herb, and yarrow herb.

Demulcent. A mucilaginous agent that soothes irritated tissues, especially of the mucous membranes (such as are found in the throat), ulcers, and the bladder. *Examples:* burdock root, calendula flower, fenugreek seed, hibiscus flower, licorice root, marshmallow root, mullein leaf and flower, oat seed and oatstraw, plantain leaf, and violet leaf.

Deobstruent. An agent that helps remove obstructions. *Examples:* dandelion root, plantain leaf, and red clover flower.

Depurative. An agent that cleanses the system, especially the blood. *Examples:* dandelion flower and root, echinacea root, elder flower and berry, nettle herb, plantain leaf, red clover flower, and yerba maté leaf.

Diaphoretic. An agent that promotes perspiration by relaxing the pores and increasing elimination through the skin. *Examples:* angelica root, anise hyssop herb, basil herb, calendula flower, cardamom seed, catnip herb, chamomile flower, cinnamon bark, echinacea root, elder flower and berry, ginger root, green and black tea leaf, hyssop herb, lemon balm herb, lemon-grass leaf, linden flower, mint herb, oatstraw, rose flower, yarrow herb, and yerba maté herb.

Digestive. An agent that aids digestion. *Examples:* angelica root, anise seed, cardamom seed, chamomile flower, cinnamon bark, clove bud, dandelion leaf and root, echinacea root, elder flower and berry, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, ginger root, green and black tea leaf, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, lemon balm herb, lemon verbena herb, lemongrass leaf, licorice root, mint herb, nettle leaf, orange peel, raspberry leaf, rose hip, rosemary herb, and yerba maté leaf.

Discutient. An agent that dissolves tumors and abnormal growths. Discutients are used internally in moderation and also topically. *Examples:* burdock root, dandelion root, elder flower and berry, red clover blossom, and violet leaf.

Diuretic. An agent that increases the secretion and expulsion of urine by promoting the activity of the kidneys and bladder. *Examples:* anise seed, blackberry leaf, burdock root, dandelion leaf, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, green and black tea leaf, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, hibiscus flower, hyssop herb, lemongrass leaf, linden flower, marshmallow root, mint herb, mullein leaf, nettle leaf, orange peel, plantain leaf, red clover flower, rooibos herb, rose hip, rosemary herb, thyme herb, violet leaf, yarrow leaf, and yerba maté leaf.

Emetic. An agent that stimulates vomiting. *Examples:* catnip leaf (in large doses), chamomile flower (in large doses), and violet root.

Emmenagogue. An agent that stimulates menstruation. *Examples:* angelica root, basil leaf, catnip leaf, cinnamon bark, clove bud, fenugreek seed, ginger root, hibiscus flower, hyssop herb, mint herb, rose flower and hip, rosemary herb, sage herb, thyme herb, and yarrow herb.

Emollient. An agent used externally to soothe, soften, and protect the skin. *Examples:* calendula flower, elder flower, fenugreek seed, licorice root, linden flower, marshmallow root, mullein leaf and flower, plantain leaf, and violet leaf.

Expectorant. An agent that promotes the discharge of mucus from respiratory passages. *Examples:* angelica root, anise seed, basil herb, burdock root, cardamom seed, cinnamon bark, clove bud, elder flower and berry, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, ginger root, hibiscus flower, hyssop herb, licorice root, linden flower, marshmallow root, nettle herb, orange peel, plantain leaf, rose flower, sage herb, thyme herb, violet leaf, and yarrow herb.

Febrifuge. An agent that reduces or eliminates fever. *Examples:* burdock root, catnip herb, chamomile flower, echinacea root, elder

flower and berry, fenugreek seed, ginger root, hibiscus flower, hyssop herb, lemon balm herb, lemongrass leaf, licorice root, mint herb, nettle herb, oat seed and oatstraw, plantain leaf, red raspberry leaf, violet leaf, and yarrow herb.

Galactagogue. An agent that increases milk secretions in nursing mothers. *Examples:* alfalfa herb, anise seed, basil herb, burdock root, dandelion leaf and root, elder flower, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, licorice root, marshmallow root, nettle herb, and red clover flower.

Hemostatic. An agent that arrests bleeding or hemorrhaging. Hemostatics can be used use internally and externally. *Examples:* blackberry leaf, cinnamon bark, hibiscus flower, marshmallow root, nettle leaf, plantain leaf, red raspberry leaf, and yarrow herb.

Hepatic. An agent that strengthens, tones, and stimulates the liver. Hepatics are often used to treat jaundice and hepatitis. *Examples:* dandelion flower, leaf, and root and rose flower.

Hepatoprotective. An agent that has a protective effect upon the liver. *Example:* ginger root.

Hypertensive. An agent that can elevate blood pressure. *Examples:* orange peel and rosemary herb.

Hypnotic. An agent that induces deep nerve relaxation and a healing sleep state. *Example:* dandelion root.

Hypoglycemic. An agent that lowers blood sugar levels. *Examples:* fenugreek seed, nettle leaf, and sage herb.

Hypotensive. An agent that lowers blood pressure. *Examples:* dandelion leaf, green tea leaf, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, lemon balm herb, linden flower, raspberry leaf, and yarrow herb.

Laxative. An agent that stimulates bowel action. *Examples:* burdock root, dandelion leaf and root, elder flower and berry, fennel seed, licorice root, marshmallow root, oat seed and oatstraw, rose hip, and violet leaf.

Lithotriptic. An agent that dissolves and eliminates urinary and gallbladder stones and gravel. *Examples:* dandelion leaf and root, hyssop herb, and nettle herb.

Mucolytic. An agent that reduces the viscosity (stickiness) of mucus. *Examples:* cardamom seed, catnip leaf, cinnamon bark, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, hibiscus flower, hyssop herb, and nettle leaf.

Nervine. An agent that calms and nourishes the nerves. *Examples:* angelica root, basil herb, catnip herb, chamomile flower, elder flower, green tea leaf, hawthorn leaf and flower, lemon balm herb, linden flower, mullein flower, oat seed and oatstraw, rosemary herb, and sage herb.

Nutritive. An agent that supplies a multitude of nutrients that build and tone the body. *Examples:* alfalfa herb, blackberry leaf, burdock root, dandelion leaf and root, marshmallow root, nettle herb, red clover flower, rose hip, and violet leaf.

Parturient. An agent that assists in labor and delivery. *Examples:* anise seed, lemon balm herb, nettle leaf, raspberry leaf, and yarrow herb.

Pectoral. An agent that relieves lung disorders and diseases. *Examples:* hyssop herb, licorice root, mullein leaf, nettle leaf, and violet leaf.

Phytoestrogenic. A plant that contains the raw materials from which the body will be able to manufacture estrogen. *Examples:* alfalfa herb, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, licorice root, raspberry leaf, red clover flower, and sage herb.

Purgative. An agent that increases bile secretions, causing intestinal peristalsis. Purgatives are often used with carminatives to prevent gripe. *Examples:* dandelion root and (in large amounts) yerba maté leaf.

Refrigerant. An agent that is cooling, lowers body temperature, and relieves thirst. *Examples:* blackberry leaf, catnip leaf, hibiscus flower,

lemon balm herb, lemongrass leaf, plantain leaf, and rose flower.

Rejuvenative. An agent that renews the body, mind, and spirit. It may also slow down the aging process, counteract stress, and increase endurance. *Examples:* burdock root, elder flower and berry, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, lemon balm herb, licorice root, marshmallow root, nettle seed, oat seed and oatstraw, rooibos herb, rosemary herb, thyme herb, and yerba maté herb.

Restorative. An agent that helps rebuild a depleted condition and restores normal body functions. *Examples:* dandelion leaf and root, elder flower and berry, fenugreek seed, licorice root, oat seed and oatstraw, plantain leaf, and violet leaf.

Rubefacient. An agent that increases blood flow to the surface of the skin and draws out deep impurities. Rubefacients are generally used topically. *Examples:* cinnamon bark, clove bud, ginger root, lemongrass leaf, and peppermint herb.

Sedative. An agent that slows down body action and strongly quiets the nerves. *Examples:* basil leaf, catnip leaf, chamomile flower, dandelion root, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, hyssop herb, lemon balm herb, lemon verbena herb, lemongrass leaf, licorice root, linden flower, mullein flower, orange peel, red clover flower, rose flower, and thyme herb.

Sialagogue. An agent that stimulates the flow of saliva, thus aiding digestion. *Examples:* cardamom seed, echinacea root, ginger root, and licorice root.

Stimulant. An agent that quickens various body actions, improves circulation, and warms the body. *Examples:* angelica root, anise seed, black and green tea leaf, cardamom seed, clove bud, echinacea root, fennel seed, fenugreek seed, ginger root, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, hyssop herb, lemongrass leaf, mint herb, raspberry leaf, rose hip, rosemary herb, thyme herb, yarrow herb, and yerba maté leaf.

Stomachic. An agent that strengthens and tones the stomach, improves digestion, and reduces gas. *Examples:* alfalfa herb, angelica root, anise seed, cardamom seed, chamomile flower, cinnamon bark, clove bud, dandelion leaf and root, fennel seed, ginger root, hyssop herb, lemon balm herb, lemon verbena herb, mint herb, orange peel, raspberry leaf, yarrow herb, and yerba maté leaf.

Styptic. An agent that stops bleeding by constricting blood vessels. Styptic herbs are astringent and can be used externally and internally. *Examples:* blackberry root, green tea leaf, and yarrow herb.

Sudorific. An agent that increases perspiration, like a diaphoretic, but with a stronger action. *Examples:* hyssop herb, lemongrass leaf, linden flower, yarrow herb, and yerba maté leaf.

Tonic. An agent that promotes general health and well-being, sometimes for a particular organ system. *Examples:* alfalfa herb, anise seed, blackberry leaf, burdock root, cardamom seed, catnip herb, chamomile flower, dandelion leaf and root, elder flower and berry, hawthorn leaf and flower, hyssop herb, lemon balm herb, licorice root, linden flower, nettle herb, oat seed and oat-straw, raspberry leaf, rooibos herb, rose hip, sage herb, yarrow herb, and yerba maté leaf.

Vasodilator. An agent that expands blood vessels, thus lowering blood pressure. *Examples:* cinnamon bark, elder flower, hawthorn berry, hawthorn flower, hawthorn leaf, lemon balm herb, linden flower, and mint herb.

Vermifuge. An agent that expels intestinal worms. *Examples:* clove bud, ginger root, hibiscus flower, nettle seed, sage herb, and thyme herb.

Vulnerary. An agent that encourages wound healing by promoting cellular growth and repair. Vulneraries are usually used topically as an application for minor external wounds. *Examples:* calendula flower, chamomile flower, dandelion leaf, echinacea root, fenugreek seed, hyssop herb, linden flower, marshmallow root, plantain leaf, red clover flower, rose leaf, rosemary herb, thyme herb, violet leaf, and yarrow herb.



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