

The Complete Guide to Natural Healing: A Natural Approach to Healing the Body and Maintaining Optimal Health Using Herbal Supplements, Vitamins, Minerals, Fruits, Vegetables and Alternative Medicine

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Preface

Did you know that Interest in herbals and natural alternatives has been growing rapidly worldwide in recent years from the reported medical research and success stories from people who use herbs and other natural resources to treat diseases and conditions?

For example, **did you know...?**

*St. John's Wort is widely used in the treatment of mild depression without the need for Prozac and it does not carry the side effects of Prozac.

*Some Ayurvedic Herbs are very useful for reducing cholesterol, diabetes and other conditions and diseases.

*Juniper Berries could get rid of yellow toenails

*Peppermint Oil and Grapefruit Seed Extract can treat bacteria overgrowth

Inside this book, you will discover...

*Valuable information about maintaining optimal health and overcoming disease naturally

- *Natural herbs that help treat and cure common conditions and diseases
- *Natural Remedies to treat hundreds of different conditions
- *Nutrition and fitness strategies to help strengthen and improve your body
- *And much more...

“The Complete Herbal Guide: A Natural Approach to Healing the Body,” is an essential reference book for anyone interested in maintaining optimal health and overcoming disease. The book contains concise and comprehensive listings of hundreds conditions. This book has quick and easy references to all the information you need to maintain excellent health the natural way.

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Introduction

Herbal Medicine sometimes referred to as Herbalism or Botanical Medicine, is the use of herbs for their therapeutic or medical value. An herb is a plant or plant part valued for its medical, aromatic or savory qualities. Herb plants produce and contain a variety of chemical substances that act upon the body.

Herbal medicine has been used for centuries. In fact, there has been evidence showing that herbal remedies have been around since the Neanderthal period about 60,000 years ago. Other evidence of the use of herbs for medical purposes has appeared in cave paintings estimated to have been made between 13,000 and 25,000 BC. Most of the synthetic prescription drugs made today is based on naturally occurring substances and capabilities found in plants.

In fact, many of the familiar pharmaceutical medications we use today were originally created from natural ingredients. Drugs like opium (from poppies), aspirin (from willow bark), digitalis (from foxglove) and quinine (from the cinchona tree.)

Herbal Medicine can be broadly classified into various basic systems: Traditional Chinese Herbalism, which is part of Traditional Oriental Medicine, Ayurvedic

Herbalism, which is derived from Ayurveda, and Western Herbalism, which originally came from Greece and Rome to Europe and then spread to North and South America.

Chinese and Ayurvedic Herbalism have developed into highly developed systems of diagnosis and treatment over the centuries. Western Herbalism is today for the most part a system of folk medicine.

Interest in herbals and natural alternatives has been growing worldwide in recent years from the reported success stories from the use of herbs. For example, St. John's Wort is widely used in the treatment of mild depression without the need for Prozac. St. John's Wort does not have the side effects such as that of Prozac. Some Ayurvedic herbs are very useful for reducing cholesterol, diabetes, etc. Similarly, the popularity of Ginseng and Ginkgo biloba (ginkgo) is rising due to its beneficial effects.

The Complete Herbal Guide: A Natural Approach to Healing the Body is an essential reference book for anyone interested in maintaining optimal health and overcoming disease. The book contains concise and comprehensive listings of over 150 herbs and conditions. This book has quick and easy references to all the information you need to maintain excellent health the natural way.

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Learn How to Be Smart and Stay Safe When Using Vitamins and Supplements

Information about vitamins and supplements can be very confusing. It's difficult to know which one offers genuine health benefits and which are unbeneficial to your body. Many Companies can promote a vitamin supplement, but how do you know what they are say is true?

The answer is research. By learning all you can about vitamins and supplements, you can make better choices about those that are right for you.

What are dietary supplements?

The Dietary Supplement Health and Education Act (DSHEA) defines a dietary supplement as a product that:

- Supplements the food you eat
- Contains one or more dietary ingredient (including vitamins; minerals; herbs or other botanicals; amino acids, and other substances)
- Comes in pill, capsule, tablet, or liquid form
- Is labeled as a dietary supplement.

There are different types of dietary, or nutritional, supplements. Vitamin and mineral supplements are types of dietary supplements containing micronutrients meant to help a healthy body function smoothly. Herbal (or botanical) supplements are dietary supplements that have a medicinal purpose. Herbal supplements generally support a specific area of the body's health, such as the liver, bones or skin.

Health benefits of vitamin and mineral supplements

Vitamins and minerals are micronutrients that serve a specific purpose and benefit the body in a unique way. For example, vitamin A supports vision and bone growth, whereas vitamin E strengthens the immune system and helps repair DNA. Vitamin and mineral deficiency can impair the body's ability to heal and protect itself.

Taking vitamins does not make up for an unhealthy diet, and vitamins are an insufficient substitute for nutrients from fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. However, a general multivitamin and mineral supplement can be a good safeguard against periodic vitamin shortfalls in your diet.

Herbal Supplements

Herbal supplements are different from vitamin and mineral supplements in that they are considered to have medicinal value. Herbs, also known as botanicals, are one of humanity's oldest health care tools, and the basis of many modern medicines. Primitive and ancient civilizations relied on herbs for healing, as do

many contemporary cultures throughout the world. In fact, the World Health Organization has estimated that 80% of the world's population continues to use traditional therapies, a major part of which are derived from plants.

If you are taking other medications, refrain from taking herbal supplements without first checking with your doctor. Herbal supplements and over-the-counter medications or prescription drugs can combine to cause adverse side effects. Just because an herbal supplement is extracted from a “natural” source does not render it any less potent than any other chemicals you may ingest.

Who can benefit from vitamins and supplements?

In general, children and adults might benefit from taking one multivitamin per day. A multivitamin helps provide a consistent source of the necessary vitamins and micronutrients. According to the Harvard School of Public Health, "a daily multivitamin, and maybe an extra vitamin D supplement, is a great way to make sure you're getting all the nutrients you need to be healthy."

However, the very first consideration is to eat a healthy diet. Even the best supplement is no substitute for good nutrition. In many Western countries, people tend to consume foods that are high in calories, but lack nutrients that are vital for good health.

Some groups of people, because of distinct nutritional needs, benefit most from taking a vitamin and supplement. These are:

- Women of childbearing age (need extra calcium and iron)
- Pregnant or lactating women
- Children and teenagers with irregular eating habits
- Seniors
- Vegetarians or vegans (may be deficient in key nutrients)
- Dieters or people avoiding certain food groups (may be deficient in key nutrients)
- People with eating disorders or medical conditions (deficiency diseases, absorption problems, lactose intolerance, etc.)

- People who often eat processed and fast food

Ensuring smart supplementation

The word “supplement” means something added. In this case, you’re “adding” to a basic healthy diet and lifestyle, or to a prescription medication or therapy to treat a medical condition. An herbal supplement or vitamin regimen on its own will not necessarily cure or treat your condition or health problem. It’s also important to remember that not all supplements are beneficial, especially when taken in toxic doses or combined with other medications.

The media loves exciting headlines, so the moment an herb or vitamin is tentatively shown to be beneficial in some way, it is touted as the next miracle cure. Advertising can be misleading as well, promising us “totally safe”, “natural”, and “quick and effective” solutions to many health problems. You can keep yourself from falling prey to false promises by researching any product you are considering taking. Make sure there is good scientific research that supports the claims of the supplement’s marketers.

Before you decide to take a dietary supplement, ask yourself:

- Do I need this supplement?
- Do I know that this supplement is safe?
- Does this supplement interact with any drug or food I am consuming?
- Do I know that this supplement works?
- Can I afford this supplement?
- Do I know enough about this supplement?

CAUTION: Interactions with other medications

Some dietary supplements may interact with other supplements or prescription and over-the-counter medicines. Taking a combination of supplements or using the products with medications (whether prescription or OTC drugs) can cause dangerous interactions which could be life-threatening.

Some common negative interactions:

- Calcium can interact with heart medicine, certain diuretics, and aluminum and magnesium-containing antacids.
- Magnesium can interact with certain diuretics, some cancer drugs, and magnesium-containing antacids.
- Vitamin K can interact with blood thinners like Coumadin
- St. John's Wort is known to adversely affect selective serotonin reuptake inhibitor (SSRI) drugs (i.e., anti-depressant drugs), and birth control pills.

How to Research and buy vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements

The safest way to purchase supplements is from a reputable vitamin or health food store, or from a health practitioner. However, not all of us have access to these types of resources. As an Internet-savvy consumer, your computer can be your best friend when it comes to choosing the right supplement for you.

The amount of information available on the Web can be overwhelming, but by using the following simple steps, you can be sure you're getting reliable information about herbal or vitamin supplements.

How to research dietary supplements

Safety and Effectiveness: Before you embark on a supplement regimen, be sure that what you're going to take is safe and effective. The National Institute of Health Office of Dietary Supplements offers fact sheets on most herbal dietary supplements, including safety aspects.

Dosage: The Mayo Clinic offers a searchable database of supplements, also in the Resources and References section below. It rates the efficacy of a supplement for various health conditions, explains safety concerns, and details recommended dosage information for adults and children.

Quality: Look for "standardized" products from manufacturers participating in the US Pharmacopeia's Dietary Supplement Verified Program or those carrying the NSF International mark of safety.

A seal from one of these organizations indicates a dietary supplement has met certain manufacturing standards, such as uniformity, cleanliness, and freedom from environmental contaminants, including lead, mercury, and drugs. Each group has different standards and processes, but the goal of each is to certify that herbal supplements meet certain safety and purity criteria.

There are many different companies marketing supplemental products. Quality does matter, so it's good to read the ingredients and warnings on the bottle, and learn about the manufacturers. It's up to you as the consumer to protect your own health – so practice caveat emptor ("let the buyer beware"), and consult your health care professional before taking any type of dietary supplements.

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The Herbal Supplement Directory

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Absinthe



Botanical: *Artemisia absinthium*

Family: Compositae (daisy)

Other common names: Wormwood, Artemisia, Green Ginger, Absinthium, Madderwort, Old Woman, Wermutkraut, Southern Wood, Green Fairy

Absinthe has long been used by herbalists to eliminate worms, improve appetite, and as an aid for improving gallbladder, liver, gastric and vascular disorders, as well as migraine headaches. Applied topically, it aids in healing wounds, skin ulcers, blemishes and insect bites. Long used in the preparation of alcoholic beverages (absinthe), it is a digestive, improves the appetite, and relieves many digestive disturbances.

Plant Description:

Absinthe is native to Europe, Siberia, and North Africa and has been naturalized in North America. In England, the plant grows in many places and appears to thrive near the sea.

It is a perennial root, which arises to a height of two to three feet with leafy, flowering stems. The leaves and flowers are extremely bitter, with the characteristic odor of thujone, and the whitish plant is closely covered with fine, silky hairs. The plants are harvested in July and August, and only the leaves and tops are used.

History:

The genus, Artemisia, is derived from Artemis, the Greek name for Diana, who is said to have found the plants and delivered their powers to Chiron, the centaur, and the ancient Greeks claimed that the plant counteracted the poisons of hemlock and toadstools.

One of its common names, wormwood, is derived from the Anglo Saxon wermode or wermut, meaning preserver of the mind, since the herb was thought to enhance mental functions and which accounts for its use in treating nervous temperament and melancholia.

In 1577, in *July's Husbandry*, Tusser advised people to lay its flowers among "stuffs and furs" to keep away moths and insects, and in 1772, Dr. John Hill made an infusion for treating indigestion. With the exception of rue, wormwood is the

bitterest herb known, but it is wholesome and was very much in demand by brewers for use, instead of hops.

The major constituent of Absinthe is a volatile oil, dark green or blue in color, with a strong odor and bitter taste. The essential oil in Absinthe was an ingredient in the alcoholic aperitif also called absinthe, which was first created by Henri Pernod in 1797. Today's successors to absinthe - anisette and vermouth - do not contain thujone. Absinthe oil contains thujone (absinthol or tenacetone), thujyl alcohol (both free and combined with acetic, isovalerianic, succine and malic acids), cadinene, phellandrene and pinene.

The herb also contains the bitter glucoside, absinthin, and other salts. Other phytochemical and nutrient contents include beta-carotene, chamazulene, chlorogenic acid, isoquercitrin, p-coumaric acid, rutin, salicylic acid, tannins, vanillic acid and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Absinthe has been used as a powerful tool to fight worm (notably pinworm and roundworm) and other parasitic infestations in humans and animals. It has long been used as an anthelmintic that expels intestinal worms.

Used as a bitter, Absinthe aids in secretions of the gallbladder and liver and is an old and trusted remedy for bilious and liver troubles, jaundice and gallbladder ailments.

Absinthe is a nervine tonic that nourishes the nervous system and, thus, eases stress and nervous disorders. The herb calms and soothes the nerves and reduces tension and anxiety.

Traditional herbalists claim that Absinthe is a febrifuge, lowers intermittent fevers, and fights infection.

Because Absinthe increases stomach acidity, it aids in the whole digestive process, particularly when there is a deficiency of gastric juice. It has been used to help alleviate gastritis, stomachache, bloating and flatulence. Moreover, as a bitter, aromatic herb, Absinthe is also said to improve a meager appetite.

Absinthe is a uterine stimulant and is said to help control irregular menstrual cycles (and thus, should not be used by pregnant women).

Well known for its commercial use in the preparation of liquors, notably absinthe and vermouth, Absinthe has also been used medicinally as a mild sedative. This bitterest of herbs includes a narcotic analgesic that affects the portion of the brain dealing with pain. If not used habitually, the herb's absinthum has been known to stimulate the cerebral hemispheres and act as a direct stimulant on the cortex cerebri, aiding in the relief of migraine headaches, nervous diseases, in addition to soothing nervous temperament.

Applied topically, the oil extracted from Absinthe acts as an anti-inflammatory that is used as a liniment to relieve pain and sore muscles. It is useful for healing wounds, skin ulcers, blemishes and insect bites.

Absinthe may also be used as an insect repellent when sprayed on organic gardens or when prepared as a sachet to keep moths from clothing.

Precautions:

Absinthe is a uterine stimulant and should not be used during pregnancy, as it can cause spontaneous abortion. Nursing mothers should not use Absinthe. Do not overuse; it may be habit forming with long-term use, and prolonged use may cause nausea, vertigo and insomnia. Do not exceed recommended dosage (many times the recommended amount). Absinthe should never be given to children.

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Acacia Bark



Botanical: *Acacia catechu*

Family: Leguminosae (legume)

Other common names: Cutch, Black Catechu, Black Cutch, Wattle Bark, Black Wattle

Acacia Bark is an ancient treatment used mainly for digestive disorders and diarrhea. It is an astringent that is rich in tannic acid, and recent research has discovered that an extract from this highly astringent herb may block the body's pain triggers.

Plant Description:

A native of Australia, where there are more than seven hundred species, Acacia Bark has been prized for its commercial value, as well as its medicinal applications. Also known as Wattle Bark and Black Wattle, it is collected from wild or cultivated trees that are seven years or older. For medicinal purposes, the bark must be allowed to mature for a year, and it is often substituted in medical applications for Oak Bark. Although they are different in appearance, both have an astringent taste.

History:

Acacia Bark is hard and woody with a rusty, brown color, and because it contained large amounts of tannin and gallic acid, its powerful astringency made it the backbone of the Australian and New Zealand tanning industry. The timber itself was used commercially, and the bark, also known as Babul, became a mainstay in the area's tanning and dyeing industries. That same astringency has special use when employed medicinally.

Medical Uses:

When used mainly in the form of a decoction, Acacia Bark is well known for its treatment of diarrhea and digestive ailments, and the decoction is used as an astringent, mouthwash and lotion. Acacia Bark has also been used in the treatment of dysentery.

Acacia (or Indian Gum Arabic) is commonly used in maintaining dental hygiene. The fresh twigs have long been used for the protection of gums and teeth, and recent studies indicated that Acacia was found to inhibit the growth of germs in the oral cavity. The herb is useful as an external application for mouth ulcers. Further, extract of Indian gum Arabic tree has been found to reduce gingival (gum) inflammation occurring because of plaque reduction.

In India, Acacia Bark has long been administered for its astringent properties, and there are current reports that, in combination with other herbs and barks, traditional Indian healers use it in the treatment of leprosy in rural areas. The healers also claim that it aids in the treatment of stomachache.

There are current reports claiming that Acacia Bark extract appears to block the body's pain trigger mechanisms.

Precautions: None

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Acai Fruit



Botanical: *Euterpe oleracea*

Family: Arecaceae (palm)

Other common names: Asaí, Ashai, Assai, Cabbage Palm, Cansin, Jicara, Manac, Pinot, Wapoe

Highly nutritious Acai Fruit is sometimes called the Amazon's perfect "super berry" and is believed to be an exceptional antioxidant, which helps to build the body's natural defenses against infection and disease and protect the body from free radicals that can attack and destroy cells. Its fatty acids are believed to help maintain healthy cholesterol levels, improve blood circulation and reduce the risk of arteriosclerosis, stroke and heart attack. Often referred to as the "Fountain of Youth," Acai Fruit is reputed to restore the stamina and vitality of our younger days.

Plant Description:

Acai Fruit is a small, deep-purple berry that grows on the tall, slender Acai palm tree, which is a very common native of the Brazilian Rainforest.

The Acai palm may reach one hundred feet in height and has adapted to survive in waterlogged soil in the lowland flood areas along the rivers of northern South America, where it forms large groves.

The palm family encompasses over twelve hundred species and is one of the most useful plants for the inhabitants of the rainforest as a vital resource for food, beverages, oils, building materials, tools and weapons.

History:

The Acai has been used for thousands of years by the indigenous tribes of the area for its extraordinary nutritional and healing qualities, and Brazilians call it "Tree of Life." The edible fruit is small, round and blackish purple, resembling a grape, but smaller and darker. The berry contains a single, large seed with very little pulp and is surrounded by stringy fibrous sheaths and a thin, oily coating. Acai berries are harvested in the dry season and favored by birds and rodents that disburse the seeds in their droppings for propagation of the species. Acai Fruit is highly nutritional, serving as a traditional food for the native people living in the Amazon forest, and although consumed for centuries as an essential food in South America, it was only at the turn of the twenty-first century that it was introduced to the outside commercial world as a spectacular natural health supplement. It also shows potential as a natural red coloring matter. Some of the constituents in Acai include anthocyanidins, fiber, sterols, epicatechin, p-hydroxy-benzoic acid, gallic acid, protocatechuic acid, ellagic acid, p-coumaric acid, ferulic acid, vanillic acid, cyanidin, pelargonidin 3-glucoside, potassium, calcium, iron, phosphorus, protein, Omega-6 fatty acid, Omega-9 fatty acid, B-vitamins and vitamins C and E.

Medical Uses:

Acai Fruit is believed to be an amazing antioxidant that prevents destructive, oxidative damage to tissues or cells. Some studies claim that Acai contains up to thirty-three percent more antioxidant properties than even red wine grapes. The berry possesses a high concentration of anthocyanidins (which give many plants their colors) and provides a high degree of antioxidant capacity that fights free radical damage in the body and builds the body's natural defenses. These compounds also allow the body's cells to absorb vitamin C, which is helpful in protecting cells from the free radicals that can bind to and destroy cellular compounds. These qualities are believed to be helpful in building the immune system and fighting serious disease and other infections.

As an energy booster, the pulpy little Acai berry is said to restore the vitality, strength and stamina of youth. It is thought to restore overall health, improve sexual function and has even been called the "Fountain of Youth." Often said to be one of the richest foods in iron, the microbiological characteristics of Acai Fruit are highly nutritional. Serving for centuries as a vital traditional food for the native people living in the Amazon forest, it is now widely used in energy drinks, energy bars and natural health supplements.

Acai Fruit is rich in essential fatty acids and is said to be very beneficial for good coronary health. Acai is believed to raise the levels of high-density lipoproteins (HDLs or "good" cholesterol) in the blood, while decreasing the low-density lipoproteins (LDLs, or "bad" cholesterol). The HDL is said to help clear the "bad" cholesterol from the arterial walls, reducing platelet aggregation (clotting) and helping to eliminate it from the body. This action also helps to promote better circulation of blood throughout the body, especially to the heart, thereby reducing the risk of arteriosclerosis, stroke and heart attacks.

Acai Fruit is rich in fiber content, and as such, it is believed to help improve digestion. It is frequently recommended for the elderly and people suffering from digestive complaints. Fibers play a very important role in regulating intestinal transit, promoting "regularity" and may actively participate in the prevention of serious diseases of the colon.

Precautions: None

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African Kola Nut



Botanical: *Cola nitida*

Family: Sterculiaceae (sterculia)

Other common names: Cola Nut, Kola Nut, African Cola Nut, Goora Nut, Gooroo Nut, Guru Nut, Bissy Nut, Gourou, Ombéné, Nangoué, Kokkorokou

Did you know...?

The African Kola Nut is regarded as a stimulant with more caffeine than coffee. It has been used for centuries in the tropics to endure hard work without fatigue, increase energy and even clear the mind. African Kola Nut is said to act as a stimulating tonic that generally imparts an overall feeling of well-being.

Plant Description:

The Kola tree (or Cola tree) is indigenous to West Africa, most notably Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ivory Coast and Nigeria. It may also be found in Gabon and in the Congo River Basin.

The vast majority of African Kola Nut production is utilized within the African continent, particularly in sub-Saharan regions, which may explain why the introduction of the crop to the tropical Americas, the West Indies, Sri Lanka and

Malaya has never caused severe competition with African production (McIlroy, 1963). It is related to the cacao tree, but larger, growing to a height of about forty

feet, with a smooth bark and bearing dense foliage with oblong leaves on large petioles.

The leaf axils also produce small, cup-shaped, yellow flowers that grow in clusters on short pedicels and fruits (red nuts or seeds) that grow in star-shaped clusters of pods. The trees fruit annually when about twelve to fifteen years of age and may continue until they reach one hundred years, thriving in rich, well-drained soil in sun at a minimum of fifty-five degrees Fahrenheit.

Traditionally, the African Kola Nut is used as a stimulant and a "masticator," with a small piece chewed before each meal to promote digestion, and it is thought to improve the flavor of anything eaten after it. Its popularity is due to the large amounts of caffeine and other substances that act as stimulants, which may also be, like coffee, mildly addictive. In many areas where other stimulants are not available, such as in regions influenced by Islam with its prohibition on alcohol, the African Kola Nut may substitute for them, and they are frequently included in many ritual and social ceremonies to mark marriages and funerals.

History:

The use of African Kola Nut goes back many centuries. Vast trading networks existed in Africa, perhaps even before the thirteenth century, to supply the great demand for this product, and indications of the domestication of the trees in plantations are found in written records that date from the sixteenth century. Among the vegetable products from the African soil, there is, perhaps, none more interesting and valuable than the African Kola Nut, and it is consumed throughout tropical and equatorial Africa as an equivalent to tea, coffee, maté and cacao. On the international commercial market,

African Kola Nut is highly valued as a flavoring for Cola drinks and for use in the important manufacture of pharmaceuticals, and it is exported to Europe, the United Kingdom and North America for these purposes. Some of the constituents in African Kola Nut include caffeine, theobromine, kolatin, kolanin, glucose, starch, fatty matter, tannins, catechins, betaine and protein.

Medical Uses:

African Kola Nut is a stimulant. It contains more caffeine than a coffee bean and is taken in the same way, as a stimulant, to prevent fatigue. In the past, it was used by armies on the march, because the stimulating effects allowed long distances to be traveled while carrying a minimum of food. It has been said that the African Kola Nut possesses a physiological property of enabling persons ingesting it to undergo prolonged exertion without fatigue, undoubtedly due to its high caffeine content.

The caffeine content in African Kola Nut may also be helpful in easing migraine headaches. Conventional wisdom has always said that all caffeine will cause headaches, but some modern research claims that judicious use of caffeine may actually help migraines, and it is even included in several over-the-counter migraine preparations. African Kola Nut is also thought to relieve the pain of neuralgia (the severe, throbbing or stabbing pain along the course of a nerve).

African Kola Nut is also believed to be a fine "nervine" or nerve tonic that has a soothing and quieting influence on the nerves without numbing them. In addition, the tonic effect stimulates and tones up the nervous system and imparts an overall feeling of healthy well-being. It has been used to alleviate nervous debility, depression, despondency, weakness, nervous diarrhea, anxiety and lack of emotion.

African Kola Nut is said to be a cardiogenic that stimulates and strengthens a weak heart.

In traditional herbal medicine and lore, African Kola Nut was taken before a meal to improve digestion, and it has been reported that in Africa, its use exercised a favorable influence upon the digestive organs - particularly the liver - and most notably in the non-native populations who appeared to escape the constitutional changes due to affections of that organ; however, there are no clinical trials to prove this claim. Further tradition stated that African Kola Nut rendered the most foul and putrid waters clean, made tainted meat edible; and when taken internally, helped prevent dysentery. Again, there is no scientific evidence to prove any of these claims.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use African Kola Nut, and excessive use (many times the recommended dosage) may cause nervousness and/or insomnia. If symptoms of dizziness, anxiety or nervousness occur, discontinue using African Kola Nut.

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Agrimony



Botanical: *Agrimonia eupatoria*

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Other common names: Church Steeples, Cocklebur, Cockburr, Philathropos, Liverwort, Sticklewort, Stickwort, Agrimonia

Agrimony was revered by the Anglo Saxons as a "heal all" with almost magical powers that corrected eye disorders, healed wounds, and snakebites. Today it is recommended for healing skin disorders and is often prescribed for gastrointestinal complaints, diarrhea, coughs, and cystitis and as a gargle for sore throats. The herb is still highly praised as an eyebath to add sparkle to tired eyes.

Plant Description:

Agrimony grows throughout England and in the United States and southern Canada. It is a perennial plant with graceful yellow flowers on slender stalks that may grow up to three feet. Agrimony has a delicate flavor and the scent of apricot and was often brewed as a spring tonic and table drink. All the aboveground parts of the plant are used in herbal medicine.

History:

Its botanical name, *Agrimonia eupatoria*, is derived both from the Persian King, Mithridates Eupator, who was known to be a "concoctor" of herbal medicine and the Greek word, *argemone*, meaning healing to the eyes. Early references as early as the Roman, Pliny, and later, Dr. Hill in the mid-1700s, praise the use of Agrimony for liver disorders, serpent bites and skin eruptions. Because of its tannin content, it was employed in the tanning of leather and used as a yellow dye.

Medical Uses:

Agrimony is fully appreciated in herbal practice as a mild astringent and a tonic that is useful for coughs, asthma, diarrhea, bronchitis, sore throat and an aid to digestion.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine Agrimony is used to stop excessive menstrual bleeding. It has also been used for thousands of years to stop bleeding and bruising by "tanning" skin cells, making them impermeable to bleeding. This action also prevents bacteria from entering the wound.

Agrimony stops irritation of the urinary tract that may increase a child's urge to urinate and therefore may be useful in the treatment of bed-wetting and adult incontinence.

Agrimony is effective against diarrhea, especially in small children, and because of its low toxicity, the herb is particularly suitable for children's illnesses.

The herb has been effective on the immune system by stimulating the body to produce immune bodies known as B-cells. These cells produce complex chemicals known as antigens that attack invading microbes.

Agrimony has a reputation for treating jaundice and other complaints, giving tone to the digestive system and promoting the assimilation of food.

The chemical compound agrimophol, which is a component of Agrimony, has the ability to expel parasites by causing them to lose their hold on the lining of the bladder or intestine and become evacuated with urine and stool. That same substance also kills the organism that causes river blindness and many common bacteria such as E. coli, Staphylococcus, and other bacteria that cause dysentery and typhoid fever.

Precautions:

While Agrimony is effective treatment for diarrhea, it may aggravate constipation, and blockage can result if Agrimony is taken at the same time as Psyllium powders (Metamucil) or with prunes or prune juice. It is not recommended during pregnancy. People with lupus, myasthenia gravis or any other autoimmune disease should avoid Agrimony.

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Alfalfa Leaf



Botanical: *Medicago sativa*

Family: Leguminosae (legume) - fabaceae (pea)

Other common names: Buffalo Herb, Lucerne, Purple Medic, Buffalo Grass, Medicago

Eliminate bloating and water retention with Alfalfa Leaf - the "Father of all Foods." This excellent source of nutrients will help boost a sluggish appetite, relieve constipation and the swelling that often accompanies rheumatism and arthritis. It is most helpful in treating kidney and urinary tract infection and will help detoxify the body, especially the liver.

History:

First discovered in Persia around 500 B.C., Alfalfa reached Mediterranean Europe by way of the Greeks, who planted it as early as 490 B.C. Since the Medes of ancient Persia are believed to have been the first to cultivate the plant, it was given its botanical name, *Medicago sativa*, which is translated from Latin, meaning, "sowed by the Medians."

Alfalfa was being cultivated in England by the sixteenth century, where it was used to soothe and strengthen the body, and arrived in the American Colonies by 1736, where it was used mainly to treat upset stomach. Native Americans employed ground Alfalfa seeds to thicken and enrich their diets and ate the leaves as tasty greens. The Eclectics, physicians who used herbal therapies in nineteenth-century America, used Alfalfa as a tonic for indigestion, dyspepsia, and anemia, loss of appetite and poor assimilation of nutrients.

These physicians also recommended the alfalfa plant to stimulate lactation in nursing mothers, and the seeds were made into a poultice for the treatment of boils and insect bites. Alfalfa is a perennial plant that can be cultivated almost anywhere, even in dry regions, and thrives as a crop in light, well-drained-to-dry, neutral-to-alkaline soil in sun.

Bushy Alfalfa may reach about three feet in height with roots that may grow to 130 feet into the soil, allowing exceptional access to a quantity of nutrients: rutin, silicon, zinc, calcium, copper, choline, foliate, iron, magnesium, manganese, potassium, phosphorus, saponins, alpha-carotene, beta carotene (useful against both heart disease), as well as B-vitamins and vitamins A, D, E and K. Alfalfa

leaves contain eight essential amino acids and are a good source of chlorophyll, and they also contain flavones, isoflavones, sterols and coumarin derivatives.

Medical Uses:

Alfalfa is a good laxative and natural diuretic that promotes urine flow and is often used to treat urinary tract infections and eliminate excess retained water.

Alfalfa is especially useful for replacing vitamin K that is depleted during treatment with a wide variety of drugs, including antibiotics.

Alfalfa acts as a blood purifier and has helped many arthritis sufferers. The action as a detoxifier and blood purifier has been found to be beneficial for a variety of illnesses, including liver disorders, breath odor, and infections, disorders of the bones and joints and skin ailments.

Alfalfa has an alkalizing effect on the body. It is a great source of mineral supplements that are all alkaline, which has a neutralizing effect on the intestinal tract, thereby easing digestive problems, such as upset stomach, gastritis and indigestion.

Alfalfa contains a high calcium and magnesium content, and studies have shown that migraines may be prevented and/or reduced when these two minerals are combined. All the minerals are in a balanced form, which also promotes absorption.

Herbalists have long used Alfalfa Leaf to treat ulcers, as the bioflavonoids found in Alfalfa reduce inflammation of the stomach lining and build capillary strength, while Alfalfa's vitamin A helps to maintain the stomach's overall health. The herb's enzymes aid in food assimilation. During the Han Dynasty (200 A.D.), Alfalfa was used to treat ulcers and continues in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to strengthen the digestive tract and stimulate the appetite.

Alfalfa is said to lower cholesterol and prevent the formation of atherosclerotic plaques (by blocking cholesterol's absorption into the body from the intestines), balance blood sugar (especially when taken with manganese) and promote pituitary gland function.

Alfalfa is an immune-system stimulant that promotes normal blood clotting; and the vitamin K content helps treat bleeding gums and nosebleed, but does not interfere with normal circulation. The bioflavonoids found in Alfalfa are believed to build capillary strength.

Alfalfa contains phytoestrogens, and the herb has had some estrogenic activity in women whose own sex hormone production has declined; thus, Alfalfa has helped many women with the discomforts of menopausal symptoms, particularly hot flashes. The phytoestrogens appear to reduce the risk of estrogen-linked disease, including serious breast problems). The Vitamin K2 found in Alfalfa may also partially prevent bone loss caused by estrogen deficiency.

Precautions:

Alfalfa should not be taken by those who have autoimmune problems (lupus, etc.), nor should it be taken by pregnant women. Ingestion of very large amounts (the equivalent of several servings) of the seed and/or sprouts or supplements has been linked to the onset of systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), the autoimmune illness characterized by inflamed joints and a risk of damage to kidneys and other organs. The chemical responsible for this effect is believed to be canavanine. Those taking prescription anticoagulants such as Coumadin, etc., should avoid this herb.

* * * * *

Allspice



Botanical: *Pimenta dioica* (formerly known as *Pimenta officinalis*)

Family: Myrtaceae (myrtle/clove)

Other common names: Clove Pepper, Jamaica Pepper, Pimento, Myrtle Pepper

Allspice relieves colic, flatulence and other digestive disorders with Allspice. Long used as a flavoring and scenting agent, the herb is an aromatic stimulant and carminative for the gastro-intestinal tract. Allspice is a natural source of beta-carotene and other important nutrients and acts as an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory.

Plant Description:

Native to the Caribbean Islands (most notably Jamaica), South and Central America, Allspice is an evergreen tree that grows to a height of fifty feet. A tender, aromatic tree with thin, oblong, leathery leaves and small, white flowers bloom in the spring and summer.

The flowers are followed by the dark brown berries that are so important in herbal medicines and cuisines, and the tree thrives in rich, well-drained, sandy soil in sun at a minimum of fifty-nine degrees Fahrenheit.

History:

Allspice was discovered growing in Jamaica by early Spanish explorers who were impressed with the taste and aroma of the leaves and berries, and it has been in continuous production there since about 1509. Because Allspice resembles peppercorns, it was named pimenta by the Portuguese and pimienta by the Spanish - both meaning pepper. Used mainly as a spice and condiment, Allspice was in great demand as a soothing anesthetic in baths to relieve sore muscles and made a stimulating spice plaster to relieve rheumatism and neuralgia.

At the end of the nineteenth century, it became fashionable to have umbrellas and walking sticks made of pimento, leading to strict enforcement of controls that saved the young trees from disappearing altogether. Allspice, with its flavor of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg, has always been an important spice and condiment and was added to mulled wine and curry, among other dishes. It has also been used widely to improve the flavor of commercial medicines. The main constituents of

Allspice are the volatile oils found in its seeds and phenol eugenol (which doubtless gives it its clove-like odor). Some of the other constituents include a fixed oil (bonastre), tannin, gum, resin, malic and gallic acids, lignin, and it is a natural source of beta-carotene and other important nutrients.

Medical Uses:

Allspice is an aromatic stimulant and carminative for the gastro-intestinal tract. As such, it has been helpful in treating diarrhea and helps to correct flatulent indigestion and the “griping” tendencies (sharp pains and grumbling in the bowels) often associated with the use of laxatives.

As a pungent, warming herb, Allspice has a tonic effect on the digestive system, improving digestive disorders, such as dyspepsia, colic and indigestion, and is known to pep up a sluggish appetite.

The essential oil in Allspice is considered a tonic for the nervous system and exerts a gentle, strengthening effect on the nerves. It believed to be useful in the treatment of nervous exhaustion, hysterical paroxysms and convulsions.

Allspice is considered an antioxidant or substance that prevents free radical or oxidative damage to body tissue and cells.

Allspice is very warming and when used externally helps to relieve chest infections and the pains of rheumatism and muscle soreness.

* * * * *

Aloe Vera Leaf



Botanical: *Aloe barbadensis* (also known as Aloe vera)

Family: Liliaceae (lily)

Other common names: Aloe, Barbados Aloe, Curaçao Aloe

Did you know...?

Cleopatra used Aloe Vera as a beauty treatment, and today this remarkable emollient is still used to smooth wrinkles, heal skin irritations, soothe burns (including sunburn) and draw out infection from wounds. Aloe Vera has attracted the interest of modern physicians for its ability to heal radiation burns. Taken internally, Aloe Vera is a powerful laxative, anti-inflammatory and promotes healing. Aloe Vera is a natural source of beta-carotene, minerals, amino acids and the important antioxidant vitamins (A, C, E and B1, B2 and B3).

History:

For more than 3,500 years, healers and physicians have sung the praises of this fragrant desert lily. Pictures of this juicy, succulent plant have been found on the walls of the temples of Egypt, where it was believed to have been used in the embalming process. Alexander the Great was reputed to have conquered the island of Socotra in the fourth century B.C., in order to acquire the beautiful violet dye produced by the species of Aloe (*socotrine*) grown there.

The Greek physician Dioscorides wrote of its benefits to heal wounds and treat hemorrhoids, and the Romans used the plant to help heal wounds. Aloe originated in southern Africa, and many varieties of this perennial are now cultivated throughout Africa, the Mediterranean and Caribbean regions, and in many countries of South and Central America and Asia. Although there are nearly five hundred varieties of this perennial plant, only Aloe Vera is considered to be the "true" curative healer. Some of Aloe Vera's constituents include beta-carotene, beta-sitosterol, lignins, saponins, calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, amino acids and the important antioxidant vitamins (A, C, E and B1, B2 and B3).

Medical Uses:

Aloe Vera is a powerful laxative and known to be one of the finest body cleansers, removing morbid matter from the stomach, liver, kidneys, spleen and bladder and is considered to be the finest colon cleanser known. It will not promote "gripe" (sharp pains and grumbling in the bowels) when used as a laxative, and it is less likely to cause dehydration from such use.

Aloe is potentially helpful in the treatment of Type-2 diabetes and does not cause weight gain, a common side effect in some diabetes medications. The herb also promotes the absorption of nutrients through the digestive tract and normalizes blood sugar.

Indian Ayurvedic physicians highly recommend the use of Aloe internally as a drink that acts as an astringent for hemorrhoids, in addition to stimulating fertility in women.

In test tube studies, acemannan, a potent immune-stimulating compound found in Aloe, was shown to be active against HIV. In people with AIDS, it soothes the lining of the digestive tract, increasing nutrient absorption. University Maryland researchers found another compound in Aloe, aloe-emodin (responsible for its laxative effect), which appears to kill the viruses that cause herpes and shingles.

Aloe juice also contains aloemmannan, a complex sugar that concentrates in the kidneys, stimulates the growth of healthy kidney cells and slows rate of crystal formation.

Aloe Vera soothes the gastrointestinal tract and eases peptic ulcer inflammation caused by excess acid, aspirin and other anti-inflammatory drugs.

Ingested, Aloe helps to lower cholesterol, increases blood-vessel generation in the lower extremities of people with poor circulation, soothes stomach irritation and promotes healing.

A medically active complex sugar in Aloe stimulates and regulates various components of the immune system, and some clinics have used Aloe Vera to increase the efficacy of chemotherapy treatments when used with other chemotherapy agents. Aloe protects against skin-damaging x - rays - an effective antioxidant that absorbs free radicals caused by radiation. It also reduces inflammation resulting from radiation therapy and stimulates cell regeneration.

Applied topically, Aloe Vera is known to rejuvenate wrinkled, sun-aged skin, and will stimulate cell regeneration. Application also promotes the healing of sores, insect bites, cuts and burns, and is an effective treatment against psoriasis and eczema. Aloe contains enzymes that relieve pain, and as a mild anesthetic, it relieves itching and swelling. Its topical application will help burns from scarring. Aloe Vera is an astringent and emollient; it is antifungal, antiviral and antibacterial.

A tea made from the dried juice of Aloe Vera Leaf makes a fine mouthwash, effective against cold sores and a wash for the eyes.

Precautions:

Pregnant or nursing mothers, children and the elderly should never take Aloe Vera internally, nor should people who take potassium-depleting drugs for high blood pressure. Aloe and prescription medications should be taken at different times. Allergic reactions, though rare, may occur in susceptible persons.

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Aloes Cape



Botanical: *Aloe spicata* (also known as *Aloe ferox*)

Family: Liliaceae (lily)

Other common names: Cape Aloe, Wild Aloe, Bitter Aloe, Red Aloe, Tap Aloe, Bitteraalwyn

Are you suffering from irregularity?

Aloes Cape has been in use for many centuries as a natural laxative for those who suffer from chronic constipation. It is a natural source of iso- and bioflavonoids, amino acids, iron and calcium and is known to produce antiviral, antibacterial and antifungal effects.

Plant Description:

Found in centuries-old rock paintings, Aloes Cape is normally neither irrigated nor treated with pesticides and contains three times as many polysaccharides than Aloe Vera. This plant is so strong that its survival is sustained through its own immune system.

History:

Its botanical specific, *ferox*, is derived from the translation of a Latin word, meaning "wild or fierce." Aloes Cape is a robust, palm like succulent with stems that grow to ten feet, crowned with dense rosettes. The broad, fleshy leaves are dull green with reddish-brown spines along the perimeter, but the flowers are a bright red/orange that adds beauty to many gardens when cultivated. Aloes Cape is native to the Cape Region of South Africa, grows in dry, rocky places and scrubs and is drought tolerant, thriving in very well drained soil in sun. Aloes Cape has been famous for its medicinal qualities for over three hundred years. Some of the constituents found in Aloes Cape include amino acids, iso- bioflavonoids, and many important minerals.

Medical Uses:

Bitter Aloe is the yellow juice that is found just below the skin of the Aloes Cape leaves, and the juice retains all the naturally present active ingredients, including its main purgative component, anthrone c-glucoside aloin (barbaloin), which is a very strong laxative.

Aloes Cape is a natural digestive-fermenting agent, supporting stomach complaints and detoxifying the intestines. As an aid to digestion, it is used to ease indigestion and improve a poor appetite.

Aloes Cape is thought to enhance the immune system and may raise the tolerance threshold in cases of allergies.

Aloes Cape is said to have wound-healing properties and has been used to treat such diverse problems as eczema, conjunctivitis, hypertension and stress. In lower doses, it has been used to help in the treatment of arthritis.

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Althea Root



Botanical: *Althea officinalis*

Family: Malyaceae (mallow)

Other common names: Marshmallow, Mortification Root, Sweet Weed, Wymote, Mallards, Hock Herb, Schloss Tea

Althea Root aids the body in expelling excess fluid and mucus and will soothe the mucous membranes and a dry, hacking cough. Good for treating bladder infection, digestive upsets, fluid retention, intestinal disorders, kidney problems, sinusitis, and sore throat. It is a natural source of beta-carotene, amino acids, minerals, and vitamins. It is often used as filler in the compounding of pills. Althea Root soothes!

History:

Althea Root or Marsh Mallow is a rich source of healing mucilage, and its genus name, *Althea*, is derived from the Greek *althe* (to cure).

The use of Althea Root originated in traditional Greek medicine and later spread to Arabian and Indian Ayurvedic medicine. Long used as a healing herb, Althea Root was eaten by the Egyptians and Syrians and mentioned by Pythagoras, Plato, and Virgil. The plant was enjoyed by the Romans in barley soup and in a stuffing for suckling pig, while classical herbalists praised its gentle laxative properties.

It was used in Persia to reduce inflammation in teething babies, and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne (A.D. 800-814), insisted that Althea be planted throughout his kingdom, and in the nineteenth century, some doctors made a meringue from the plant's root juices, egg whites and sugar that hardened into a medicinal candy, which was used to soothe children's sore throats. Althea Root is a hardy perennial that grows best in wet, marshy areas.

Plant Description:

The plant bears hibiscus-like blossoms of light red to white or purple in color and may grow to a height of four to six feet. All parts of the plant are used in various ways, i.e., medicinal, decorative, culinary, and cosmetic purposes, but the root is mainly used for medicinal purposes. Althea Root is rich in mucilage, paraffin, pectin, lecithin, tannins, acids, beta-carotene, amino acids, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Althea (Marshmallow) Root's particular excellence involves soothing irritated tissue and relieves various forms of inflammation, especially of the mucous membranes, since it is high in mucilage, which is very soothing to the membranes. It aids the body in expelling excess fluid and mucus. The herb is used in many lung preparations and cough syrups to alleviate a dry, hacking cough and laryngitis. It is also known to be a good expectorant, helping to loosen and expel phlegm from the lungs.

Althea Root is an old-time remedy for gastrointestinal disorders, strengthening the digestive system, because it contains polysaccharides that form a protective layer on the stomach lining and will lower stomach acids. The herb is frequently used to treat ulcers and colitis.

The herb improves the functioning of the immune system, since it is known to stimulate phagocytosis, the immune process in which cells called macrophages engulf and digest infectious micro-organisms.

Althea Root may be used externally in an ointment as an emollient to soften and soothe skin and dry hands. The high mucilage content will also promote rapid healing of diaper rash, skin ulcers, sunburns, and psoriasis and problem skin.

Precautions: None

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Alum Root



Botanical: *Geranium maculatum*

Family: Geraniaceae (geranium)

Other common names: Cranesbill, Spotted Cranesbill, Geranium, Wild Geranium, Spotted Geranium, Dovefoot, Tormentil, Storksbill, Wild Cranesbill, Crowfoot, American Kino Root, Old Maid's Nightcap, Shameface, Alum Bloom

A powerful astringent and antiseptic, Alum Root has been used for centuries in the treatment of diarrhea and hemorrhage, including bleeding gums after tooth extraction and excessive menstruation. Excellent when used in treating internal piles and hemorrhoids.

Plant Description:

Centuries ago, Native American healers knew that the root of the wild geranium (Alum Root) would calm an inflamed intestinal tract and treat diarrhea.

Alum Root is a perennial plant that is native to North America, especially in the woodlands of the eastern half. The stout, horizontal rootstock (the medicinal part) produces a hairy stem, which grows to a height of two feet, as well as leaves and attractive rose-purple flowers, which bloom from April to July.

History:

Native Americans used Alum Root as eyewash and applied it to sores, open wounds and swollen feet. The Chippewa's employed it as a remedy for sores inside the mouth, especially in children, and many tribes ate the young leaves of the plant. The early settlers learned of the many effective medicinal qualities of Alum Root from the Native Americans, and by the nineteenth century, a physician remarked that the root was "a very popular domestic remedy" that was widely in use as an astringent for diarrhea, dysentery and hemorrhaging.

Alum Root was listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1820 to 1916. To this day herbalists recommend the underground root stem for many of those same medicinal purposes, and it is still used both internally and externally for its astringent qualities. Some of the constituents in Alum Root include tannic, citric and gallic acid, starch, sugar, gum, oleoresin, pectin, anthocyanins and calcium oxalate

Medical Uses:

When used internally, it is an excellent treatment for hemorrhage, diarrhea, nosebleeds and profuse menstruation. The root contains a high concentration of tannins that act as a powerful astringent, which are said to be effective against diarrhea, cholera and dysentery.

When ingested, Alum Root is an old and reliable treatment for internal piles and hemorrhoids.

Taken internally, Alum Root has a potent healing effect on the entire gastrointestinal tract and has been used as an excellent treatment against pus and mucus in the bladder and intestines or, in fact, mucous discharges from any part of

the body. It is helpful in reducing inflammation of the mucous membranes, curbs irritation of hemorrhoid tissue and promotes venous health.

Used externally, it is a powerful blood coagulant: The dry powder sprinkled on a wound or cut will stop bleeding immediately. (Barbers have used it as a styptic for years to stop razor cuts.)

As a mouthwash, Alum Root will aid in the relief of mouth sores, sore throat and bleeding gums.

Alum Root has been used to treat ulcers and has been found helpful in fighting the bacteria in tuberculosis.

Precautions

This herb is not recommended for long-term use, as excessive use may cause liver damage.

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American Ginseng



Botanical: Panax quinquefolius

Family: Araliaceae (ginseng)

Other common names: Five Fingers, Man's Health, Red Berry

Did you know...?

Ginseng increases mental efficiency and boost stamina and energy with American Ginseng. An excellent way to improve the body's resistance to infection and damaging environmental influences, the herb is also used by many athletes for overall body strengthening and endurance. It is useful for bronchitis, circulatory problems, diabetes and infertility. Recent studies have shown it to be helpful in lowering cholesterol and possibly even inhibiting the growth of malignant growths. American Ginseng has long been used as an aphrodisiac and is especially helpful to weak or elderly people.

Plant Description:

American Ginseng is a smaller version of its more famous Asian (Korean/Chinese) cousin but has many of the same benefits. It is a slow-growing perennial plant with a large fleshy root (the part used in herbal medicine) and a stem that grows to two feet. It is found from Maine to Georgia and from Oklahoma to Minnesota, and it is endangered in much of this area.

History:

Gar-ent-oguen is its Iroquois name, meaning Man Plant, and Native Americans made a tea to alleviate nausea and vomiting long before European settlers arrived in North America. Some tribes thought it to be a love potion, and modern researchers believe that it increases interest in sex by altering the action of the neurotransmitter, dopamine, in the brain. American colonists began using Ginseng in the early 1700s, and by 1709 through 1714, French Jesuit missionaries, Pere Jartoux and Pere Lafitau, were responsible for noting the value of the wild American Ginseng, collecting samples in southern Canada and creating a huge market in China.

Tons of American Ginseng were exported to Asia, where it was prized by Chinese herbalists, because it is sweeter than the Korean Panax ginseng and considered more "yin" (cooler) in nature. Asians particularly favor the Ginseng grown in Wisconsin. Some of the constituents in American Ginseng include ginsenosides, kaempferol, beta-sitosterol, campesterol, cinnamic-, ferulic-, fumaric-, oleanolic-, panaxic- and vanillic-acids, as well as saponin, stigmasterol, calcium, choline, fiber, foliate, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, silicon, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

American Ginseng is an adaptogen in that it normalizes body functions during stressful situations that might alter those functions, helping the body to adapt and return to an overall sense of well-being. It improves mental and physical vigor and is used by athletes for overall body strengthening and endurance.

Taken over a course of one to three months, American Ginseng helps to combat stress, because it appears to protect a portion of the brain known as the hippocampus from the effects of stress hormones. This prevents memory problems and loss of cognitive ability in people who suffer from bipolar disorder and even depression. It may be used to relieve fatigue, stress and nervousness, especially after acute illness. It is an overall tonic, which is particularly helpful to the old and weak.

American Ginseng is believed to promote a good appetite and is helpful for rheumatism, headaches, colds, coughs, bronchitis, constipation and cystitis. Its anti-inflammatory properties may be useful in reducing fevers and lung problems. Taken in low doses, it acts as a mild sedative; in large doses, it is a stimulant.

American Ginseng is said to stimulate fertility in women, as it stimulates growth of the uterine lining. Various Native American groups used it in the treatment for infertile women, and it is known that American Ginseng shares compounds with Chinese Ginseng that stimulate the pituitary gland to, in turn, stimulate growth of the uterine lining. The herb is also said to relieve symptoms of menopause.

Although less well studied than Asian Ginseng, American Ginseng has been used to reduce cholesterol and high blood pressure, and recent studies indicate that it may be used to inhibit the growth of malignant growths. Like Asian Ginseng, American Ginseng is considered an effective antioxidant that protects against cell damage.

Researchers also believe that American Ginseng may be a viable alternative to conventional forms of treatment for Type-2 diabetes. Constituents in American Ginseng root appear to be responsible for its ability to lower blood sugar in diabetics, and recent clinical trials show potential benefit in the supportive treatment of diabetes.

American Ginseng increases vitality and improves the body's resistance to a wide variety of illnesses and damaging external influences. It strengthens the adrenal and reproductive glands, enhances immune functions and promotes lung and respiratory health.

It has long been regarded as a powerful aphrodisiac and has traditionally been used to restore sex drive in men. It is thought to alter the action of the neurotransmitter, dopamine, in the brain. American Ginseng also has the added benefit of not increasing testosterone, which could increase aggression or aggravate prostate disorders.

Precautions:

Since American Ginseng stimulates fertility, it should be avoided by women in the first week after starting any new brand of oral contraceptives. It should be avoided by women who take prescription medications, for which pregnancy is contraindicated, especially isotretinoin (Accutane). This product should not be taken by pregnant or nursing mothers. There may be possible interactions with blood thinners, i.e., Coumadin, aspirin, Plavix and Ticlid. American Ginseng should not be taken by people with hypoglycemia, high blood pressure, heart disorders, asthma or insomnia.

* * * * *

Korean Ginseng



Botanical: Panax ginseng

Family: Araliaceae (ginseng)

Other common names: Asian Ginseng, Chinese Ginseng, Panax Ginseng, Ginseng Root, Red Ginseng, Asiatic Ginger, Oriental Ginseng, Jintsam, Ninjin

Did you know...?

Many athletes swear that Korean Ginseng gives them a competitive edge; women drink it to alleviate unpleasant symptoms of menopause; and millions of people have used this "wonder herb" to cope with stress and also as a stimulant and tonic. Researchers claim that it lowers cholesterol (especially LDL or bad cholesterol), acts as an aphrodisiac and digestive aid, improves mental function and increases the body's energy and stamina. Long considered to be an overall body tonic, Korean Ginseng is believed to vitalize, strengthen and rejuvenate the entire body.

Plant Description:

Korean ginseng is one of the most widely used and acclaimed herbs in the world. Its scientific name is Panax ginseng, which is the species from which Chinese, Korean, red, and white ginseng are produced. Chinese and Korean ginseng are the same plant cultivated in different regions, and have slightly different properties according to Chinese medicine. White ginseng is simply the dried or powdered

root of Korean ginseng, while red ginseng is the same root that is steamed and dried in heat or sunlight. Red ginseng is said to be slightly stronger and more stimulating in the body than white, according to Chinese Herbalism.

History:

The Mandarin word for Ginseng is Len seng, which literally means "Root of Man," and the name Ginseng comes from the Chinese, jen shen, also meaning "Man Root." This low-growing, perennial shrub, native to the cool-summer regions of China and North Korea, takes at least four years to mature, and it has been a part of Chinese medicine for over five thousand years. It was first mentioned in the Shen Nong Herbal (compiled between the first and second centuries B.C.) as a superior drug, suitable for long-term use without toxic effects, and it was long considered an "anti-ageing" herb. Another Asian species (*Panax pseudoginseng*) is native to Japan and may be used for some of the same purposes. Ginseng was traditionally used to curb emotions, stop agitation, brighten the eyes, enlighten the mind and increase wisdom. The herb was also commonly used by elderly people to improve mental and physical vitality. The reverence with which some hold Ginseng is reflected in its botanical name, *Panax*, which is derived from the Greek word for panacea or all healing. Some of the constituents in Korean Ginseng include ginsenosides, kaempferol, beta-sitosterol, campesterols, cinnamic-, ferulic-, fumaric-, oleanolic- and vanillic-acids, oleyacetylinic alcohol, as well as saponins, stigmasterol, calcium, choline, fiber, folate, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, silicon, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Korean Ginseng has been known to increase physical and mental endurance, reduce cholesterol and increase energy. It is commonly taken to enhance physical performance, prolong life and increase sexual potency. Korean Ginseng may increase the body's production of adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) and certain steroid hormones, such as adrenaline. This is believed to stimulate the natural function of the body's stress-response system, which keeps the adrenal glands from "burning out" during prolonged periods of stress. It is even though that Korean Ginseng may reduce the stress of anticipated pain.

With regard to cognitive ability, Korean Ginseng is said to significantly improve abstract thinking. Several studies have found that treatment with Ginseng improved the ability to complete detailed tasks, perform mental arithmetic, as well as improve concentration, memory, attention and a general ability to cope. Furthermore, it is said to enhance reaction to visual and auditory stimuli, as well as visual and motor co-ordination.

According to 2008 research presented to the American Psychiatric Association, Panax Ginseng shows promise for relieving symptoms of schizophrenia that are difficult to treat, including “negative symptoms,” characterized by lack of pleasure or motivation in everyday life, severe reduction in emotional expression, cognitive impairment or inability to converse meaningfully. The research suggests that Panax Ginseng hits some of the same targets in the brain as drugs being developed to treat both negative and positive symptoms of schizophrenia; and unexpectedly, Ginseng's effect on reducing symptoms continued even when the patients were crossed over to placebo. While too early to prescribe Korean Ginseng for schizophrenia, the findings indicate promise as an adjunct to their other antipsychotic medications.

Korean Ginseng has long been reported to be an aphrodisiac: Chemicals in Ginseng are thought to stimulate the part of the brain known as the hypothalamus to direct the production of hormones that stimulate cell growth and healing in the sex organs. It is also believed to promote better blood circulation within the penis, and an Italian study found that Ginseng use may increase testosterone levels, as well as the number and motility of sperm cells.

Korean Ginseng is considered an "adaptogen" in that it normalizes body functions during stressful or other situations that would alter those functions, helping the body to adapt and return to an overall sense of well-being. Dr. I. Brekhman, a Soviet scientist, was the first to describe this unique ability to normalize body functions. For example, if blood sugar levels drop too low, or blood pressure climbs too high, an adaptogen will aid the body's return to normal function. Long before scientists researched its benefits, Chinese herbalists prescribed it to normalize blood pressure, improve blood circulation and prevent heart disease.

Korean Ginseng is thought to prevent liver damage in people who have been exposed to various drugs and toxins. It has also been used to help in withdrawal from methamphetamines and cocaine.

When taken in lower doses, Korean Ginseng (like American Ginseng) acts as a sedative, and in higher doses, it is a stimulant.

Many women have claimed relief from hot flashes and other discomforts of menopause when taking the herb. Lab studies indicate that it increases ovarian estrogen production in early menopause; consequently, if taking HRT (hormone replacement therapy), one should consult a physician prior to taking Asian Ginseng.

Korean Ginseng is said to enhance the breakdown of alcohol in the body and therefore may shorten a hangover. The herb may also help improve drug or alcohol-induced liver dysfunction in older adults.

Panax Ginseng has been used to help the digestive system and stimulate the appetite; thus, some herbalists have used it with some success when treating anorexia. It is also said to reduce digestive upset caused by emotional stress and inhibit ulcer formation.

Korean Ginseng may be very beneficial to good heart health: Studies in Japan have shown that taking Panax Ginseng will lower LDL or "bad" cholesterol and raise HDL (the beneficial) cholesterol. This action is believed to increase blood circulation, reduce blood pressure and reduce the risk of strokes, arteriosclerosis and heart attacks. Long before scientists researched this herb, Chinese herbalists prescribed it to normalize blood pressure, improve blood circulation and prevent heart disease. Modern tests have shown that Korean Ginseng slows the heart rate and reduces the heart's demand for oxygen. It is also said to increase the strength with which the heart muscle can contract, and protects the heart from myopathy, a weakness or wasting of the heart muscle.

With regard to invasive malignant diseases, Japan's Kanazawa University's preliminary research found that unpurified Panax Ginseng's saponins (or ginsenosides, the main active ingredients in Ginseng) not only inhibited the growth of malignant cells, but also actually converted the diseased cells to normal cells.

Polyacetylinic alcohol, a compound in Korean Ginseng is said to retard cell reproduction in tumors, and the ginsenosides in the herb have been found to induce cell differentiation, a prelude to natural cell death in leukemia cells. Another Korean study found that Ginseng destroys malignant lung cells that are resistant to standard chemotherapy drug treatments. It is also thought to protect against the effects of radiation exposure.

Non-saponin constituents in Korean Ginseng root appear to be responsible for its ability to lower blood sugar in diabetics. People with Type-2 diabetes often find that after two weeks of consuming Ginseng their blood-sugar levels go down considerably, and it may reduce insulin requirements and prolong the effect of injected insulin. Diabetics should take Ginseng only under a physician's supervision.

Precautions:

There have been reports of interactions between Korean Ginseng Herbal Supplement and MAO inhibitor drugs, digitalis, warfarin (Coumadin) and high doses of prescription steroids. Pregnant women and nursing mothers should not use Ginseng, and diabetics should consult a physician before using. Avoid taking Asian/Korean Ginseng for two weeks prior to elective surgery. Korean Ginseng should not be used by people with hypoglycemia, high blood pressure, heart disorders, asthma or insomnia without first consulting a physician. Taking more than the recommended dosage of Korean Ginseng may cause slight insomnia if taken at bedtime. Ginseng should not be used with stimulants or alcohol.

American Mandrake Root



Botanical: *Podophyllum peltatum* (American)*

Family: Berberidaceae (barberry)

Other common names: American Mandrake, Mayapple, Raccoon Berry, Wild Lemon, Indian Apple, Duck's Foot, Hog Apple, Umbrella Plant, Ground Lemon

Did you know...?

American Mandrake Root is a strong and powerful purgative that has been used historically and primarily to regulate bowel and liver function. It is believed to be a strong stimulant that efficiently cleanses and removes waste products from the body, and has been used to treat constipation, jaundice, and other disorders associated with waste product buildup. Native Americans also used it to remove warts and expel worms from the intestines.

Plant Description:

American Mandrake Root is a perennial plant that is native to and grows abundantly in North America (not be mistaken for European Mandrake - *Mandragora officinarum* - a poisonous herb of the nightshade family), and it thrives in moist, humus-rich, well-drained soil in woodlands and clearings in sheltered semi-shade.

It is an ornamental plant with a single, forked stem that is topped by two umbrella-like leaves and a solitary, waxy, white flower dropping from the fork of the stem. After the flower blooms in May, it then produces a pulpy, lemon yellow berry that ripens in July and August, and that fruit is the only part of the plant that is not poisonous and may be eaten (but it is rather tasteless).

The plant usually grows in patches and may reach a height of eighteen inches, but young leaves may be damaged by frost. In the autumn, the roots are collected, dried, and crushed into powder, and the powdered rhizomes (roots) are used as a potent purgative.

History:

This application was well known to Native Americans long before it was "rediscovered" in conventional American medicine and listed in the U. S. Pharmacopoeia from 1820 to 1926. Native Americans used minute doses as a purgative, emetic, liver tonic, and vermifuge (to destroy and expel worms), and for topical application in removing warts. The Menominee tribe used it on plants and potato crops as an effective insecticide, a use that is now being studied extensively in laboratories. It is an acrid, caustic herb with an unpleasant smell, and because it is so potent, it is not advisable for self-medication in specific applications; therefore, it is always wise to seek an experienced health care provider when using this herb. Some of the constituents in Mandrake Root are lignins (including the most important podophyllotoxin) and resin (podophyllin).

Medical Uses:

Mandrake Root (Mayapple) has mainly been used (in controlled dosage) as a very potent purgative cathartic, a strong laxative that causes rapid, watery evacuation of the intestines and bowels. It is said to aid bowel complaints, such as constipation and other disturbances, due to sluggish action. It is considered an alterative, an agent that cleanses and stimulates the efficient removal of waste products from the system.

American Mandrake Root is said to aid in liver complaints. As a cholagogue, it has been used to stimulate the production and flow of bile (which also aids in the digestive process), and has a reputation for supporting liver function. Some say it

has no equal when used for liver ailments and has been used in cases of jaundice, biliousness, and for the removal of body obstructions. The eliminative properties of Mandrake (in both the bowel and liver) make it effective for a number of complaints marked by accumulation of waste products in the system (including arthritic and skin problems).

Mandrake is also considered a vermifuge, an agent that destroys and expels worms from the intestinal tract.

Used externally, Mandrake Root is said to be effective in wart removal, especially helping venereal warts, and the root is said to possess antiviral properties.

There is a derivative in Mandrake Root called podophyllotoxin (the agent responsible for removing warts), and recent studies have shown some promising results for its use as a possible anticancer and antitumor substance, which may be used in treating human cancers. In tests, it has been found to stimulate the immune system while suppressing lymph cells and appears to be more toxic to leukemia cells than normal cells. Thus far, it is too severe for the digestive tract for practical purposes, but a synthetic derivative is being used in Europe in chemotherapy (trademarked Vepeside) for lung and testicle cancers.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should never use Mandrake Root. This herb should be used with great caution (it is always advisable to use it in consultation with a physician), and it is subject to restrictions in many countries. It should never be taken in large amounts, as an overdose would likely be fatal. It is considered unsafe as a food by the USFDA.

* * * * *

Bee Pollen



Did you know?

Bee Pollen has become a popular nutritious supplement that helps to enhance vitality, build the immune system, increase strength and stamina, and improve concentration and even combat depression. Bee Pollen is considered an herbal antibacterial and antifungal.

Description:

For years, herbalists have touted bee pollen as an exceptionally nutritious food. They've even claimed it is a cure for certain health problems. Bee pollen contains vitamins, minerals, carbohydrates, lipids, and protein. It comes from the pollen that collects on the bodies of bees. Bee pollen may also include bee saliva. It's important to avoid confusing bee pollen with natural honey, honeycomb, bee venom, or royal jelly. These products do not contain bee pollen.

History:

Bee Pollen is one of the many gifts that bees have bestowed on humanity (think of beeswax, honey, Bee Propolis and Royal Jelly), and yet scientists have not been able to duplicate this wondrous substance in a laboratory. Even when manmade pollen has been created with every known nutrient present in the real pollen, bees will die when fed the lab-produced, synthesized food. Bee Pollen is a powder-like material produced by the anthers of flowering plants and gathered by bees and picks up the nutrients of every plant it visits. This is particularly rich, non-airborne pollen called entomophile pollen that is needed by those flowers to guarantee their fertilization, and unlike the wind-carried anemophile pollen, it generally does not

trigger allergic reactions. This entomophile pollen is processed by the honeybee and is rich in protein, essential fatty acids, B-complex vitamins, vitamins A, C, E and D, carotene, enzymes, almost all known minerals, trace elements, sodium, plant sterols and simple sugars.

Medical Uses:

Bee Pollen is the favorite of many athletes who use it to help increase their endurance, stamina, speed and strength before workouts or competitions. Bee pollen also helps athletes to recover more swiftly after strenuous exercise. It appears to improve not only endurance and energy, but also physical acuity and sharper mental response. Many people use it to fight overall fatigue.

With regard to mental response, Bee Pollen appears to be effective in helping people who suffer from mental fatigue, stress, depression and the inability to concentrate. Bee pollen is a natural energy food that helps to improve mental clarity and the capacity to concentrate for longer periods.

Bee Pollen is known as one of the finest sources of immunity-building nutrients that stimulate glands and enhance the body's natural defenses while also eliminating damaging toxins from the system. Improved immunity helps the body ward off disease, resist infections and simply combat many common ailments, including colds, flu, bronchitis and others.

Because Bee Pollen may strengthen the immune system, it also appears to help people with allergies. Those very same immune-enhancing properties in Bee Pollen stimulate the body's natural defense against allergic responses. In addition, since Bee Pollen supports reduced production of histamine, the substance that can cause allergic responses, many allergy sufferers have found relief with Bee Pollen as an herbal antihistamine.

For a youthful, radiant appearance, regular use of Bee Pollen appears to result in skin that looks much smoother, younger and healthier. Credit is given to Bee Pollen for reducing lines and wrinkles on the face and is said to be a marvelous toner for the skin, providing it with increased elasticity. Some say that regular use of Bee Pollen will even keep unwanted gray hair away.

Bee Pollen appears to be an excellent source of antioxidants, and some research has claimed that use of Bee Pollen has demonstrated anti-carcinogenic properties and has also shown some delayed growth in tumors. In separate studies, a noticeable decrease in the side effects of radiation (including nausea, bladder inflammation, appetite loss and rectal swelling) has been noted, as well as countering the effects of environmental and chemical toxins.

Like other bee products, Bee Pollen has shown extremely active anti-microbial activity, and certain cultures of microbes in hard-to-control diseases (i.e., Salmonella, etc.) were killed with Bee Pollen. Bee Pollen may also destroy harmful intestinal flora, thereby easing colon disorders and diarrhea. Its antibacterial and antifungal properties have also shown positive results against Candida and other yeast infections.

Bee Pollen's quality of invigorating the body and enhancing energy seems to extend to helping sexual performance, especially in older adults who experience diminishing sex hormones and shrinking reproductive organs. One reason may be that the aspartic acid content in Bee Pollen is an amino acid important to bodily rejuvenation processes, particularly those of the sex glands. Bee Pollen has become very popular in Europe where older adults claim it has put new life and vigor into their sex lives.

Precautions:

A small number of people have been known to be allergic to bee and/or plant Pollen and should avoid it, as ingestion may result in severe allergic reaction, including anaphylaxis, an acute allergic response which may be life threatening. When using Bee Pollen Herbal Supplement, it is wise to take a small amount at first, and if any sneezing, discomfort or rash occurs, discontinue use immediately.

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Bilberry Fruit



Botanical: *Vaccinium myrtillus*

Family: Ericaceae (blueberry)

Other common names: Whortleberry, European Blueberry, Myrtle Blueberry, Blueberry,* Huckleberry,* Black Whortle, Burren Myrtle, Whinberry, Dyeberry, Wineberry, Fraughan (Irish), Black Hearts, Grouseberry

Did you know...?

During World War II, some RAF pilots enjoyed Bilberry jam on their bread, and it was noted that these men were more successful in hitting their targets. Later research discovered that Bilberry does, in fact, reduce eye irritation, nearsightedness and night-blindness, and it extends range and clarity of vision. Pregnant women find the herb to be beneficial, as it fortifies veins and capillaries and combats fatigue.

Plant Description:

Bilberry is a shrubby perennial plant that is native to northern Europe and Asia. It is similar in appearance to the American blueberry, but it contains higher quantities of the constituents useful for improved eye health and better circulation.

Its name is derived from the Danish *bollebar*, meaning dark berry, and its botanical name, *vaccinium*, means purple flower. In Elizabethan times, English herbalists prescribed "Whortleberry" for stomach complaints and diarrhea. American herbalists later combined whortleberries with gin to make a diuretic. Rich in lutein, tannins, bioflavonoids, calcium, inositol, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon, sulfur, zinc, B-vitamins, vitamin C, glycosides, fruit acids, and glucoquinone.

History:

Bilberry has long been a well-known folk remedy for poor vision. Modern European medical journals are filled with studies confirming Bilberry's positive effect on vision.

Medical Uses:

Bilberry helps to preserve eyesight and prevent eye damage. It is particularly useful for people who suffer from eyestrain or poor night vision and is helpful for nearsightedness (myopia). The fruit is beneficial in strengthening the red blood cells and capillaries around the eyes and thereby increases circulation of blood and nutrients to the many blood vessels in the eyes.

Because Bilberry strengthens capillaries and fortifies veins, it improves blood circulation by increasing the ability of fluids and nourishment to pass freely and is therefore valuable to people, particularly the elderly, who suffer from poor circulation to the hands and feet.

Bilberry has been used to regulate bowel action. It is a mild but strong astringent that has been effective in treating dysentery and diarrhea. It is an antiseptic that helps treat urinary tract infections and is said to curb intestinal putrefaction (which produces flatulence and gas), helping to reduce stomach cramps.

Italian scientists have discovered that Bilberries contain significant, curative anti-ulcer activity, which they attributed to the fruit's anthocyanoside (a flavonoid) content.

Bilberry has also been used as a mild diuretic and is said to relieve bloating and rid the body of excess water retention.

Treatment:

Herbalists say that Bilberry tea makes a fine mouthwash or gargle and recommend its use to relieve inflamed gums and tongue; it is held in the mouth for a while and then swallowed.

Bilberry is most effective when taken over a period as a dietary supplement that helps to strengthen the immune system.

Precautions:

Currently, there are no warnings or contraindications with the use of Bilberry.

* * * * *

Blue Flag

Botanical: *Iris versicolor*

Family: Iridaceae (iris)

Other common names: Blue Iris, Iris, Wild Iris, Liver Lily, Flag, Lily, Poison Flag, Snake Lily, Water Flag, Dragon Flower, Dagger Flower, Fleur-de-Lis

Did you know...?

Blue Flag stimulates intestinal, liver and gallbladder function and works to correct the many problems associated with a congested liver and intestines, including jaundice, hepatitis, gastric distress, headaches, toxins, skin problems, constipation and undigested fats.

Plant Description:

Blue Flag is a beautiful, hardy perennial with deep green, sword-shaped leaves and large, blue-violet flowers that bloom from May to July on three-foot stalks.

This elegant species of iris is a native of North America and may be found in Canada and the United States, growing in marshes, wet meadows and on lake and stream banks, although it is tolerant of an extreme range of conditions and can be drought tolerant. It is an ornamental that prefers rich, heavy, moist-to-wet, acid soil in sun.

History:

Blue Flag's botanical genus, *Iris*, refers to the Greek winged goddess of the rainbow, in honor of the beauty and variety of the many hued irises in the genus that grace perennial gardens. It was called *Iris* by early American settlers because of its close resemblance to a common European species, the yellow flag, which was the model for the fleur-de-lis, the emblem of French royalty. One of Blue Flag's common names, Liver Lily, refers to its use in early herbal medicine as a remedy for diseases of the liver and blood impurities.

Other folk uses included remedies for skin diseases, rheumatism and even syphilis. The use of various dried iris roots (called orris) in medicines and unguents was recorded in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome. Blue Flag has been used for centuries as a perfume, largely because of its essential oil (twenty-five percent), consisting partly of irone, which produces a violet scent that intensifies as the dried rhizome ages.

Blue Flag was one of the most widely used medicinal plants used by Native Americans for many ailments, and the Creeks even grew it near their villages to ensure a convenient supply. The tribes used it mainly as a cathartic and emetic, and the root was officially listed for those very same applications in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1820 to 1895. During the nineteenth century, Blue Flag was a very important emmenagogue and remedy for constipation, dermatitis and many other conditions, but today it is not so widely used. Blue Flag is an acrid, slightly aromatic herb, and the dried rhizomes (roots must be thoroughly dried) are used in herbal medicines. Some of the constituents in Blue Flag include beta-sitosterol, furfural, oleoresin, glucose, starch, tannin, gum, iodine, volatile oil (irone), acrid resin (iridin), fixed oil, alkaloid and acids (including traces of salicylic acid).

Medical Uses:

Blue Flag acts as a mild, but effective, purgative that promotes bowel movement. The iridin content is said to increase intestinal peristalsis, and, as such, it has been used for centuries to relieve constipation and clear wastes from the system. Moreover, the herb has been used as a vermifuge, expelling intestinal worms, and this may be the result of its laxative activity.

As an "alterative," Blue Flag helps to gradually and favorably alter the course of an ailment or condition and assists in altering the process of nutrition and excretion, restoring normal bodily function. It also acts to cleanse and stimulate the efficient removal of waste products from the system.

Blue Flag is well known for stimulating liver and gallbladder function. It is believed that the iridin in the oleoresin acts powerfully on the liver as a purgative, clearing congestion and purifying the blood. It also stimulates bile production and helps to process and emulsify fat and to relieve biliousness (including bilious headache), jaundice and chronic hepatitis. By purifying the liver, Blue Flag works to reduce cholesterol, remove toxins, especially when there has been excessive exposure to industrial pollutants and drugs. The herb also works to relieve pain in the liver and gallbladder occurring after excessive ingestion of fatty foods, alcohol or coffee.

The combination of increased bile production and cleansing actions in the liver and blood make Blue Flag useful for chronic skin diseases, including acne, pustular eruptions, syphilitic skin diseases, herpes zoster, herpes praeputialis, psoriasis, dermatitis and eczema, especially when torpor of the liver, gallbladder and intestines (constipation) contribute to the problem. The increased biliary secretion facilitates digestion and relieves gastric irritation, soothing duodenal catarrh in the first portion of the intestine just after the stomach. In smaller doses, Blue Flag alleviates nausea, vomiting and indigestion, but in large doses, it is an emetic that causes vomiting and gastric irritation.

Blue Flag is said to have a positive effect upon the pancreas by stimulating the flow of enzymes and bicarbonate, thus reducing acidity of stomach contents that enter the duodenal portion of the small intestine and decreasing undigested fat in excreted waste.

As an emmenagogue, Blue Flag stimulates and promotes suppressed menstruation and regulates its flow. Because it stimulates the uterus, it was used in the nineteenth century to induce labor, but it should never be used in this manner today.

Blue Flag has been used to treat enlarged thyroid or other glandular affections, including low-grade scrofula (tuberculosis involving the swelling of the lymph nodes of the neck), goiter, swollen glands and dropsy (accumulation of fluid in tissues that causes swelling).

Used externally Blue Flag has been used to treat skin diseases, running sores, rheumatism and infected wounds.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Blue Flag, nor should those who suffer from hyperthyroid conditions. Overuse (many times the recommended dosage) may cause nausea and vomiting. All parts of the fresh plant are harmful if eaten.

* * * * *

Blue vervain



Botanical: *Verbena hastata*

Family: Verbenaceae (vervain)

Other common names: American Vervain, False Vervain, Indian Hyssop, Simpler's Joy, Wild Hyssop, Purvain, Traveler's Joy, Verbena

Did you know...?

Blue Vervain is an old American herbal remedy that is said to relieve respiratory and liver congestion, lower fevers, ease coughs and colds, cleanse toxins, calm the nerves, and act as a general tonic that produces an overall feeling of well-being.

Plant Description:

Blue Vervain is an erect, tall, elegant perennial that bears opposite, lance-shaped leaves on top with lobed, hastate leaves below (meaning shaped like an arrowhead and giving credence to the herb's botanical specific, *hastata*).

The stem of the plant also bears dense spikes of small, purplish-blue flowers and is indigenous to North America (as opposed to *Verbena officinalis*, or the Vervain that is native to the Mediterranean region and introduced to the United States). Blue Vervain may be found along roadsides in dry, grassy fields, flowering from

June to September, and thrives in well-drained soil in sun, reaching a height of three to four feet. The woody, fibrous, and faintly odorous root is used in herbal medicine. It is bitter, somewhat astringent with an unpleasant taste, but much stronger than the leaves, which are sometimes also used, but are less active.

History:

Both varieties of Vervain have been used in herbal medicine for centuries, and Blue (American) Vervain was very popular with Native Americans as a female tonic. In addition they employed it for colds, fevers, lung, and bowel complaints (the Cherokees utilized it as a remedy for dysentery and diarrhea), and many of these uses have been confirmed by the herb's modern applications.

Medical Uses:

Blue Vervain is said to be excellent in cases of colds and congestion. As an expectorant, it helps to loosen and expel phlegm from the throat and chest. It is considered one of the best herbs to help alleviate the onset of a cold, especially with upper respiratory inflammation of the lungs. Moreover, Blue Vervain also acts as a sudorific, or agent that promotes sweating, thereby cools the body, and reduces intermittent fevers, which helps to relieve symptoms of colds. Sweating not only works to reduce fever, but it also acts to rid the body of toxins through the skin. At one time, the herb was frequently given to children to ease fevers and other minor ailments.

As an "alterative," Blue Vervain is believed to have a cleansing effect on the system that stimulates the efficient removal of waste products from the body. First, by encouraging sweat, it helps to remove toxins through the skin. Furthermore, as a diuretic, the herb encourages the flow of urine and helps to quell infection and remove toxins and obstructions (including gravel from the bladder) through the increased urine. This is said to be helpful in cases of gout by promoting the flow and expulsion of uric acid.

Blue Vervain is said to have a potent tonic effect on the liver that nourishes and helps to restore healthy function to the organ. It is believed to be an excellent liver cleanser when there is inflammation and is said to be helpful in cases of toxic liver conditions and jaundice; and it helps to stimulate sluggish digestion.

As a parasiticide, Blue Vervain has been used to destroy and expel parasites and worms from the intestines and is often said to work where other remedies fail.

Blue Vervain is also thought to be an excellent overall tonic that supports the entire body and exerts a gentle strengthening and nourishing effect. The herb is said to be helpful during convalescence from disease and has been used in some cases of debility and anorexia. It is also believed to produce a general feeling of well-being.

As a mild sedative, Blue Vervain is said to be a quieting herb that acts as a natural tranquilizer and has a relaxing effect on the system. This quality has enumerable positive applications, some of which include helping to calm coughs, relieve insomnia, settle an upset stomach, and ease nervous conditions.

Blue Vervain is considered an "emmenagogue," a substance that promotes and regulates menstrual flow when it has been obstructed or delayed.

Used externally, Blue Vervain has been used to heal wounds, bruises, and sores.

Precautions:

Blue Vervain should not be used during pregnancy, as it may be a uterine stimulate. Overuse (many times the recommended dosage) may cause vomiting, but small doses are thought to relieve gastric irritation.

* * * * *

Dandelion



Botanical: *Taraxacum officinale*

Family: Compositae (daisy) - Asteraceae (aster)

Other common names: Bitterwort, Pissabed, Lion's Tooth, Priest's Crown, Telltime, Puffball, Cankerwort, Blow Ball, Swine Snout, White Endive, Wild Endive, Irish Daisy, Doonheadclock, Yellow Gowan, Clock Flower, Fortuneteller

Did you know...?

Potassium-rich Dandelion has been called the "free health food pharmacy" that grows everywhere! Both leaves and roots are considered to act as a superior natural diuretic, digestive aid, mild laxative, fine blood cleanser and nutritious tonic, helping to detoxify the system, especially the liver and gallbladder. For an overall feeling of good health and improved mobility, you'll want to add this "wondrous weed" to your herbal regimen.

Description:

Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*) is a common meadow herb of the Asteraceae or sunflower family. There are about 100 species of dandelion, and all are beneficial. This sun-loving beauty is a native of Greece, naturalized in temperate regions throughout the world, and familiar to nearly everyone. The perennial dandelion

grows freely wherever it can find a bit of earth and a place in the sun. Dandelion's nutritive and medicinal qualities have been known for centuries.

History:

Dandelion wins the prize as the world's most famous weed pest when it grows in manicured lawns and gardens, but the botanical name (*Taraxacum officinale*) of this wonderful wildflower means "the official remedy for disorders," and thought to be derived from the Greek words *taraxos*, meaning "disorder" and *akos*, meaning "remedy."

Since ancient times the entire plant (stems, flower, leaves and root) has lived up to its name and has been used for healing and dietary purposes. The English name, Dandelion, is apparently derived from the French, *dent de lion*, meaning "lion's tooth," because the shape of the leaves resemble the shape of a lion's tooth. Dandelion may be distinguished from other similar-looking herbs because of its hollow, leafless stems that contain a bitter milky-white liquid, which is also found in the root (most potent) and leaves.

The dark green Dandelion leaves are irregularly shaped with jagged margins and hairless mid-rib. The magenta-tinged leaves are arranged in a rosette pattern and may grow to a foot and a half in length. The compact, golden-yellow Dandelion blossoms are singular and round, blooming from early spring until well into autumn and reaching up to eight inches in height.

Dandelion is a perennial that is believed to be a native of Greece, but grows spontaneously in most parts of the globe, thriving (with its deep, tenacious roots) under almost any conditions. Earliest mention of Dandelion is obscure, although many say Pliny (A.D. 23-79) wrote about it. The Chinese recorded its use in herbal medicine in A.D. 659 and have been using it in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to treat breast cancer for at least one thousand years. Interestingly, today's research has shown that Dandelion has worked effectively against two malignant growth systems, stimulating macrophage action, and possibly demonstrating some potential in the area of cancer research - and echoing its use in Traditional Chinese Medicine for this disease during the last thousand years. Arabian physicians of the tenth and eleventh centuries spoke of its nutritive value, and in Europe, it was noted in Welsh medicines of the thirteenth century and mentioned in the *Ortus*

Sanitatis of 1485. Dandelion was purposely introduced from Europe into North America by the early colonists who regarded it as an important part of their herbal medicines and diets. Native Americans soon found the flower equally important, using it as a tonic and physic (the Mohegan tribe), for heartburn (the Ojibwas) and for chest pains (Meskwakis).

Dandelion was included in the British Pharmaceutical Codex and United States Dispensatory from 1831 through 1926, and in the National Formulary until 1965. The dried root of Dandelion is listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia. Traditionally, in Europe and America, Dandelion was used as a favorite spring health tonic and is cultivated in India as a liver remedy. In Germany, there is an over-the-counter preparation containing this common weed that has been found effective against gallstones. It is also listed in over-the-counter treatments in Canada, France and the United Kingdom.

Other Uses for Dandelion:

Other uses for dandelion have included the flower in a yellow dye, the leaves in a purple dye, the young leaves in a healthy salad, the flowers in wine and as a garnish in food, and the ground root as a tasty, healthy caffeine-free coffee substitute. Some of Dandelion's chemical constituents include bitter glycosides, carotenoids, terpenoids, inula, choline, lecithin (believed to protect against cirrhosis of the liver), tannins, sterols, essential oil, gluten, gum, saponin and fructose-oligosaccharide inulin (a food fiber that is a type of sugar-replacing starch, widely distributed in other plants and constituting an important part of the world's diet; it also is thought to have probiotic qualities that help activate healthy stomach bacteria to promote a healthy colon and digestive system). Dandelion is a nutritive and a wealth of vitamins A, C, D, several B-vitamins and vitamin P. Rich in iron and other important minerals, including boron, calcium, silicon, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, selenium and zinc, Dandelion is also an exceptional source of potassium salts. The root also includes asparagin.

Medical Uses:

Dandelion Root is considered a superior and potent diuretic (even to synthetic products) that helps to increase urine flow, rid the body of excess water and relieve bloated feelings. The high level of potassium in Dandelion is important, because

large amounts of potassium are lost in the urine and too often flushed from the body when synthetic diuretics are used.

Considered a potassium-rich herb, Dandelion is said to help promote healthy heart function. The potassium works with sodium to regulate the body's water balance and normalize heart rhythms. Dandelion may lower cholesterol and high blood pressure due to its powerful diuretic action in ridding the body of excess fluid, thereby reducing the amount of fluid the heart must pump to circulate blood.

Dandelion Root is considered a fine liver tonic that is also said to promote healthy gallbladder, pancreas and spleen function. It affects all forms of secretion and excretion from the body and is a gentle cleansing agent with almost a specific affinity for the liver and modifies and increases the secretions, removing excess water from the body in edemous conditions that could result from liver problems. Herbal healers use Dandelion to strengthen the liver and treat liver disorders. The herb is thought to promote the flow of bile and ease such conditions as hepatitis, inflammation of the liver, jaundice (caused by excess bile in the blood) and liver enlargement. By promoting the flow of bile from the liver, Dandelion is said to be helpful when used in the first stages of cirrhosis of the liver.

Dandelion Root and Leaves are known for keeping the internal organs clean and clear. Herbalists treat kidney ailments with Dandelion, and it is also thought to improve gallbladder function, possibly even preventing gallstones (in Germany, the over-the-counter "Hepaticol" is said to be proven effective against gallstones).

As a blood purifier, Dandelion Leaf is considered an excellent tonic that cleanses poisons from the body. Through its action both on the liver and kidneys (as its French name, *pis en lit*, "wet the bed" indicates), it gently eliminates toxic wastes from the body. The natural nutritive salts work to purify the blood and also help to neutralize the acids in the blood.

Dandelion Leaf's powerful blood purifying and liver cleansing properties help to clear skin problems, especially acne. A liver that is not performing at its best can worsen acne, because it cannot break down and clear excess hormones from the body. Furthermore, Dandelion contains inulin, which is one of only a few plant insoluble fibers that have demonstrated prebiotic activity, creating beneficial microflora in the intestines to help combat bad bacteria. The indigestible quality of

inulin also has significant effects on intestinal transit, which helps to improve the quality of skin by removing bacteria.

Dandelion Root and Leaves are an excellent nutritive and a valuable source of sodium, minerals (especially potassium), large amounts of vitamins A, C and D, B-vitamins and trace elements. The roots are sometimes used as a healthy coffee substitute or as an addition to coffee. In fact, some claim that it acts as an antidote to any of coffee's possible detrimental effects on the body and may be especially helpful in cases of dyspepsia.

European herbalists regard Dandelion as one of the best herbs for building the blood and relieving anemic conditions. Anemia is caused by deficiency of proper nutrients in the blood, and iron-rich Dandelion is one of its oldest, best-known remedies.

For constipation, Dandelion Leaf is considered a mild laxative that stimulates the bowel and is also said to ease the discomforts caused by inflammation of the bowel. Furthermore, its inulin content (a prebiotic fiber) passes undigested to the large intestine and stimulates the growth of gut micro-flora known as Bifidobacteria or Lactobacilli. These bacteria may crowd out pathogenic bacteria and provide disease resistance in the bowel.

Dandelion Root promotes good digestion by invigorating the functions of the digestive organs and stimulating the circulation of blood to the entire body. This herb tonic is used for problems in the digestive organs and is said to relieve acute stomachaches.

For treating nagging, toxic conditions, including gout, joint inflammations, chronic arthritis, chronic rheumatism, swelling and stiff joints, Dandelion Root is said to be ideal, because it flushes toxins from the system, rids the body of excess water and salt and is believed to reduce uric acid. Dandelion may help reduce stiffness and increase mobility in situations of chronic degenerative joint disease. Moreover, this purifying and flushing action is also believed to help clear skin problems, including acne and psoriasis.

The inulin content in Dandelion Root is thought to be an “immuno-stimulant,” boosting the function of the immune system and stimulating macrophage action to surround and digest invasive infection and serious malignant disease.

Dandelion Root may be helpful in cases of osteoporosis. It is a rich source of boron, which is thought to raise estrogen levels in the blood, thus helping to preserve bone. The herb is also a rich source of calcium and silicon, both of which are also believed to strengthen bone.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Dandelion Leaf or Root. It is not recommended for people with gallstones or biliary tract (bile duct) obstruction without first consulting a physician. In cases of stomach ulcers, gastritis or irritable bowel, Dandelion Herbal Supplement should be used cautiously, as it may cause over production of stomach acid. Those who are allergic to daisies or asters should not use Dandelion. Do not take Dandelion Herbal Supplement without talking to your doctor first if you are taking certain medicines used to treat infection (antibiotics such as Cipro, Tequin, Levaquin, etc., as it may lower efficacy of drug); Potassium supplements for health condition (too much may be harmful); Blood thinning medicine (Coumadin, Plavix, aspirin, etc.).

* * * * *

Evening Primrose



Botanical: *Oenothera biennis*

Family: Onagraceae (evening primrose)

Other common names: Evening Star, Tree Primrose, King's Cure-all, Evening Plant, Night Willow Herb, Scurvish, Scabish, Sun Drop, Field Primrose, German Rampion, Fever Plant

Did you know...?

Evening Primrose has a long tradition of relieving coughs, asthma, gastrointestinal difficulties and menstrual complaints, but recent medical research reveals an anti-clotting factor in Evening Primrose that may help in the prevention of heart attacks caused by thrombosis, as well as gamma linolenic acids that will significantly reduce blood pressure and promote overall good health.

Plant Description:

As night falls and the moon raises, the Evening Primrose blooms, and a lemon-scented fragrance radiates from its yellow petals. By daybreak, the flowers fade and await the new blossoms that will bloom the next evening. Evening Primrose is a hardy, erect biennial herb that thrives in dry soil and may reach a height of six feet. During its second year, showy yellow flowers appear and bloom in diminished light or in the darkness, and in optimum conditions, this ornamental plant will self-seed.

History:

Evening Primrose is a North American native that grows in dry meadows from Canada to Texas and east of the Rockies to the Atlantic. It was brought to Europe in the seventeenth century, where it continues to be used in herbal medicine. The entire plant is edible, and it was once a popular food for North American Indians who also used it as a painkiller and as an asthma treatment. The oil derived from the seeds contains rare gamma linolenic acid, mucilage, tannin, lignin, amino acids, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, essential fatty acids, B-vitamins and vitamin E.

Medical Uses:

Evening Primrose possesses a high content of the rare gamma linolenic acid (GLA) that appears to produce a host of beneficial effects. GLA is an unsaturated fatty

acid that assists in the production of prostaglandins, the hormones necessary for many important bodily functions. GLA helps the body produce energy and forms part of the structural fats that comprise the brain, muscle, bone marrow and cell membranes.

For the promotion of cardiovascular health, the prostaglandins formed by GLA in Evening Primrose are said to have anti-coagulating properties that dilate the blood vessels and reduce the blocking of blood vessels by a blood clot, thereby helping to prevent heart attacks and strokes. In addition, GLA is said to lower levels of cholesterol and blood pressure, further reducing the possibility of heart disease and stroke. The increased blood circulation properties in Evening Primrose are also thought to be beneficial in cases Raynaud's syndrome.

GLA plays a crucial role in the health of the brain and nervous system, and Evening Primrose has been recommended as a supportive treatment for multiple sclerosis and other degenerative diseases. Gamma linolenic acid deficiency is said to be associated with many health problems.

Those with premenstrual syndrome, diabetes, scleroderma, Sjogren's syndrome, eczema and other skin conditions may have a metabolic block that interferes with the body's ability to make GLA. In preliminary research, supplementation with Evening Primrose has helped people with these conditions.

Certain disorders or diseases may block the body's ability to make gamma linolenic acid (GLA), and Evening Primrose oil can supplement that deficiency, which in turn should help to ease the conditions that block the conversions in the first place. Some of these ailments include blood sugar problems, chronic inflammatory disorders, nutrient deficiencies and the metabolizing of hydrogenated oils and fats, as well as many other problems that may be helped by better balance of fatty acids in the body; therefore, people with deficiencies would presumably benefit from supplemental GLA intake from Evening Primrose.

Evening Primrose has been used as a traditional supplement for its stimulating effects on the liver, spleen and digestive apparatus and is said to help gastric irritation, irritable bladder, chronic diarrhea and fatty acid problems.

In modern herbal medicine the mucilage in Evening Primrose is used in cough remedies to help inhibit coughing, whooping cough and to help relieve cold symptoms.

Evening Primrose is considered an antispasmodic that helps to alleviate spasmodic asthma and menstrual cramps. In treating female problems, Evening Primrose acts as a natural estrogen promoter and therefore can help to relieve heavy bleeding, headache, breast tenderness and bloating. This is also said to have favorable effects when used for menopausal discomforts, such as hot flashes.

In some studies, Evening Primrose was thought to help treat schizophrenia, depression and premenstrual syndrome, especially when related to mood swings. Research continues into treatments for anorexia nervosa, hyperactivity, alcoholism and chronic anxiety. There is evidence that alcoholics may be deficient in GLA, and a double-blind study suggested that alcohol withdrawal might be facilitated with Evening Primrose supplementation.

Evening Primrose is an anti-inflammatory that has been used topically to soothe skin eruptions and is an astringent for healing wounds. In 1982, the British medical journal, Lancet, noted that Evening Primrose might be of help to people who suffer from rosacea, atopic eczema, psoriasis, skin rashes or eczema due to allergy.

Precautions:

Pregnant women should not use Evening Primrose, and excessive use may result in oily skin, an indication to decrease dosage. Because of its blood-thinning properties, Evening Primrose should be avoided by those who are taking prescription blood thinners (aspirin, clopidogrel (Plavix), ticlopidine (Ticlid), warfarin (Coumadin(R)), enoxaparin (Lovenox). Evening Primrose may exacerbate symptoms of temporal lobe epilepsy and should be avoided by those are treated for seizure disorders: phenytoin (Dilantin), valproic acid (Depakote, Depakene), carbamazepine (Tegretol), gabapentin (Neurontin), lamotrigine (Lamictal). Do not take Evening Primrose if you are taking medication for mental conditions (examples: chlorpromazine (Thorazine), thioridazine (Mellaril), perphenazine (Trilafon). Some experts suggest that magnesium, zinc, vitamin C, niacin and vitamin B-6 should be taken along with this herb.

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Flaxseed



Botanical: *Linum usitatissimum*

Family: Linaceae (linen)

Other common names: Common Flax, Linseed, Lint Bells, Winterlien

Did you know...?

Flaxseed provides all eight essential amino acids and a wealth of nutrients, including Omega-3 and Omega-6 essential fatty acids, digestive enzymes, protein, vitamins and minerals. Flaxseed is said to help lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels, improve circulation and immune function and treat inflammatory disorders.

Plant Description:

As the source of linen fiber, Flax has been cultivated since at least 3000 B.C., and its importance continues today for its fiber and as a source of oil. Flax is a hardy annual that grows from one to four feet with narrow, hairy leaves and red, white, or blue flowers that are followed by spherical capsules (bols), which contain seeds that are high in oils with linoleic acid.

History:

Its history reaches back to the earliest times as a food (the seeds when roasted) and in the making of fine linen cloth. The Flax plant was grown in Palestine before the arrival of the Israelites.

The Bible tells us that Rahab in Jericho hid two spies under stems of Flax she had been drying, and Solomon, praised his wife who separated the fibers of the Flax for fine linen.

The Egyptians made fine linen clothing and used it for wrapping mummies in the embalming process. The medicinal properties of Flaxseeds were known to the Greeks, as Hippocrates recommended them for inflammations of the mucous membranes and digestive disorders, and in eighth-century France, Charlemagne passed laws requiring the seeds to be consumed to keep his subjects healthy. In North America, the use of Flax dates back to 1617, when L. Hebert, the first farmer in Canada, brought it to New France, and today, the crop grows widely on the prairies of Canada for its oil-rich seeds.

The seed oil (linseed) is not only an important commercial ingredient in the manufacture of paint and varnish, but Flaxseed contains a wealth of nutritional benefits. The stems are used to make a high quality paper and linen cloth. The majority of fat in Flaxseed (more than 70 percent) includes polyunsaturated fatty acids, namely alpha-linoleic acid (parent of Omega-3), and linoleic acid (parent of Omega-6), the "good fats." They are essential in the human diet, required for proper infant growth and development and for maintaining the structure of cell membranes and permeability of the skin.

The body cannot manufacture them; their presence depends totally on dietary consumption. Flaxseed contains the linoleic and linolenic acids needed for production of hormone-like prostaglandins, which are vital for many bodily functions. Flaxseeds are not only rich in Omega-3 and Omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids, but they are also a wealth of nutrients, such as calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, vanadium, zinc, protein, mucilage, digestive enzymes, saponin, beta carotene, B-vitamins and vitamin E.

Medical Uses:

In reducing the risk factors of coronary heart disease, recent research has shown that Flaxseed's high Omega-3 fatty acid and its soluble fiber content have helped to reduce serum triglycerides and blood pressure. It also helps to reduce the hardening effects of cholesterol on cell membranes. Most of the soluble fiber in Flax is mucilage gum, which is a thick, sticky substance that blocks cholesterol absorption and helps balance blood-glucose levels, thereby making it useful for reducing high blood sugar.

With regard to strokes and arteriosclerosis, the Omega-3 fatty acids in Flaxseed also appear to protect against stroke by regulating blood clotting and platelet aggregation.

Flaxseed is high in fiber. As an important source of both soluble and insoluble fiber, it has been long used to treat constipation and promote regularity. The insoluble fiber swells in the bowel to produce a gentle, bulking laxative, and the high oil content lubricates the intestines. A high-fiber diet including Flaxseed has been linked to a reduced risk of many chronic diseases, including diverticulosis, certain malignant diseases, i.e., colon (the quicker waste is eliminated, the less time the colon is exposed to toxins and bacteria).

For improved immune function, Flaxseed's alpha-linoleic acid and lignins have demonstrated a beneficial impact by affecting immune cells and immune-response mediators, such as eicosanoids and cytokines. Through these mechanisms, Flaxseed may play an important role in the clinical management of autoimmune diseases and certain hormone-dependent malignancies (breast, endometrial and prostate).

Flaxseeds have been used as a relaxing expectorant, easing sore throats and hacking coughs. Folk healers have long used the seeds to soothe any kind of lung or throat disturbance. The mucilage in Flaxseed has been effective for inflammations of the mucous membranes, which is soothing for many conditions including pharyngitis and gastritis.

Several studies have shown that Flaxseed's anti-inflammatory and soothing properties may reduce the pain, inflammation and swelling of arthritis and other inflammatory conditions.

Flaxseed is an old remedy when used topically as a poultice for inflammations and ulcers and as a drawing poultice for boils and abscesses.

Precautions:

None

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Ginkgo Biloba



Botanical: Ginkgo biloba

Family: Ginkgoaceae (ginkgo)

Other common names: Maiden Hair, Fossil Tree

Did you know...?

Ginkgo Biloba is the world's most used treatment for memory loss and degenerative diseases of the brain and central nervous system. Because Ginkgo increases the circulation of blood and oxygen to all parts of the body, the herb is an effective overall tonic that aids in the treatment for a variety of conditions, ranging from impotence to ringing in the ears.

Plant Description:

Ginkgo Biloba is sometimes called a living fossil and the only surviving member of the Ginkgo family. It is one of the oldest living tree species, a deciduous conifer, dating back over three-hundred million years. Individual trees may live for one thousand years, as they are resistant to viruses, fungi, insects, pollution and even radiation, and they may reach 122 feet in height.

History:

Native to China, it has been included in Chinese herbal medicine's repertoire for almost five thousand years, where it was used for respiratory tract ailments and for memory loss in older adults. The trees were introduced to Europe in 1730 and the United States in 1784 as ornamentals, but since the 1980s, Western medical interest in the plant has grown dramatically since its potent actions on the cardiovascular system were identified. Different parts of the plant have different properties with different medical applications.

Most commercial growth of Ginkgo is centered in plantations in South Carolina, France and China. Some of Ginkgo's constituents include amino acids, tannins, quercetin, beta-carotene, flavone glycosides, bioflavones, sitosterol, lactones, anthocyanin, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamins A and C. Ginkgo is now among the leading prescription medicines in both Germany and France.

Medical Uses:

Ginkgo Biloba improves blood and oxygen flow to the brain and has been most effective in treating senility, dementia, depression, anxiety, forgetfulness and inability to concentrate and ADD (attention deficit disorder) in adults. Ginkgo's most exciting application may be in the treatment for Alzheimer's disease by helping to speed the blood flow to the brain and aiding the brain to utilize glucose efficiently. Improved blood flow to the brain also helps to prevent strokes, cerebral arteriosclerosis and other diseases of peripheral circulation. Available evidence demonstrates Ginkgo's efficacy in the management of "cerebral insufficiency" caused by impaired blood flow to the brain, which is thought to be secondary to arteriosclerotic disease, and characterized by impaired concentration, confusion, depression, fatigue, headache and dizziness.

Ginkgo may reduce the risk of heart attack. In the same way improved blood flow helps other vital areas of the body, Ginkgo may prevent the blood clots that cause them. The herb blocks the platelet activation factor (PAF) that triggers the internal blood clots, which lead to heart attacks. In addition, one of Ginkgo's flavone glycosides (ginkgolide) has been used to treat severely irregular heartbeat.

Problems associated with poor circulation, such as varicose veins, Raynaud's disease and macular degeneration have been alleviated with the use of Ginkgo Biloba. A circulatory stimulant that relaxes blood vessels. By increasing peripheral vascular circulation, the pain and cramping associated with obstruction and narrowing in the arteries (reducing blood flow) is relieved. Improved blood circulation may also help inner ear dysfunction, including tinnitus (ringing in the ears).

Ginkgo helps promote good sexual health. Male impotence (erectile dysfunction) has been helped by the use of Ginkgo Biloba. Studies showed Ginkgo improved blood flow to the penis in men who had narrowing of the arteries that supply blood to that area and were unable to achieve erections. Additionally, women who suffered sexual difficulties when taking antidepressants have benefited from the use of Ginkgo, claiming that it enhanced orgasm and excitement.

Ginkgo is said to fight melanoma by improving the delivery of oxygen to tissues throughout the body. Oxygenated blood creates a hostile environment for hormone-related malignancy, including bladder, breast, ovarian, etc.

As an astringent, antifungal and antibacterial, Ginkgo helps to ward off kidney infections, diphtheria, dysentery, hemorrhoids and toxic shock, and has a beneficial effect on the urinary system, treating incontinence and excessive urination. It is also useful in treating vaginal infection.

Ginkgo Biloba is a powerful antioxidant that helps to protect the brain from neurotoxicity. It is said to prevent free-radical damage and age-related declines in brain function. It may also prevent free radical damage in the kidneys and liver.

Problems with the respiratory tract are thought to be improved with Ginkgo Biloba. This herb treats bronchial constriction, asthma, chesty coughs (with thick phlegm) and tuberculosis.

Ginkgo has been known to provide relief for the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, including fluid retention and breast tenderness.

Precautions:

Speak with your doctor before taking Ginkgo Biloba if you are taking prescription MAO inhibitors (antidepressants) or blood thinners. Discuss its use before having surgery, if you are pregnant or if you take painkillers on a regular basis. It is not recommended for epileptics. Topical or internal use may cause skin irritations, mild headaches or mild upset stomach.

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Goldenrod



Botanical: *Solidago virgaurea*

Family: Compositae (daisy) - Asteraceae (aster)

Other common names: European Goldenrod, Yellow Weed, Woundweed, Blue Mountain Tea,

Aaron's Rod, Sweet Goldenrod, Canada Goldenrod, Liberty Tea, Solidago, Goldruchte, Verge d'Or

Did you know...?

Goldenrod is used to flush impurities from the kidneys, bladder and urinary tract, helping to treat urinary inflammation and infection (cystitis, urethritis, and vaginitis) and clearing kidney stones and gravel. It also helps to thin and expel mucus and congestion from the upper respiratory tract and help coughs of colds and flu.

Plant Description:

Goldenrod is a perennial that encompasses a multitude of species (there are over 130 varieties in North America alone!), with some that are native to Europe (*S. vigaurea*, et al) and others that are indigenous to North America, (*S. Canadensis*, et al), and many are distributed throughout Europe, the Americas, northwest and central Asia and North Africa. The attractive plant generally bears narrow, deep green leaves that smell like anise when crushed, with tiny yellow flower heads that grow in clusters on the upper ends of outstretched branches, blooming from June to September.

Goldenrod may be found in open fields, waste places, and on forest margins, thriving in well-drained, moisture-retentive soil in sun or partial shade and reaching a height anywhere from two to seven feet, depending upon geographic location and species. The different species are generally interchangeable with similar medicinal applications.

The flowers attract many different beneficial insects, such as lacewings and ladybugs, which are effective in controlling pests, especially aphids, and the leaves and flowering tops are harvested before the flowers are fully opened, then dried for use in herbal medicines.

History:

Goldenrod's botanical name, *Solidago*, is derived from the Latin word, *solidare*, which means "to make whole, firm, or strong," echoing the plant's historic use as a bitter, astringent and relaxant herb that treated many ailments. Native American medicine men employed the leaves in teas for intestinal disorders, colic, urinary disorders, and dropsy (edema). Canadian tribes also applied the leaves topically to heal bruises and wounds, and in Europe, it is still used to flush the urinary tract, kidney and bladder of stones, inflammation and infection.

One story tells us that after the American colonists rebelled against the British Crown and dumped tea into Boston Harbor, there was a shortage of tea to drink until someone made a brew from Goldenrod leaves and aptly called it "Liberty Tea." It was considered so tasty that it was later exported to China. Early physicians prescribed it as a diuretic, carminative and diaphoretic, and it was included in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1820 through 1882, as a stimulant and diaphoretic. Once considered a weed that caused hay fever, it was shown that Goldenrod pollen is not airborne at all, but is carried by bees, and because it blossoms at the same time as the inconspicuous ragweed (the real culprit), it was falsely accused. It is actually thought to be of some help in treating hay fever. Some of the constituents in Goldenrod include triterpene saponins (antifungal), rutin and phenolic glycosides (anti-inflammatory), flavonoids (hyperoside, etc.), quercetin, tannins, essential oil and polysaccharides.

Medical Uses:

Goldenrod stimulates the kidneys and supports overall good kidney health. The herb has been used to flush the kidneys, clear up kidney stones, and gravel in the bladder.

As a diuretic and urinary antiseptic Goldenrod promotes the irrigation of the urinary tract and flow of urine (further flushing the kidneys and bladder) and has been helpful in treating bacterial urinary infections (including cystitis and urethritis), clearing urinary calculi and is also good when experiencing dark, cloudy urine. Recent research has called Goldenrod an "quadratic," and better than a straight diuretic, maintaining that the herb clears water from the body with no loss of important electrolytes.

Goldenrod has been used for many years to stimulate good digestion and is used as a reliable carminative that relieves intestinal gas pain and distension (pharmacology's have validated this use), and it is said to be good for flatulent dyspepsia (especially associated with nervous tension).

As an astringent, Goldenrod has been used to thwart internal hemorrhage, ulceration of the intestines, diarrhea, dysentery and simple dropsy (although edema is always associated with another root cause and should be treated by a physician).

Goldenrod is believed to have expectorant properties that help to relieve upper respiratory catarrh by thinning and expelling chronic, excess mucus. The herb is said to be helpful in relieving congestion of the upper respiratory area experienced during influenza conditions and be useful in easing coughs from colds and whooping cough.

As an antifungal, the saponins in Goldenrod are thought to be helpful in inhibiting yeast infections, including *Candida albicans*.

Used externally, Goldenrod flowers have been chewed for sore throats, included in gargles for laryngitis and pharyngitis, and applied topically in lotions for the relief of insect bites and stings and to promote the healing of wounds, ulcers, eczema and other skin diseases. The flower heads are also used as a rinse for blonde hair, a facial treatment and as a brilliant yellow dye.

Precautions: None

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Horehound



Botanical: *Marrubium vulgare*

Family: Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

Other common names: Marrubio, White Horehound, Hoarhound, Marrubium

Did you know...?

Horehound has been a popular cough and cold remedy since ancient Egyptian times. As a potent expectorant, it will promote mucus and ease the pain of a non-productive, hacking cough. Try it for bronchitis, indigestion and whooping cough.

Plant Description:

Horehound is a hardy perennial and medicinal mint that may grow to two feet in height, and all the aboveground parts of this herbaceous plant are used in herbal medicine.

History:

Ancient Egyptian priests honored Horehound as a treatment for coughs and colds, calling it "eye of the star," and the Greek physician, Hippocrates, esteemed its curative powers and even thought it would break magical spells. Horehound's botanical name is derived from the Hebrew, marrob, which translates as "bitter juice," and it is thought that Horehound was one of the original bitter herbs of the Jewish Passover meal. Some claim that Horehound is native to Morocco, but what is certain is that it was carried throughout the Old World and later to Europe and North America by traders and settlers. Horehound flourishes in Britain, where it is included in teas and candies for the treatment for coughs and colds. Among its chemical constituents are marrubium (a "bitter" that is sometimes called maribun or marrubiin), essential oils, tannins, minerals, wax, saponins, B-complex vitamins and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Horehound is a powerful expectorant and relieves lung congestion. In treating painful, chesty, non-productive coughs, colds, bronchitis and sinusitis, Horehound's compound, marrubium, decreases the thickness of phlegm and promotes the secretion of fluids into the bronchial passageways, producing mucus. It also combines the action of relaxing the smooth muscle of the bronchi while

promoting mucus production and expectoration, thereby also easing the pain of the cough.

As a pain reliever, the marrubium compound in Horehound stimulates the central nervous system and was found in laboratory tests to be more potent than some well-known pain relief medications.

Horehound promotes good digestion. The stimulation of the central nervous system by marrubium also stimulates the stomach to secrete digestive juices, helping the stomach to digest food. The reaction also stimulates the flow of bile from the gall bladder, which eases flatulence by changing the chemical composition of the contents of the large intestine.

Horehound promotes sweating, helping to break a fever and cooling the body. The herb will also help rid the body of excess water weight and the feeling of bloating.

Horehound is considered a mild laxative and is said to expel worms.

Some studies claim that Horehound helps to stop the high and low blood-sugar reactions after eating high-carbohydrate meals and snacks.

Horehound is said to have a relaxing effect on heart tissue and is used by some herbalists as a circulatory tonic to help lower blood pressure. The marrubium may steady the heartbeat in low doses, but a physician must be consulted before using it in this situation, and larger doses may cause abnormal heartbeat.

Precautions:

Horehound is not advisable for pregnant or nursing women, younger children or adults over sixty-five years of age. Those with heart problems or stomach ulcers should not use Horehound without consulting with a physician. Do not overuse; larger doses may cause diarrhea. Women with menstrual problems should avoid Horehound, as it may increase menstrual flow.

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Juniper Berry



Botanical: *Juniperus communis*

Family: Cupressaceae (cypress) - Coniferae (conifer)

Other common names: Common Juniper, Ginepro, Enebro, Ground Juniper, Hackmatack, Horse Savin

Do you have excess water weight?

Juniper Berry promotes urine flow and helps to clear the kidneys, bladder and prostate of toxic wastes, while at the same time helping to combat urinary infections in both men and women. Well-known in the kitchen and as a flavoring for gin, Juniper Berry's warm, aromatic qualities aid digestion and help to relieve gout, arthritis and painful joints.

Plant Description:

The common Juniper is a bitter, aromatic, prickly bush or tree that thrives in most soils, tolerating both acid and alkaline soils and dry and wet conditions, in sun or partial shade and often in exposed positions. Juniper encompasses many species

and is usually a low-growing, ornamental shrub that rises to a height of six or eight feet, but it may also grow as a tree to a height of thirty feet.

It is a slow-growing, coniferous evergreen with silvery green, spiny needles, flowers and berries, which take up to three years to ripen. Both male and female plants are necessary for berry production, and Juniper is cultivated for the slightly resinous, sweet-flavored berries that are borne only on the female bush.

Junipers are widely distributed throughout the Northern Hemisphere, and the berries are used for medicinal and commercial purposes. It is said that the flavor of the berries is stronger the farther south the plant is grown, and Juniper is a rare and endangered species in some states of the United States.

History:

The use of Juniper goes back many centuries. In the middle ages, the scent of Juniper was believed to ward off plague, contagious diseases and leprosy. For hundreds of years, Juniper Berry has been (and still is) an herbal remedy for urinary tract problems, including urine retention and gallstones and is an old folk remedy for gout. In the 1500s, a Dutch pharmacist used Juniper Berries to create a new, inexpensive diuretic drink that he called gin, which was not only used for medicinal purposes, but its delightful juniper-flavor (and other obvious enjoyments) became a very popular beverage. In North America, the Native Americans believed that Juniper would cleanse and heal the body and keep away infection, and different tribes used it to treat a wide range of illnesses from kidney complaints to stomachaches, colds and syphilis.

The Navajos used it for flu, and because it was an excellent survival food, many of the tribes used it to fight off starvation by drying and grinding the berries into cakes. Roasted Juniper Berries have been ground and used as a substitute for coffee, and the berries are frequently used as a spice for pickles, sauerkraut, game, pork and in patés. It is highly valued commercially as the flavoring for gin. The word gin is a shortened form of the Dutch, genever, which was originally derived from the Latin, juniperus.

Some of the constituents in Juniper include the volatile oils, camphene, cineole, myrcene, alpha- and beta-pinene and terpinene (the active ingredients), as well as

resin, sugar, gum, lignin, wax, salines, beta-carotene, betulin, borneol, catechin, glycolic acid, limonene, linalool, menthol, rutin, tannins, calcium, chromium, iron (and many other valuable minerals), B-vitamins and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Juniper Berry is an effective diuretic and antiseptic that not only promotes the flow of urine, but also treats infection of the urinary tract at the same time. As a diuretic, the herb stimulates the kidneys and bladder to get rid of retained and excess water (possibly also helping to treat obesity). Juniper increases the filtering of waste products by the kidneys and helps to expel prostate sediment and gallstones. It is also thought to dissolve kidney stones. The herb helps to prevent the crystallization of uric acid in the kidneys, retaining it in a solution and passing it in the urine; this is of great benefit to those suffering from gout (a condition marked by painful inflammation of the joints caused by deposits of uric acid).

As an antiseptic and further aiding urinary and prostate health, Juniper Berry is helpful in combating bacteria, including bladder and urinary infections, such as cystitis, urethritis, prostatitis, vaginitis and inflamed kidneys, etc.

Juniper Berry is an old herbal therapy for the digestive tract. The active volatile oil content helps to eliminate gas and expel intestinal flatulence and assists in the digestion of gassy foods like cabbage, etc. The herb has been used to ease stomach cramps, colic and indigestion; and in small doses, it stimulates the appetite.

The anti-inflammatory properties of Juniper Berry are thought to ease the pain of rheumatism, arthritis, sore muscles and gout.

Juniper Berry has traditionally shown excellent results in the treatment for lung disorders as an effective expectorant and decongestant. It is highly recommended in catarrhal conditions and has helped to ease breathing and treat bronchial asthma, emphysema, sinusitis, head colds, flu and general congestion.

Juniper Berry is considered a purifier of the blood and overall system cleanser, and by removing acid and toxic wastes from the body, the herb helps to reduce overall susceptibility to disease. As an excellent antiseptic, it helps to control general infection and disease.

In preliminary lab studies, Juniper has demonstrated antiviral activity against virus A-2 and Herpes simplex virus I and II.

Precautions:

Pregnant women should not use Juniper Berry, because it stimulates the uterus and may cause abortion. The USFDA does not recommend this herb as safe and prolonged use (more than a month) is not recommended, as it may cause kidney damage. If kidney disease is suspected, Juniper berries may over-stimulate the kidneys and adrenals and should be avoided. Those with kidney disease or acute kidney infection should avoid this herb. Juniper should not be used in cases of heavy menstrual flow, and the herb may interfere with the absorption of iron and other minerals. Some people may have allergic responses to Junipers.

* * * * *

Goldenseal Root



Botanical: *Hydrastis canadensis*

Family: Ranunculaceae (peony/buttercup)

Other common names: Eye Root, Indian Dye, Yellow Indian Paint, Yellow Puccoon, Yellowroot, Ground Raspberry, Orange Root, Indian Turmeric, Eye Balm, Jaundice Root

Did you know...?

Goldenseal is immensely popular as an immune booster and antibiotic that is taken at the onset of a cold to help prevent further symptoms. Often called Echinacea's partner, Goldenseal, is said to help stimulate the body's resistance to infection and is another "must have" herb for your home.

Plant Description:

Goldenseal is a hardy, herbaceous, North American woodland perennial that grows under two feet in height with a thick, yellow root and a single, erect stem producing leaves and a flower. From the flower, a single, red, inedible fruit emerges, but it is the roots, dug from three-year-old plants, that are used in herbal medicine.

History:

Its botanical name, Hydrastis, is derived from two Greek words signifying "water" and "to accomplish," probably attributed because of its effect on the body's mucous membranes. Few wildflowers were as important to the American Indians as the versatile Goldenseal.

The roots supplied the Cherokee and Iroquois with a brilliant yellow dye for their weapons and clothing, a paint for their faces and medicinal remedies for indigestion, inflamed eyes, mouth ulcers, cancer, tuberculosis and edema. It may not have been effective for all those ailments, but its efficacy as an antiseptic and in stopping bleeding was well noted. Pioneers quickly adopted Goldenseal, and it became a mainstay of American folk medicine, frequently sold as an ingredient in patent medicines in traveling medicine shows. The root is an ingredient in many herbal remedies, as it not only possesses medicinal virtues of its own, but it also appears to enhance the potency of other herbs. Goldenseal has also found its way

into modern medicine as a treatment for inflamed eyes, and some drug manufacturers include an alkaloid extracted from the root in their eye drops.

Once common in eastern North America, Goldenseal has almost become extinct in many places by commercial harvesting, and the plant was cited on the CITES list for protection and conservation, making it a rare and expensive commodity. Some of Goldenseal's constituents include alkaloids (hydrastine, berberine, canadine and hydrastanine), tannins, beta-carotene, fatty acids, resin, albumin, essential oil, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium selenium, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamins A, C and E.

Medical Uses:

Goldenseal root has a reputation for being a natural antibiotic. Used at the first sign of a cold, flu or sore throat, it may stop further symptoms from developing. The berberine content in Goldenseal possesses strong antibiotic and antiseptic activity against a wide variety of bacteria and fungi, combating vaginal inflammations, sore throat, and bladder and intestinal infections.

As an antibacterial, Goldenseal is thought to further fight skin infections and skin ulcers (when used topically and internally) and is an antiseptic mouthwash (fighting sore throat). In treating periodontal disease, Goldenseal destroys the bacteria that cause the disease and relieves inflamed gums.

Goldenseal is an immensely popular herb that has long been used as an immune enhancer and a body cleanser that promotes healthy glandular functions. In laboratory studies, the berberine in Goldenseal was thought to increase blood flow to the spleen and stimulate the activity of macrophages, blood cells that are an important part of the immune system. The berberine may also increase the secretion of bile. In regulating healthy glands, the herb is said to be of overall benefit to the liver, pancreas, spleen, thyroid and lymphatic system.

Because Goldenseal is thought to increase the flow of digestive enzymes and is considered an effective herb for improving overall digestion and easing disorders of the digestive tract, including heartburn (particularly when it is associated with emotional tension), inflamed peptic ulcers, constipation and indigestion. Several

early Native American tribes also used Goldenseal extensively for treating digestive problems.

Goldenseal, sometimes called "King of the Mucous Membranes" is thought to have a soothing effect on inflamed mucous membranes and, as such, has been thought to help the respiratory system (by easing congestion), chronic inflammation of the colon, rectum and hemorrhoids.

In laboratory experiments the alkaloids, hydrastine and berberine, in Goldenseal are said to lower blood pressure.

Goldenseal is sometimes used in the treatment for "female problems" and helps to regulate the menses. It has been used to arrest bleeding from the uterus and profuse menstruation, and it is believed to cause uterine contractions.

The berberine content in Goldenseal is thought to be effective in treating diarrhea due to toxic pathogens such as cholera.

Historically, Goldenseal was eyewash with mildly antibiotic and astringent qualities helping to reduce inflammation of the eye, but this application is not recommended because of the herb's natural grittiness.

Berberine (found in Barberry, Goldenseal, Oregon Grape and the roots and bark of a number of plants) is now the focus of attention for use in diabetic care. In a report from Medical News Today (Diabetes News/August, 2006), a collaboration of Chinese, Korean and Australian scientists at Sydney's Garvan Institute revealed that berberine could be a valuable new treatment for this disease, giving scientific backing for its glucose lowering effects that were documented in Chinese literature and used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM).

Garvan scientist, Dr. Jiming Ye claimed that in lab tests, the berberine activates an enzyme in the muscle and liver that is involved in improving sensitivity of the tissue to insulin, which, in turn, helps lower blood sugar levels. Moreover, the berberine might help to reduce body weight. Professor James, the head of Garvan's Diabetes and Obesity Research Program added that despite berberines widespread use in Traditional Chinese Medicine, it would have to be evaluated following the defined clinical trials process.

Precautions:

Pregnant or nursing women should not use Goldenseal or any other herb containing berberine. Goldenseal may limit the efficacy of anticoagulants (aspirin, blood thinners, Coumadin, etc.), and may interfere with tetracycline antibiotics. Excessive use (many times the recommended dosage) may cause lethargy, skin, eye or kidney irritation, and nosebleed, lowered blood pressure and lowered heart rate. Because Goldenseal may lower blood sugars, people with diabetes should use it only under the supervision of a physician. Those who suffer hyperthyroid conditions, high blood pressure or epilepsy should avoid this product. Goldenseal should not be taken for prolonged periods.

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Hawthorne Leaf

Botanical: *Crataegus oxyacantha* (also called *Crataegus laevigata* and *Crataegus monogyna*)

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Other common names: *Crataegus*, English Hawthorn, Mayflower, May Bush, Mayblossom, Quickset,

Did you know...?

May Tree, Whitethorn, Thorn-apple Tree, Quickthorn Hawthorne is a wonderful and trusted cardiac tonic that is used to lower blood pressure, reduce cholesterol, and significantly enhance blood circulation to the heart and brain. It is used to strengthen the heart and relieve angina, myocarditis (inflamed heart) and arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat).

Plant Description:

Hawthorne (also spelled Hawthorn) is a thorny, deciduous hardwood tree or shrub that may grow to a height of twenty-five feet and bears small white flowers that produce red berries. The tree is found in roadsides, fields and woods, thriving in most soils, including alkaline, in sun or partial shade, but the fruit is more prolific when growing in an open, sunny position.

History:

According to Christian tradition, the crown of thorns placed on the head of Jesus was made of Hawthorne; and its May blossoms have long been associated with May festivals, i.e., selecting a "May Queen" and "King and Queen of the May." Although Hawthorne was used medicinally in ancient Greece, it fell into obscurity until the nineteenth century, when the secrets of an Irish doctor's effective Hawthorne-enriched heart tonic were revealed, making it extremely popular for that use and for which it is still acclaimed today. It is an important medicinal herb used in Europe, the United States, and the Orient, where it is used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as a heart tonic and a treatment for digestive disorders. Some of the constituents included in Hawthorne are beta-carotene, catechin, pectin, flavonoids, rutin, essential fatty acids, amino acids, many valuable minerals

(calcium, choline, chromium, iron, manganese, zinc, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon and magnesium), B-vitamins and high vitamin C content.

Medical Uses:

Hawthorne is an excellent cardio-tonic that supports good heart health and protects it in a variety of ways. It is thought to be especially effective in the beginning stages of heart disease, as well as speeding up the recovery time after a heart attack. It is also believed to strengthen a weak heart muscle associated with age, relieve pressure and tightness of the chest, ease angina and myocarditis (inflammation of the heart), as well as mild cardiac arrhythmia. The bioflavonoids found in Hawthorne interact with key enzymes in the heart to increase the pumping force of the heart muscle and eliminate arrhythmia.

Good heart health is further supported by Hawthorne's rich flavonoids, which are thought to dilate and open up the blood vessels (as a vasodilator), allowing oxygen-rich blood to get to the heart and reduce the risk of a heart attack.

Because of its vasodilating properties, Hawthorne stimulates blood circulation to the brain, as well as the heart, and herbalists have long used it to treat age-related forms of memory problems. Scientific research has identified two ways in which the herb may work. It appears to lower cholesterol, and since there is less platelet aggregation from cholesterol (blood clotting) in the arteries, this action allows the blood to flow more freely and reach the brain's tissues. The herb's high vitamin C content helps to strengthen tiny capillaries in the brain, opening them and resulting in more nutrients and oxygen reaching the brain.

Improved capillary health is also known to relieve conditions such as blood shot eyes, glaucoma, swollen ankles and varicose veins.

Hawthorne reduces cholesterol and regulates blood pressure (both high and low), but when taken for at least eight weeks, is thought to be effective in lowering pressure, since its action develops slowly. It also appears to increase the liver's conversion of LDLs (bad cholesterol) into HDLs (good cholesterol) that do not clog arteries, which helps to stop plaque formation. This is also beneficial in the treatment for arteriosclerosis, high blood pressure, heart attack and strokes. Hawthorne may be of great help for arthritis and osteoporosis.

The anthocyanidins and proanthocyanidins in the herb help to stabilize collagen in cartilage, reducing joint damage, and it is thought to prevent the formation of thromboxane-A2, a hormone involved in inflammatory processes. Hawthorne is said to stabilize the collagen in the bone itself, thereby helping to counter osteoporosis.

ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) may be helped by the use of Hawthorne. By increasing blood circulation to the brain and stopping inflammatory responses caused by allergies, the herb is believed to have a sedative effect on the central nervous system. The sedative effect has also been used to treat insomnia and nervous tension.

Some preliminary research has claimed that Hawthorne may be effective against certain serious diseases. Its rutin content is a bioflavonoid that appears to accelerate the death of leukemia cells and Burkitt's lymphoma and may deactivate plasmin, a chemical that allows cancerous growths to spread throughout the body.

Precautions:

If diagnosed with angina, cardiac arrhythmias, or congestive heart failure, use Hawthorne only under the supervision of a physician. Large amounts of Hawthorne may result in sedation or dramatic drop in blood pressure. Children and pregnant or nursing women should use Hawthorne only in consultation with a health care provider.

* * * * *

Horsetail



Botanical: Equisetum arvense

Family: Equisetaceae (horsetail)

Other common names: Shavegrass, Pewterwort, Scouring Rush, Equisetum, Queue de Cheval, Bottlebrush, Dutch Rushes, Giant Horsetail

Did you know...?

Horsetail is a healing herb, rich in nutrients and high in silica, which helps the body absorb calcium and promotes strong, healthy nails, teeth, hair, skin and, perhaps most importantly, strong bones. This is particularly beneficial for countering the bone loss and osteoporosis experienced by menopausal women. Horsetail has strong astringent properties that have been used to control internal and external bleeding for centuries, and it acts on the genitourinary tract to relieve many urinary ailments.

Plant Description:

Horsetail is a resilient perennial, practically unchanged in form since prehistoric times. It is descended from giant fernlike plants that covered the earth two hundred million years ago and is widely distributed throughout the world's

northern hemisphere in temperate climates. At the top of the hollow stem of one variety (which may reach six feet in height), there are spore-bearing structures that resemble horsetails, and the other variety (which grows to eighteen inches in height) looks like asparagus with feathery stems, also resembling horsetails (both of which are used in the same manner).

History:

Its botanical name, *Equisetum*, is derived from two Latin words, *equus*, meaning "horse" and *setum*, meaning "bristle," an obvious reference to the plant's brush-like appearance. The aerial parts are used in herbal medicine, and the nutritious plant may be eaten as a healthy vegetable. Horsetails are easy to grow, and once established are difficult to control.

The whole plant yields a yellow ochre dye, and its high silica content has made it an effective way to scour metal and polish pewter and fine woodwork, a practice that was employed until well into the eighteenth century. Some of the stems concentrate gold in their tissues (not in sufficient quantities to warrant extraction), but are said to be indicators for gold prospectors. Galen (A.D. 131-199), court physician to the Roman emperor, Marcus Aurelius, recommended Horsetail for a variety of ailments, including internal and external bleeding; and many subsequent cultures throughout the centuries have used it to treat arthritis, bleeding ulcers, and tuberculosis, kidney and bladder ailments. Native Americans used Horsetail to stanch bleeding and help heal wounds. The Thompson tribe in British Columbia applied ashes of Horsetail to remedy burns, and Guatemalan tribes have used it for treating abdominal and oral cancers. Many country people are still thought to use Horsetail for stop nosebleeds. Horsetail is an ingredient in many herbal cosmetics and preparations to strengthen hair and nails and improve the skin. Some of the constituents in Horsetail include a high silica content, beta-sitosterol, campesterol, alkaloids, tannic and other acids, luteolin, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, selenium, calcium, beta-carotene, B-vitamins and Vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Horsetail is rich in silica, which helps to soothe and strengthen connective tissue. Silicon is a vital component for bone and cartilage formation, and it helps the body

to absorb and utilize calcium, which is of great value in treating fractures and bone diseases, including rickets and osteoporosis.

Horsetail is used to strengthen bones, teeth, nails and hair. The improved cartilage helps to lessen inflammation and combat joint pain, arthritis, gout, muscle cramps, hemorrhoids, spasms and rheumatism. A French company was awarded a patent that includes isolated silica compounds from Horsetail for treating many bone disorders and rheumatoid arthritis.

The beta-carotene content in Horsetail, a compound closely related to Vitamin A and sometimes the precursor to Vitamin A, is believed to be beneficial to good eye health. Researchers have claimed that this nutrient may significantly decrease the risk of developing night blindness, dryness of the conjunctiva and cornea and other eye disorders.

The highly nutritious qualities of Horsetail have been effective in promoting healthy hair and nails. The silicon and magnesium content in Horsetail is said to be very helpful for improving the quality of hair. There are claims that silicon (which may be found in vegetables, fruits, horsetails and oats, etc.) will strengthen hair and cause thickening of nails and hair within weeks. There are also reports that it promotes faster growth.

As a mild diuretic, Horsetail has been used to promote urination and helps to relieve kidney and gallbladder disorders. This is also said to be helpful for edema in some cases of arthritis and swelling of the legs, as well as tuberculostatic conditions. Horsetail is an herb used to treat a urine infection and an enlarged prostate gland in menthe herb is used to reduce urinary tract irritation and help relieve prostatitis, cystitis and urethritis.

Horsetail's further effects on the urinary tract have been used to treat enuresis (bed-wetting) in children and incontinence (loss of urine) in adults. Horsetail is considered mild enough for use by delicate and weak persons (although not for prolonged period).

Horsetail is a powerful astringent that has made it effective for treating both internal (bleeding ulcers, etc.) and external bleeding. Those same properties have been employed to treat urinary incontinence and bed-wetting.

Women may not only find Horsetail beneficial for strengthening bones, hair and nails, but the silica is also thought to promote the growth of collagen (the protein found in connective tissue), which is a great help for improving skin health. Horsetail may be added to skin care products and to anti-ageing lotions.

When used externally, Horsetail has been used to stop bleeding wounds and promote rapid healing. It is thought to be a good wash for swollen eyelids and when used in a bath, will invigorate the body and increase circulation and metabolic rate by feeding the body through the skin.

Precautions: Pregnant and nursing women or men with prostate cancer should avoid Horsetail. This herb should not be used for prolonged periods of time nor in excessive amounts (many times the recommended dosage). Older adults, children and people with cardiac disease or high blood pressure should not use the herb without first consulting a physician.

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Lady's Slipper



Botanical: *Cypripedium pubescens* (large)

Family: Orchidaceae (orchid)

Other common names: American Valerian, Nerve Root, Noah's Ark, Yellow Lady's Slipper, Cypripedium, Bleeding Heart, Moccasin Flower, Monkey Flower, Slipper Root, Venus Shoe, Yellows, Lady's Slipper Orchid, Yellow Indian Shoe, Whippoorwill's Shoe

Did you know...?

The root of Lady's Slipper is called "Nature's Tranquilizer" and is used primarily as a gentle tonic to calm the nerves and ease tension, anxiety and stress. Often called the American Valerian, it is also thought to relieve depression, recurring headaches and hyperactivity in children.

Plant Description:

Lady's Slipper is a perennial plant that is native to the woods and meadows of North America. The fleshy rootstock produces several rounds, hairy stems with alternate leaves and characteristic golden yellow flowers, lined with purple, blooming from May to July.

This beautiful member of the orchid family has a characteristic lower lip that forms an inflated sac, which suggests the shape of a moccasin, thereby giving the plant one of its common names, Moccasin Flower. Lady's Slipper is a pungent, bittersweet herb with an unpleasant odor and thrives in moist, humus-rich soil in an open or shady situation, growing to about two feet in height. Like many other native orchids, Lady's Slipper is becoming increasingly rare, and its history as an ornamental is as rich as its distinguished medicinal past.

History:

The plant was widely employed by Native Americans as a tranquilizer, and the early settlers found that it was a good substitute for the garden heliotrope (Valerian) that women and children had used as a sedative in Europe. They began to refer to the plant as American Valerian, and by the mid-nineteenth century, doctors were prescribing the root for hysteria, delirium, irritability, epilepsy and neuralgia. Although called American Valerian, because of its calming properties, Lady's Slipper is less potent than Valerian, and the roots of several varieties of this plant (*Cypripedium pubescens*/ larger and *Cypripedium parviflorum*/ smaller) were

included in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1863 to 1916. Lady's Slipper is a complex resinoid substance and includes cypridenin.

Medical Uses:

Lady's Slipper is mainly used as a nervine and tonic that gently strengthens the functional activity of the nervous system. As such, it has been used by generations to relieve hysteria, general nervousness, delirium tremens, tension, anxiety, nervous depression, irritability, recurring headaches and a relief for all stress. It's relaxing qualities are also considered helpful for reducing hyperactivity in children.

As a mild sedative, Lady's Slipper is said to be effective in easing chronic insomnia and restlessness and is especially useful during those times when "the brain just won't shut off," and it allows sleep. Lady's Slipper is considered superior because it is non-narcotic.

Lady's Slipper is considered an antispasmodic and has been helpful for relieving cramps and muscle twitches and spasms. With its additional ability to relieve nervous conditions, it has also been used in the past to ease epilepsy.

Lady's Slipper helps to relieve neuralgia, which is a severe, throbbing or stabbing pain along the course of a nerve. It is also thought to be useful in relieving Bell's Palsy.

As a diaphoretic, Lady's Slipper is said to increase perspiration, which ultimately cools the body and eases intermittent fevers.

Precautions:

Overuse (many times the recommended dose) may cause hallucinations. Handling the plant may cause an allergic reaction.

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Lemon Balm



Botanical: *Melissa officinalis*

Family: Lamiaceae (mint)

Other common names: Melissa, Balm, Balm Mint, Bee Balm, Blue Balm, Cure-all, Dropsy Plant, Garden Balm, Sweet Balm, Heart's Delight, Honey Plant

Lemon Balm calms you down!

The herb has been used for centuries to "restore the joy of life to even the most melancholy" and will not only alleviate stress and anxiety, but is said to improve memory and mental function. Try Lemon Balm for a good night's sleep. It also helps to relieve indigestion, cramps and combat cold sores.

Plant Description:

Lemon Balm is one of the most fragrant of herbs. Its origin is somewhat ambiguous, but it appears to have originated in the Middle East and southern European areas of the Mediterranean. Others argue that the herb was brought from the Orient to Spain by Arab traders; however, this perennial plant is now naturalized all over Europe and parts of the United States, where it grows to a height of three feet in fields and along roadsides in almost any type of soil. It is easy to grow; but when cultivated, it is a highly ornamental plant that may

frequently be found in beautiful mounded shapes, preferring rich, sandy, loamy soil in sun or partial shade.

History:

Lemon Balm is widely cultivated as a culinary herb with the leaves used in herbal medicine, and its value as an important therapeutic herb goes back thousands of years. Lemon Balm's botanical name, *Melissa*, is derived from the Greek, meaning "bee," referring to the great attraction Lemon Balm flowers held for bees. (The plant was a favorite of ancient beekeepers, because of the honey they produced.) The word Balm is also derived from the Greek, *balsamon*, an oily, sweet-smelling resin. Finally, the name Lemon describes the plant's fragrance when the leaves are bruised. Virtually all the herbal physicians and naturalists of the past, including Dioscorides and Pliny, revered Lemon Balm as a treatment for a variety of problems, including nervous disorders, headache, and as an antiseptic for healing wounds. It was greatly esteemed for all complaints that "proceeded from a disordered state of the nervous system" and was thought to combat poisonous venoms and help insect bites. Arab doctors of the ninth and tenth centuries used Lemon Balm to dispel anxiety and heart palpitations and described it as a "gladdening" herb. Paracelsus (1493-1541) highly esteemed the herb as "the elixir of life" that would completely revivify a man. Lemon Balm was brought to Germany (where it is still widely cultivated) by Benedictine monks and its pleasing flavor is included in the manufacture of Benedictine and Chartreuse. In 1653, the herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper said it would relieve weak stomachs, and John Evelyn (1620-1706) noted that Lemon Balm was "sovereign for the brain, strengthening the memory and powerfully chasing away melancholy." Finally, the London Dispensary of 1696 claimed that a daily dose would "renew youth and strengthen the brain." The leaves, stems and flowers of Lemon Balm are used in herbal medicine. Some of the constituents in Lemon Balm include volatile oils, tannins, acids, resin, monoterpenoid aldehydes, flavonoids and polyphenolic compounds.

Medical Uses:

Lemon Balm has been used for thousands of years as an effective calmative that is good for all kinds of nervous problems, including tension headaches, migraines,

neuralgia, hysteria, nervous tension, stress, anxiety, excitability, heart palpitations (resulting from anxiety) and agitation. Frequently called "the calming herb," it may be effective in treating Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorders, easing such symptoms as inability to listen, fidgeting, inability to sustain attention and shifting from one incomplete task to another. It also appears to relax muscle tension without daytime drowsiness.

To prevent insomnia, Lemon Balm is used to calm and relax the nerves, and Lemon Balm is an old and particularly reliable treatment for relieving the feelings of melancholy and depression.

Lemon Balm is also effective in calming the digestive tract. It relieves dyspepsia, colic, gas, upset stomach, indigestion and stomach cramps (particularly when related to nervous tension).

In the treatment for Alzheimer's disease, Lemon Balm shows great promise, because of the herb's possible central nervous system acetylcholine receptor activity and antioxidant properties. It may even positively affect cognitive abilities, enhance memory and improve mental clarity.

Further demonstrating Lemon Balm's calmative quality, the herb has been used to relieve irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), stopping the spasms and relieving the pain and cramps associated with the disease. In addition, although it is strong enough to ease spasms, it is not so strong as to cause constipation.

Lemon Balm is an old folk remedy for treating feverish patients. It promotes perspiration and cools the body by breaking a fever. It is especially helpful in cases of colds and flu. Lemon Balm is also said to relieve bronchial catarrh and some forms of asthma.

In cases of hyperthyroidism, the flavonoids and polyphenolic found in Lemon Balm induce thyroid-regulating actions and have been known to block the attachment of thyroid cells by antibodies that cause Graves' disease, a condition that result in hyperthyroidism and over-stimulation of the thyroid gland.

Lemon Balm is said to possess excellent antiviral properties. Its volatile oils have been known to destroy viruses in test tubes in as little as three hours, and this quality makes the herb especially helpful in combating cold sores and herpes virus

infection. In addition, it is also thought to relieve the pain, itching, and sting of an outbreak. According to recent research, topical use of Lemon Balm speeds healing time of herpes simplex virus sores on the mouth.

Lemon Balm is an antibacterial and, used externally, it makes a fine poultice that has anti-putrescent effects and has been used as a surgical dressing. It is good for tumors, insect bites and stings, and it also cleanses sores and wounds. Because of its agreeable lemony scent, the herb is often included in sachets, potpourris and perfumes.

Precautions:

Lemon Balm is mild, gentle, and safe for children. It is wise, however, not to take it concurrently with barbiturates for insomnia or anxiety, as it may increase their effects.

* * * * *

Lemongrass



Botanical: *Cymbopogon citratus*

Family: Gramineae (grass) - Poaceae (haygrass)

Other common names: Oil Grass, Fever Grass, Lemon Grass, Citronella, Capim, Fever Tea, Herbe Citron, Patchuli Falso, Capim Santo

Lemongrass is a mild sedative. Try it for your insomnia, or when you are under stress, or even if you need help to calm a nervous or upset stomach. The herb is also said to relieve headaches, lower intermittent fevers and rid the lungs of mucus. Lemongrass also acts as an effective antimicrobial, antifungal and antibacterial.

Plant Description:

Lemongrass is a perennial and intensely fragrant herb, native to Asia, and widely cultivated as a commercial crop throughout the tropics and subtropics of the world. The plants grow well in sandy soils in warm, humid climates in full sun with adequate drainage.

The narrow foliage of Lemongrass ranges from blue-green to gold, and the flowers are white, cream or green. It ranges in height from about three to five feet and is a bitter, aromatic grass with leaves used in herbal medicines and herbal teas. Lemongrass is also highly valued commercially as a common food flavoring and ingredient in baked goods, confections, cosmetics, perfumes, creams and soaps, and the oil is used in hair oils and herbal baths.

History:

The herb's lemony flavor is widely used in Asian (particularly Thai, Lao, Sri Lankan, Khmer and Vietnamese) and Caribbean cooking. Lemongrass is used in traditional Brazilian medicine as an analgesic and sedative, a use that is copied around the world. Some of the constituents of Lemongrass include essential oils (including terpineol, myrcene, citral (its most active ingredient), citronellol, geraniol and limonene, among others), alpha-pinene, beta-sitosterol, coumarin, tannin and ursolic acid. The large amounts of citral and geraniol in Lemongrass are lemon-scented and rose-scented respectively. Lemongrass also includes nutritious calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium and zinc.

Medical Uses:

Lemongrass is widely used as an analgesic, an agent that reduces the sensation of pain, and has been effective in relieving painful headaches. It's essential oil, myrcene, is the constituent that produces this effect and confirms the longtime Brazilian use of the herb for pain. The herb is also believed to relieve spasms, muscle cramps and rheumatism.

As a mild sedative, Lemongrass's myrcene is an effective relaxant that acts as central nervous system depressant and helps people under stress and hypertension. It is also used to relieve insomnia, again confirming the Brazilians' longtime use of the herb for sedation.

Lemongrass is an aromatic and cooling herb that is used to increase perspiration, relieve fevers, and help treat minor, feverish illnesses. Furthermore, it also acts as a diuretic and helps promote urination and relieves retained water.

Lemongrass is considered a bitter and said to help the gastrointestinal tract and ease indigestion, flatulence and stomach discomforts. This grass is rich in a substance called citral, the active ingredient that is also in lemon peel, and this substance is said to relieve digestive disturbances and intestinal irritations.

As an effective antifungal and antimicrobial, Lemongrass is believed to dispel bacterial infections and has been used to treat internal parasites. The herb has shown strong antibacterial activity against several human pathogens, and a study in 1988, found increased activity against *E. coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. Used externally, the herb is an effective treatment for lice, ringworm, athlete's foot and scabies, and is an insect repellent.

Lemongrass is used to treat colds, sore throats, and flu (especially with headaches and fevers) and is reputed to reduce and slow the discharge of mucus in respiratory conditions, due in part to its astringent properties.

Lemongrass is a tonic and supplement that is believed to be of great benefit to the skin, nails, and is often used by herbalists to help clear blemishes and maintain balanced skin tone.

Lemongrass may possess anti-mutagenic properties. Recent studies have demonstrated that myrcene has been found to reduce toxic and mutagenic effects.

Rich in geraniol and citral, Lemongrass may contribute to lowering serum cholesterol. It may work by interfering with an enzyme reaction and inhibiting the formation of cholesterol from simpler fats.

Precautions:

Currently, there are no known contraindications or warnings with the use of Lemongrass, but if you have, any other health problems, such as high blood pressure or heart or blood vessel disease, consult your doctor before using. There have been some reports of allergy to Lemongrass, and if there is any indication of breathing problems or tightness in your throat or chest, chest pain, skin rash or itchy skin, discontinue use.

* * * * *

Lemon Peel



Botanical: Citrus limon

Family: Rutaceae (rue/citrus)

Other common names: Citrus Limonum, Citronnier, Leemoo, Limone

Did you know...?

Lemon Peel is not just a garnish for your lemonade. Try Lemon Peel for natural good health. Its high nutritive content (especially ascorbic acid) helps to build the body's immune system and ward off infection, and its digestive qualities help to ease indigestion, colic and nausea. Lemon Peel may halt vomiting.

Plant Description:

Lemon Peel is the ripened rind of Lemons, which grow on tender trees that thrive in rich, well-drained soil in full sun with ample moisture during the growing season. Lemons are native to northern India, and are cultivated in the West Indies, the Mediterranean region and other tropical countries throughout the world, but do not transplant well. The trees may grow to a height of twenty-two feet with green leaves and flowers that produce yellow fruits that are very sour.

History:

The name Lemon is derived from the Arabic, limun or limu, which, in turn, comes from the Sanskrit, nimbuka, a term that covers several Types of citrus. The trees reached Europe by way of Persia (or Media) and were first grown in Greece, and then Italy in the second century.

There is a great deal of current research being conducted lately with respect to Lemon Peel and its powerful constituent, d-limonene, a cyclic monoterpene that causes G1 cell cycle arrest, but thus far, no conclusions have been drawn, and further research is needed. (You may wish to check out the Memorial Sloan-Kettering site for further information about d-limonene.)

Lemon has been an important ingredient in herbal medicines, as well as candies, baked goods, drinks and preserves, with the peels used in aromatherapy and potpourris for their strong fragrance. Some of the constituents in Lemon Peel include volatile oils, flavonoids, coumarins, hesperidin (a bitter, crystalline glucoside), a high content of ascorbic acid (vitamin C), protein, carbohydrates, fiber, calcium, potassium, phosphorus, iron and vitamins A.

Medical Uses:

Lemon Peel is considered a digestive. It contains a bitter principle that is effective in stimulating the digestive tract and promoting good digestion, and it has long been used to calm an upset stomach, ease colic and indigestion, and stop vomiting.

Lemon Peel is highly nutritional and loaded with important minerals and vitamins (especially ascorbic acid/vitamin C) that are beneficial in cases of vitamin deficiency, such as scurvy, etc., as well as helping to build immunity against infection. Moreover, Lemon Peel is said to reduce permeability of blood vessels, which may be helpful in relieving the discomforts of phlebitis. Reducing permeability of blood vessels may also increase the body's resistance to invasive infection and disease.

As a diuretic, Lemon Peel is thought to help promote urine flow and work to cool the body. Lemon Peel is thought to improve peripheral circulation that helps to stimulate blood flow to the hands and feet, which can be of great relief to older people with poor circulation. When used topically, Lemon Peel is thought to help stop bleeding gums after vigorous brushing.

Precautions:

Currently, there appear to be no warnings or contraindications with the use of Lemon Peel, but when used topically, it may cause photosensitivity or contact dermatitis.

* * * * *

Lesser Celandine



Botanical: *Ranunculus ficaria*

Family: Ranunculaceae (buttercup)

Other common names: Pile Wort, Smallwort, Tree Celandine, Celandine Poppy, Fig Buttercup

Lesser Celandine has primarily been used for many years as a treatment for piles. Its astringent and soothing properties are said to both shrink and relieve the pain of hemorrhoids, and the herb is used to alleviate the discomforts caused by episiotomies after childbirth.

Plant Description:

Lesser Celandine is an herbaceous annual or perennial plant that is native to Europe, and was introduced as an ornamental to the United States (and elsewhere), where it grows vigorously, forming large, dense patches of groundcover, often displacing native growth, and is considered an invasive weed in many states as it overtakes areas rapidly.

The plants have a dark green basal rosette, branched woody stock, stalked leaves and butter-yellow (sometimes orange) flowers that open about nine a.m. and close up by five p.m. each day. When in bloom, Lesser Celandine appears as a green carpet with yellow dots, spreading across the forest floor.

The plant grows chiefly in wet or moist (preferring sandy) soil in sun or shade and is particularly invasive when grown in moist shade, which encourages formation of bulbils at the leaf bases. The finger-like tubers are so prolific that well-meaning weed-pullers trying to unearth the plant actually scatter it, and the plant is often transported during flood events.

History of Lesser Celandine:

Celandine is one of the rare exceptions in the buttercup family that is not too irritating for internal use (as most others contain acrid compounds). The Doctrine of Signatures of Paracelsus (1493-1541) taught that healing herbs were given a symbolic shape or color to indicate their usage, and because Lesser Celandine's tuberous roots were thought to resemble piles, the herb was specifically used to treat hemorrhoids, both internally and externally. One of the herb's common names reflects that application, i.e., Pile Wort, and its botanical specific, *ficaria*, is derived from the Latin word, *ficus*, meaning fig, another reference to the appearance of its tubers when seen hanging in a bunch.

It is considered an astringent, slightly bitter herb, and the whole plant, including the roots, is used in herbal medicine. There is not much known about the chemical constituents of Lesser Celandine; however, it is thought to include an acrid principle (similar to anemonin), lactones, triterpenoids, tannin and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Lesser Celandine is an astringent and old remedy for piles when either taken internally or used externally, and the herb has even been re-introduced into the British Pharmacopoeia specifically as an antihemorrhoidal. Its soothing astringency is also thought to help perineal damage after childbirth, when the muscle and tissue between the vagina and anus may be cut during labor (episiotomies).

Lesser Celandine may have antibacterial and antifungal properties. One of the herb's constituents, protoanemonin, is said to have antibiotic properties and considered useful against bacteria, and the saponins found in it are said to be fungicidal.

Other traditional uses for Lesser Celandine have included support for the liver and gallbladder and poor appetite, but no clinical evidence could be found in this regard.

Precautions:

Great caution should be exercised with the use of this herb. Pregnant and nursing women should not use Lesser Celandine. Use of the herb may cause skin irritation or photosensitivity, and it may alter the effects of prescription medications. It is strongly recommended that before using Lesser Celandine internally, one should always consult a health care provider.

* * * * *

Licorice Root



Botanical: Glycyrrhiza glabra

Family: Leguminosae (legume) - Fabaceae (pea)

Other common names: The Great Harmonizer, Gan Cao, Sweet Wood, Grandfather Herb, Liquorice, Sweet Licorice.

Did you know...?

Licorice root will help to keep your lungs clear, your digestive tract calm, your colon cleansed and your adrenal gland functioning properly. Alexander the Great gave his soldiers Licorice to boost their energy before a battle, so why not try some if you are feeling exhausted and stressed? Licorice is a reliable and pleasant way to soothe a sore throat.

Plant Description:

Licorice is a woody-stemmed perennial plant found wild in southern and central Europe and parts of Asia that thrives in deep, rich, moisture-retentive, slightly alkaline, sandy soil in full sun. It is a cultivated crop in many places that grows slowly from seed (generally from two to six feet in height), but is difficult to eradicate when well established. It is a very important commercial crop that is included in herbal medicine, as well as a flavoring for confectionery, snuff, foods, cough syrups and tobacco.

History:

Licorice is best known in the United States as a flavoring and candy, ninety percent of Licorice imports are actually used to flavor tobacco products. Licorice has been used as one of the key herbs in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) for over three thousand years, and its use is associated with longevity.

It was (and is) considered a tonic to rejuvenate the heart and spleen, treat ulcers, coughs, colds and digestive complaints and was mentioned in the Shen Nong Canon of Herbs listings of more than 365 plants and drugs that was compiled in China about two thousand years ago.

In the West, the Greeks learned about Licorice from the Sythians as a treatment for coughs as long ago as the third century B.C., the very same application for which it

is still used today. Alexander the Great supplied his troops with rations that included Licorice sticks to alleviate thirst and boost energy before battles. Both Hippocrates and Pliny the Elder described the medical benefits of Licorice, as did Dioscorides, who gave the plant its botanical name, Glycyrrhiza, which is derived from the Greek words, glukus, meaning "sweet" and riza, meaning "root," referring to the sweet flavor of the dried roots, which may be chewed like candy.

Some of the chemical constituents in Licorice include the saponin, glycyrrhizic acid (the chief active ingredient that is fifty times sweeter than sugar cane with cortisone-like effects), plant sterols, other sugars (glucose, mannose, sucrose), starch, resin, a trace of tannin, essential oil, amino acids, flavonoids, iso flavonoids, coumarins, lignin, mannitol, phenol, quercetin, salicylic acid, thymol, calcium, choline, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium selenium, silicon, zinc, beta-carotene-vitamins and vitamin C.

Archaeologists recently discovered a piece of Licorice from the eighth century that still possessed its active chemical principles. In addition to all of its historical medicinal applications, modern herbalists also commonly use Licorice to treat adrenal insufficiencies, such as hypoglycemia, to counteract stress, and to purify the liver and blood. The roots are widely used in European herbal medicine.

Medical Uses:

Licorice has been used for thousands of years as a superior expectorant that is primarily used for respiratory problems. The herb helps loosen phlegm and ease non-productive coughs. It is also very helpful for bronchitis, congestion, and colds. As a demulcent, Licorice soothes mucous membranes and helps relieve sore throats. It is a wonderfully effective ingredient in cough medicines and cough drops as both a pleasant flavoring, as well as an expectorant and soothing agent.

As an anti-inflammatory, the glycyrrhizin acid activity in Licorice seems related to the way corticoids are released from the adrenal glands, which is helpful in treating arthritis, rheumatism and stiff, painful joints. The herb stimulates production of cortisone and aldosterone, which appear to be effective anti-inflammatory agents.

Licorice is a wonderful support for good digestion and healthy gastrointestinal system. As a demulcent, the herb soothes the mucous membranes and protects the stomach and intestines.

It has been known to coat the stomachs lining with a mucus, rather than restraining the secretion of gastric acid (which would result in incomplete digestion) and reduce the activity of pepsin. Glycyrrhizin acid also helps to inhibit enzymes that dismantle prostaglandins, which will help the stomach and upper intestine, allowing ulcers to heal more quickly. This activity may also protect the colon and treat ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, Celiac disease, gastritis and peptic ulcer.

As an effective antibacterial, the glycyrrhizin acid in Licorice seems to stop the growth of many bacteria and is a further support for the respiratory tract by treating infection. The Chinese utilize Licorice as a powerful antitoxin and use it for the treatment for pesticide poisoning. It may also curb malaria. As an antiviral, Licorice combats viruses, including influenza-A, hepatitis-B, Epstein-Barr virus and holds promise for the treatment for HIV. Studies have shown Licorice to be effective in treating viral hepatitis, particularly chronic active hepatitis, due to its well-documented antiviral activity.

Licorice is an age-old, mild laxative that is also known to cleanse the colon. It is considered an "alternative," which is a cleansing stimulant that is effective in removing toxins and wastes from the body. It is also thought to be good for bladder and kidney ailments.

Modern herbalists commonly use Licorice to sustain adrenal function and treat adrenal insufficiencies, including hypoglycemia and Addison's disease. It is also used to purify the liver, the body's detoxification center, helping its defenses against liver diseases, such as cirrhosis and hepatitis.

Licorice is sometimes called an adrenal-hormonal that is said to stimulate the production of interferon, the agent thought to be key in preventing and treating immune-response deficiency diseases. The herb contains a natural hormone that induces the adrenal cortex to produce larger amounts of cortisone and aldosterone and assists the body to handle stress and relieve exhaustion. Licorice produces mild estrogenic effects and is said to normalize ovulation in women experiencing infrequent menstruation and ease menopausal symptoms.

The active ingredient, glycyrrhizic acid, is known to be fifty-times sweeter than sugar cane, but it does not promote thirst; it actually will alleviate thirst.

Licorice regulates low blood sugar. The glycyrrhizin content has a chemical structure similar that of human steroid hormones, which appear to help raise blood sugar levels to normal.

Precautions:

Pregnant women, diabetics and those with high blood pressure should avoid this herb. People suffering from heart disease should not use Licorice unless under a physician's care. People with high blood pressure, kidney disease, gallbladder disease and cirrhosis should avoid this herb. Large doses of Licorice may induce sodium retention and potassium depletion and can lead to hypertension and edema. Use of Licorice should be done under the supervision of a health care provider or qualified practitioner. The herb is not meant for long-term use. Do not use this herb on a daily basis for more than seven days in a row.

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Linseed



Botanical: *Linum usitatissimum*

Family: Linaceae (linen)

Other common names: Flax, Flaxseed, Lint Bells, Winterlien

Linseed provides all eight essential amino acids and a wealth of nutrients, including Omega-3 and Omega-6 essential fatty acids, digestive enzymes, protein, vitamins, and minerals. Linseed helps lower cholesterol and blood sugar levels, improve circulation and immune function, and treat inflammatory disorders.

Plant Description:

As the source of linen fiber, Flax has been cultivated since at least 5000 B.C., and its importance continues today for its fiber and as a source of oil. Flax is a hardy annual that grows from one to four feet with narrow, hairy leaves and red, white, or blue flowers that are followed by spherical capsules (bols), which contain the Linseeds (or Flaxseeds) that are high in oils with linoleic acid.

History:

Its history reaches back to the earliest times as a food (the seeds when roasted) and in the making of fine linen cloth. The plant was grown in Palestine before the arrival of the Israelites.

The Bible tells us that Rahab in Jericho hid two spies under stems of Flax she had been drying, and Solomon praised his wife, who separated the fibers of the plant for fine linen. The Egyptians made fine linen clothing and used it for wrapping mummies in the embalming process.

The medicinal properties of Linseeds were known to the Greeks, as Hippocrates recommended them for inflammations of the mucous membranes and digestive disorders; and in eighth-century France, Charlemagne passed laws requiring that the seeds be consumed to keep his subjects healthy.

In North America, the use of Flax dates back to 1617, when L. Hebert, the first farmer in Canada, brought it to New France, where today the crop grows widely on the prairies of Canada for its oil-rich seeds. The Linseed oil is not only an important commercial ingredient in the manufacture of paint and varnish, but the plant's stems are also used to make a high quality paper and linen cloth. Perhaps more importantly, Linseed also contains a wealth of nutritional benefits.

The majority of fat in Linseed (more than seventy percent) includes polyunsaturated fatty acids, namely alpha-linolenic acid (parent of Omega-3) and linoleic acid (parent of Omega-6), the "good fats." They are essential in the human diet, required for proper infant growth and development and for maintaining the structure of cell membranes and permeability of the skin.

However, the body cannot manufacture them; their presence depends totally on dietary consumption. Linseed contains the linoleic and linolenic acids needed for production of hormone-like prostaglandins, which are vital for many bodily functions. Linseeds are not only rich in Omega-3 and Omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids, but they are also a wealth of nutrients, such as calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, sulfur, vanadium, zinc, protein, mucilage, digestive enzymes, saponin, beta carotene, B-vitamins and vitamin E.

Medical Uses:

In reducing the risk factors for coronary heart disease, recent research has shown that Linseed's high Omega-3 fatty acid and its soluble fiber content have helped to reduce serum triglycerides and blood pressure. It also helps to reduce the hardening effects of cholesterol on cell membranes. Most of the soluble fiber in Flax is mucilage gum, which is a thick, sticky substance that blocks cholesterol absorption and helps balance blood-glucose levels.

With regard to strokes, the Omega-3 fatty acids in Linseed also appear to protect against stroke by regulating blood clotting and platelet aggregation.

Linseed is high in fiber. As an important source of both soluble and insoluble fiber, it has been long used to treat constipation and promote regularity. The insoluble fiber swells in the bowel to produce a gentle, bulking laxative, and the high oil content lubricates the intestines. A high-fiber diet including Linseed has been linked to a reduced risk of many chronic diseases, including diverticulosis and certain malignant diseases, i.e. colon (the quicker waste is eliminated, the less time the colon is exposed to toxins and bacteria).

For improved immune function, Linseed's alpha-linoleic acid and lignins have demonstrated a beneficial impact by affecting immune cells and immune-response mediators, such as eicosanoids and cytokines. Through these mechanisms, Linseed

may play an important role in the clinical management of autoimmune diseases and certain hormone-dependent malignancies (breast, endometrial and prostate).

Linseeds have been used as a relaxing expectorant, easing sore throats and hacking coughs. Folk healers have long used the seeds to soothe any kind of lung or throat disturbance. The mucilage in Linseed has been effective for inflammations of the mucous membranes, which is soothing for many conditions including pharyngitis and gastritis.

Several studies have shown that Linseed's anti-inflammatory and soothing properties may reduce the pain, inflammation and swelling of arthritis.

Linseed is an old remedy when used topically as a poultice for inflammations and ulcers and as a drawing poultice for boils and abscesses.

Precautions:

Currently, there are no known warnings or contraindications with the use of Linseed.

* * * * *

Lobelia



Botanical: *Lobelia inflata*

Family: Campanulaceae/Lobeliaceae (lobelia)

Other common names: Indian Tobacco, Wild Tobacco, Asthma Weed, Rag Root, Bladderpod, Vomitroot, Puke Weed, Vomitwort, Emetic Herb, Emetic Weed, Gag Root, Cardinal Flower, Red Lobelia, Scarlet Lobelia

Did you know...?

Lobelia is an old and controversial herb with an interesting past as a "cure-all" and a bright future. Recent experiments have claimed that the herb may be helpful to smokers who wish to "quit the habit" and have tried all other remedies without success. It is believed to make the taste of nicotine repulsive. At the same time, Lobelia is also supposed to calm the nerves and relax the muscles of the body. Many people say it even helps to ease mild depression.

Plant Description:

Lobelia is a very common weed that is indigenous to North America and grows wild throughout the United States in pastures, meadows, and cultivated fields. It is

a short-lived annual or biennial that has erect, angular, hairy stems with a milky sap and bears light serrate leaves with numerous small, blue-violet flowers that grow in a spike-like fashion.

Lobelia thrives in rich, moist, slightly acid soil in full sun or partial shade and reaches a height of three feet. Although very pretty when growing in the wild, it is highly controversial and should be handled only by qualified health care practitioners, as it can be very harmful if eaten.

All the aerial parts of the plant (above ground) are used in herbal medicine. The plant has a disagreeable odor and a burning taste (somewhat like an acrid tobacco) and will cause a flow of saliva.

History:

Lobelia was named after the botanist, Matthias de Lobel, a native of Lille, who died in London in 1616. However, the discovery of Lobelia is credited to Samuel Thomson (1769-1843), a pioneer herbalist and founder of Physiomedicalism, and the herb was the mainstay of his Botanic Family Physician in 1831.

It was reported to treat bronchitis, laryngitis, asthma and convulsive and inflammatory disorders, such as epilepsy, tetanus, diphtheria and tonsillitis. He was prosecuted, but not found guilty, for misuse of the herb in 1809. Long before that time, however, Lobelia was widely used by Native Americans who smoked its leaves to relieve asthma and other lung ailments, thus giving rise to the herb's common name, Indian tobacco.

The Penobscot Indians of New England also used it for bronchial complaints, and the Meskwaki tribe secretly included its finely ground roots in the food eaten by quarreling couples to make the pair fall in love again.

The Iroquois used the herb to treat syphilis, and by the early 1800s, English physicians adopted the Iroquois' cure, but it was not effective and was soon dropped. It was theorized that the plant failed to affect a cure, possibly because the Native Americans used it in combination with other herbs, or because the vitality of the plant was lost after, it was dried.

Today, Lobelia is an ingredient in some cough medicines (supporting its historical use as an expectorant in folk medicine) and is found in some over-the-counter preparations marketed to break the smoking habit. Some of the constituents included in Lobelia are the piperidine alkaloids, lobeline, (first isolated by Proctor in 1838) and isolobeline, lobelic acid, gum, resin, chlorophyll, essential oil, lignin, salts of lime and potassium, ferric oxide, manganese and vitamins A and C.

Medical Uses:

Lobelia has been used for centuries as an expectorant that promotes the expulsion of phlegm from the lungs and is believed to be helpful in cases of asthma, bronchitis, whooping cough and pleurisy.

As a relaxant and antispasmodic, Lobelia is said to relax smooth muscle and has thus been useful in easing muscle tension and convulsions, and calming the nerves. It has also been thought to relieve mild depression, hyperactivity and possibly even induce a state of euphoria. In times past, the herb was commonly employed in midwifery to alleviate rigidity of the pelvic musculature and as a sedative to relax women preparing for childbirth.

Lobelia is considered a diaphoretic that promotes perspiration and helps to lower fever and cool the body (also ridding the body of toxins through the skin). This action may also be beneficial in cases of colds and flu.

Used externally, Lobelia is believed to reduce inflammation and pain and is often used in poultices for bruises, sprains, ringworm, poison ivy irritation, skin diseases, poisonous stings, insect bites, whiplash, rheumatism, tennis elbow, boils and ulcers.

Lobelia is a highly controversial herb, but current evidence suggests that it may aid smokers to "quit the habit," as it produces similar effects as the nicotine in tobacco and is thought to make the taste of tobacco repulsive.

As an emetic, Lobelia will induce nausea and vomiting. This acrid herb is also said to stimulate respiration and was once used to stimulate the respiration of newborn infants. When overused, however, it will cause vomiting, drowsiness, weakened pulse, and respiratory failure, and great care should be exercised with its use. It is

recommended that Lobelia always be used in consultation with a health care provider.

Used externally (and best with slippery elm and soap), Lobelia will bring abscesses and boils to a head.

Precautions:

Great care should be exercised with the use of Lobelia, since it has poisonous potential and is controversial. Overuse is very dangerous to one's health, and the herb should always be used under supervision of a health care provider. Pregnant and nursing women and people with high blood pressure should not use Lobelia.

Overdoses of the herb (many times the recommended amounts) produce vomiting, sweating, pain, paralysis, depressed temperatures, rapid (but feeble) pulse, collapse, and possibly coma and death. The plant itself is harmful if eaten, and the U.S.F.D.A. has declared it poisonous; therefore, this herb should always be used under the supervision of a health care provider when taking it for specific ailments.

* * * * *

Lovage



Botanical: Ligusticum officinale

Family: Umbelliferae (carrot) - Apiaceae (parsley)

Other common names: Loveroot, Love Parsley, Wild Celery, Old English Lovage, Italian Lovage, Cornish Lovage, European Lovage, Lovose, Sea Parsley, Common Lovage, Cajoler's Weed, Maggi Plant, Smellage, Levisticum, Maggiwurz, Sauerkrautwurz

Lovage is primarily used as a diuretic that helps relieve difficult urinary problems, clear gravel and stones from the kidneys and eliminate excess retained water. Also, a bittersweet aromatic is used to relieve colic, indigestion and flatulence. It will even sweeten your breath!

Plant Description:

Lovage is a native of the Mediterranean region of southern Europe and Asia Minor and grows both wild and cultivated throughout Europe.

It is a true perennial and appears as a stout plant with a thick, grayish-brown, fleshy root that grows about six inches into the ground and is shaped like a carrot. The thick, hollow, erect stems grow to about six feet in height and produce large, dark green, radical leaves, which are divided into wedge-like segments, not unlike those of celery.

When bruised, the surface emits an aromatic odor, again, somewhat evocative of celery or angelica. In the summer, the plant bears pale yellow flowers, followed by small, yellowish-brown, extremely aromatic fruits.

The odor of the whole plant is very strong, and its taste is warm and aromatic and abounds with a yellowish, gummy, resinous juice. The plant thrives best in rich, moist, well-drained soil in a sunny situation, and the entire plant is used for medicinal purposes.

History:

It has also been introduced into Great Britain and later into North America (where American Lovage, *Levisticum officinale*, is used in the same manner as its European cousin).

There is even a Scottish species of Lovage (*Ligusticum scoticum*) called siunas, which translates from Gaelic as "growing in the storm." Lovage grows in gardens, meadows and hedgerows.

The name, Lovage, is said to be derived from two Latin words, *Levisticum* and *Ligusticum* (two botanical names for the genus), meaning Ligurian, because the herb flourished in ancient times in Liguria, a region that includes the Italian Riviera.

These terms became garbled over the years, and by the time, it entered English, in Chaucer's day, the name became corrupted beyond recognition. Misled by the name, Lovage, many people over the years have fancied a connection between Lovage and love potions (perhaps because it also sweetens the breath?).

It became a popular medication in the fourteenth century, probably because of its aromatic qualities and was widely used for fevers and "pestilential disorders." In the New World, New Englanders planted Lovage for its roots, which they candied and used as a sweet and a breath lozenge, and nineteenth-century Shaker religious communities grew and sold Lovage as part of their commercial enterprises. It was formerly widely utilized for culinary purposes and eaten as a vegetable.

Today, the young stems are used as a flavoring for liquors and in confectionery; young leaves are eaten in salads or made into teas; stalks are candied (like angelica) or used fresh as straws in Bloody Mary's; seeds are included in breads and cheese crackers; leaves are added to soups, stews and savory dishes; and, finally, the oil in Lovage is used in perfumery. Some of the constituents in Lovage include a volatile oil, a bitter extractive (angelic acid), resins and a pigment named ligulin, which is used to identify alkalinity and acidity in water testing.

Medical Uses:

Lovage is mainly used as a diuretic, which encourages urine flow. The additional urine is said to be helpful in cases of urinary difficulties and cystitis. It is also used to eliminate excess retained water.

The increased urine flow promoted by Lovage also helps to flush the kidneys, which is said to be beneficial in eliminating gravel and kidney stones.

Lovage is considered a stomachic, an agent that strengthens and improves stomach function. The bitter principle in Lovage also works to improve the appetite and relieve indigestion, colic, gastric catarrh and general disorders of the stomach. Lovage is particularly effective when used to relieve flatulence. Both ancient Greek writers and modern pharmacologists have extolled the benefits of the herb's powers to relieve gas and griping (the grumbling and pain associated with gas).

As an expectorant, Lovage is believed to loosen and expel phlegm from the pulmonary system and is said to be excellent in cases of pleurisy.

Lovage is a diaphoretic and excites perspiration and sweating. This action helps to cool the body and relieve intermittent fevers and feverish attacks. The increased perspiration also helps to clear the body of toxins through the skin.

As an aid for women, Lovage is a uterine stimulant and considered a good emmenagogue or agent that induces menstruation and regulates its flow. This quality also helps to relieve dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation) and menstrual cramps. Moreover, its uterine stimulating properties are thought to speed up the progress of slow labor.

Used externally, skin problems often respond favorably to a wash made with Lovage, and it is said to be effective against many disease-causing organisms. It has been used as a gargle for sore throat and a treatment for aphthous ulcers (canker sores that appear as a painful white or yellow ulcer in the mouth).

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Lovage, nor should those who have impaired or inflamed kidneys. Excessive use (many times the recommended dosage) may cause kidney damage.

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Love root



Botanical: *Ligusticum officinale*

Family: Umbelliferae (carrot) - Apiaceae (parsley)

Other common names: Lovage, Loveroot, Love Parsley, Wild Celery, Old English Lovage, Italian Lovage, Cornish Lovage, European Lovage, Lovose, Sea Parsley, Common Lovage, Cajoler's Weed, Maggi Plant, Smellage, Levisticum, Maggiwurz, Sauerkrautwurz

Love Root is primarily used as a diuretic that helps relieve difficult urinary problems, clear gravel and stones from the kidneys and eliminate excess retained water. Also, a bittersweet aromatic is used to relieve colic, indigestion and flatulence. Love Root will even sweeten your breath!

Plant Description:

Love Root is a native of the Mediterranean region of southern Europe and Asia Minor and grows both wild and cultivated throughout Europe.

It has also been introduced into Great Britain and later into North America (where American Lovage, *Levisticum officinale*, is used in the same manner as its European cousin).

There is even a Scottish species of Love Root (*Ligusticum scoticum*) called siunas, which translates from Gaelic as "growing in the storm." Love Root grows in gardens, meadows and hedgerows.

It is a true perennial and appears as a stout plant with a thick, grayish-brown, fleshy root that grows about six inches into the ground and is shaped like a carrot.

The thick, hollow, erect stems grow to about six feet in height and produce large, dark green, radical leaves, which are divided into wedge-like segments, not unlike those of celery. When bruised, the surface emits an aromatic odor, again, somewhat evocative of celery or angelica. In the summer, the plant bears pale yellow flowers, followed by small, yellowish-brown, extremely aromatic fruits. The odor of the whole plant is very strong, and its taste is warm and aromatic and abounds with a yellowish, gummy, resinous juice.

The plant thrives best in rich, moist, well-drained soil in a sunny situation, and the entire plant is used for medicinal purposes.

History:

The name, Love Root, is said to be derived from two Latin words, *Levisticum* and *Ligusticum* (two botanical names for the genus), meaning Ligurian, because the herb flourished in ancient times in Liguria, a region that includes the Italian Riviera. These terms became garbled over the years, and by the time, it entered English, in Chaucer's day, the name became corrupted beyond recognition. Misled by the name, Lovage, many people over the years have fancied a connection between Love Root and love potions (perhaps because it also sweetens the breath?).

It became a popular medication in the fourteenth century, probably because of its aromatic qualities and was widely used for fevers and "pestilential disorders." In the New World, New Englanders planted Love Root for its roots, which they candied and used as a sweet and a breath lozenge, and nineteenth-century Shaker religious communities grew and sold Love Root as part of their commercial enterprises. Love Root was formerly widely utilized for culinary purposes and eaten as a vegetable.

The young stems are used as a flavoring for liquors and in confectionery; young leaves are eaten in salads or made into teas; stalks are candied (like angelica) or used fresh as straws in Bloody Mary's; seeds are included in breads and cheese crackers; leaves are added to soups, stews and savory dishes; and, finally, the oil in Love Root is used in perfumery. Some of the constituents in Love Root include a volatile oil, a bitter extractive (angelic acid), resins and a pigment named ligulin, which is also used to identify alkalinity and acidity in water testing.

Medical Uses:

Love Root is mainly used as a diuretic, which encourages urine flow. The additional urine is said to be helpful in cases of urinary difficulties and cystitis. It is also used to eliminate excess retained water.

The increased urine flow promoted by Love Root also helps to flush the kidneys, which is said to be beneficial in eliminating gravel and kidney stones.

Love Root is considered a stomachic, an agent that strengthens and improves stomach function. The bitter principle in Love Root also works to improve the appetite and relieve indigestion, colic, gastric catarrh and general disorders of the stomach. Love Root is particularly effective when used to relieve flatulence. Both ancient Greek writers and modern pharmacologists have extolled the benefits of the herb's powers to relieve gas and griping (the grumbling and pain associated with gas).

As an expectorant, Love Root is believed to loosen and expel phlegm from the pulmonary system and is said to be excellent in cases of pleurisy.

Love Root is a diaphoretic and excites perspiration and sweating. This action helps to cool the body and relieve intermittent fevers and feverish attacks. The increased perspiration also helps to clear the body of toxins through the skin.

As an aid for women, Love Root is a uterine stimulant and considered a good emmenagogue or agent that induces menstruation and regulates its flow. This quality also helps to relieve dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation) and menstrual cramps. Moreover, its uterine stimulating properties are thought to speed up the progress of slow labor.

Used externally, skin problems often respond favorably to a wash made with Love Root, and it is said to be effective against many disease-causing organisms. It has been used as a gargle for sore throat and a treatment for aphthous ulcers (canker sores that appear as a painful white or yellow ulcer in the mouth).

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Love Root, nor should those who have impaired or inflamed kidneys. Excessive use (many times the recommended dosage) may cause kidney damage.

* * * * *

Lavender



Botanical: *Lavandula officinalis* (also known as *Lavandula angustifolia* and *Lavandula vera*)

Family: Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

Other common names: English Lavender, Fleurs de Lavande, Lavanda, Lavandin (Dutch)

The essential oils in Lavender soothe headaches, calm nerves, ease depression, dizziness and stress, and will even combat halitosis. Lavender's antibacterial properties work to combat bacteria in the intestines, and it is also an antiviral and antifungal, working against yeast infections, diphtheria, typhoid, staph, strep and

many flu viruses. It is an effective tonic that improves intestinal health. This fragrant herb is necessary for every home.

Plant Description:

Lavender is a shrubby, flowering perennial that is indigenous to the mountainous regions of the western Mediterranean and is cultivated extensively for its aromatic flowers and many medicinal applications throughout Europe, the United States and Australia.

There are many species of Lavender grown in Europe that are used with similar applications; and interestingly, when English Lavender (Lavender officinalis/Lavandula angustifolia) is grown in France, it is often traded as French Lavender, but French Lavender is a different species (Lavandula dentata). The plant grows to about two or three feet in height.

History:

Lavender was widely used in ancient Egypt for its fragrance, and it was a favorite in the homes of Greeks and Romans. Even its name is derived from the Latin, lavare, meaning, "To wash," because it was used in scented baths.

In Arab medicine, Lavender was used as an expectorant and antispasmodic, while European folk medicine regarded it as essential for healing wounds and as a worm remedy for children.

Traditional herbalists used it to treat conditions of the nervous system, and even the hard-working Queen Elizabeth I took it with sugar to ease tension. In the Middle Ages, Lavender was a popular "strewing herb," not only for its fragrance, but also for its insect repellent properties. In France, the town of Grasse used Lavender in their glove-tanning process, and when the town remained remarkably free of plague, it encouraged people elsewhere to carry the herb to ward off pestilence. This fragrant plant is famous for its wonderful aroma, which is much used in the perfume industry. It is also widely used medicinally and is a staple of aromatherapy to promote relaxation. Lavender's many constituents include essential oils, tannins, coumarins, flavonoids and triterpenoids.

Medical Uses:

Lavender has been used for centuries as a tonic to ease conditions of the nervous system. It is a relaxant that calms nerves, relieves fatigue, depression, migraine and tension headaches, nervous exhaustion, irritability and excitement.

The essential oils in Lavender act as a mild sedative on the heart and may be effective in lowering blood pressure.

Lavender is used to promote good digestion. It has a mild sedative effect that is used to ease colic, nausea, vomiting, indigestion and other stomach problems. It is considered a "carminative" which will reduce flatulence and relieve a "gassy" stomach, and it is a diuretic.

Lavender is an effective tonic that works to improve intestinal health. As a "cholagogue," it stimulates the flow of bile from the liver to the intestines, and its antibacterial properties are useful in combating putrefactive bacteria in the intestines. Its antiviral, antifungal and antiseptic properties are thought to inhibit the activity of yeast infections, diphtheria, typhoid, staph, strep and many flu viruses.

Used externally, Lavender may be added to a sachet, which will repel insects, create a pleasant fragrance to relax the nerves, and possibly help to avoid dizziness and fainting.

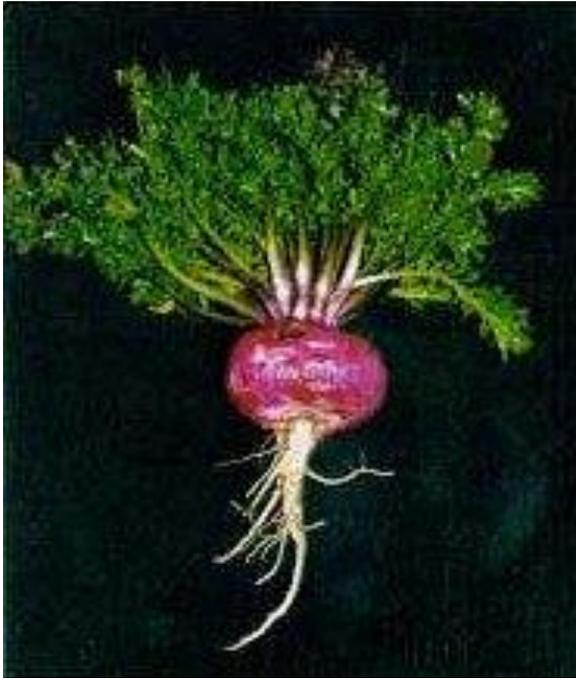
Applied topically, the essential oils in Lavender act as an antiseptic and painkiller, helping to relieve insect bites and stings, skin diseases, such as eczema and psoriasis, and minor burns. It is also makes a fine mouthwash. Added to bathwater, Lavender calms irritable children and relaxes adults, and mixed with water, it makes a fragrant hair rinse.

Precautions:

Pregnant women should avoid taking Lavender internally, as it may stimulate uterine contractions. Excessive use of this product (many times the recommended dosage) may cause drowsiness.

* * * * *

Maca Root



Botanical: *Lepidium meyenii*

Family: Brassicaceae (cabbage) - formerly Cruciferae (mustard)

Other common names: Peruvian Ginseng, Maka, Mace, Maca-Maca, Maino, Chichira, Ayuk, Pepperweed, High Andean Ginseng, Royal Maca

Did you know...?

Hailed as Peruvian Ginseng, Maca Root has been used for centuries to increase vitality, promote libido, fertility and sexual performance, and stamina. It is also used to relieve the symptoms of menopause and premenstrual syndrome (PMS), as well as enhance energy and strength during athletic performance. Like other cruciferous members of the cabbage family, Maca Root is credited with possessing immuno-stimulating qualities that help to build the body's defenses against invasive infection and serious disease.

Plant Description:

Maca is a biennial or perennial plant that is native to the very high parts of the Andes Mountains, at altitudes from eight thousand to almost fifteen thousand feet, in an inhospitable region of intense sunlight, violent winds and below-freezing temperatures.

Maca Root is a low-growing, mat-like stem system that produces inconspicuous, scalloped leaves and off-white flowers. Despite the poor, rocky soil and extreme temperatures, the large, radish-like root vegetable has managed to flourish over the centuries.

The root is usually off-white to yellow in color (although purple and black exist), and the smaller, less fibrous type is preferred and common in Peruvian markets as a highly nutritious vegetable. It is also highly valued in herbal medicine.

History:

Maca Root was domesticated during the pre-Inca, Arcaicia Period sometime around 3800 B.C., with primitive cultivars of Maca being found in archaeological sites dating back to 1600 B.C. It continued to be cultivated by the Incas centuries ago as a valuable nutritious dietary staple and medicinal commodity. The indigenous people used it for centuries to enhance fertility in humans and animals. Soon after the Spanish conquest in South America, the Spaniards found that their livestock was reproducing poorly in the highlands, and the local tribes recommended Maca. So remarkable were the results that the Spanish chroniclers wrote in-depth reports, saying that it improved the reproductive health of their horse, and in another report from 1549, the Spanish encomendero, de Soto Mayor, was given Maca Root as a tribute, which he used to improve the fertility of livestock in Castille. It was considered so valuable that in 1572, the Chinchaycochas Indians used Maca for bartering, and colonial records indicate that tribute was demanded in the form of nine tons of Maca.

For the Andean Indians today, Maca Root is still a valuable commodity that is frequently traded with communities at lower elevations for rice, corn, green vegetables and beans. It is also an important staple in the diets of the indigenous peoples, because it has the highest nutritional value of any food crop grown in the region.

The root (which has a tangy, sweet taste and aroma like butterscotch) is rich in sugars, protein, starches and essential nutrients (especially iodine and iron), and the roots are often considered a treat when baked in the same manner as a sweet potato. Maca Root may be stored for long periods and is used in porridges, jams, puddings, sodas and even a sweet, fragrant, fermented drink called maca chichi.

There has been much scientific research since the 1960s into the improved fertility, reproductive and energy boosting qualities of Maca, and varied reports from G. Chacon (1990), R. Chacon (1961) and A. Mendrano (1993) claim that Maca has increased fertility in rats, cows and guinea pigs. A. Mendrano also noted that Maca increased seminal fluid volume, sperm motility and sperm count in rams, and litter size and weights of guinea pigs were increased from 45% to 73%.

The species, *L. meyenii*, was first described by Gerhard Walpers in 1843, and it has been suggested by botanists that the cultivated species of today may be a newer species found in Peru, *L. peruvianum*, (both are used interchangeably), and because of Maca's popularity as an aphrodisiac and energy enhancer, cultivation has boomed to meet the demand in the United States and abroad.

There is much current research into the effects of Maca Root with respect to building immunity to invasive infection. Researchers at Johns Hopkins University found that the protein (called nrf2) spurs cells to produce enzymes that detoxify harmful substances, and members of the Brassicaceae family are known to contain this helpful chemical.

The studies claim that by "elevating the level of nrf2 detoxifying enzymes, we can enhance the resistance to carcinogens." Some of the constituents in Maca Root include alkaloids, whole fiber, lipids, twenty amino acids (including arginine, serine, glycine, valine, histidine, aspartic acid and glutamic acid, etc.), proteins, beta-ecdysone, beta-sitosterol, hydrolyzable carbohydrates, fatty acids (including linolenic, palmitic and oleic acids), glucosinolates, isothiocyanate, iodine, phosphorus, potassium, iron, magnesium, zinc, calcium, protein, steroid glycosides, saponins, sitosterol, stigmasterol, tannins, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, vitamin B12 and vitamins C and E.

Medical Uses:

Maca Root is believed to help sexual performance and act as an aphrodisiac that boosts libido in both men and women. Chemical research has demonstrated that Maca Root contains a chemical called p-methoxybenzyl isothiocyanate, which has reputed aphrodisiac properties. Because Maca is thought to balance hormonal activity, it is believed to be useful in cases of sterility and other reproductive and sexual disorders.

In men, it is believed to treat male impotence and erectile dysfunction and may, in fact, increase seminal volume and sperm motility. There are also claims that Maca especially enhances sexual performance and endurance. The April 2000, issue of Urology reported that the sexual performance claims made by those who used Maca were consistent with the legendary reports coming from Peru. In women, it is said to increase libido, perk up a low sex drive because of the herb's glucosinolate content, and enhance fertility.

Menopausal women and those who suffer menstrual difficulties may be helped with the use of Maca. It is believed to promote healthy estrogen and progesterone levels. Research has shown that Maca Root contains no plant hormones, but its action relies on plant sterols, which act as chemical triggers to help the body produce a higher level of hormones appropriate to the age and gender of the person taking it. Clinical case studies have shown that Maca can help relieve the discomforts of premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and menopausal symptoms. New York-based Dr. Viana Muller introduced Maca to medical doctors practicing CAM (Complementary Alternative Medicine) at the Anti-Ageing Medical Conference in 1997, and noted that Maca Root had been used successfully by Peruvians to regulate hormonal imbalances, menstrual irregularities, fertility and menopausal symptoms, including hot flashes, vaginal dryness, osteoporosis, loss of energy and libido and temporary depression in women.

Maca Root is believed to increase energy and stamina and boost endurance in athletes. It is also thought to help in cases of chronic fatigue syndrome and to restore lost vitality and vigor. Moreover, it may help to enhance memory and promote mental clarity. In the past, Spanish chroniclers described Inca warriors who consumed boiled Maca Root before battle to increase their strength, as well as using it to bolster their reserves for endurance activities. Today, it is still employed

as a fatigue-fighter and general tonic to counter lethargy, memory loss and other disorders resulting from depleted energy stores.

Maca Root is highly nutritious. It is the highest source of nutrients growing in the Andean region and is rich in sugars, protein, vitamins, essential nutrients (especially iodine and iron) and carbohydrates that resemble healthy cereal grains.

Maca has been used to reduce thyroidal symptoms. If one has hypothyroidism, it is most likely caused by a hormonal imbalance, because the thyroid gland does not produce enough thyroid hormones. This tends to slow down the body's functions and can lead to many physical disorders. The chemical element, iodine, is a major component of thyroid hormones and a deficiency of this element is a leading cause of hypothyroidism; consequently, the high iodine content and hormone balancing properties in Maca may be responsible for its use in improving this condition.

Maca Root is also considered beneficial in cases of anemia. The herb's high iron content may be the reason it is used for this purpose.

The phytochemical contents in Maca are said to boost the immune system, helping to strengthen the body's fight against foreign, harmful substances that may try to invade it. Maca Root is thought to be an adaptogen or agent that helps to balance bodily systems and normalize bodily functions during stressful situations that might alter those functions, helping the body to adapt and return to an overall sense of well-being. There are current studies claiming that the glucosinolates found in Maca Root may help to combat serious invasive infection; they are the substances that are also found in other members of the Brassicaceae family (including broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower and other cruciferous vegetables) and are said to be particularly effective in building the body's defenses against serious malignant illnesses.

Precautions: None

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Magnolia Bark



Botanical: *Magnolia glauca* (also known as *Magnolia virginiana*)

Family: Magnoliaceae (magnolia)

Other common names: Sweetbay Magnolia, Laurel Magnolia, White Bay, Swamp Laurel, Sweetbay, Swamp Sassafras, Beaver Tree, Hou Po

Did you know...?

In Chinese medicine, Magnolia Bark has been associated with the stomach, lungs, spleen and large intestine for over two thousand years and has been used to treat abdominal bloating, gas, nausea, diarrhea, menstrual cramps and indigestion. Recent studies have found that the herb inhibits the production of cortisol (the substance that encourages fat storage) and may be effective in weight loss programs.

Plant Description:

Magnolia is a magnificent family of forest trees that are revered for their beautiful, large, showy and deliciously fragrant flowers. Magnolias may be both evergreen and deciduous with luxuriant foliage and rich flowers and can reach a height of more than eighty feet, with some species much smaller.

Magnolias can survive in both moist and dry soils (preferring well drained moist) that can be neutral-to-acid-to-alkaline, in sun or partial shade with shelter from cold winds and late frosts. It is in flower from June to September, and the flowers are hermaphrodite (has both male and female organs) and are pollinated by beetles. Magnolia can tolerate atmospheric pollution. When growing in warmer climates, the trees reach their greatest development.

History:

In 1703, Charles Plumier named the genus after Pierre Magnol, the most illustrious botanist in France at that time. For the most part, the genus is North American, where it was originally included in many herbal remedies of the Native Americans. There are also several species that are native to China and Japan (*Magnolia officinalis*, *Magnolia hypoleuca*, etc.), where it has been an important part of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) for over two thousand years. Several species were listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1820 through 1894 as a tonic, stimulant and diaphoretic. It was even used as a substitute for quinine when treating malaria. Magnolia's wood, which is straight-grained, yellow in color, light, soft, easily worked and finishes well, is used for furniture, broom handles, bowls and light woodenware articles, and an essential oil from the flowers has been used in the manufacture of perfumes. Magnolia Bark is collected in the autumn, and the unopened flowers are harvested in the springtime and used in herbal medicines. Some of the constituents in Magnolia Bark include volatile oils (eudesmol, bornyl-acetate, etc.), alkaloids, tannin, magnolol, honokiol, zinc, copper, calcium, potassium, iron, magnesium and manganese.

Medical Uses:

Magnolia Bark has been used in Chinese herbal medicine for at least two thousand years as an aromatic, pungent and warming stimulant that treats various disorders of the digestive system and strengthens stomach function. It is a bitter relaxant herb that acts as a tonic and improves digestion, relieving stomach pains,

gastroenteritis and flatulence. It calms diarrhea and vomiting associated with indigestion, stimulates poor appetite and alleviates fullness and distension of the abdomen.

As a mild diaphoretic, Magnolia Bark is said to increase perspiration and sweating and thus reduce fevers and cool the body. It has been historically used in cases of malarial fevers and fevers of a typhoid type.

Magnolia Bark is believed to have antiseptic, antibacterial, antifungal, antispasmodic, expectorant and anti-inflammatory properties. As such, the bark is thought to relieve the pain and inflammation of rheumatism and gout, counteract yeast infections (such as leukorrhea) and combat upper respiratory tract infections and spasms, including asthma, coughs, profuse phlegm in the lungs, shortness of breath and fullness and pressure in the chest area.

In the fight against obesity and weight management, Magnolia Bark has recently been recognized as an efficient fat burner. It is said that the magnolol and honokiol in the herb effectively inhibit the body's production of cortisol, the substance that liberates fat from adipose cells and thus suppresses fat storage, particularly in the abdominal and belly area. Magnolia is also said to act as a mild laxative.

Magnolia Bark itself has been chewed as a substitute for tobacco and is said to "cure the habit."

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Magnolia Bark. Overuse (many times the recommended dosage) may cause vertigo and dizziness.

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Ma Huang



Common Name: Ma Huang

Scientific Name: *Ephedra* spp

Other Common Names: Chinese ephedra, Efedra china

Did you know...?

Ma huang (*Ephedra sinica*) is a cone-bearing shrub, 30 to 50 cm in height, which is native to China but now found also in the Mediterranean region, India, Persia, and the western portion of South America. This species grows best in sandy or rocky deserts and mountains. Warm temperate latitude with less than 20 cm of annual rainfall are suitable for the growth of ma huang, i.e., ma huang is a xerophytic plant capable of growing under semiarid to arid conditions.

Plant Description:

The jointed green stems of ma huang are the chief photosynthetic organs of the plant. The plant has tiny, scale-like, opposite leaves that only function briefly when

first formed, after which they lose their chlorophyll and turn a faded brown. The stems are tough, relatively flexible, and lack bark for several years.

Seeds for ma huang are planted in the early spring. During the first year of growth, the plants must be watered and kept entirely weed free. Stems are harvested usually after four years of plant growth, and during the blooming season, when alkaloid content is the highest. *Ephedra sinica* is not harvested during the summer months, because alkaloid content is reduced when stems are fully hydrated from summer rains.

Stems less than 1.25 cm in diameter are cut, dried in the sun for 15 days, and then artificially dried at 120 degrees F for three more hours. Afterwards, the stems are beaten with sticks to break their great jointing, and then screened to separate unwanted joints from the internodes. Packed in bags or covered in containers, the stems must be stored in a dry atmosphere awaiting shipment.

History:

We know that ephedras have been used at least for 5000 years in China, probably elsewhere. Beverages made with the ephedra plant have been referred to under many names, e.g., yellow river, mormon tea, and whorehouse tea. Ancient Chinese physicians prescribed ephedra tea and pills for the common cold, coughs, asthma, headaches, and hay fever. Ephedra comforts asthma patients by acting as a bronchial dilator. Honey is often added to the ephedra.

Ten species of *Ephedra* are known to exist in North America, and many were popular in folk medicine and as a daily beverage. After the Mormons had arrived in Utah, the native tribe introduced them to a species of *Ephedra*, and they used the stems as a substitute for coffee and tea. However, this was considered a bitter-tasting tonic beverage. In the Old West, the same species used by the Mormons gained a reputation as a cure for syphilis and gonorrhea, although this cure was never actually proven to work.

The stimulants, or uppers, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are the two widely used alkaloids of ma huang. These alkaloids are found in highest concentrations in internodes, and in thin stems with fewer nodes (i.e., long internodes), especially less fibrous stems that snap most easily, and they are absent from roots. All the

alkaloids are less potent than adrenaline, yet more effective than caffeine. Caffeine--contained in coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, yerba mate, and cola drinks--when combined with ma huang enhances the performance of ma huang, and the results are insomnia, irritability, and nervousness.

Medical Uses:

Ephedrine can be obtained in nonprescription forms. A 24-25 mg capsule containing ma huang comes in a hydrochloride or sulfate salt form. Typically, only 5 mg of ephedrine is contained within this capsule, but ephedrine alkaloid content is not regulated due to its difficulty in being measured as a constant amount. Extreme variability in ephedrine content is associated with different ephedrine species and their places of origin.

Many herbalists agree that the intact ma huang stem is much safer to use for medicinal purposes than its alkaloid extracts. As an example, pure ephedrine raises blood pressure, whereas ephedra stems reduces it. Comparing the alkaloid pseudoephedrine with the entire plant, the entire plant causes fewer heart symptoms. When comparing alkaloid to alkaloid for commercial cold preparations, pseudoephedrine is less risky than ephedrine.

Ma huang and its alkaloids have various medicinal uses, of which only some of the more widely used purposes will be mentioned here, but especially ma huang acts as a bronchial dilator to dry up the sinuses. Pseudoephedrine HCL, an isomer of ephedrine, is claimed to have a longer bronchial dilating effect than ephedrine. This use is especially helpful in treating hay fever, allergies, and asthma. Bronchial dilation also aids in decongesting the chest from the cold and flu. Synthetic ephedrine compounds are widely used in cold and allergy remedies, such as Sudafed.

Ma huang stimulates the nervous system to enhance mood, reduce fatigue, and to make a person alert enough to smell their coffee in the morning. Ma huang also has the ability to increase energy and endurance; it does this through increase of blood flow to the muscles, resulting in an increase of oxygen and nutrient supply to the muscles. Ephedrine also increases basal metabolic rate (BMR), so that the body is spurred to burn calories faster, and so ephedrine is part of the thermogenic process that can result in substantial weight loss. In thermogenesis, white fat stores are

mobilized into the bloodstream, where they are carried to the brown fat to be burned up and dissipated as heat.

Administering ma huang causes uterine contractions, thus, menstruation can be initiated. However, during pregnancy, women are not advised to try ma huang. Ma huang can help smokers to quit smoking by decreasing cigarette cravings.

Because it has some effects like adrenaline, some athletics have been known to take ephedra products to enhance physical performance. One recent rumor claimed that downing many Sudafed tablets is a common practice for professional hockey players. Diego Maradona of the Argentina World Cup soccer team tested positive for ephedrine and was removed from competition by the Argentina Football Association, and ephedra is now on the United States Olympic Committee's list of banned substances.

Finally, ma huang and its alkaloids are marketed to produce euphoria and to increase sexual sensations, and for that reason, ma huang poses a large risk of addiction in adolescence.

The wide range of products that can be formed from ma huang make the plant and its alkaloids very marketable, and extracts of the alkaloids have been used in modern over-the-counter drugs since the 1920s. As just mentioned, ma huang is used to increase sexual sensation and to bring the user to a state of euphoria, and the plant is portrayed as a natural alternative to the street drugs "ecstasy" and "escalation." Combination products of multiple stimulants are also quite marketable. The kola nut caffeine and green tea extract are used in combination with ephedra to produce multiple stimulants.

As with many other marketable stimulants, adverse side effects are not uncommon. The alkaloids of ma huang can cause rapid or irregular heartbeat, very similar to the effects of adrenaline. Blood pressure rises. Unfortunately, there have been reported cases of liver injury and hepatitis, and users experience aggressiveness, anxiety, and tremors. This leads to poor judgment, and thus potential injuries. Complications from these side effects can result in cerebral hemorrhage, cardiac arrest, and, of course, death. Prolonged use of the drug, which is not recommended, can be the cause of weakened adrenal glands, nervousness, and insomnia. Other side effects include nausea, vomiting, fever, depression, seizures, and headaches. It

should be noted, however, that the low dosage of ephedrine in many ma huang products is not large enough to produce significant cardiovascular changes in everyone.

Precautions:

The United States Food and Drug Administration have described ephedra as an herb of "undefined safety." But because ephedra plants are considered nutritional supplements, products containing ma huang are not regulated for safety. Repeating from above, alkaloid content varies so greatly from plant to plant and for different ephedra species that it is very difficult to monitor the safety level of each batch. Probably because of no monitoring and poor warnings, at least fifteen fatalities have been linked to food products with ephedrine.

In 1993, ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were put on the list of the official regulated chemicals for the state of California. One major reason for this regulation was to help identify illicit drug labs by monitoring quantities and destinations of precursor chemicals. Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are used as starting compounds, or "substitute precursors," in the illicit manufacturing of methamphetamines. Only 50% of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are lost during methamphetamines synthesis; compared with other chemicals used in drug labs for the synthesis of methamphetamines, 50% is a low amount to be lost. The Controlled Substances Act states that all sales of single entity ephedrine products are liable for full record keeping and reporting requirements under the act. If the act is not kept, a person, or a group of people, may be fined \$25,000 per violation, including up to ten years in prison.

Many people have the predisposition to believe that because a product is "natural" and available without a prescription that it is healthful and not harmful to the human body. Perhaps an extension of that reasoning, when victims are delivered to hospitals for liver injury, cerebral hemorrhage, and cardiac arrest, many will not reveal their use of such "natural" medicines unless prompted. It is important to remember that anything thought by the government as being of "undefined safety"- -whether it has been in use for medicinal purposes for 5000 years or for five years- -should always be researched extensively before it is put into your body.

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Maiden Hair



Botanical: Ginkgo biloba

Family: Ginkgoaceae (ginkgo)

Other common names: Ginkgo Biloba, Fossil Tree

Did you know...?

Maiden Hair is the world's most used treatment for memory loss and degenerative diseases of the brain and central nervous system. Because Maiden Hair increases the circulation of blood and oxygen to all parts of the body, it is effective overall tonic that aids in the treatment for a variety of conditions, ranging from impotence to ringing in the ears, and that is only the beginning!

History:

Maiden Hair comes from one of the oldest living tree species on earth, the Ginkgo, a deciduous conifer, dating back over three hundred million years. Individual trees may live for a thousand years, as they are resistant to viruses, fungi, insects, pollution and even radiation, and they may reach to 122 feet in height. Native to China, Maiden Hair has been included in Chinese herbal medicine's repertoire for almost five thousand years, where it was used for respiratory tract ailments and for memory loss in older adults. The trees were introduced to Europe in 1730 and the United States in 1784 as ornamentals.

Plant Description:

Since the 1980s, Western medical interest in the plant has grown dramatically since its potent actions on the cardiovascular system were identified. Different parts of the plant have different properties with different medical applications. Some of Maiden Hair's constituents include amino acids, tannins, quercetin, beta-carotene, flavone glycosides, bioflavones, sitosterol, lactones, anthocyanin, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, B-vitamins, vitamins A, and C. Maiden Hair is now among the leading prescription medicines in both Germany and France.

Medical Uses:

Maiden Hair improves blood and oxygen flow to the brain and has been most effective in treating senility, dementia, depression, anxiety, forgetfulness, inability to concentrate and ADD (attention deficit disorder) in adults. Maiden Hair's most exciting application may be in the treatment for Alzheimer's disease by helping to speed the blood flow to the brain and aiding the brain to utilize glucose efficiently. Improved blood flow to the brain also helps to prevent strokes, cerebral arteriosclerosis and other diseases of peripheral circulation.

Maiden Hair may reduce the risk of heart attack. In the same way improved blood flow helps other vital areas of the body, Maiden Hair appears to prevent the blood clots that cause them. It blocks the platelet activation factor (PAF) that triggers the internal blood clots, which lead to heart attacks. In addition, one of Maiden Hair's flavone glycosides (ginkgolide) has been used to treat severely irregular heartbeat.

Problems associated with poor circulation, such as varicose veins, Raynaud's disease and macular degeneration have been alleviated with the use of Maiden Hair. A circulatory stimulant relaxes blood vessels. By increasing peripheral vascular circulation, the pain and cramping associated with obstruction and narrowing in the arteries (reducing blood flow) is relieved. Improved blood circulation may also help inner ear dysfunction, including tinnitus (ringing in the ears).

Maiden Hair helps promote good sexual health. Male impotence (erectile dysfunction) has been helped by the use of Maiden Hair. Studies showed that the

herb improved blood flow to the penis in men who had narrowing of the arteries that supply blood to that area and were unable to achieve erections. Additionally, women who suffered sexual difficulties when taking antidepressants have benefited from the use of Maiden Hair, claiming that it enhanced orgasm and excitement.

Maiden Hair is said to fight melanoma by improving the delivery of oxygen to tissues throughout the body. Oxygenated blood creates a hostile environment for hormone-related malignancy, including bladder, breast, ovarian, etc.

As an astringent, antifungal and antibacterial, Maiden Hair helps to ward off kidney infections, diphtheria, dysentery, hemorrhoids and toxic shock, and has a beneficial effect on the urinary system, treating incontinence and excessive urination. It is also useful in treating vaginal infection.

Maiden Hair is a powerful antioxidant that helps to protect the brain from neurotoxicity. It is said to prevent free-radical damage and age-related declines in brain function. It may also prevent free radical damage in the kidneys and liver.

Problems with the respiratory tract are thought to be improved with Maiden Hair. This herb treats bronchial constriction, asthma, chesty coughs (with thick phlegm) and tuberculosis.

Maiden Hair has been known to provide relief for the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, including fluid retention and breast tenderness.

Precautions:

Speak with your doctor before taking Maiden Hair if you are taking prescription MAO inhibitors (antidepressants) or blood thinners. Discuss its use before having surgery, if you are pregnant or if you take painkillers on a regular basis. It is not recommended for epileptics. Topical or internal use may cause skin irritations, mild headaches or mild upset stomach.

* * * * *

Maitake Mushroom



Botanical: *Grifola frondosa*

Family: Basidiomycetes (button mushroom) - Meripilaceae (a fungus from the polypore order)

Other common names: Hen of the Woods, Sheep's Head

Described as the King of Mushrooms in Japan, Maitake is rapidly gaining a reputation as one of the finest immuno-stimulants known. Used in Oriental medicine for over three thousand years, new scientific research in Japan and the United States has discovered some powerful compounds that have shown significant carcinogenesis prevention activity in tests. Regarded as the most potent immune enhancing of all the mushrooms, current studies are revealing some promising data that may provide hope for HIV patients. Maitake Mushroom is easily absorbed and is as effective when taken as an oral supplement as it is when given intravenously.

Plant Description:

Maitake Mushroom is a very large mushroom that has been used for over three thousand years in traditional Chinese and Japanese cooking and herbology, in which mushrooms have been used to maintain health, preserve youth and increase longevity.

Among the several types of mushrooms used in traditional medicine, Maitake is said to contain the most potent healing qualities. It is described as a cluster of dark fronds with a firm and supple texture at the base, becoming slightly brittle and crumbly at the edges and exuding a distinctive aroma and rich, woody taste.

History:

In Japanese, Maitake means, "dancing mushroom," because in ancient times, those who were fortunate enough to find them were, said to dance with joy, since Maitakes could be exchanged for their weight in silver. The Maitake Mushroom grows wild in the deep mountainous regions of northeastern Japan and is difficult to cultivate because of its sensitivity to environmental conditions. Members of this family all grow on rotting wood and tend to form very simple fruiting bodies. Until cultivation techniques were devised in 1979, they were collected in the wild, but are now successfully grown for ever-expanding food and medicinal markets in Japan, as well as export to the West. Today, traditional Oriental herbal medicine functions side-by-side with modern medical techniques in Japan, as witnessed by the frequent use of Maitake Mushrooms to treat conditions that are routinely treated in the West with synthetic drugs. However, because of new scientific research, many promising benefits are emerging from the use of Maitake Mushroom in the area preventing carcinogenesis and HIV treatments, and many studies are now being conducted in the United States and Japan to substantiate these claims. Maitake Mushroom is very nutritious and includes vitamins C, D and B-2, potassium, magnesium and a very powerful polysaccharide called beta-1, 6-glucan, which is thought to account for the mushroom's healing properties.

Medical Uses:

Maitake Mushroom is considered an adaptogen, an agent that increases resistance to stress and helps the body adapt to stressful conditions and normalize bodily functions when those functions have been altered.

Maitake is said to be the most powerful immuno-stimulant of all the mushrooms. The most important compound, the polysaccharide beta-1, 6-glucan, is said to stimulate immune function by enhancing the activity of key immune cells known as T-helper cells or CD4 cells.

In addition to enhancing immune function, Maitake's potent polysaccharide compound has been shown to prevent carcinogenesis in laboratory tests, and further studies are investigating the potential use of Maitake for malignant colorectal and breast disease.

The U.S.F.D.A. has approved clinical studies of Maitake on participants with advanced prostate cancer, skipping the usual first-phase toxicity study, going directly to phase-two human study. There are also strong indications that Maitake may reduce pain, hair loss, nausea and other side effects usually associated with chemotherapy.

Penn State researchers found that all mushrooms are a rich source of the powerful antioxidant, ergothioneine, but the exotic mushrooms (such as Maitake) contain even more ergothioneine, which is a unique metabolite that is thought to provide cellular protection within the human body that can reduce the risk of developing chronic diseases.

Maitake Mushroom is also said to have an antiviral effect and has killed HIV virus in laboratory experiments. Reports that Maitake extracts may help AIDS patients fight Kaposi's sarcoma and other symptoms are still preliminary and require further studies. Further antiviral qualities are thought to be useful for chronic fatigue syndrome and chronic hepatitis.

Traditionally, mushrooms have been believed to prevent hypertension, and there are reports that Maitake can lower blood pressure.

New research claims that Maitake Mushroom may be useful for treating diabetes in patients with non-insulin dependent diabetes. Another potent polysaccharide in Maitake may increase the body's ability to recognize glucose levels and improve the insulin levels.

Precautions:

Some people may have allergic reactions to mushrooms. People with MS should consult their physicians before taking Maitake.

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Malva Leaf



Botanical: *Malva sylvestris*

Family: Malvaceae (hibiscus/mallow)

Other common names: High Mallow, Common Mallow, Mallow, Country Mallow, Cheese Flower, Blue Mallow, Tall Mallow

When bothered with the pain and inflammation of asthma, laryngitis, bronchitis, sore throat or dry, hacking cough, try Malva Leaf to help rid the lungs and respiratory tract of excess fluid and mucus, while at the same time, it helps to soothe irritation and inflammation of the mucous membranes.

Plant Description:

Malva Leaf is an annual or perennial that is native to southern Europe and Asia and later introduced to North America. The plant may be cultivated or found wild in waste places, fields and along fences and roadsides in Europe and North America, growing to a height of four feet in well-drained to poor soil in sun or partial shade.

The whitish root puts up a round stem, bearing alternate, light green, downy leaves and produces pink or purple flowers, which bloom from May to October. Malva Leaf (like other mallows) is one of the oldest medicinal plants in the world.

History:

It was used in teas in China more than five thousand years ago and employed by Greek and Roman physicians to treat internal and external disorders, calling it

omnivorium, meaning "the remedy of all illnesses," It continued as an important "cure-all" treatment throughout the Middle Ages, and like all mallows, it is principally known for its soothing qualities. There are many species of mallow that are often used interchangeably with *Malva sylvestris* (high mallow), including *M. Moschata* (musk mallow), *M. neglecta* (dwarf or low mallow), and *M. rotundifolia* (roundleafed mallow); however, none are quite as potent as their close relative, *Althaea officinalis* (the marshmallow). Some constituents in Malva Leaf include a high mucilage content (made up of complex carbohydrates), flavonoids, anthocyanidins, polysaccharides, volatile oil and tannin.

Medical Uses:

Malva Leaf, like all mallows, is a demulcent, and its particular excellence involves soothing irritated tissue and relieving various forms of inflammation. The leaves contain high amounts of mucilage, made up of complex carbohydrates, which give the herb most of its soothing activity, though flavonoids and anthocyanidins may also contribute. It is effective in countering irritation and inflammation of the mucous membranes, and because it contains polysaccharides that form a protective layer on the stomach lining, it is said to lower stomach acids and is useful in relieving gastrointestinal disorders, such as gastric catarrh, enteritis, indigestion, ulcers and colitis.

As an expectorant, Malva Leaf is said to help loosen and expel phlegm and congestion from the lungs. It aids the body in expelling excess fluid and mucus, and because of its soothing, demulcent qualities, it not only removes phlegm, it also acts to soothe and relieve inflammation of the larynx and tonsils, dry coughs, sore throat, hoarseness, lung catarrh, bronchitis, asthma, emphysema and irritation of respiratory passages. The German Commission E has approved Malva Leaf preparations for the relief of sore throats and dry coughs.

Malva Leaf is considered a mild laxative when used in larger doses.

Early research in test tube studies shows one carbohydrate in mallows has been shown to inhibit a component of the immune system known as the complement cascade. Excessive activation of the complement cascade has been implicated in chronic inflammation and autoimmune disorders, suggesting that further research into Mallow Leaf in these areas is warranted.

Malva Leaf is said to have diuretic properties that increase the flow of urine. It has been used to soothe the urinary tract and relieve cystitis and bladder infection.

Used externally, Malva Leaf is an emollient and demulcent that softens tissue and soothes damaged or inflamed surfaces, including dry hands, sunburn and diaper rash. In addition to its emollient qualities, it is also mildly astringent, and when included in poultices, it is helpful for sores, psoriasis, weeping eczema, boils, abscesses, insect bites and wounds.

Precautions:

Overuse (many times the recommended dosage) may cause nausea and vomiting.

* * * * *

Marigold



Botanical: *Calendula officinalis*

Family: Compositae (daisy) - Asteraceae (aster)

Other common names: Calendula, Calandula, Garden Calendula, Garden Calandula, Holigold, Golds, Pot Marigold, Mary Bud, Mary Gowles, Bride of the Sun, Butterwort

Did you know...?

Marigold is an anti-inflammatory and antiseptic qualities have been used for centuries to ease skin infections, ulcerations, bowel problems, hemorrhoids and varicose veins. The herb is also said to reduce fever and treat indigestion, as well as help gallbladder and liver problems. Marigold is widely used in cosmetics for its toning and soothing effects.

Plant Description:

Marigold, also called Calendula, is an annual or biennial aromatic that is native to the Mediterranean countries, where it was used in early Arabic cultures and in ancient Greece and Rome as a medicinal herb, as well as a colorant for fabrics and an ingredient in food and cosmetics.

The ornamental plants bear orange or yellow flowers with dense petals and are widely grown in gardens in North America and Europe for their beauty, and the flowers are extensively cultivated for use in herbal medicine throughout Latin America and Eastern Europe.

History:

The name Marigold refers to the Virgin Mary, since Marigolds were traditionally used in Catholic celebrations concerning the mother of Jesus; and the plant received its botanical name, Calendula, from the Romans, who noted the fact that the plants bloomed on the first days or "calends" of every month. The Calendula/Marigold was used medicinally in ancient Rome to treat scorpion bites and heal wounds, among many other applications. Some of the constituents in Marigold are essential oil, acids, carotenoid, phytosterols, calcium, vitamins C and E, saponins, flavonoids (which account for much of its anti-inflammatory activity), polysaccharides, resin and mucilage.

Medical Uses:

Marigold has a long history as a superior antibacterial when used internally and externally and has been used to heal many skin irritations, wounds, and injuries, including eczema, herpes, gingivitis, varicose veins and athlete's foot. It is thought to be similar to Witch Hazel, due to its natural iodine content, and may be used as a

local application to heal all types of skin problems. Some consider Marigold to be the best tissue healer for wounds, and old herbal doctors believed that constant applications of Marigold would help or even prevent gangrene or tetanus.

As a diaphoretic and febrifuge, Marigold is often used to induce perspiration and break a fever.

Marigold/Calendula is a powerful anti-inflammatory and painkilling agent that is thought to reduce inflammation of the bowel. It reduces the general tension that can promote bowel problems, relaxing the nervous constriction of the digestive muscles, which will help bowel function. The herb is thought to prevent the overgrowth of yeast in the bowel and have beneficial effects on colitis, diverticulitis and inflammatory pelvic disease.

As an antispasmodic and effective painkiller, Marigold is an old-time remedy for menstrual cramps and for quelling the pain of an angry ulcer.

Marigold is often used to soothe the digestive tract. German studies have demonstrated that Marigold prevents the hormonal reactions that produce swelling and inflammation in the stomach lining, specifically by acting on the inflammatory prostaglandin (PGE) and has a strong bactericidal effect that may counteract infection with *Helicobacter pylori*, a bacterium associated with both gastritis and peptic ulcers.

As a cholagogue, Calendula/Marigold increases the flow of bile into the intestines and is thus thought to help the gallbladder and the liver, making it useful in the treatment for hepatitis. This action further helps to promote good digestion.

When taken internally, Marigold soothes and heals the tender mucous membranes and tissues within the body, improving the colon, stomach, liver, and gums after operations. When used externally, the herb provides the same soothing effects on mucous membranes that will support the skin and connective tissues.

It is thought that Marigold will support good heart health, as some recent studies indicate that the herb may reduce blood pressure.

Europeans use Marigold in numerous medicinal compounds and cosmetics. It is said to enhance the production of collagen in the skin and fill in facial wrinkles,

tone tender skin, treat sunburn and insect bites, and protect babies' sensitive skin (particularly when used for diaper rash).

Precautions:

Pregnant women should not take Marigold internally, as it may stimulate the uterus. When taken internally, Marigold/Calendula may increase the sedative effects of medications taken for anxiety and insomnia, and caution should be exercised if using the medications and the herb at the same time, particularly when driving or operating machinery. When using topically, some people may show an allergic reaction, and it is wise to test a patch of skin before widespread use.

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Marjoram Leaf



Botanical: *Origanum majorana*; *Origanum marjorana*

Family: Labiatae/Lamiaceae (mint)

Other common names: Sweet Marjoram, Knotted Marjoram, *Marjorana hortensis*, *Majorana hortensis*

Marjoram Leaf is an aromatic tonic (and important condiment) that is a pleasant means to good digestion. It eases colic, sour stomach, stomach pains and menstrual cramps and is an effective expectorant that loosens phlegm in the lungs and alleviates sinus headache, bronchitis, dry coughs and the symptoms of colds and flu. Marjoram is also a natural disinfectant, anti-inflammatory, antifungal and antioxidant that effectively relieve pains and aches.

Plant Description:

Sweet Marjoram is a half-hardy annual that is native to southern Europe (probably Portugal) and can be found in North Africa, the Balkans and the Middle East, and has been introduced throughout Europe and into North America. Sweet Marjoram Leaf has a more delicate flavor than its close cousin, *Origanum vulgare* (oregano or wild marjoram), and possesses very similar medicinal properties, often being used in a similar manner.

Sweet Marjoram is even sometimes confused with it. Marjoram Leaf is a bushy plant with small, dark green leaves and flowers that resemble little knots, hence, one of its common names, Knotted Marjoram, and the plant generally reaches about one foot in height, thriving in well-drained-to-dry, and neutral-to-alkaline soil in full sun.

History:

The Greeks gave us its botanical name, *Origanum*, which is derived from *oros* and *ganos*, meaning "joy of the mountain," and those traveling through Greece will find it (and wild Marjoram) covering the hillsides and scenting the summer air. Legend tells us that sweet Marjoram was created by Aphrodite as a symbol of happiness, and bridal couples in Greece and Rome were crowned with its garlands to ensure a happy marriage.

This highly fragrant herb was also placed on tombs to give peace to departed spirits. In ancient Greece Marjoram was used in oils to massage into the skin to relieve pain, and Aristotle recommended it as an antidote for poisoning, claiming that tortoises swallowing a snake would immediately eat wild Marjoram as an antidote to prevent death. The ancient Egyptians also knew of its power to heal, using it to disinfect, preserve and heal wounds, and it is used in that country for the

same purposes to this day. In medieval times, herbalists prescribed Marjoram oil for toothache, and sixteenth and seventeenth-century herbalists recommended it as an internal aid to digestion and as a diuretic.

Throughout history, Marjoram Leaf has been used in preserving food and in remedies for colds and sore throats, and dried Marjoram Leaf was popular as snuff. Sweet or Knotted Marjoram is considered by many cooks to be far better than wild Marjoram (oregano), and the leaves are highly popular in Italian and Greek cuisine and used to flavor oil and vinegar.

It is often infused in healthful teas, and its fragrance is placed on pillows to promote sleep, in moth bags to deter moths, in potpourris for its fragrance, on hair and skin for its sweet scent and added to bathwater to relieve tension and rheumatic pains. Marjoram Leaf is rich in flavonoids and volatile oils, notably carvacrol and the powerful antiseptic, thymol, gallic acid, caffeic acid, saponins and tannin.

Medical Uses:

Marjoram Leaf is an expectorant that has long been used to loosen and expel phlegm from the lungs. Because of its saponin content, it is a fine decongestant that is very useful for bronchial complaints, especially relieving congestion and mucus in the chest and sinuses. Marjoram Leaf helps to ease asthma, bronchitis, dry coughs, and sinusitis and sinus headaches.

As a mild tonic for the nervous system, Marjoram Leaf is thought to be more relaxing than oregano, and it is used to soothe the nerves, reduce tension and mitigate stress, especially environmental stress. The flavonoids possess sedative qualities that help to relieve insomnia, tension headaches and migraines.

Marjoram Leaf promotes healthy digestion and treats simple gastrointestinal disorders, such as loss of appetite, indigestion, nausea and flatulence. It is said to act like peppermint in the way it soothes minor digestive upsets and colic.

The flavonoids and saponins in Marjoram Leaf are thought to promote healthy arteries and heart. Laboratory experiments claim that it prevents cholesterol buildup, improves blood circulation and may reduce high blood pressure. These properties may also be helpful in combating Alzheimer's disease.

Marjoram Leaf contains caffeic acid, a phenylpropanoid, which is an analgesic and anti-inflammatory, and when used internally or externally, the leaf eases pain, confirming its age-old use for alleviating aches and pains. Used externally, it eases toothache pain, rheumatic pain, muscular pain, bruises, arthritis, sprains and stiff joints.

Used internally, Marjoram Leaf eases severe stomach cramps, spasms and painful menstruation (and will stimulate suppressed menstruation).

As a mild diuretic, Marjoram Leaf will promote the flow of urine, helping to relieve stomach bloating and clearing the body of toxins and cleansing the blood. This action is also said to benefit eruptive diseases and skin disorders, particularly eczema.

Marjoram Leaf is also a diaphoretic and stimulates perspiration, which also helps to rid the body of toxins through the skin. Moreover, this quality assists in reducing fevers and helps to relieve cold and flu symptoms.

Marjoram Leaf is considered a natural disinfectant, antiseptic, antifungal and antibacterial that possesses healing qualities and combats infection. The saponins are said to help heal wounds and prevent scarring.

The flavonoids in Marjoram Leaf are believed to have an antioxidant effect against the free radicals that can damage important cellular molecules or other parts of the cell.

Marjoram Leaf can be infused as an aromatic tea for colds, headaches, simple gastrointestinal disorders and tension.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Marjoram Leaf. Those who are allergic to members of the mint family (thyme, basil, sage, oregano, etc.) should avoid this herb.

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Marshmallow Root



Botanical: *Althaea officinalis*

Family: Malvaceae (mallow/hibiscus)

Other common names: Althea Root, Mortification Root, Sweet Weed, Wymote, Mallards, Hock Herb, Schloss Tea, Marsh Mallow

Troubled by asthma, bronchitis or other respiratory problems? Marshmallow Root aids the body in expelling excess fluid and will soothe the mucous membranes and a dry, hacking cough. The herb is good for easing bladder infection, digestive upsets, fluid retention, intestinal disorders, kidney problems, sinusitis and sore throat, and it is a natural source of beta-carotene, amino acids, minerals and vitamins.

History:

Marshmallow Root is a rich source of healing mucilage, and its botanical name, *Althaea*, is derived from the Greek, *althe*, which means, "to cure." The use of Marshmallow originated in traditional Greek medicine and later spread to Arabian and Indian Ayurvedic medicine.

Long used as a healing and soothing herb, Marshmallow was eaten by the Egyptians and Syrians and mentioned by Pythagoras, Plato and Virgil.

The plant was enjoyed as a highly nutritious food by the Romans in barley soup and in a stuffing for suckling pig, while classical herbalists praised its gentle laxative properties.

It was used in Persia to reduce inflammation in teething babies, and the Holy Roman Emperor, Charlemagne (A.D. 800-814) insisted that it be planted throughout his kingdom. In the nineteenth century, some doctors made a meringue from the plant's root juices, egg whites and sugar that hardened into a medicinal candy that was used to soothe children's sore throats.

Marshmallow Root is a hardy perennial that is native to Europe and is found in the western part of the United States, thriving along riverbanks and in waste places and roadsides in wet, marshy areas. The plant bears hibiscus-like blossoms of light red to white or purple in color and may grow to a height of four to six feet. All parts of the plant are used in various ways, medicinal, decorative, culinary, and cosmetic purposes, but the root is mainly used for medicinal purposes. Marshmallow Root is rich in mucilage, paraffin, pectin, lecithin, quercetin, salicylic acid, tannins, amino acids, beta-carotene, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, and vitamins B-1, B-2, B-3 and C.

Medical Uses:

Marshmallow Root's particular excellence involves soothing irritated tissue, and it relieves various forms of inflammation, especially of the mucous membranes, since it is high in mucilage, which is very soothing to the membranes. It aids the body in expelling excess fluid and mucus. The herb is used in many lung preparations and cough syrups to alleviate a dry, hacking cough, whooping cough and laryngitis. It soothes the membranes, frequently preventing cough.

Because it contains salicylic acid (the natural forerunner of synthetic aspirin), Marshmallow has been used to relieve the pain of headaches and muscle aches; and along with its ability to expel excess fluid and mucus, it helps to ease sore throat and sinusitis.

Marshmallow Root is an old-time remedy for gastrointestinal disorders and strengthening the digestive system, because it contains polysaccharides that form a protective layer on the stomach lining and will lower stomach acids. The herb has frequently been used to ease ulcers, peptic ulcers, Crohn's disease, Irritable Bowel Syndrome and colitis.

As a diuretic, Marshmallow Root increases the flow of urine and rids the body of excess fluid. It has been used to improve kidney function, soothe the urinary tract and relieve cystitis and bladder infections.

Marshmallow improves the functioning of the immune system, since it is known to stimulate phagocytosis, the immune process in which cells called macrophages engulf and digest infectious microorganisms that attack healthy cells and cause serious disease.

Used externally, Marshmallow Root may be used in an ointment as an emollient to soften and soothe skin and dry hands. The mucilage's form a protective layer on damaged skin and heals. Used internally and externally, the high mucilage content will also promote rapid healing of diaper rash, skin ulcers, sunburns, psoriasis, and eczema and problem skin.

Precautions: None

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Maté



Botanical: *Ilex paraguariensis*; *Ilex paraguayensis*

Family: Aquifoliaceae (holly)

Other common names: Yerba Maté, South American Holly, Paraguay Tea, St. Bartholomew's Tea, Ilex Maté, Missionaries' Tea, Jesuit Tea, Ilex, Hervea, Maté Tea, Houx Maté, Brazil Tea, Gon-gouha

Maté is a powerful stimulant and more popular in its native South America than tea or coffee (it is the national drink of Argentina!). Maté has a reputation as a nutritious tonic that not only stimulates the body (providing youthful vigor and energy), but it also stimulates the mind (promoting mental acuity and clarity).

Plant Description:

Maté is a large, white-flowered, evergreen shrub that grows wild near streams in moist, well-drained soil in sun or shade and requires at least a forty-five-degree Fahrenheit temperature to succeed.

It is native to South America and has been cultivated as a very valuable commercial crop in northern Argentina, Southern Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay (and has been naturalized in Texas). Paraguay exports millions of pounds of Maté annually. The tree produces a large red fruit or drupe (which is never consumed) and leafy shoots that may be picked at intervals throughout the year in the same way as tea.

History:

The leaves are used in herbal medicine and made into a tea that is the "beverage of choice" in much of South America. Because of its enormous popularity, Maté is heavily cultivated as a valuable crop and has displaced great areas of rain forest canopy trees. Although the trees sometimes reach a height of twenty feet, they are still much lower than the rain forest canopy they replace and have, thus, created an environmental issue. A beverage made from the leaf is the national drink of Argentina, where it is touted as an energizer and a tonic, and it is so popular that the average Argentine consumes about eleven pounds annually! The odor is not particularly agreeable and the taste rather bitter, but it is drunk at every meal and every hour. Maté was first brought under cultivation by Jesuit missionaries, who had learned of the herb and its many benefits (as a cooling drink and a folk remedy for scurvy) from the South American Indians; and the Jesuits risked their safety, searching for the shrubs in the dense jungles of Brazil, where it grew wild. After cultivating the small trees in their missions, the common names, Jesuit Tea and Missionaries' Tea emerged. The name Maté (pronounced mah-tay) is derived from the Spanish word, meaning "gourd," which was the vessel in which the drink was infused in the same manner as tea, and the cup passed around.

Maté was introduced into the United States in the 1970s, and the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has generally recognized the herb as safe for use as a food additive and supplement. Some of the constituents in Maté include caffeine, theobromine, chlorogenic acid, chlorophyll, rutin, tannin, ursolic acid, vanillin, choline, inositol, nicotinic acid, pyridoxine, trace minerals, B-vitamins, vitamins C, and E.

Medical Uses:

Maté has been used for centuries as an invigorating, bracing tonic that revitalizes the body, while also stimulating the mind, and some even claim that it combats the ageing process. It produces a natural energy without interfering with sleep (although it is not recommended for insomniacs). Maté is generally considered a powerful stimulant that will also help to enhance the efficacy of other stimulant and healing herbs.

Maté is recommended for balancing and strengthening immune function and toning the nervous system. It is said to help restore the entire system and ease mild nervous depression, soothe tension headaches and fight fatigue.

As a diaphoretic, Maté helps to promote perspiration (thereby also removing toxins from the body through the skin) and lowering fever and cooling the body. The herb is also believed to be a powerful diuretic that encourages urine flow and helps the body expel excess retained fluid. This is particularly helpful in relieving the excess water weight and bloated feelings associated with premenstrual syndrome (PMS).

Maté is considered an excellent antioxidant that fights free radicals in the system. It contains polyphenols that are said to be similar to those in green tea. They are compounds that prevent the oxidation of low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or "bad cholesterol," which helps to inhibit the progress of arteriosclerosis.

Maté is believed to possess anti-inflammatory properties that are helpful in alleviating rheumatic conditions and inflammatory bowel disorders. The herb is also thought to stimulate the production of cortisone, which is a natural anti-inflammatory.

As a stimulant, Maté is thought to help relieve constipation, and because it is high in mineral content, the herb helps to restore minerals that may be lost in the laxative process.

Maté is the source of trace minerals and considered very nutritious and sustaining. It was frequently carried as the only refreshment on journeys lasting several days. Because Maté is especially rich in minerals such as magnesium, manganese and potassium, it helps the body maintain electrolyte balance and restore lost minerals caused by rapid weight loss due to a high protein diet.

Supporting its reputation as a stimulant, Maté is said to stimulate the burning of fat. There are claims that the herb suppresses or helps to curb the appetite. It is also thought that the caffeine stimulates weight loss by short-circuiting the feedback mechanisms that keep the body from producing more adrenaline when stimulated by other weight loss herbs. While probably not actually affecting weight loss by itself, it appears to boost the stimulant properties of other herbs.

Maté is thought to be a depurative, an agent that cleanses and purifies the blood. The herb is also said to be useful for alleviating allergies.

Precautions:

Pregnant or nursing women and people who suffer from insomnia should not use Maté, because of the stimulating effects of the caffeine content. The herb should not be taken with meals, since it may interfere with the absorption of nutrients, and Maté should not be used in large amounts (many times the recommended dosage), as it is a potent stimulant.

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Mayapple



Botanical: *Podophyllum peltatum* (American)*

Family: Berberidaceae (barberry)

Other common names: American Mandrake Root*, Mandrake, Raccoon Berry, Wild Lemon, Indian Apple, Duck's Foot, Hog Apple, Umbrella Plant, Ground Lemon

Did you know...?

Mayapple is a strong and powerful purgative that has been used historically and primarily to regulate bowel and liver function. It is believed to be a strong stimulant that efficiently cleanses and removes waste products from the body, and has been used to treat constipation, jaundice and other disorders associated with waste product buildup. Native Americans also used Mayapple to remove warts and expel worms from the intestines.

Plant Description:

Mayapple is a perennial plant that is native to and grows abundantly in North America and is sometimes called Mandrake, but should not be mistaken for European Mandrake (*Mandragora officinarum* - a poisonous herb of the nightshade

family), and Mayapple thrives in moist, humus-rich, well-drained soil in woodlands and clearings in sheltered semi-shade.

It is an ornamental plant with a single, forked stem that is topped by two umbrella-like leaves and a solitary, waxy, white flower drooping from the fork of the stem.

After the flower blooms in May, it then produces a pulpy, lemon yellow berry that ripens in July and August, and that fruit is the only part of the plant that is not poisonous and may be eaten (but it is rather tasteless).

The plant usually grows in patches and may reach a height of eighteen inches, but young leaves may be damaged by frost. In the autumn, the roots are collected, dried and crushed into powder, and the powdered rhizomes (roots) are used as a potent purgative.

History:

This application was well known to Native Americans long before it was "rediscovered" in conventional American medicine and listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1820 to 1926. Native Americans used minute doses as a purgative, emetic, liver tonic and vermifuge (to destroy and expel worms), and for topical application in removing warts. The Menominee tribe used it on plants and potato crops as an effective insecticide, a use that is now being studied extensively in laboratories. It is an acrid, caustic herb with an unpleasant smell, and because it is so potent, it is not advisable for self-medication in specific applications; therefore, it is always recommended that one should seek an experienced health care provider when using this herb. Some of the constituents in Mayapple are lignins (including the most important, podophyllotoxin) and resin (podophyllin).

Medical Uses:

Mayapple has mainly been used (in controlled dosage) as a very potent purgative cathartic, a strong laxative that causes rapid, watery evacuation of the intestines and bowels. It is said to aid bowel complaints, such as constipation and other disturbances, due to sluggish action. It is considered an alterative, or agent that cleanses and stimulates the efficient removal of waste products from the system, while at the same time altering and improving the course of an ailment.

Mayapple is said to aid in liver complaints. As a cholagogue, it has been used to stimulate the production and flow of bile (which also aids in the digestive process), and has a reputation for supporting liver function. Some say it has no equal when used for liver ailments and has been used in cases of jaundice, biliousness and for the removal of body obstructions. The eliminative properties of Mayapple (in both the bowel and liver) make it effective for a number of complaints marked by accumulation of waste products in the system (including arthritic and skin problems).

Mayapple is also considered a vermifuge, an agent that destroys and expels worms from the intestinal tract.

Used externally, Mayapple is said to be effective in wart removal, especially helping venereal warts, and the root is said to possess antiviral properties.

There is a derivative in Mayapple called podophyllotoxin (the agent responsible for removing warts), and recent studies have shown some promising results for its use as a possible anticancer and antitumor substance, which may be used in treating human cancers. In tests, it has been found to stimulate the immune system while suppressing lymph cells and appears to be more toxic to leukemia cells than normal cells. Thus far, it is too severe for the digestive tract for practical purposes, but a synthetic derivative is being used in Europe in chemotherapy (trademarked Vepeside) for lung and testicle cancers.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should never use Mayapple. This herb should be used with great caution (it is always advisable to use it in consultation with a physician), and it is subject to restrictions in many countries. It should never be taken in large amounts, as an overdose would likely be fatal. It is not considered safe as a "food" by the FDA.

* * * * *

Meadowsweet



Botanical: *Filipendula ulmaria* (also known as *Spiraea ulmaria*)

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Other common names: Pride of the Meadow, *Spiraea*, Bridewort, Lady of the Meadow, Meadsweet, Dolloff, Queen of the Meadow

Suffering from headache, fever, arthritic and joint pain? Rather than reach for aspirin, why not try Meadowsweet instead? It is the natural version of aspirin without the digestive upsets and bleeding that may accompany the synthetic product. It is even said to soothe digestive upsets, as well as the pains and aches of inflammatory ailments.

Plant Description:

Meadowsweet is a stout perennial wildflower that thrives in the rich, wet soils of marshes, bogs, ditches, damp meadows and moist woods in sun or partial shade. The plant, with its fernlike foliage, pinnate leaves and fragrant, cream-white flower

clusters, dislikes acid soil and grows up to six feet tall with a creeping, underground root.

Meadowsweet was introduced to North America from Europe and now grows wild throughout eastern Canada and the United States. Meadowsweet's name is derived from its older name, meadsweet, which, like meadwort (its oldest English name from Anglo-Saxon times), refers to the plant's use as a flavoring for mead, a honeyed liquor.

History:

Its botanical specific, *ulmaria*, is derived from the Latin, *ulmus*, meaning "elm," referring to the resemblance of Meadowsweet's leaves to those of the elm tree. Meadowsweet was one of the three most sacred herbs of the Druids, the others being water mint and vervain; and in medieval Europe, the fragrant plant was considered an important strewing herb. The sweet fragrance of the plant made it a favorite of Queen Elizabeth I, who favored the herb above all others as the strewing herb on the floors of her chambers. Meadowsweet is an astringent, aromatic herb, and the entire plant and flowers are used in herbal medicine. In 1653, the pharmacist, Nicholas Culpepper, noted the use of the herb as a remedy for fevers, colds and flu. Meadowsweet is the mother of aspirin. From this herb, salicylic acid was first isolated in 1838, and the salicylates are the basis of the herb's reputation as a reliable remedy. Some sixty years thereafter, the pharmaceutical company Bayer produced acetylsalicylate, a synthetic substance with the same properties as its natural forerunner. They called it aspirin, referring to Meadowsweet's oldest botanical name, *Spiraea ulmaria*. Herbalists consider the plant to be one of the best remedies for digestive upsets, and the natural salicylic acid content is a longtime favorite for the symptoms of cold, flu, headaches and rheumatic pains and aches. The leaves and flowers have a wonderful fragrance (and pleasant taste, too), and they are often included in potpourris. The whole plant yields a greenish-yellow dye, and the roots produce a black dye. Some of the constituents in Meadowsweet include salicylic acid, flavonoids (quercetin, rutin), tannins, mucilage, anthocyanidin, avicularin, coumarin, essential oil (methylsalicylate, hyperoside), salicin, vanillin, glycoside and citric acid (vitamin C).

Medical Uses:

Probably the most famous use of Meadowsweet is for its aspirin-like qualities without the unpleasant side effects of synthetic acid. The salicylic acid content provides natural relief for colds, flu, fevers and headaches. It is a great overall pain reliever.

Meadowsweet's anti-inflammatory qualities help to soothe and reduce inflammation and are beneficial for the relief of rheumatic pains and the pain of arthritis, aching joints and muscle cramps.

Some herbalists regard Meadowsweet as the best plant remedy for hyperacidity and heartburn. It is an antacid herb that heals and soothes the digestive tract and strengthens and tones the system. It also helps to control peptic ulcers and gastritis. Unlike synthetic aspirin, Meadowsweet offsets the acidic effects of salicylic acid. Long use of aspirin can lead to gastric ulceration and bleeding, but Meadowsweet does not produce these side effects and is actually a gentle digestive remedy for acidity.

Meadowsweet promotes sweating, and as such, helps to reduce fevers and clear the body of toxins through the skin.

As an antiseptic, Meadowsweet is said to be effective against organisms that cause diphtheria, dysentery and pneumonia.

Meadowsweet is an astringent that is believed to tighten and tone tissues. The tannins in the herb have been helpful in relieving diarrhea.

As a mild diuretic, Meadowsweet promotes the flow of urine and is beneficial for the elimination of excess fluid in the system. It is said to be helpful in cases of certain urinary infections and cystitis.

Used externally, Meadowsweet has been used as a compress for rheumatic pains, neuralgia and sore, aching joints and muscles. It has also been used as cooling eyewash that relieves conjunctivitis and other eye complaints.

Precautions:

Those who are allergic to aspirin should not use Meadowsweet. It is not recommended for pregnant or nursing women without first consulting a physician and children under the age of sixteen years of age with symptoms of flu, chicken

pox or other types of viral infection should not use Meadowsweet, because, like aspirin, there may be a risk of developing Reye's syndrome.

* * * * *

Melilot



Botanical: *Melilotus officinalis*

Family: Leguminosae (legume) - Fabaceae (pea)

Other common names: Sweet Clover, Sweetclover, Yellow Sweet Clover, Yellow Melilot, King's Clover, Hay Flowers, Sweet Lucerne, Wild Laburnum, Hart's Tree, Plaster Clover, Corn Melilot

Did you know...?

Melilot is considered a natural anticoagulant (its main active constituent is coumarin!) with blood thinning properties that may be very helpful as a venous tonic, improving the flow of blood through the veins to the heart and may thus

relieve varicose veins and swollen legs. Melilot also helps to clear congestion, reduce retained fluid and ease aching and painful joints.

Plant Description:

Melilot is a biennial or perennial herb with smooth, erect, multi-branched stems, bearing serrate leaflets and sweet-smelling, white or light yellow flowers that grow in towering spikes to a height of five feet.

The tender plant is a native of Europe (*Melilotus officinalis*, or Yellow Sweet Clover) and has been naturalized across North America (*Melilotus vulgaris*, or White Sweet Clover), where it has been widely cultivated as a valuable feed crop for animals. The two species may be used interchangeably. Melilot may be found on roadsides and in fields; waste places and chalky banks in well-drained-to-dry, neutral-to-alkaline soil in sun and is drought tolerant.

History:

The plant's botanical name, *Melilotus*, is derived from two Latin words, *mel*, meaning "honey" and *lotus*, meaning the "lotus flower," referring to the great sweetness of the plant and the fact that it is such a great favorite of bees. Melilot has been used medicinally for thousands of years.

Ancient Egyptians used it to treat intestinal worms and earache, and the second-century physician, Galen, prescribed it in poultices for the relief of inflammations and swollen joints. In Anglo-Saxon England, Melilot was made into a salve for wounds and sores, a remedy that may still be found in rural British areas as "Melilot plasters." Horses, cattle (and bees) love the tender and aromatic Melilot, and it is highly regarded as a fodder. Interestingly, however, in the 1920s, farmers began to store Melilot as animal feed, but because it was not thoroughly dried, it fermented and produced a coumarin compound, which not only gives the plant its sweet vanilla taste, but also becomes a potent anticoagulant and blood-thinning agent (as evidenced by hemorrhaging in the herds, which was, subsequently, remedied by thorough drying of the clover). The whole plant has a sweet vanilla fragrance that intensifies as the plant is dried, and when not fermented, it is a valuable addition to animal diets and is now widely respected commercially for that purpose.

Additional commercial uses for Melilot include its addition to Gruyere cheese and a green Swiss cheese called Schabzieger. It is also used to flavor marinades and rabbit stews, and it makes a fine and refreshing tea that is not only pleasant to drink, but is also said to relieve flatulence and alleviate congestion of the lymph system. Melilot's most important constituent is the crystalline coumarin compound and its related compounds (melilotic acid, orthocoumaric acid, hydrocoumaric acid, melilotic anhydride), flavonoids, glycoside (melitoside), dicoumarol and lactone (a fragrant oil); and the flowers and aerial parts of the plant are used in herbal medicine.

Medical Uses:

Melilot contains coumarins, and when the plant is fermented, it produces dicoumarol, a potent anticoagulant. It is said to be a good venous tonic that increases the blood flow through the veins to the heart and has been used in cases of painful, swollen veins of the legs that are associated with poor venous return or raised abdominal pressure (as in obesity, pregnancy or persistent constipation). Melilot is believed to also help alleviate varicose veins, blood clots, phlebitis and thrombotic conditions.

As a mild astringent, Melilot has been used to clear congestion. When taken internally, it is said to relieve congestion of the lymph glands and painful congestive menstruation; and when used externally, it is said to ease hemorrhoids.

Melilot is an aromatic herb that has been used as a soothing digestive aid and has been thought to be particularly effective in cases of flatulence. Supporting healthy digestive health, Melilot is also said to relieve colic, indigestion and stomach problems.

As a diuretic, Melilot promotes the flow of urine, and as such, it helps to relieve excess fluid retention and edema (the accumulation of fluid in tissues that results in swelling).

Melilot is also believed to be a mildly sedative herb that relieves temporary palpitations, sleeplessness, spasms, anxiety and the pain of tension headaches, earaches and neuralgia.

As an expectorant, Melilot helps to loosen and expel phlegm from the lungs, and it is said to be helpful in cases of bronchitis.

Used externally, Melilot has been effective in poultices for inflammations and wounds, particularly in delicate parts of the body, i.e., eyes. It is also said to have emollient and soothing properties that help to reduce inflammation and ease painful swollen joints, severe bruising, arthritis and rheumatic pain. It is also believed to be effective in drawing out toxins and is therefore useful for boils and other skin problems.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Melilot. People who use prescription blood thinners (warfarin, Coumadin, aspirin, etc.), or those with any blood-clotting problem should not use Melilot. For those individuals who take prescription medications, it is wise to consult a health care provider before using this herb, as there may be interactions with other drugs. Overuse (many times the recommended dosage) may induce vomiting and other symptoms of poisoning.

* * * * *

Milk Thistle



Botanical: *Silybum marianum*

Family: Compositae (daisy) - Asteraceae (aster)

Other common names: Mary Thistle, Wild Artichoke, Silybum, Marian Thistle, St. Mary's Thistle, Lady Thistle, Holy Thistle

Did you know that your liver is the toxic waste disposal plant of your body? Keep it healthy and nourished with Milk Thistle. This remarkable herb is said to have no pharmaceutical equivalent for its beneficial effects on the liver, spleen and gallbladder. Rid yourself of toxins and temporary depression, and boost your immunity with Milk Thistle. In the meantime, you will also gain valuable antioxidant protection.

Plant Description:

Milk Thistle is a stout, spiny annual or perennial that is native to the Mediterranean region and has been naturalized throughout Europe and parts of North America and Australia. This common weed grows to about six feet in height in the dry, rocky soils of fields and waste places. The plant produces a purple flower, and there are

distinctive white markings on its leaves, which legend has described as the splashes of the Virgin Mary's milk.

History:

Historically, it has been a very popular plant in Europe for its medicinal and dietary qualities and is still a favorite in France as a wholesome, delicious vegetable and as an ingredient in salads. The seeds and leaves are used in herbal medicine, and their use goes back two thousand years.

The Greek, Dioscorides, prescribed Milk Thistle to remedy the poison of snakebite. In the first-century, Pliny wrote that it was excellent for "carrying off bile," meaning that it restored impaired liver function, a claim that has been justified by many modern researchers. In the Middle Ages the liver was regarded as the seat of emotions (both in Europe and in traditional Chinese medicine), and depression and emotional distress were ultimately thought to be caused by a malfunction of the liver. Consequently, Milk Thistle was commonly prescribed to remedy such ailments, and the herb was widely used as a spring tonic to provide relief from the pent-up emotions and depression housed in the liver. It was an early remedy for the winter's doldrums and "blues." According to the noted herbalist, Gerard, in his 1597 Herball, Milk Thistle was considered the "best remedy that grows against all melancholy diseases."

In fact, the word "melancholy" is derived from the Greek translation of "black bile," and in Gerard's day, that referred to any liver or biliary derangement. Milk Thistle was also considered a key ingredient in the diets of European wet nurses to ensure a healthy milk supply, and it continued to be used in the nineteenth century for improving the liver, spleen, kidneys, varicose veins and menstrual ailments.

The herb lost popularity but interest in it was renewed in the 1950s, when scientific research supported many of the medicinal claims that herbalists had known for centuries. The liver is the body's second largest organ and has often been called the body's toxic waste disposal plant and chemical factory, and Milk Thistle is said to have no pharmaceutical equivalent in the remarkable way in which it benefits and affects the liver.

Some of Milk Thistle's constituents include beta-carotene, mucilage, silymonin, silymarin (a flavonoid that is its most active ingredient, which increases protein synthesis in liver cells by increasing RNA activity and stops absorption of toxins in the liver), apigenin, calcium, essential fatty acids, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium and zinc.

Medical Uses:

Milk Thistle is known to be extraordinarily useful as a tonic to safeguard the liver from all types of liver disorders. As a free-radical scavenger, it protects the liver from toxins and pollutants by preventing free radical damage, and it stimulates the production of new liver cells. It is considered a remarkable herb for relieving temporary discomforts associated with cirrhosis, alcoholic poisoning, jaundice, fatty liver, hepatitis and viral hepatitis. A flavonoid complex (silymarin) stimulates liver protein creation, enabling the organ to produce new liver cells and replace the old ones damaged by hepatitis infection or other toxins.

Milk Thistle increases the production of bile, the fluid created in the liver that helps to break down fats in the small intestine. This helps to remove (via excretion) testosterone byproducts that cause acne. As a demulcent with mucilaginous properties, it soothes mucous membranes from irritating substances and helps to protect the intestinal lining (reducing inflammation of the intestine), alleviating the constipation of irritable bowel syndrome and Crohn's disease, as well as other inflammatory bowel disorders.

By increasing the bile production and stimulating protein synthesis in the liver, Milk Thistle regulates the digestion of fats and may be beneficial in preventing arteriosclerosis and strokes, in addition to reducing the chances of gallstone formation by promoting total, normal cholesterol levels and helping the liver convert low-density lipoprotein (LDL or "bad cholesterol") into high-density lipoprotein (HDL or "good cholesterol"). Milk Thistle is also thought to prevent cholesterol that has been excreted into the bile from being reabsorbed into the body. Another compound in Milk Thistle stops the oxidation of LDL cholesterol into a form that creates plaques in the linings of artery walls.

Milk Thistle is believed to detoxify the liver and gallbladder and the poisons that enter our blood stream by enhancing overall liver function. The herb has been

effective in countering the toxic effects of nicotine, alcohol, carbon monoxide pollutants, dry-cleaning fluid and cadmium. Thousands of years ago the herb was prescribed to counteract the poison of snakebite, and current research shows that Milk Thistle does, in fact, combat the poisonous activity of many toxins, including the deadly mushroom poisoning of Death Cap.

Milk Thistle is not only a rebuilding herb for the liver and gallbladder; it is believed to also protect the kidneys, brain and other tissues from chemical toxins. Using the herb is believed to protect against inflammation of the bile ducts.

Milk Thistle regulates the digestion of fats and alleviates common stomach problems, such as nausea, lack of appetite and dyspepsia, and it may help ease abdominal distention and fatigue.

Milk Thistle is thought to help to protect specialized immune cells in the liver known as Kupffer cells by engulfing bacteria, toxins and other invasive matter from entering into the liver and may destroy harmful cells that have entered blood circulation as the first step in spreading to other parts of the body.

Chronic liver damage sometimes results in diabetes, in which the liver is no longer able to respond to insulin, and Milk Thistle has been said to help promote and regulate normal blood sugar levels and may help to actually lower blood sugar.

For thousands of years Milk Thistle has been used to promote lactation and increase the production of breast milk in nursing mothers.

Precautions:

Currently, there are no warnings of contraindications with the use of Milk Thistle, but the herb may reduce the efficacy of birth control pills. It is essential that people with diabetes and liver disease should have regular blood tests.

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Mistletoe



Botanical: *Viscum album*

Family: Viscaceae/Loranthaceae (mistletoe)

Other common names: European Mistletoe, *Viscum*, Birdlime, All-heal, Devil's Fuge, *Loranthus*, Mulberry Mistletoe, Golden Baugh

If all you want is a kiss, walk under a bough of Mistletoe, but if you are exhausted, irritable or suffering from headache or hypertension, try Mistletoe for relief. Perhaps more importantly, there are very hopeful and exciting studies currently being conducted on Mistletoe in the area of immune therapy, which show promise in building defense against disease.

Plant Description:

European Mistletoe (not to be confused with American Mistletoe, an entirely different plant that is seldom used medicinally) is a woody perennial that is native to Europe and Asia and continues to grow throughout Europe, as well as northwest Africa, parts of Asia and elsewhere.

It is an evergreen shrub with branches that may extend ten feet across with feathery leaves, yellow flowers and sticky white berries. Mistletoe is a parasitic plant and

grows on young branches of deciduous host trees, such as firs, ash, apple, hawthorne and oak.

As a true parasite, it assumes the varied nutrients acquired from the host plant; at no time does it receive its nourishment from the soil. The plant is propagated in seeds carried by birds and cannot be cultivated from the soil. Mistletoe has been used in herbal medicine since ancient times and was considered sacred to the Druids who went forth in white robes to collect it (particularly revering the oak-grown plant) and cutting it with great ceremony, using a golden knife.

History:

The mysterious Druids believed that Mistletoe protected its possessor from all evils, especially regarding Mistletoe from the oak trees to be superior and providing them with many wonderful cures, including remedies for sterility, epilepsy and as an antidote for poisons.

There are many legends surrounding Mistletoe, and it became embedded in European rituals, folklore and folk medicine. European Mistletoe was an important herb associated with welcoming the New Year and was cut from the oak trees at a particular phase of the moon (using a golden sickle). "Kissing under the Mistletoe" originated in Scandinavian lore. Balder, the god of peace, was killed by an arrow made of Mistletoe, then resurrected by other deities, and the plant was subsequently entrusted to the goddess of love, who established it as a symbol of love, with the custom that anyone passing beneath it should receive a kiss.

It is a pungent, bittersweet, warming herb, and the stems and leaves are used in herbal medicine. Mistletoe has been used medicinally since ancient times, and Dioscorides and Galen both sang its praises for a variety of ailments, including an external remedy made from a glutinous extract. Hippocrates prescribed the herb internally for disorders of the spleen. Mistletoe was introduced as a cancer therapy in 1917, and was administered by injection.

Today there is very exciting research being conducted in the area of immune therapy, and there are currently patent medicines used in Europe that include European Mistletoe, which are employed in oncology therapies. Patented European drugs, Helixor and Iscador (containing Mistletoe lectins), are routinely used as a

supplemental treatment in oncology therapy in Europe, but there are no conclusive studies in the United States to confirm these applications. The German Commission E has approved European Mistletoe as a treatment for degenerative and inflamed joints and as a palliative therapy for malignant tumors.

The constituents in European Mistletoe vary according to the host tree on which it grows, but some common properties include glycoprotein (lectins), alkaloids, peptides, polysaccharides, saponins, viscin (the active resin), potash, phosphoric acid, mucilage, sugar, lignins, tannin, choline and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

European Mistletoe is considered a nervine that is said to relax the whole body or a part of the body by affecting the nervous system. It has been used in herbal medicine for centuries to relieve the symptoms of epilepsy, convulsions, hysteria, delirium, vertigo, exhaustion, St. Vitus dance, and nervous tension and to ease irritability. It is said to be a mild sedative.

Mistletoe is thought to be an excellent immunostimulant. Some animal and human studies suggest that Mistletoe lectins may stimulate the proliferation of healthy cells and natural killer (NK) cells, and possibly enhance the effects of chemotherapeutic drugs. Lectins are also thought to stimulate the movement of immune cells called T-cells that patrol the body seeking to destroy intrusive infection.

European Mistletoe is considered a cardiogenic that is reputed to regulate and strengthen the heartbeat, as well as regulate a fast heart rate from feeling nervous. The herb is believed to promote normal blood pressure and ease mild hypertension, thus possibly showing benefit in cases of hardening of the arteries. It is also said to relieve the temporary headaches associated with high blood pressure.

Used externally, European Mistletoe has been applied for relief of arthritis, rheumatism, chilblains, leg ulcers and varicose veins.

Precautions:

Great caution is advised when taking European Mistletoe; it is a very powerful herb, and it should be used only under the direction of a qualified health care

practitioner. Pregnant and nursing women should not use Mistletoe, nor should people with heart problems or those who take MAO inhibitors for depression or Parkinson's disease. All parts of the plant are highly poisonous if eaten. Do not take Mistletoe if you have tuberculosis (TB), AIDS, hyperthyroidism, an inflammatory disease, or brain or spinal cord tumors. Call your doctor right away, if you have any of the following side effects: low or high blood pressure, fainting, seizures, change in eyesight, hallucinations, diarrhea, nausea or vomiting. There have been reports of allergy, and thus if there is itching, rash, tightness in your throat or chest pain, stop taking Mistletoe.

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Pansy



Botanical: *Viola tricolor*

Family: Violaceae (violet)

Other common names: Heartsease, Field Pansy, Garden Violet, Wild Pansy, Johnny Jumper, Johnny-Jump-Up, Jupiter, Stepmother, Ladies' Delight, Herbe de Pensée Sauvage

Pansy is a colorful addition to our salad bowls and ancient love potions, but more importantly, Pansy is a soothing expectorant that has been used to treat lung problems (bronchitis, dry cough and asthma), as well as numerous skin problems (diaper rash, weeping eczema, cradle cap).

Plant Description:

Pansy is a pretty flower that is native to Europe and is widely cultivated as a garden ornamental, but it also grows wild in fields, meadows and along forest edges in the temperate regions of North America, Asia and Europe.

History:

The Pansy is sometimes called a cultivated weed with hollow stems, bearing lanceolate leaves and solitary flowers of yellow, blue-violet; or it may be dual-colored with white. The plant thrives in well-drained, moisture-retentive soil in sun or partial shade and flowers from May to September, growing to a height of fifteen inches. The name, Pansy, is thought to be derived from the French word, *penser*, which means "to think," and the Pansy's three colors (purple, yellow, and white) stand for memories, loving thoughts and souvenirs, all of which ease the hearts of separated lovers, recalling one of the flower's common names, Heartsease. Pansy is a member of the violet family, and its use in herbal medicine may be traced to ancient times. Homer told us that Athenians used it to moderate anger, while the Roman, Pliny, recommended it to prevent headaches and dizziness, and it was also used in love potions.

In Gerard's Herbal of 1597, he recommended Pansy for infantile convulsions and for chest and lung inflammations, as well as for scabs, itching and ulcers - uses that are continued in herbal medicine to this very day. It is interesting to note that the Chinese used Pansy in herbal medicines throughout history in all the same ways as they were employed in the West. In the seventeenth century, North American tribes treated boils and swellings with Pansy, and by the late 1800s, it was being employed as a remedy for a variety of skin diseases, such as scabies. Pansy was once included in the United States Pharmacopoeia and has continued as an important factor in herbal medicine. Some of the constituents in Pansy include mucilage, resin, alkaloids, flavonoids, volatile oil, violine, a bitter principle, salicylic acid and saponins.

Medical Uses:

Pansy has been used for centuries as an effective expectorant that has been helpful in easing chest problems, such as bronchitis, asthma, lung inflammation and dry coughs. It is said to help loosen and expel phlegm. The mucilage in Pansy acts as a demulcent that soothes mucous membranes and eases painful coughs, and the salicylic acid content helps to ease the pain of lung inflammations.

It is believed that the blood cleansing properties of this modest little plant are hardly excelled by any other and are said to be especially useful for scrofula and skin eruptions in children. When taken internally, it is said to rid the body of toxic products that cause skin problems. As a diuretic, Pansy promotes the flow of urine and expels toxins and waste through the increased urine; and as a diaphoretic, it promotes sweating, which not only cools the body and reduces fever, but it will also further rid the body of toxins through the skin.

Treatments:

Pansy is said to strengthen the blood vessels, stabilize capillary membrane fragility, and act as a gentle circulatory stimulant. These qualities are said to help combat arteriosclerosis by improving blood flow and help in cases of varicose ulcers.

As a mild sedative and calmative, Pansy has been used to soothe nervous complaints, including hysteria, and it is considered an anodyne or substance that relieves pain or promotes general comfort.

Pansy is considered an old and reliable treatment for skin diseases of all kinds. Used topically in lotions and poultices, it is said to treat wounds, scabies, boils, itching, rashes, swellings and weeping eczema. Recent research has supported some of the historical uses of Pansy for skin conditions, particularly with respect to the skin complaints of infants. Taken internally, a handful of fresh Pansy that had been boiled in milk was said to be very effective in treating Crusta lactea, or "cradle cap," which is seborrhea of the scalp common in nursing infants. It may also be similarly applied topically in a poultice for the same condition. Pansy is also said to help ease diaper rash.

Precautions:

Pansy should not be used in excessive amounts (many times the recommended dosage) nor for prolonged periods, as large doses may cause nausea, vomiting and skin irritations. Pansy should not be used in conjunction with prescription diuretics nor with medications for asthma.

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Papaya Fruit



Botanical: Carica papaya

Family: Caricaceae (papaya)

Other common names: Papaw, Mamao, Tree Melon, Paw-Paw, Gandul, Fan Kua

Are you suffering from heartburn and indigestion?

Papaya contains papain, a remarkable, protein-dissolving enzyme that eases many stomach ailments and is an exceptional aid to digestion. A rich source of minerals and vitamins A, C and E, papain also breaks down wheat gluten, which may be of great help those with Celiac disease.

Plant Description:

Papaya is an herbaceous tree with a stem of spongy, soft wood that is hollow in the center and bears melon-like fruit. It is an interesting tree, in that the male and

female parts exist in different trees, and trees may grow to a height of twenty to thirty feet.

The Papaya Tree needs a tropical climate that is dry when cold and wet when warm; consequently, its greatest success appears in the equatorial zone with its warm wet season and cool dry season. It is extremely sensitive to frost, and waterlogging will kill the taproot within forty-eight hours. The Papaya tree is especially susceptible to parasites, pests and diseases.

This fussy plant needs a lot of water but must have good drainage, and it bears most fruit in light, porous, slightly acidic soils that are rich in organic matter. Said to be a native of the Caribbean and Central America, the Papaya is the true papaw that now grows abundantly throughout tropical America, Hawaii and many other tropical climates throughout the world.

Although grown to some extent in south Florida, the true papaw is not related to the North American papaw. The fruits, leaves and latex are all used medicinally. The fruit is usually pear-sized and has a central cavity filled with edible, pea-sized seeds.

Medical Uses:

Papaya Fruit is eaten as a melon, included in salads and when unripe, it is cooked as a vegetable. The seeds are said to have a similar flavor as capers. The green fruit stems and leaves are a rich source of gummy, milky, white latex that contains the powerful enzyme, papain (in latex and exudates).

This protein-dissolving substance has not only been widely used for stomach and digestive disorders, but it is also included in commercial preparations as a meat tenderizer, chewing gum and as a stabilizing agent that is used to clarify beer. Some of the constituents included in Papaya Fruit are the fermenting agent myrosin, another important enzyme (chymopapain), butanoic acid, methyl butanoate, benzylglucosinolate, linalool, cis- and trans-linalool oxide, alpha-linolenic acid, alpha-phellandrene, gamma-terpinene, 4-terpineol, terpinolene, methyl-thiocyanate and benzyl-isothiocyanate, rutin, resin, lycopene, malic acid, methyl salicylate, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, beta-carotene, B-vitamins and vitamins A, C and E.

Medical Uses:

Papaya is an excellent treatment for digestive disorders and extremely useful for any disturbances of the gastrointestinal tract. Papain, the powerful enzyme in Papaya, helps to dissolve and digest protein, thus easing stomach ailments and indigestion. (Because papain breaks down tough meat fibers, it is often used in restaurants and is the major ingredient in commercial meat tenderizers!) Papaya has been effective in easing heartburn and is given to treat dyspepsia and gastric catarrh. Papaya also stimulates the appetite.

Papaya's enzyme, papain, not only digests protein, but it extends its activity to digesting carbohydrate. Papain also breaks down wheat gluten, which may be helpful for those suffering from Celiac disease. Those who have difficulty digesting starchy foods, such as breads, cereals and potatoes, might find great relief in including Papaya in their diets.

Others Usages:

Papaya helps to settle a nervous and upset stomach and the queasy feelings often associated with travel and motion sickness. It has also been helpful in relieving morning sickness.

The papain in Papaya is thought to relieve acute prostate inflammation and may be very helpful in cases of benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH). Clinical studies in Russia found that papain treatment reversed rectal lesions induced by extreme prostate enlargement in over 97 percent of the men treated.

Papaya is said to stimulate the bowels in times of constipation and is believed to be useful in treating inflammatory bowel disorders.

The papain in unripe Papaya's gummy milk sap has been known to kill parasites by digesting them and has been used in herbal medicine to kill and expel worms. (Papaya has even been used for termite control.) Papaya's latex also works as a dewormer by its purgative actions, increasing the movement of intestinal contents.

The papain in Papaya is currently undergoing studies to investigate its efficacy in treating the herpes simplex virus and herpes zoster (shingles).

Another papayan enzyme, chymopapain, has been used in the treatment for slipped spinal disc and pinched nerves. Extracts of the pulp of Papaya Fruit have showed bacteriostatic properties when tested against Staphylococcus aurea, Escherichia coli, Salmonella typhi, Bacillus subtilis and other bacteria in vitro.

Since many stomach problems are the direct result of indigestion, use of Papaya appears to help prevent many ailments. It stimulates digestive acids and the production of bile, which may also lead to a healthier liver and pancreas.

Papaya is said to have compounds that act as the female hormone, estrogen and has been used in folk medicine to promote milk production, facilitate childbirth and increase the female libido. In some parts of the world, it is used to induce menstruation and is considered a uterine stimulant.

In other cultures, Papaya has many medicinal applications. For treatment for poisonous snakebites, Papaya helps to degrade the venom protein in the blood, thus losing its deadly strength. It is used topically to rid the pain of insect stings, and it is said that when applied to heal wounds, it digests dead tissue without affecting the surrounding live tissue. In Jamaica, the gummy latex of the unripe papaya fruit is slowly dripped onto warts and corns, shriveling them, and they fall off. The juice has been used as a facial wash to remove freckles.

Precautions:

People who take blood-thinning medication (Coumadin, aspirin, etc.) should consult with their physicians before taking this herb, as it may have anticoagulant properties. Pregnant women should avoid Papaya, as it can be a uterine stimulant, (papain apparently dissolves a protein(s) responsible for adhering the newly fertilized egg to the wall of the uterus). Papaya in all its forms should never be taken by people with a latex allergy (causing anaphylactic shock). Inhaling papaya powder (high in the enzymes, papain and chymopapain, can induce allergies.

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Papaya Leaf



Botanical: *Carica papaya*

Family: Caricaceae (papaya)

Other common names: Papaw, Mamao, Paw-Paw, Tree Melon, Gandul, Fan Kua

Did you know...?

The Papaya Leaf contains a remarkable protein-dissolving enzyme called papain, and if you suffer from indigestion or heartburn, gives Papaya Leaf a try! The enzyme in Papaya Leaf also breaks down wheat gluten and carbohydrates for extra digestive protection.

Plant Description:

Papaya Leaf is an herbaceous tree with a stem of spongy, soft wood that is hollow in the center and bears melon-like fruit. It is an interesting tree, in that the male and female parts exist in different trees, and trees may grow to a height of twenty to thirty feet. The Papaya Tree needs a tropical climate that is dry when cold and

wet when warm; consequently, its greatest success appears in the equatorial zone with its warm wet season and cool dry season.

It is extremely sensitive to frost, and water logging will kill the taproot within forty-eight hours. The Papaya is especially susceptible to parasites, pests and diseases. This fussy plant needs a lot of water but must have good drainage, and it bears most fruit in light, porous, slightly acidic soils that are rich in organic matter. Said to be a native of the Caribbean and Central America, the Papaya is the true papaw that now grows abundantly throughout tropical America, Hawaii and many other tropical climates throughout the world.

Medical Uses:

Although grown to some extent in south Florida, the true papaw is not related to the North American papaw. The fruits, leaves and latex are all used medicinally. The fruit is usually pear-sized and has a central cavity filled with edible, pea-sized seed, which are said to have a similar flavor as capers. Papaya Leaves are cooked and considered a green vegetable and are a rich source of gummy, milky, white latex that contains the powerful enzyme, papain. This protein-dissolving substance is an excellent remedy for stomach and digestive disorders.

Papain is so powerful that Papaya Leaves have been wrapped around meats to break down the fibers and tenderize them. It is included in commercial preparations as a meat tenderizer and often used for that purpose in restaurants, and it also used commercially in chewing gums and as a stabilizing agent that is used to clarify beer. Papaya Leaves were even fed to animals to tenderize their flesh. Some of Papaya Leaf's constituents include the fermenting agent myrosin, alkaloids, rutin, resin, tannins, carpaine, dehydrocarpaines, pseudocarpaine, flavonols, benzylglucosinolate, linalool, malic acid, methyl salicylate, another enzyme, chymopapain (latex and exudate), calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, beta-carotene, B-vitamins and vitamins A, C and E.

Treatments:

Papaya Leaf is an excellent treatment for digestive disorders and extremely useful for any disturbances of the gastrointestinal tract. Papain, the powerful enzyme in Papaya, helps to dissolve and digest protein, thus easing stomach ailments and

indigestion. (Because papain breaks down tough meat fibers, it is often used in restaurants and is the major ingredient in commercial meat tenderizers!) Papaya has been effective in easing heartburn and is given to treat dyspepsia and gastric catarrh. Papaya also stimulates the appetite.

Papaya Leaf's enzyme, papain, not only digests protein, but it extends its activity to digesting carbohydrate. Papain also breaks down wheat gluten, which may be helpful for those suffering from Celiac disease; and those who have difficulty digesting starchy foods, such as breads, cereals and potatoes, might find great relief in including Papaya in their diets.

The papain in Papaya is thought to relieve acute prostate inflammation and may be very helpful in cases of benign prostatic hypertrophy (BPH). Clinical studies in Russia found that papain treatment reversed rectal lesions induced by extreme prostate enlargement in over 97 percent of the men treated.

The papain in Papaya is currently undergoing studies to investigate its efficacy in treating the herpes simplex virus and herpes zoster (shingles).

Another papayan enzyme, chymopapain, has been used in the treatment for slipped spinal disc and pinched nerves.

Since many stomach problems are the direct result of indigestion, use of Papaya appears to help prevent many ailments. It stimulates digestive acids and the production of bile, which may also lead to a healthier liver and pancreas.

Papaya is said to stimulate the bowels in times of constipation and is believed to be useful in treating inflammatory bowel disorders.

In many areas of the world, Papaya is used as a vermifuge, anthelmintic and amoebicide that eliminate worms and other parasites, and it is thought that the papain content digests the invaders and Papaya's latex works as a dewormer by its purgative actions, increasing the movement of intestinal contents.

Precautions:

People who take blood-thinning medication (Coumadin, aspirin, etc.) should consult with their physicians before taking this herb, as it may have anticoagulant properties. Pregnant women should avoid Papaya, as it can be a uterine stimulant,

(papain apparently dissolves a protein(s) responsible for adhering the newly fertilized egg to the wall of the uterus). Papaya in all its forms should never be taken by people with a latex allergy (causing anaphylactic shock). Inhaling papaya powder (high in the enzymes, papain and chymopapain, can induce allergies.

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Parsley Leaf



Botanical: *Petroselinum crispum* (also known as *Petroselinum sativum*)

Family: Umbelliferae (carrot) - Apiaceae (parsley)

Other common names: Common Parsley, Rock Parsley, Garden Parsley, Rock Seline, Persil

Did you know Parsley Leaves get rid of bad breath!

You will get a high dose of vitamins C and A, potassium (important for lowering blood pressure), calcium (good for osteoporosis) and folic acid (which may help prevent cardiovascular disease). Parsley also acts as a mild laxative and diuretic.

Plant Description:

Parsley Leaf is a biennial or perennial herb that originated in the eastern Mediterranean region as a wild plant, but is now found in cultivation everywhere. The leaves are dark green and shiny and packed with nutrition.

History:

For more than two thousand years, it has been highly regarded as a medicinal herb to treat gastrointestinal disorders, and ancient Greeks valued Parsley for its soothing and diuretic effect on those with kidney and bladder ailments. Galen even recommended Parsley for "the falling sickness" (epilepsy). The Greeks also adorned victors at the Isthmian games with wreaths of Parsley Leaves. Parsley Leaves also adorned the tombs of both Greeks and Romans. What is now an indispensable and nutritious addition to our dinner table was never brought to the table of old, being held sacred to the dead, and it continued to be associated with death through the ages.

Medical Uses:

Nonetheless, it continued to be used in herbal medicine as an important digestive and circulatory aid. Saint Hildegard of Bingen, a Medieval German herbalist, prescribed Parsley wine to improve blood circulation and help heart conditions; and when Charlemagne had it planted in his garden in the Middle Ages, its cultivation was ensured, although its association with the underworld and the Devil continued for some time. Parsley supplies important minerals, beta-carotene, essential oils, quercetin, rutin, flavonoids, chlorophyll and healthy doses of B-vitamins and vitamins A, C, E and K. Parsley leaves, roots and seeds cover a wide variety of ailments.

Treatments:

Parsley Leaves have been used to regulate blood sugar and are thought to be effective in cases of low blood sugar, if there is adrenal malfunction.

Parsley Leaf stimulates and strengthens the activity of the digestive system, easing flatulence and indigestion. Its chlorophyll content is essential to healthy digestion, and it increases circulation to the digestive tract. The English herbalist, Culpepper, wrote that Parsley was "comfortable to the stomach and good for wind." The herb is said to stimulate both the appetite and metabolism.

Medical Uses:

Parsley is a natural diuretic. The herbalist, Culpepper, also commented that Parsley "removed obstructions from the liver and spleen," and it is said today that Parsley helps to expel gallstones and kidney stones. Parsley is said to improve urination when it is painful or incomplete and accelerates the excretion of toxins. It is also said to help prevent the body's re-absorption of salt and to rid the body of excess mercury. As a diuretic, Parsley relieves the bloating that some women experience before their periods.

Used as a garnish with meals, Parsley Leaf is highly nutritious. The leaves contain more vitamin C than oranges by weight and also provide a good source of iron (important for the proper formation of red blood cells), potassium (good for lowering blood pressure), calcium and manganese (helpful for osteoporosis) and folic acid (which may help prevent cardiovascular disease).

Parsley Leaf is a superior breath freshener because of its high chlorophyll content.

When applied externally, the ancients believed that Parsley Leaf was an effective treatment for skin problems, insect bites and stings, and would dispel skin tumors suspected to be cancerous. In addition, Parsley Leaves were used to relieve inflamed and swollen eyes.

Parsley Leaf is believed to stimulate menstruation.

The high mineral salt content in Parsley is thought to help restore the body's overall health by neutralizing acidic conditions.

Parsley Leaf is reported to be a mild aphrodisiac.

Precautions:

Parsley is not recommended for pregnant women in large amounts, as it may cause uterine contractions, but used after delivery, it is said to tone the uterus. Parsley should also be avoided by those who suffer from kidney infection.

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Parsley Root



Botanical: *Petroselinum crispum* (also known as *Petroselinum sativum*)

Family: Umbelliferae (carrot) - Apiaceae (parsley)

Other common names: Common Parsley, Rock Parsley, Garden Parsley, Rock Selineen, Persil

Did you know...?

The Parsley Root is an old-time remedy for digestive disorders, kidney and liver problems, menstrual irregularities, and cleansing the blood and body of toxins. Do not forget to take Parsley for a healthy dose of vitamins, minerals and nutrients. Its chlorophyll content makes it a wonderful breath freshener.

Plant Description:

Parsley Root is a biennial or perennial herb that originated as a wild plant in the eastern Mediterranean region but is found in cultivation everywhere. Among the many constituents included in Parsley are important minerals, beta-carotene, essential oils (including eugenol and apiole), flavonoids, coumarins, chlorophyll, B-vitamins and vitamins A, C, E and K. Parsley actually ranks higher than most vegetables in histidine, an amino acid that is said to inhibit tumors. The leaves, roots and seeds cover a wide spectrum of ailments similarly, but Parsley Roots and

seeds are more potent than the leaves and are more effective for more severe conditions.

Medical Uses:

For more than two thousand years, it has been highly regarded as a medicinal herb to treat gastrointestinal disorders and kidney, liver and bladder ailments.

History:

Used as a tomb decoration in ancient Greece and Rome, Parsley was thought to possess magical powers and was associated with the underworld and death. In one legendary Greek myth, King Lycurgus's son, Opheltes, was left for a short time by his nurse who pointed out the location of a spring to thirsty soldiers. When she returned, the child had been killed by a snake, and Amphiaraus, the seer and soldier who viewed the incident, said it was a bad omen and correctly predicted his own death in the upcoming battle. He gave Opheltes the surname Archemorus, meaning "the first to die," and the child became the symbol of impending death. From his blood, the first Parsley plants were said to have sprung.

On the other hand, garlands of Parsley were used as prizes in both Greek and Roman public games. Although the plant remained an important part of the herbalists' repertoire, it remained associated with magic and the underworld through the Middle Ages as one of the Devil's favorites and could only be counteracted by sowing the seeds on Good Friday. Another medieval belief advocated the sprinkling of Parsley Seeds on a baldhead three nights a year to grow hair, but it was also used during that time as a poison antidote.

Medical Uses:

Parsley Roots and leaves have been used to regulate blood sugar and are thought to be effective in cases of low blood sugar, if there is adrenal malfunction.

Preparations made from Parsley Roots have their major influence on the liver and spleen, and for the last 100 years, clinical physicians have claimed that Parsley Root has been effective in treating liver diseases, helping to dissolve and pass gallstones and kidney stones, if they are not too large.

Parsley has been used since ancient times to improve both the digestion and assimilation of food and is said to settle the stomach after a meal. The volatile oil in Parsley increases circulation to the digestive tract, easing stomach problems, indigestion and flatulence.

Rich in many nutrients, Parsley contains apigenin, a flavonoid that reduces allergic responses and is considered an effective antioxidant.

Treatments:

Parsley Root is a natural and effective diuretic that helps to purify the blood and accelerate the excretion of toxins from the body. Parsley may also ease bloating, reduce excess water weight, and improve urination when it is painful or incomplete. Because of its diuretic properties, Parsley is believed to lower blood pressure, reduce the heart rate and relieve hypertension. Parsley is also considered a mild laxative.

Parsley is highly nutritious and contains more vitamin C than oranges by weight and also provides a good source of iron (important for the proper formation of red blood cells), potassium (good for lowering blood pressure), calcium and manganese (helpful for osteoporosis) and folic acid (which may help prevent cardiovascular disease).

Parsley Roots work to normalize delayed menstruation.

Although pregnant women should not use Parsley, because it stimulates uterine contractions, in normal circumstances the herb is said to have a toning effect on the uterus and is thought to similarly affect the prostate in men.

Parsley Root is thought to make an excellent and nutritious tonic. The root may be cooked and added to soups to improve the health of invalids or weakened people.

Precautions:

Pregnant women should avoid Parsley, because the herb stimulates uterine contractions. Those suffering from kidney infection should also avoid Parsley.

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Parsley seed



Botanical: *Petroselinum crispum* (also known as *Petroselinum sativum*)

Family: Umbelliferae (carrot) - Apiaceae (parsley)

Other common names: Common Parsley, Rock Parsley, Garden Parsley, Rock Seline, Persil

Did you know...?

The Parsley Seed is very nutritious. It is a natural way to good health. This herb helps to relieve indigestion, fluid retention, halitosis, gas and helps to promote kidney, liver and bladder health. A high dose of vitamins and minerals adds to its all-round benefits.

Plant Description:

Parsley Seed is a biennial or perennial herb that originated as a wild plant in the eastern Mediterranean region but is now found in cultivation everywhere.

History:

For more than two thousand years, it has been highly regarded as a medicinal herb to treat gastrointestinal disorders and kidney, liver and bladder ailments. Used as a tomb decoration in ancient Greece and Rome, Parsley was thought to possess

magical powers and was associated with the underworld and death. In one legendary Greek myth, King Lycurgus's son, Opheltes, was left for a short time by his nurse who pointed out the location of a spring to thirsty soldiers. When she returned, the child had been killed by a snake, and Amphiaraus, the seer and soldier who viewed the incident, said it was a bad omen and correctly predicted his own death in the upcoming battle. He gave Opheltes the surname Archemorus, meaning "the first to die," and the child became the symbol of impending death. From his blood, the first Parsley plants were said to have sprung. On the other hand, garlands of Parsley were used as prizes in both Greek and Roman public games. Although the plant remained an important part of the herbalists' repertoire, it remained associated with magic and the underworld through the Middle Ages as one of the Devil's favorites and could only be counteracted by sowing the seeds on Good Friday. Another medieval belief advocated the sprinkling of Parsley Seeds on a baldhead three nights a year to grow hair, but it was also used during that time as a poison antidote. Among the many constituents included in Parsley are important minerals, beta-carotene, essential oils (including eugenol and apiole), flavonoids, coumarins, chlorophyll, B-vitamins and vitamins A, C, E and K. Parsley actually ranks higher than most vegetables in histidine, an amino acid that is said to inhibit tumors.

Medical Uses:

Parsley is a natural diuretic that purifies the blood and accelerates the excretion of toxins from the body. The herb can also ease bloating, reduce excess water weight, and improve urination when it is painful or incomplete. The seeds have been valued since ancient times for their soothing, diuretic effect on those with kidney and bladder ailments and are believed to help expel gallstones and kidney stones. Because of its diuretic action, Parsley is thought to lower blood pressure, reduce the heart rate and relieve hypertension. Parsley is also considered a mild laxative.

Parsley strengthens and stimulates the normal activity of the digestive system, easing flatulence, indigestion and other stomach problems. The herb is also believed to stimulate both the metabolism and the appetite.

The calcium in Parsley has been used in the fight against osteoporosis. When high doses of calcium are taken in supplement form, it may impair the body's absorption

of manganese, which helps build bone, but Parsley enhances manganese absorption.

Parsley has a drying effect on the respiratory system, thus improving asthma, allergies and bronchitis.

Used externally, Parsley is thought to make an excellent dry skin facial when used with steam and is a fine hair rinse. A tea made from Parsley seeds was known to kill scalp vermin.

Parsley is said to improve blood circulation, and it is a blood purifier, providing the healthful nutritional material necessary for tissue maintenance. It is considered useful in treating cellulite.

The high histidine (an amino acid) content in Parsley has been thought to inhibit the growth and multiplication of tumor cells.

As an emmenagogue, Parsley stimulates the onset of menstruation and helps ease painful menses. Its constituent, apiole, stimulates uterine contractions and has been used in Russia to promote uterine contractions during labor. Consequently, Parsley should not be used in large doses by pregnant women. (After delivery, it is said to tone the uterus.) It is also thought to tone the urinary tract, reducing the possibility of infections.

Parsley is said to be a mild aphrodisiac.

Precautions:

Because large doses of Parsley stimulate uterine contractions, it should be avoided by pregnant women. Those suffering from kidney infection should avoid Parsley.

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Passion Flower



Botanical: *Passiflora incarnata*

Family: Passifloraceae (passionflower)

Other common names: Passionflower, Maypop, Passion Vine, Blue Passionflower, Ocoee,

Purple Passionflower, Wild Passionflower, Passiflora, Flower of the Five Wounds, Apricot Vine, Waterlemon, Corona de Cristo

The Passion Flower is Nature's Tranquilizer.

Do you get tension headaches? Do you toss and turn, unable to fall asleep because you are overstressed, anxious and exhausted? Do you need a restful, sound sleep without the addictive side effects usually associated with synthetic sedatives? Perhaps it is time to think of Passion Flower.

Native Americans knew this secret hundreds of years ago, and today, many European herbalists prescribe Passion Flower for insomnia, nervous anxiety and relief of pain and neuralgia. It just might provide the relief you need.

Plant Description:

Passion Flower is the State Flower of Tennessee and a perennial woody vine with a trailing stem that can climb to the tops of many trees seeking the sun, often covering spans up to thirty feet in length. There are about four hundred known species of Passiflora, and most are natives of the Americas. Passiflora is native to North, Central, and South America and grows along hedgerows, on the edges of woods, in thickets and over open ground. It bears white to pale lavender flowers of about two inches across with edible berries. The fruits ripen only in warm, sunny climates, and the vine thrives in well-drained, sandy (slightly acid) soil in sun.

History:

In the sixteenth century, early Spanish explorers were astounded by the beauty of the exotic climbing vine that resembled elements of the Passion and Crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and named it Passion Flower in honor of the agonies of Christ.

They soon found it to be a source of medicine for the Native Americans. The Houma tribe added it to drinking water as a tonic, and in the Yucatan, it was a remedy for insomnia, hysteria and convulsions in children. Other tribes used it in poultices to heal bruises, and the early Algonquians brewed Passion Flower in a tea to soothe their nerves. In 1783, a visiting European doctor described its use as a remedy for epilepsy, and other early physicians prescribed the fruit juice as a wash for sore and tired eyes. The plant was largely ignored in conventional North American medicine until the late 1800s, when it became a popular nineteenth-century remedy for insomnia. It finally received official recognition in the United States National Formulary from 1916 to 1936, and the whole plant is used in herbal medicine.

Medical Uses:

Passion Flower may be a useful bridge between traditional herbal medicine and the treatment for modern ills, especially in cases of anxious states, depression and patients trying to wean themselves from synthetic sleeping pills and tranquilizers.

Despite the dearth of research into Passion Flower in the United States, the herb is frequently prescribed in Europe to ease tension, restlessness, irritability and mild insomnia. However, because of its increased popularity and use in the United States, clinical trials will hopefully be conducted to determine why the plant

appears to produce effective results. Aside from its medicinal value, the fruits are pulped for jams and deserts, and because they create a popping sound when mashed, the plant received one of its common names, "Maypop." Some of the constituents in Passion Flower are alkaloids (harmaline, maltol, etc.), flavonoids (apigenin, luteolin, etc.), quercetin, rutin, kaempferol, vitexin, saponarin, amino acids, glycosides, gums and calcium.

Treatments:

Passion Flower is a very gentle (but effective) sedative that has a depressant effect on the central nervous system. The alkaloids and flavonoids are believed to be effective, non-addictive sedatives, which promote restful, sound sleep, particularly in cases of nervous insomnia. It is one of nature's best tranquilizers and has been used for centuries as a reliable remedy for nervous, menopausal and premenstrual tension, irritability, and fatigue and tension headaches. It is said to gently shift moods, alter perception and aid concentration, and the alkaloids are thought to act in a similar way as MAO inhibitors, which may be of some help in cases of depression. In Italy, Passion Flower is used to treat hyperactive children.

Its relaxing qualities appear to extend to relaxing spasms, relieving muscle tension and other manifestations of extreme anxiety. This is beneficial for restless leg syndrome, Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and irritable bowel syndrome.

Passionflower is considered an anodyne that reduces pain, and as such, is used to relieve headache and nerve pain, the pain of shingles and dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation).

Passionflower is thought to relieve hypertension and lower blood pressure. Some tests claim that it relaxes the walls of the arteries, which may be useful for maintaining good heart health.

In laboratory tests, Passion Flower was able to stop the growth of certain kinds of thyroid malignancy, and further research may, hopefully, bring positive results in this area.

There are reports that Passion Flower stops chemical reactions that cause nausea and vomiting because of withdrawal from cocaine, heroin or opiate painkillers, and this may prove useful for those patients trying to withdraw from such substances.

A bitter principle in Passion Flower is thought to be beneficial for functional digestive problems as well.

Passion Flower may help a diminished sex drive. The herb is a source of an antioxidant chemical known as chrysin, which helps the body conserve testosterone. It does not cause the body to produce more of the hormone, but by conserving it, the action has a direct effect of increasing testosterone levels, which may boost sex drive.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Passion Flower. Since it may cause sleepiness, it should not be used before driving or operating machinery. Children should never be given this herb in any form, and older adults and children between two and twelve should take low dosages (preferably in consultation with a physician). Do not use Passion Flower if you take MAO inhibitors, and it should not be taken with other prescription sedatives or sedative herbs, as it increases their effects.

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Partridgeberry



Botanical: *Mitchella repens*

Family: Rubiaceae (madder)

Other common names: Squaw Vine, Mitchella, Winter Clover, Twin Berry, One-berry, Deerberry, Squawberry, Hive Vine, Checkerberry, Running Box

Partridgeberry is an old folk remedy for "female troubles." Native Americans relied on this herb to help facilitate all aspects of childbirth, including labor, delivery, and expulsion of afterbirth. Used several weeks before expected delivery, Partridgeberry is thought to stimulate the uterus and encourage a safe and easier birth. It is also used to promote suppressed menstruation and relieve painful menstruation.

Plant Description:

Partridgeberry is an ornamental, creeping, evergreen perennial. It is native to North America and thrives in dry woods among timber and in swampy places in humus-rich, neutral-to-acid soil in shade.

It beautifies the dull, colorless winter forests with its green, clover-like leaves and bright scarlet berries that hug the ground. The berries are edible but tasteless, dry, and full of stony seeds and are said to be the favored food of the ruffed grouse, a bird similar to the European partridge; thus, the name Partridgeberry emerged.

Another common name, Deerberry, is derived from the fact that deer also eat the berries. The aerial vine is used in herbal medicine.

History:

Native Americans carefully guarded the secrets of this herb, but it was finally revealed that Cherokee and Penobscot women (among others) used the herb several weeks before confinement in order to render childbirth safe and easy, and because they were the first to utilize the herb in this manner, the herb received another common name, Squaw Vine.

The English colonists learned of this use and adopted Partridgeberry as an aid in childbirth and as a remedy for menstrual cramps. The vine was included in the U. S. National Formulary from 1926 through 1947. Among the constituents included

in Partridgeberry are resin, wax, mucilage, dextrin, saponin, tannins, alkaloids, and glycosides.

Medical Uses:

Partridgeberry is believed to facilitate all aspects of childbirth. Taken by Native American women during confinement (the last stages of pregnancy and nearing delivery), the herb was believed to prepare the uterus for an easier and safe delivery. Partridgeberry is thought to stimulate and tone the uterus, strengthen and relax the uterine muscles, and thus strengthen uterine contractions. Finally, the herb is said to help expel afterbirth when delivery is over.

Partridgeberry is believed to benefit all uterine complaints and many gynecologic ailments and has been used to ease menstrual cramps and bring on suppressed menstruation. The herb is also said to relieve pelvic congestion and alleviate the mucous discharge of leukorrhea.

As a tonic and astringent, Partridgeberry is thought to soothe mucous membranes and reduce catarrh and excess mucus. It is also believed to be effective in the treatment for diarrhea and colitis.

Partridgeberry also exerts a mild tonic and soothing effect on the nervous system and is thought to calm the nerves, ease nervous exhaustion, and irritability.

As a mild diuretic, Partridgeberry is believed to promote suppressed urine and is also said to be effective in some cases of dropsy (edema), which is the retention of fluid by the body that causes swelling and discomfort. (It is not a disease in itself, but a manifestation of some other condition and should be checked by a doctor.)

Used externally, nursing mothers may find relief in a topical lotion made from the leaves of Partridgeberry and applied to the breasts to ease soreness after breastfeeding. It has also been used as an astringent skin wash.

Precautions:

Partridgeberry should not be used until the last weeks of pregnancy and always under the care of a health care provider.

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Pau D'arco



Botanical: *Tabebuia impetiginosa* (also known as *Tabebuia avellanedae* and *Tabebuia heptaphylla*)

Family: Bignoniaceae (pau d'arco)

Other common names: Taheebo, Lapacho, Bow Wood, Ipe Roxa, Trumpet Tree

The ancient Incas of Peru understood the importance of Pau D'Arco, and today its wonderful benefits are just beginning to surface, especially in the area of immunity enhancement and cell strengthening. Sometimes called the "Miracle Bark from South America," its therapeutic uses are somewhat controversial, but it is considered a powerful antiviral, anti-inflammatory and antibiotic, and that is just the beginning!

Plant Description:

Pau D'Arco is an evergreen of the Amazon rain forest, but it is also deciduous when it grows in higher and colder locations. It is a tropical tree, native to South and Central America, and although it grows to a height of one hundred feet, it may start out as a vine. The tree grows in well-drained, fertile soil in sunny, warm, tropical climates.

Pau D'Arco has high iron content, making it effective in the assimilation of nutrients and elimination of body wastes, and includes beta-carotene, beta-

sitosterol, saponins, flavonoids, alkaloids, barium, iodine, lapachol (a naphthoquinone), lapachone and xyloidine (quinoids).

History:

The wood and inner barks are used for medicinal purposes, and the lumber (known as lapacho) is highly valued in cabinetmaking. Pau D'Arco may flower in a number of colors, but the roxa (red, magenta, crimson and violet) varieties are used the most in herbal medicine, and the best quality is said to come from Argentina (where it is used extensively by the Callaway tribe). Pau D'Arco has a long folk history of use in the treatment for infections and cancer, and many South American Indian societies have used it for centuries to treat cancer, infectious diseases and wounds, and to enhance energy and endurance. They also introduced Pau D'Arco to the early Portuguese settlers of Brazil to treat schistosomiasis, a tropical disease brought on by flatworm, and modern science does support those antimicrobial properties. Its ancient and current use in South America as a treatment for cancer (mostly blood and skin) is highly controversial, but the National Cancer Institute does not recognize it as a viable treatment, because the high levels required to be effective in may cause many undesirable side effects. Although the Argentine government dispenses the herb free of charge to cancer and leukemia patients, the government of Brazil disavows its efficacy for such treatments. Test tube studies have found that the lapachone content can kill cancer cells by inhibiting an enzyme called "topoisomerase," and there are hopes that effective anti-cancer drugs may eventually be produced through chemical modification of lapachone. There is much ongoing research on the subject, but there have been wonderful positive reports regarding the herb's antifungal and anti-inflammatory qualities.

Medical Uses:

Pau D'Arco is reputed to possess significant and potent antiviral and antifungal properties and has been used as an effective treatment against viruses, yeast infections, such as *Candida albicans*, etc., herpes simplex, flu, gonorrhea, athlete's foot, warts, syphilis, venereal disease and vaginitis.

Thought to be an effective anti-inflammatory and painkiller, Pau D'Arco has been used to help ease the pain and inflammation of inflammatory conditions, such as

arthritis and rheumatism. It is also believed to ease the temporary discomforts of inflammatory bowel disease and alleviate bowel pain.

Pau D'Arco is thought to promote and maintain normal blood sugar levels, which may be of help in cases of diabetes. It appears to prevent spillover of glucose into the urine and seems to act in the same manner as the prescription drug ingredient, acarbose, by keeping sugar from passing through the intestinal wall into the bloodstream.

Pau D'Arco is considered a mild laxative and diuretic. It promotes urine flow and supports urinary tract health, fighting such conditions as cystitis, prostatitis and other urinary infections. The herb is also thought to lower fever.

Treatments:

As a blood cleanser, Pau D'Arco is thought to purify and clear toxins from the blood and multiply the numbers of red corpuscles, which helps to build the blood and may be helpful in combating pernicious anemia and other ailments entailing blood deficiencies.

Pau D'Arco is considered an immune enhancer that is believed to strengthen and stimulate the immune system to produce macrophages, immune cells that engulf and digest bacteria and infectious microbes before they invade cell walls and cause damage to cells and tissue. The herb is said to combat chronic degenerative ailments, increase energy and stamina and has been used as part of a treatment to combat environmentally produced allergies and asthma.

Pau D'Arco is said to protect and promote healthy liver function. It is believed to neutralize poisons that involve the liver and may be helpful in treating hepatitis. Some South American hospitals have used Pau D'Arco on patients to reduce the destructive process that chemotherapy exerts on the liver and kidneys. Chemotherapy has been known to destroy the liver and kidneys, and this may be of great help to patients undergoing such treatments.

Pau D'Arco is thought to be an excellent antibacterial and support good digestion. In laboratory tests, the active ingredient, lapachol, reverses aspirin-induced irritation of the stomach lining, and may possibly have antibiotic effects on *Helicobacter pylori*, a bacterium associated with gastritis and peptic ulcer. Its

antibiotic properties have been useful in the treatment for dysentery, and the Naval Medical Research Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, has found that lapachol is also useful against parasitic infection and may be effective in treating malaria and Chagas disease.

Used externally, Pau D'Arco has been used to treat dermatitis, eczema, psoriasis, scabies, boils and many other skin infections.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Pau D'Arco, and excess amounts (many times the recommended dosage) may cause nausea, bleeding, vomiting, dizziness and diarrhea. People who take prescription anticancer drugs or those on chemotherapy should not use this herb without consulting with a physician. Because it may induce bleeding, people who take prescription blood thinners (Coumadin, etc.) should not use this herb, nor should it be used prior to surgery.

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Pea Fiber



Botanical: *Pisum sativum*

Family: Fabaceae (pea) - Leguminosae (legume)

Pea Fiber supplements is a simple way to supply our diets with both soluble and insoluble natural fiber. A fiber rich diet is thought to provide many healthful benefits, including gastrointestinal well-being, proper bowel function (including relief for constipation and diverticulosis) and may reduce our risk of colon cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

History:

The modern garden pea is thought to be descended from the field pea that was indigenous to central Asia and Europe, and has been consumed as a healthy dietary addition for thousands of years. Peas are considered legumes, plants that bear fruit in the form of pods, enclosing the fleshy seeds, and are one of the few members of the legume family that are sold and cooked as fresh vegetables. It is interesting to note that high-fiber foods are mostly low in calories and inexpensive. Today, the largest commercial producers of fresh peas are the United States, Great Britain, China, Hungary and India.

Medical Uses:

Peas provide one of the highest sources of natural soluble and insoluble dietary fibers known, and since the National Cancer Institute suggests that dietary fiber can be protective against some cancer, taking Pea Fiber supplements may provide the fiber that is lacking in our regular diets. Americans generally consume ten grams of fiber per day, and the National Cancer Institute recommends at least twenty grams daily. Fiber is not a miracle food, but adding fiber to your diet may provide surprising and wonderful health benefits.

Pea Fiber may help to improve cardiovascular health by reducing cholesterol. Fiber is credited with helping to lower bad cholesterol levels in the blood and may thus help to reduce the risk of heart disease. Studies of high-fiber diets have shown dramatic benefits provided by high-fiber foods. In one study, two groups of people were fed different amounts of high-fiber foods. The high-fiber group reduced their total cholesterol by nearly seven percent, their triglyceride levels by over ten percent and their VLDL (Very Low Density Lipoprotein, the most dangerous form of cholesterol) by over twelve percent. Soluble fiber forms a gel-like substance in the digestive tract that binds bile (which contains cholesterol) and carries it out of the body. In India, clinical studies demonstrated that Peas have the ability to

dissolve blood clots, which may also be of help in improving blood circulation, another factor affecting cardiovascular health.

The National Cancer Institute suggests that fiber may be protective against some cancers, particularly colon cancer, and Pea Fiber provides one of highest sources of natural dietary fiber. A diet rich in fiber is essential for gastrointestinal wellbeing and proper bowel function; it not only is said to help increase stool bulk and prevent constipation, but it may also help to prevent digestive disorders like irritable bowel syndrome and diverticulosis.

Pea Fiber may be beneficial to diabetics as a way to stabilize their blood sugar levels, since fiber intake has been shown to control intestinal glucose absorption. People with insulin resistance, hypoglycemia or diabetes may benefit from high-fiber intake by balancing blood sugar levels while providing steady, slow-burning energy. Researchers compared two groups of people with type-II diabetes who were fed different amounts of high fiber foods.

One group ate the standard American Diabetic diet, which contains twenty-four grams of fiber per day, while the other group ate a diet containing fifty grams of fiber per day. Those who ate the diet higher in fiber had lower levels of both plasma glucose (blood sugar) and insulin (the hormone that helps blood sugar get into cells). Danish research demonstrated that when Pea Fiber was consumed, blood glucose levels did not rise and fall as rapidly or as severely as they did in response to other food fibers and was superior in its actions even to sugar beet fiber or wheat bran, and it is interesting to note that in Europe, doctors already prescribe sugar beet fiber for diabetics and celiac patients. According to the United States General Services Administration Federal Citizen Information Center, studies indicate that foods with fiber (particularly peas, beans, etc.) help to lower blood glucose, and because we should consume much more fiber than the average American now consumes to get this benefit, Pea Fiber supplements may provide an uncomplicated and simple way to achieve this nutritional benefit.

By absorbing water (and fats) in the intestinal tract and increasing stool bulk, the bulking action of Pea Fiber may also help in weight loss programs by filling the intestines and giving one the feeling of fullness and reducing the appetite.

Precautions: None

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Pennyroyal



Botanical: *Mentha pulegium*

Family: Labiatae/Lamiaceae (mint)

Other common names: European Pennyroyal, Tickweed, Squaw Mint, Stinking Balm, Thickweed, Mock Pennyroyal, Mosquito Plant, Squaw Balm

Pennyroyal has been used for centuries to treat feverish conditions. It promotes sweat, which helps to reduce fevers and cleanse toxins from the body through the skin. It is also a digestive that relieves indigestion, flatulence, and grumbling in the intestines.

Plant Description:

Pennyroyal is a pungently aromatic, bitter, astringent herb. It is a member of the mint family, and exact naming of the different species has been difficult, as mints interbreed so readily.

Pennyroyal is a perennial with variable growing habits and may range from a low-growing, spreading plant to a lanky upright shrub. Its leaves are bright green and exude a strong peppermint scent, and the herb prefers rich, damp, sandy soil in sun or partial shade. It is considered a weed in many places, and one of its folk names is "grows-in-the-ditch."

History:

Pennyroyal is said to be native to Ireland, spreading across south and central Europe to the Ukraine and parts of Asia. The herb was introduced to North America centuries ago, and grows abundantly in the wild lands of the world. American Pennyroyal (*Hedeoma pulegiodes*) has a long medicinal history in North America, where it was used by the native tribes and settlers alike for headaches, feverish colds, and menstrual cramps to produce abortion.

Pennyroyal was listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1831 until 1915. *Mentha pulegium* and *Hedeoma pulegiodes* have a similar chemistry and are used in the same manner, but the herb carries severe warnings and should be used only under the supervision of a health care practitioner. In Europe, the leaves of *Mentha pulegium* are used in herbal teas that relieve the symptoms of cold and flu and for culinary purposes as a flavoring for black pudding and sausages.

Medical Uses:

Pennyroyal has been used to promote perspiration and reduce fevers. It is said to relieve feverish colds and the symptoms of coughs, colds and flu. The herb is said to be an expectorant that alleviates dry, hacking coughs and helps expel phlegm and chest congestion. The herb is also thought to ease whooping cough.

Pennyroyal is said to be good for the digestive system, relieving indigestion, colic, flatulence and nausea.

As an emmenagogue, Pennyroyal promotes and regulates menstrual flow and eases painful menstruation. It stimulates uterine contractions and was sometimes used to ease childbirth, but the herb was also used to induce abortion and, as such, was considered extremely dangerous, often causing hemorrhaging and serious complications for the mother. Therefore, it should never be used for that purpose, as amounts needed may cause death.

Precautions:

Pennyroyal should be used only with medical supervision. Pennyroyal should never be taken when pregnant. It is not recommended for lactating women and should not be taken by those suffering from kidney problems. The essential oil should never be taken internally, as it is highly toxic.

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Penta

Botanical: *Gynostemma pentaphyllum*

Family: Cucurbitaceae (gourd/squash)

Other common names: Jiaogulan, Southern Ginseng, Sweet Tea Vine, Gospel Herb, Amachazuru (Japan), Dungkulcha (Korea)

Penta is often called "The Immortality Herb" and is included in anti-ageing tonics and revered in the Orient for its medicinal and cosmetic qualities.

Penta has been used to support healthy cholesterol and blood pressure levels, ease nervous tension and exhaustion, stimulate liver function, enhance stamina and boost the body's resistance to disease. New research promises potential, effective antioxidant benefits with the use of Penta.

Plant Description:

Penta is a hardy perennial climber from the genus, *Gynostemma*, a native of southern and eastern Asia, which consists of two climbers that attach themselves by means of tendrils. Penta bears palmate leaves and toothed leaflets, with a three-inch terminal leaflet and small, yellow-green, star-shaped panicles of six-inch flowers that bloom in the summertime.

The flowers are followed by smooth, very dark green fruits that are marked with white lines, and the vines grow to twenty-five feet in length and thrive in moist, well-drained soil in partial shade in a warm climate.

History:

Penta is called "The Immortality Herb" in China and has been used in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) since the Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) as a remedy for hepatitis, tumors, bronchitis, and peptic ulcers. A better understanding of its properties was gained in the 1980s, when Japanese researchers investigated its antioxidant properties, and it was rated one of the ten most important tonic herbs at the 1991 International Conference on traditional medicine in Beijing, China. The whole plant is used in herbal medicine.

Medical Uses:

Penta is considered an excellent tonic herb that restores, heals and nourishes the entire body and exerts a gentle strengthening effect on all body functions. In the Orient, Penta is called "The Immortality Herb" and is thought to produce healing and anti-ageing effects. Moreover, it is also believed to help enhance stamina and strength.

Penta is said to improve blood circulation and may be very helpful in treating cardiovascular problems. The herb is thought to support healthy cholesterol levels in the blood as well as maintain healthy blood pressure levels.

As a mild sedative, Penta is thought to support the nervous system, easing nervous tension and exhaustion. It is also used to alleviate the temporary discomforts of peptic ulcers and relax spasms.

Penta is considered an "adaptogen," or agent that helps the body adjust and normalize its functions when exposed to stresses that would alter those functions. The herb also enhances the body's immune system and increases its resistance to stress, which may be very helpful in fighting invasive infections. Penta is said to have potent antioxidant properties, which are also thought to detoxify and prevent free-radical damage to tissues and cells.

Penta has been used in China for a myriad of other conditions, including stimulation of liver function, reducing blood sugar and relieving asthma, bronchitis, throat problems and chronic coughs.

Precautions: None

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Peony Root



Botanical: *Paeonia lactiflora*

Family: Paeoniaceae (peony) formerly Ranunculaceae (buttercup/crowfoot)

Other common names: Chinese Peony, Moutan, Tree Peony, Moutan Peony, Mudan

Peony Root has been used in herbal medicine for thousands of years for its tranquilizing effect on the nerves, pain relieving effect on muscles and purifying effect on the blood. It is also an old remedy for "female complaints," both physical and emotional; but men have also enjoyed its benefits for an overall feeling of well-being.

Plant Description:

The Peony is an extremely hardy and ornamental flower that is native to China, but grows wild in southern Europe and is cultivated for its beauty in gardens everywhere. Because of its hardiness, it can grow in almost any soil but prefers

deep, rich, well-drained loam in sun or partial shade, avoiding positions where frost damage is likely, and it propagates very quickly. In the autumn, the root is lifted from cultivated plants of at least two (preferably four to five) years of age; and after the root bark is stripped away, it is boiled and dried for use in herbal medicine (and has been for thousands of years) as a pungent, bitter, analgesic herb that cleanses and cools both the blood and liver and reduces pain.

History:

The genus, *Peoria*, is supposed to have been named after the Greek god of healing, the mythical physician, Palos, who used Peony Root to cure Pluto and other gods for wounds received during the Trojan War. In ancient times, Peony was thought to be of divine origin, an emanation from the moon, and it was advised to harvest the plant only at night. The Peony was first mentioned in Chinese medicine in Pouch of Pearls, a twelfth-century work; and well into the Middle Ages, the plant was associated with dispelling evil and averting tempests. It was worn as a necklace to protect against evil spirits and disease and used medicinally to dispel nightmares and calm "nervous affections" and convulsions. In Europe, Peony Root is used as an old remedy for jaundice and kidney and bladder problems. Some of the constituents included in Peony Root are monoterpene glycosides (including the most active and bitter paeoniflorin), proanthocyanidins, flavonoids, tannins, polysaccharides, asparagi and sitosterol.

Medical Uses:

Peony Root has been used for centuries as an antispasmodic that relaxes smooth muscle and is said to be effective in helping cramps of all kinds, including spasms of calf muscles, cramps of the limbs, abdominal cramps after diarrhea, asthma with cramps, epilepsy, convulsions and menstrual cramps, among others.

As a diuretic, Peony Root has been thought to remove obstructions and help many kidney and bladder problems. This quality is believed to be useful in relieving gout by removing uric acid through increased urine flow.

Peony Root is said to be a sedative and tranquilizer with effects that are helpful in calming the nerves, and treating irritability and other nervous conditions. It is also thought to relieve nightmares and was used at one time to treat dementia.

Treatment:

As an analgesic, Peony Root is believed to relieve abdominal pain, headache and muscle pain. The herb is thought to be very helpful to women, because it treats menstrual disorders and is said to relieve dysmenorrhea (painful menstruation) and treat amenorrhea (the absence of menstruation). It was once used to relieve the pains of labor by relaxing muscle tension while stimulating the uterus.

Peony has been used as a blood cooler and purifier since ancient times. It is thought to nourish the blood, and as an anticoagulant, remove congealed blood and the pain of blood stagnation.

Some research claims that Peony Root may help reduce blood pressure and be helpful in cases of eclampsia, a severe form of pregnancy-induced hypertension, resulting in seizures, but a physician should always be consulted before this application is considered.

Peony Root is said to cool and remove obstructions from the liver. It is an old remedy for jaundice and said to be helpful in some cases of liver disease.

Peony Root is believed to possess antibacterial, antifungal and antiallergenic properties and has been useful for treating gastrointestinal infections; and when used topically, it is useful for boils and other skin problems. Many people use Peony Root to achieve healthier and younger looking skin.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Peony Root, and it is always advisable to use this herb in consultation with a health care provider for specific conditions.

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Peppermint Leaf



Botanical: *Mentha piperita*

Family: Labiatae/Lamiaceae (mint)

Other common names: Mint, Balm Mint, Curled Mint, Lamb Mint, Brandy Mint

Did you know...?

For indigestion, bad breath, flatulence and hiccups, use Peppermint!

It is one of nature's oldest and best-tasting home remedies for gas, nausea, heartburn, stomachaches and digestive problems. Every home medicine cabinet should have it!

Plant Description:

Plants of the genus *Mentha* are so numerous that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the origins within the species, but mint has been known and appreciated since antiquity. Its name is derived from the name of a nymph, Minthe, who was seduced by Pluto, the ruler of the underworld, and whom the jealous Persephone turned into a lowly plant to be trodden underfoot. Pluto then turned her into a seedling (mint), knowing that people would appreciate her fragrance for years to come.

History:

There is evidence that mint was cultivated by the Egyptians, and the Romans revered it so much that they are said to have introduced it from southern Europe (where it is sometimes said to have originated) to other parts of Europe. Medicinal interest in mint dates from the first century A.D., when it was recorded by the Roman naturalist, Pliny.

When cultivated, the plant is considered an annual that grows to a height of four feet, but it is long-lived, and if left in the ground, is likely to take over the whole garden in irregular fashion, and so, it may also be considered a perennial when wild. The use of mint as a medicine is mentioned in the Icelandic Pharmacopoeias of the thirteenth century, and in Elizabethan times, more than forty ailments were reported to be remedied by mint. It is interesting to note that a seventeenth-century visitor to New England included mint on a list of plants that had been taken to the New World. However, the herb only appears to have arrived into the popular medicine of Western Europe by the eighteenth century.

Peppermint is said to be a hybrid of watermint and spearmint that was first cultivated near London in 1750, and although native to Europe, Peppermint is now cultivated throughout most of temperate North America and similar regions in other parts of the world, with the finest quality grown in the northwestern United States. Peppermint is a staple of the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries and is used in the manufacture of cough syrups, pastilles, ointments, digestives, vapor rubs, toothpastes, mouthwashes, soaps, shampoos and scents. It is also included as an important flavoring in liqueurs. Some of Peppermint's chemical constituents include a volatile oil (containing menthol), rutin, tannin, alpha- and beta-carotene, acids, luteolin, linalool, betaine, coumarin, calcium, choline, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamin E.

Medical Uses:

Peppermint promotes good digestion and improves the appetite. Its foremost use as a medicine (in both home remedies and pharmaceutical preparations) is applied to relieve indigestion and the intestinal gas caused by certain foods; hence, its use in after-dinner mints and liqueurs. It relaxes the stomach muscles and promotes burping.

Some studies have shown that Peppermint lessens the amount of time food spends in the stomach by stimulating the gastric lining, and because Peppermint increases stomach acidity and stimulates the flow of bile, it helps to digest food before passing into the intestines and colon. This could make it especially useful in treating Crohn's disease. Peppermint slightly anesthetizes the mucous membranes of the gastrointestinal tract, easing the discomforts of indigestion, including heartburn, hiccups, flatulence and stomachache. Peppermint calms a queasy stomach and is good for nausea and vomiting. It is said to be especially calming for the lower bowel and has been helpful in relieving diarrhea and irritable bowel syndrome.

Treatment:

As an antispasmodic, Peppermint is helpful in alleviating cramps, including menstrual cramps, and stomach pain, and it eases "griping" (sharp pains and grumbling in the bowel) caused by eating unripe fruit or irritating foods. In England, gastroenterologists spray diluted Peppermint oil directly on the instrument used for colonoscopy to prevent spasms.

Peppermint is a "nervine" that eases nervous agitation and anxiety. It has a calming effect on the entire body and can help soothe a nagging cough. Peppermint may help treat insomnia, and people with headaches have found Peppermint effective when they accompany it with a short nap.

Peppermint is a strong aromatic and an excellent expectorant that helps to loosen and expel phlegm from the respiratory system, thereby easing congestion of the lungs and nasal passages.

As an antiseptic, Peppermint's antibacterial properties can kill the micro-organisms that may cause food poisoning. The herb also makes a fine mouthwash and is a wonderful remedy for bad breath.

Peppermint is a stimulant that acts more powerfully on the system than any liquor; quickly diffusing through the system and bringing back to the body its natural warmth and glow. It is helpful in cases of sudden fainting or dizziness with extreme coldness and pale countenance. This quality is useful in alleviating chills and the symptoms of colds, flu and rheumatism, especially in winter.

When used externally, the high menthol content in Peppermint makes a wonderful, soothing rub that relieves muscular tension, sore muscles, and the pain of strains. When topically treating migraines, facial neuralgia, rheumatic, and muscular aches, gently massage the affected areas; its anesthetic qualities give a cooling, numbing sensation.

As an inhalant, Peppermint temporarily relieves nasal catarrh. The menthol content makes it a superior vapor rub that helps relieve upper respiratory ailments.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not take Peppermint without consulting a physician. Peppermint may aggravate hiatal hernia. Those who suffer from gallbladder disorders, gallstones or blockage of the bile duct, or those who take heartburn medication (cisapride, etc.) should not take Peppermint without consulting a physician. Do not exceed dosage (many time the recommended amount), and it is recommended to take a few days' break after two weeks' continual use. Peppermint may interfere with absorption of iron.

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Pimento



Botanical: *Pimenta dioica* (formerly known as *Pimenta officinalis*)

Family: Myrtaceae (myrtle/clove)

Other common names: Allspice, Clove Pepper, Jamaica Pepper, Myrtle Pepper

Did you know...?

Pimento relieves colic, flatulence and other digestive disorders. Long used as a flavoring and scenting agent, it is an aromatic stimulant and carminative to the gastro-intestinal tract. Pimento is a natural source of beta-carotene and other important nutrients and acts as an antioxidant and anti-inflammatory.

Plant Description:

Native to the Caribbean Islands (most notably Jamaica), South, and Central America, Pimento is an evergreen tree that grows to a height of fifty feet. It is a tender, aromatic tree with thin, oblong, leathery leaves and small, white flowers that bloom in the spring and summer. The flowers are followed by the dark brown berries that are so important in herbal medicines and cuisines, and the tree thrives in rich, well-drained, sandy soil in sun at a minimum of fifty-nine degrees Fahrenheit.

History:

Pimento was discovered growing in Jamaica by early Spanish explorers who were impressed with the taste and aroma of the leaves and berries, and it has been in continuous production there since about 1509. Because Pimento resembles peppercorns, it was named pimenta by the Portuguese and pimienta by the Spanish - both meaning pepper.

Used mainly as a spice and condiment, Pimento was in great demand as a soothing anesthetic in baths to relieve sore muscles and made a stimulating spice plaster to relieve rheumatism and neuralgia. At the end of the nineteenth century, it became fashionable to have umbrellas and walking sticks made of pimento, leading to strict enforcement of controls that saved the young trees from disappearing altogether.

Pimento, with its flavor of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg, has always been an important spice and condiment and was added to mulled wine and curry, among other dishes. It has also been used widely to improve the flavor of commercial medicines. The main constituents of Pimento are the volatile oils found in its seeds

and phenol eugenol (which doubtless gives it its clove-like odor). Some of the other constituents include a fixed oil (bonastre), tannin, gum, resin, malic and gallic acids, lignin, and it is a natural source of beta-carotene and other important nutrients.

Medical Uses:

Pimento is an aromatic stimulant and carminative for the gastro-intestinal tract. As such, it has been helpful in treating diarrhea and helps to correct flatulent indigestion and the "griping" tendencies (sharp pains and grumbling in the bowels) often associated with the use of laxatives.

As a pungent, warming herb, Pimento has a tonic effect on the digestive system, improving digestive disorders, such as dyspepsia, colic and indigestion, and is known to pep up a sluggish appetite.

The essential oil in Pimento is considered a tonic for the nervous system and exerts a gentle, strengthening effect on the nerves. It believed to be useful in the treatment for nervous exhaustion, hysterical paroxysms and convulsions.

Pimento is considered an antioxidant or substance that prevents free radical or oxidative damage to body tissue and cells.

Pimento is very warming and when used externally helps to relieve chest infections and the pains of rheumatism and muscle soreness.

Precautions:

Pimento is not recommended for pregnant women or nursing mothers.

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Pine Bark



Botanical: *Pinus strobus*

Family: Pinaceae (pine)

Other common names: White Pine Bark, Eastern White Pine, Northern White Pine, Pumpkin Pine, Soft Pine, Deal Pine, Weymouth Pine (in Britain)

Did you know...?

Pine Bark is an old and trusted treatment for colds and flu. It loosens and expels phlegm from the respiratory tract, easing bronchitis and lung congestion, and its warming qualities stimulate circulation, which may ward off colds and flu before they settle in. The high content of nature's most powerful antioxidants (proanthocyanidins/PCSS/OPCs) in Pine Bark has made it the focus of much attention in the area of combating free radical damage, arteriosclerosis and strokes.

Plant Description:

The Eastern White Pine is the tallest evergreen tree that is native to eastern North America and one of many Pine varieties that have been used medicinally in various countries from the earliest times. The Eastern White Pine is the official State Tree of both Maine and Michigan and is the Provincial Tree of Ontario.

History:

The species was imported into England by Captain George Weymouth in 1620, who planted it widely for a future timber crop, but it was not successful because of Blister Rust disease.

The Eastern White Pine is a hardy conifer that grows to a height of 150 feet, or more, thriving in well drained, neutral to acid soil in sun and a cool climate and covered with a deeply fissured, gray-brown bark. In natural, pre-colonial days, the White Pine is said to have grown to two hundred and thirty feet in height. Its branches grow in regular whorls and bear soft, bluish-green, needle-like linear leaf clusters (fascicles) of five.

Both male and female trees produce long, slender cones. Mature trees can live to two hundred years old; some live as long as four hundred years! Prior to the American Revolution and during the age of the great sailing ships, the high quality of Eastern White Pine was valued for its use in mast making by the British Royal Navy, and Pine is still widely grown in plantation forestry and valued in the commercial timber industry. An oleoresin, known as turpentine, is tapped from various species of Pine and distilled to produce oil or spirits of turpentine, which is used commercially, but there is now a turpentine substitute that is based on petroleum. Besides the important commercial uses for White Pine, it is invaluable in herbal medicines. Fossilized Pine resin (amber) is obtained from buried trees and used to treat urinary tract infections, stones, convulsions and heart disease.

The Chinese used many species of the Pine and first mentioned it in their medical literature dating back to A.D. 500, recommending it for arthritis and as an analgesic for pain. Native Americans, including the Iroquois and Micmacs, considered the Pine as a panacea and used it in virtually all their herbal, medicinal combinations. Some tribes relied on Pine as an expectorant and used it as a cough medicine; other tribes used the resinous sap in poultices to cure wounds and sores. The Eastern White Pine is rich in resins and camphoraceous volatile oils (including pinene), which are strongly antiseptic and stimulant. Pine needles contain five times the amount of vitamin C (by weight) of lemons and make an excellent tea, and the inner bark is edible and is a source of potent antioxidants.

Medical Uses:

Pine Bark is an excellent expectorant and is used to loosen and expel phlegm and mucous excretions from the respiratory system. The inner bark has been a longtime standard herbal remedy for coughs, whooping cough, croup, bronchitis, laryngitis and chest congestion due to colds.

As a warming and aromatic stimulant, Pine Bark is said to increase circulation and further help to overcome or prevent the onset of colds and flu by raising circulatory action.

Pine Bark contains the second highest source (the first is grapeseed) of nature's most potent antioxidants, tannin compounds, called proanthocyanidins (also called OPCs for oligomeric procyanidins or PCOs for procyanidolic oligomers) that provide a high degree of antioxidant capacity, which fight free radical damage in the body. These compounds allow the body's cells to absorb vitamin C, which is helpful in protecting cells from the free radicals that can bind to and destroy cellular compounds.

These qualities may be helpful in building the immune system and fighting invasive material and other infections. They are classified as flavonols, and the way in which these versatile healing compounds are distinct from flavonoids is their simple chemical structure, which allows them to be readily absorbed into the bloodstream. They work actively against fat-soluble and water-soluble oxidants, thus protecting the cells from damage, and their antioxidant activity is thought to have great potential in combating cellular damage caused by foreign infectious attack.

Pine Bark's OPCs, which may also be derived from grapeseed, red wine, hops, pomegranate and various other fruits, nuts and beans are believed to contribute to a lowered incidence of arteriosclerosis and coronary heart problems. Pine Bark is also a source of resveratrol, which is thought to raise the levels of high-density lipoproteins (HDLs or "good" cholesterol) in the blood, while decreasing the low-density lipoproteins (LDLs, or "bad" cholesterol) and thereby possibly helping to prevent heart attacks and strokes. It is also said to prevent fat in the bloodstream from sticking together and clogging the arteries, which is thought to promote better circulation of blood throughout the body, especially to the heart.

The inner bark of Pine Bark (cambium) is the source of resveratrol, a polyphenolic phytoalexin, which is produced in plants that is reputed to have antifungal properties.

Pine Bark is considered a diuretic, and as such, encourages the flow of urine, which is said to be very helpful in cases of urinary tract infections and kidney problems.

Precautions:

Pregnant or nursing women should not use Pine Bark.

* * * * *

Plantain



Botanical: Plantago major

Family: Plantaginaceae (plantain)

Other common names: Greater Plantain, Common Plantain, Ripple Grass, Cuckoo's Head, Waybread, Waybroad, Rat-tail Plantain, Englishman's Foot, White Man's Foot, Snake Weed, Broad-leaved Plantain, Ribwort, Dooryard Plantain

Common Plantain, like all members of the plantago family, contains a high amount of mucilage, which soothes and cools mucous membranes, while at the same time its astringency helps to relieve diarrhea, excess menstrual flow, hemorrhoids and incontinence in children and adults. It is also used to soothe the lungs while effectively loosening and expelling phlegm and congestion. Plantain also helps to control vaginal and other types of infection, remove obstructions from the liver, kidney and bladder, and possibly help in managing weight control.

Plant Description:

Plantain is an annual or perennial plant that is native to Eurasia and introduced to the New World by early settlers. The plant has been naturalized throughout temperate North America, may be found wild in fields, roadsides, lawns, and waste places, thriving in well-drained soil in full sun, and grows from one to two feet in height. Plantain produces a radial rosette of broad, oval leaves and a few densely flowered spikes of greenish-white to greenish-brown flowers that bloom from April to October.

It is frequently called a common weed that will take over a lawn, destroying and replacing the grass that originally occupied the site, but it has been greatly valued since antiquity for its medicinal qualities.

The foliage and seeds are used in herbal medicines. Some of the constituents in Plantain include adenine, mucilage, allantoin, aucubin, apigenin, acids (oleanolic, p-coumaric, salicylic, vanillic, ursolic, cinnamic, ferulic, benzoic, caffeic and chlorogenic), fiber, luteolin, potassium and vitamins C and A.

History:

It was one of the nine sacred herbs mentioned in the Lacnunga, the most ancient source of Anglo-Saxon medicine, where it was called "The Mother of Herbs." In Old World tradition, Plantains were used as a remedy for bleeding, cuts, burns, poison ivy, snakebites and inflammations, and a tea made from the seeds was employed to remedy diarrhea, dysentery and bleeding from mucous membranes. Its spread has been thought to follow in the footsteps of the early colonists and their settlements across the continent.

A report from Virginia, in 1687, stated that the Indians called the plant Englishman's Foot, due to the plant's habit of growing wherever the White Man created a settlement, giving the plant two of its common names. Longfellow noted in his "Hiawatha" that wherever the English have taken possession of the soil, the Plantain springs up. Native Americans used Plantain widely and referred to it as "Life Medicine."

The Shoshones employed it for wounds, diarrhea, and dysentery, and the herb was an antidote for venomous snakebites and a worm remedy in early American domestic medicine. It should be noted that Plantain is not related to the cooking banana of the same name, even though it is a corruption of a Spanish word, plantano, which means "banana or plant/plane tree." It is one of the large families of plantagos. The young leaves are a tasty addition to salads, but once again, it must not be confused with another plant, the poisonous foxglove, which has a very similar appearance.

Medical Uses:

Plantain leaves contain tannins and is considered an astringent that is able to draw tissues together (both internally and externally). As such, they can help to stop bleeding (including bleeding from mucous membranes) and control excess menstrual flow. It has also been used to relieve colitis, hemorrhoids, diarrhea, dysentery, vomiting and bed-wetting in children and incontinence in the aged.

As a diuretic, Plantain increases urine flow, and its potent antiseptic properties make it effective in easing uterine infections, urinary tract infections, syphili and bladder infections. It is beneficial for female disorders with fluent discharges and internal problems symptomatic of the urinary tract, including cystitis and leucorrhoea. Plantain may also slow the growth of tuberculosis bacteria and staphylococcus infection. The increased urine flow also helps to rid the body of excess mucus and fluids, which is useful in cases of edema (the accumulation of fluid in tissues that cause swelling) and excess water weight.

Treatments:

Plantain's diuretic properties are also believed to help kidney, liver, spleen and bladder function by flushing impurities with the increased urine flow. By removing obstructions from the liver, it is beneficial in cases of jaundice.

Plantain may be able to control cholesterol. The seeds contain soluble fibers that swell in gut when wet and fill the intestinal tract, preventing cholesterol and lipid absorption, and the increased bulk has a mild laxative (not purging) action that helps to rid the intestines of excess cholesterol. Added to the diet before meals, Plantain may cause a decrease in triglycerides and beta cholesterol (bad), and reduction of cholesterol, of course, may contribute to a reduction in heart disease.

As an expectorant, Plantain is thought to loosen and expel phlegm from the lungs and respiratory system. Because of its high mucilaginous qualities (that are not equaled by other mucilaginous herbs), it is also soothing to the lungs and protects damaged and sore tissue as it expels mucus. It relieves dry coughs, chronic bronchitis, coughing, wheezing and irritation.

An Italian study found that Plantain served effectively in contributing to weight loss in conjunction with a prescribed dietary regimen. When Plantain, with its high mucilage and fiber content, was added to the diet, it has been conjectured that it works by filling and coating the stomach, which limits caloric intake by reducing the absorption of fats, as well as providing a feeling of fullness and reducing the appetite.

Plantain contains salicylic acid, the natural forerunner of synthetic aspirin, and as such, has been effective in relieving pain, including neuralgic pain.

Plantain's mucilage is said to soothe the stomach and ease indigestion and heartburn, as well as soothe the inflamed tissues of the lower intestinal tract. The increased bulk in the intestines acts as a mild laxative that promotes normal bowel function and the fiber is thought to absorb toxins from the bowel and rid the body of poisons.

Used externally, Plantain has a long and venerable history. The tannins tighten tissues, but the mucilage acts as a demulcent and help to balance the astringent actions and heal and soothe bee stings, bites, and poison ivy. The astringency also has a styptic effect when used topically and acts to stanch hemorrhage and ease

wounds and bleeding cuts by contracting blood vessels. It makes a fine eyewash for pink eye; and it is believed to help those who wish to "quit the habit" to stop smoking by including Plantain in a gargle.

Precautions:

None

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Pleurisy Root



Botanical: *Asclepias tuberosa* (also known as *Aesclepias tuberosa*)

Family: Apocynaceae (dogbane) - formerly Asclepiadaceae (milkweed)

Other common names: Butterfly Weed, Silkweed, Flux Root, Tuber Root, White Root, Wind Root, Canada Root, Orange Swallow Wort, Orange Milkweed, Colic Root, Swallow Wort

Pleurisy Root is considered one of the finest plant expectorants that have been used to ease pleurisy, pneumonia, and other pulmonary and respiratory ailments. It also has been used to promote sweating, which will help to cool the body and reduce eruptive and burning fevers.

Plant Description:

Pleurisy Root is an herbaceous milkweed that is native to North America, and unlike other milkweeds, it does not produce a milky, latex-like sap. It is a handsome, fleshy-rooted perennial that may grow to a height of three feet and bears beautiful clusters of deep yellow and orange flowers. The plant is sensitive and difficult to establish and thrives in dry, sandy, neutral-to-acid soil in full sun, but when cultivated, Pleurisy Root does not like to be disturbed and prefers good peat soil.

It is considered rare and protected in some states. Pleurisy Root is an important nectar source for bees and other insects and a larval food source for monarch butterflies, thereby giving rise to one of its common names, Butterfly Weed. The seedpods in the plant contain soft filaments that are known as "silk," which suggests another of its common names, Silkweed, and this material is considered a fine insulation that may be superior to down feathers. Its botanical name, *Asclepias* (sometimes spelled *Aesclepias*) is derived from the Greek god of healing, Aesclepius, because of the plant's many medicinal applications; and the name, Pleurisy Root, is an obvious reference to its historical use to treat pleurisy and other pulmonary ailments.

History:

Early Western tribes enjoyed the high dextrose content in Pleurisy Root as a natural sweetener, and Canadian tribes considered it a fine vegetable for the pot. The Natchez people employed Pleurisy Root as a remedy for pneumonia, and the Catawbas used it for dysentery. It is interesting to note that Native Americans used Pleurisy Root in their medicines (mostly for lung ailments) for over one thousand years before the herb entered European pharmacopoeias of the eighteenth century or was listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia in the nineteenth century (1820-1920). It is a bitter, acrid, nutty-flavored tonic herb, and its dried roots are used in herbal medicine. Some of the constituents in Pleurisy Root include alpha- and beta-amyrin, resins, amino acids, volatile oil, flavonoids (rutin and quercetin), glucosidal principal (asclepiadin), kaempferol and lupeol.

Medical Uses:

Pleurisy Root, as its name suggests, has been a very valuable herb in the treatment for pleurisy. It not only eases the pain associated with the illness (which helps to make breathing easier), but most importantly, it is also considered an effective expectorant that encourages, loosens and removes phlegm from the respiratory tract. The herb is said to reduce inflammation of the pleural membranes of the lungs, enhance secretion of healthy lung fluids and stimulate the lymphatic system. Its specific action on the pulmonary and respiratory system is said to help break up colds, ease consumption, bronchitis, asthma, pneumonia, dry cough, clogged nasal passages, catarrhal affections of the lungs and throat and virtually all bronchial complaints.

Treatment:

Pleurisy Root is thought to be good for the digestive system, although not often used for this purpose. It has been used to relieve indigestion and a "gassy stomach" and for flatulent colic.

As a diaphoretic, Pleurisy Root is said to promote perspiration and sweating, and herbalists have used it to cool the body and reduce eruptive fevers. It has been utilized to ease the feverish stages of colds and flu, scarlet fever, rheumatic fever, bilious fever, low typhoid states, measles and other burning fevers.

Several of Pleurisy Root's historical applications have included treatment for dysentery and diarrhea, and have been called an effective antispasmodic.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Pleurisy Root. Overuse (many times the recommended dosage) may cause diarrhea and vomiting.

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Pokeweed



Botanical: *Phytolacca americana* (also known as *Phytolacca decandra*)

Family: Phytolaccaceae (pokeweed)

Other common names: Poke Root, Garget, Score, Coakum, Cocum, Pigeon Berry, Red Plant, Virginia Poke, Skokeweed, Cancer Root, Red Nightshade, American Nightshade, Redweed, Ink Berry, Red Ink Plant

Did you know...?

Pokeweed is said to exert a positive influence on the lymphatic system, stimulating glandular action and relieving swollen glands, goiter, enlarged thyroid glands, lymphadenitis and mumps. It is a very potent herb, and its unique chemistry is believed to enhance immune function and act as an antiviral and anti-inflammatory. Pokeweed also acts as a powerful purgative.

Plant Description:

Pokeweed is a North American native and one of many species of *Phytolaccas* that are distributed worldwide. It is an erect weed that may be found in damp fields,

open woods and waste places, reaching a height of twelve feet, and thriving in rich, moist, well-drained soil in sun.

The herbaceous perennial produces a branched, purplish, succulent stem that bears large, pointed leaves and upright spikes of small, greenish-white flowers that develop into hanging clusters of purple-to-black berries, which contain a deep red juice. The botanical genus, *Phytolacca*, is derived from the Greek word, *phyton*, meaning "plant" and the Latin, *lacca*, meaning "lacquer."

History:

The English name, Pokeweed, is believed to be a derivative of the Native American words, *pocan*, referring to any plant yielding a red dye, and *pak*, meaning "blood." Pokeweed was utilized by the First Nations of North America as a purgative, emetic and anti-rheumatic, and it was officially listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1820 to 1916 as an analgesic and anti-inflammatory.

It has also played a long and important role in herbal medicine as a treatment for cancer and is, in fact, one of the constituents in the Hoxsey Formula (unapproved by the orthodox medical community) for the management of many types of cancer, alluding to one of the plant's common names, Cancer Root. Other common names, Ink Berry and Red Ink Plant refer to the rich color of the berries that were used in the ink that penned the United States Constitution (it would, in fact, make a wonderful dye, but is rather unstable). Although most parts of the plant are poisonous, very young shoots and young leaves have been eaten like asparagus after being boiled in many, many changes of water.

Pokeweed is cultivated as a popular ornamental in Europe and was once used in Portugal to color port wines. The dried roots and berries of Pokeweed are used in herbal medicines, but it is important to understand that all parts, notably the leaves and berries, are toxic if eaten fresh, and must be processed before being used medicinally. Some of the constituents in Pokeweed include alkaloids (betanine, betanidine, phytolaccine, etc.), triterpene saponins, bitter resin, tannin, glycoprotein lectins (sometimes called Pokeweed mitogens), esculentic acid, jaligonic acid, phytolaccagenic acid, GABA, histamine, PAP (Pokeweed antiviral protein), spinasterol, sterols, starch, saccharose and potassium salts.

Medical Uses:

Pokeweed is considered an "alternative," or agent that helps to gradually and favorably alter the course of an ailment or condition. It helps to modify the process of nutrition and excretion, restoring normal bodily function, as well as acting to cleanse and stimulate the efficient removal of waste products from the system. As such, it not only cleanses the intestinal tract and blood, but it is also thought to cleanse the liver by encouraging bile flow and releasing accumulated toxins.

The result of cleaner blood is a great help for many skin diseases, and Pokeweed is said to be excellent for alleviating scrofula, eczema, psoriasis and lingering infections.

As an antiviral, Pokeweed (or Pokeroor) has an unusual chemistry. The glycosidase, PAP (Pokeweed antiviral protein) has been shown to inactivate ribosomes in both eukaryotic and prokaryotic cells and has demonstrated potent antiviral activity against many viruses, including HIV, in vitro. It is also currently being researched for possible use in anti-AIDS drugs.

Pokeweed contains substances referred to collectively as Pokeweed mitogens that are said to affect cell division. They are toxic to many disease-causing organisms, including the water snails that cause schistosomiasis.

Treatments:

Pokeweed is believed to contain potent anti-inflammatory agents that have been used to relieve tracheitis, laryngitis, tonsillitis, pharyngitis, chronic catarrh, inflamed mucous membranes and many rheumatic complaints.

As a lymphagogue, Pokeweed is thought to be excellent in cases of stagnation and cessation of flow associated with lymphatic and glandular stasis. This activity is important because the lymphatic system transports infection-fighting cells called lymphocytes, is also involved in the removal of foreign matter and cell debris by phagocytes, and is part of the body's immune system. It has been used to relieve swollen glands, enlarged thyroid glands, goiter, lymphadenitis, mumps, lymphedema and many other lymphatic disorders.

Further supporting its importance as a potent immune enhancer, Pokeweed is believed to stimulate macrophage activity. Phytolacca mitogens have demonstrated an immuno-stimulating effect by enhancing hemagglutination, leucagglutination and mitogenicity (proliferation of T and B-lymphocytes) and an increase in peripheral blood plasma cells.

Pokeweed is considered a cathartic and emetic. Its purgative actions work to cause copious and rapid evacuation of the bowels, and its emetic properties work to induce vomiting.

Traditional herbalists have been using Pokeweed for years in treatments for certain **types:** of cancers. There are claims that Pokeweed has been effective in cases of uterine, throat and breast cancer. It has been utilized topically in poultices, as well as internally (and is an important ingredient in the controversial Hoxsey formula for cancer care) and other herbal blends. It is important to note that the Hoxsey formula is not sanctioned by the orthodox medical community. Pokeweed is also used to relieve swollen and caked breasts (mastitis).

Used topically in poultices (and internally), Pokeweed is thought to be excellent in cases of scrofula, eczema, psoriasis, lingering infections, itching and other skin diseases.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should avoid Pokeweed. Great care should be taken with the use of this herb, since it is very potent in its actions. It should be used only in small amounts and under the care of a knowledgeable health care provider. It should not be used by those who have lymphatic cancer.

Taken in large doses Pokeweed has narcotic properties and slows cardiac contraction, reduces the force of the pulse, decreases respiratory activity and acts to paralyze the central nervous system. Gastrointestinal irritation is an indication of toxicity, and usage should be stopped immediately.

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Pomegranate



Botanical: *Punica granatum*

Family: Punicaceae (pomegranate) - Lythraceae (purple loosestrife)

Other common names: Granada, Melogranato, Grenadier, Granatum, Chinese Apple

Pomegranate has been used since time immemorial for ridding the intestines of tapeworm infestation and other intestinal parasites. It is also an astringent that has been used to ease chronic diarrhea and dysentery, and recent studies show promise in the area of antioxidant protection for a healthy heart and serious prostate disease.

Plant Description:

The Pomegranate is one of a species of fruit-bearing, deciduous shrubs or trees, and it is believed to have originated in the area from eastern Iran to India; however, its true native range has not accurately been determined because of its extensive cultivation throughout the warm areas of the world. The tree bears slender, oblong, glossy leaves with bright red flowers and fruits (containing edible pulp and seed

grains) that range in size from an orange to a grapefruit, and it grows as an ornamental, thriving in well-drained soil in full sun, reaching a possible height of thirty feet.

Pomegranates may grow wild and are drought tolerant, but they fruit most successfully when cultivated in long, hot, summer climates; in wet areas, they are prone to root decay from fungal diseases.

History:

It is said that the Iranian cities of Kashan, Saveh and Yazd cultivate and produce the finest Pomegranates in the world. Pomegranate's medicinal history may be traced back to antiquity. In the Old Testament, it is noted that Pomegranate figures were woven onto the borders of Hebrew priestly robes, and Kings Chapter 7:13-22 describes Pomegranates depicted in King Solomon's temple in Jerusalem.

The Jewish tradition teaches that the Pomegranate is a symbol for righteousness, and many Jews eat Pomegranates on Rosh Hashanah and Sukkot. Pomegranate was mentioned as a cure for tapeworms in the famed Ebers Papyri (circa 1500 B.C.) that was found in Egypt, and was used for that purpose in ancient Greece (the same use echoed in today's herbal medicine).

Pomegranate was regarded as a medicinal herb in Traditional Chinese Medicine around 470 A.D., and was considered a symbol of fertility in times past and was eaten by childless women. It is said that Europeans largely overlooked the medicinal applications of Pomegranate until 1804, when a practitioner in India cured an Englishman of tapeworm infestation. The fruits are eaten fresh, and the seed grains are used to garnish desserts. Pomegranate juice is famous as the cordial called grenadine, an important ingredient in cocktails, as well as an important flavoring for drinks, fruit salads, sorbets, ice creams and natural health fruit juices (in England, Pomegranate juice is endorsed by the cholesterol charity, HEART UK). Preliminary studies have suggested that Pomegranate juice may contain almost three times the total antioxidant ability compared to the same quantity of green tea or red wine. The bark, root, fruit and fruit rind are used in herbal medicine. Some of the constituents in Pomegranate include fruit acids, sugar, polyphenols, tannins, anthocyanins, alkaloids (pelletierine, etc.), gum, protein, iron, calcium, phosphorus and potassium. One Pomegranate is believed to

deliver forty percent of an adult's vitamin C requirement, the antioxidant vitamins A and E, and it is said to be a rich source of folic acid and niacin.

Medical Uses:

Pomegranate is considered an anthelmintic or substance that destroys and expels intestinal worms. Of all types of intestinal worm infestations, Pomegranate is said to be most useful in cases of tapeworm, an incredibly long parasite, which attaches itself to the intestinal walls of its host by means of spined or sucking structures. Pomegranate is believed to contain an unusual alkaloid content, called pelletierine, which was discovered in 1878, and apparently effective when expelling worms and parasites from the intestinal tract.

Pomegranate is a bittersweet, warming, astringent herb, and its fruit peel contains about thirty percent tannin, which is an active astringent substance. As such, it has been used to relieve looseness of bowels, control chronic diarrhea and alleviate amoebic dysentery.

With regard to heart health, the polyphenols in Pomegranate are currently being studied for their abilities as antioxidants that may be responsible for free radical scavenging. In several human clinical trials, Pomegranate has been found effective in reducing several heart risk factors, including LDL (low-density lipoproteins or "bad cholesterol") oxidation, macrophage oxidative status and foam cell formation, all of which are steps in arteriosclerosis and heart disease. Israeli scientists claim that Pomegranate may prevent the thickening of arteries.

Researchers at the University Of Wisconsin School Of Medicine claim that Pomegranate shows major promise in the fight against prostate cancer. In vitro studies using human cancer cells, the higher the dose of Pomegranate extract the cells received, the more cells died. In laboratory tests using mice, the results were dramatic: Those receiving the higher concentration of Pomegranate extract showed significant slowing of their cancer progression and a decrease in the levels of prostate-specific antigen (PSA), a marker used to indicate the presence of prostate cancer in humans. "Our study - while early - adds to growing evidence that pomegranates contain very powerful agents against cancer, particularly prostate cancer," says lead author, Dr. Hasan Mukhtar, professor of dermatology in the UW Medical School.

Treatment:

According to Dr. Qi Dai, assistant professor of medicine at Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, a ten-year study found that the particularly strong antioxidant effects of the polyphenols, which may be found in Pomegranate, act to reduce the incidence of Alzheimer's disease.

Pomegranate is believed to possess antiviral and antiseptic properties, which have been helpful when applied to cuts. When used externally, it is said to be beneficial in cases of skin problems, vaginal discharge and as a vaginal douche for leucorrhoea. Pomegranate's antibacterial activities also render it beneficial for oral health, helping to relieve mouth sores, throat infections (as a gargle), mouth irritation, and several studies have indicated that treatment with Pomegranate extract significantly improved clinical signs of chronic periodontitis. Furthermore, its astringent action results in strengthened gums.

Precautions:

Pomegranate should not be used by pregnant and nursing women, and overuse (many times the recommended dosage) may cause cramps, vomiting and diarrhea.

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Prickly Pear Cactus



Botanical: *Opuntia ficus-indica*

Family: Cactaceae (cactus)

Other common names: *Opuntia*, Nopal, Indian Fig, Smooth Prickly Pear, Tuna Blanca, Nochtli, Prickly Pear

The Prickly Pear Cactus is often used to relieve the symptoms of overindulgence in alcohol, including dry mouth and nausea. The herb is also thought to lower fats and cholesterol in the blood, and is becoming increasingly popular as a means to decrease blood sugar levels and control diabetes.

Plant Description:

Prickly Pear Cactus is a large cactus with a woody trunk and large top, many oblong joints, small, yellow barbed spines, bright yellow flowers, and red fruit with a juicy, white, sweet flesh and numerous black seeds.

It is said to be a native of Mexico, where it is considered the symbol of identity of the Mexican people and even included on the Mexican flag. About twenty thousand years ago, *Opuntia* (or Prickly Pear) began to develop as a food, and the plant's development was said to enable human settlement and cultural development in many parts of the arid lands, where it was considered the lifeblood of those ancient cultures, particularly in times of drought.

From about 5,000 to 7,000 B. C., prehistoric indigenous groups began the cultivation of a series of native plants, including beans, *opuntia*, peppers and agave, etc., and in Pre-Columbian times, Prickly Pear was considered an important staple food (for both humans and livestock), a beverage, a medicine, a source of dye and was included in religious and magical rites.

During the Spanish Colonial Period, Prickly Pear gained further importance as forage when cattle was introduced to the semiarid areas and there was a consequent depletion of grasslands. Its beneficial uses as a medicine and beverage were also gaining in reputation. In the De la Cruz-Badiano Codex of 1552, it was noted that Prickly Pear treated several ailments and was used to cure burns and soothe wounds, and Friar Motolinia said, "these Indians, from a land so sterile that they lack water, drink the juice of these leaves of nopal" (the genus, *Opuntia*, is still

often called Nopal). Prickly Pear received its botanical name, *Opuntia*, from Tournefort, who thought the plant was similar to a thorny plant that grew in the town of Opus, in Greece.

After the Spanish conquest, Prickly Pear spread from Mexico to practically all the Americas (from Canada to Patagonia, Argentina) and may now be found in tropical and arid regions throughout the world, including the southwestern United States. Some of the constituents in Prickly Pear Cactus include water, fat, mucopolysaccharide soluble fibers, carbohydrate, protein, saponins, glycosides, a flavonoid (quercetin), minerals and large amounts of B1, B6, niacin, riboflavin and pantothenic acid.

Medical Uses:

Prickly Pear is said to be beneficial in diabetes control, because it contains a high percentage of carbohydrate fibers known as mucilage which does not dissolve in water, but it does absorb water, so it swells up to form a bulky paste when exposed to fluids. The fiber component is thought to produce hypoglycemic activity by affecting the intestinal uptake of glucose. In double-blind tests, insulin concentrations were favorably affected with the administration of Prickly Pear, and the herb is thought to reach maximum effect about three to four hours after eating a meal.

The pectin component in Prickly Pear does dissolve in water and becomes a thick, syrupy liquid, which is thought to coat and protect the stomach and gastrointestinal tract, thereby helping to relieve digestive problems, relieve stomachache and irritable bowel syndrome.

This coating effect created by the pectin in Prickly Pear may help hyperlipidemia and to lower cholesterol in the blood. The pectin seems to attach to substances in the stomach or intestines and appears to inhibit the absorption of fats from food. Consequently, excess levels of fats and cholesterol in the blood may be lowered. Animal research has indicated that the pectin component may also alter hepatic (liver) cholesterol metabolism.

Prickly Pear is believed to be effective for hangover relief from overindulgence in alcohol. In tests, the greatest improvements were seen in symptoms of nausea, loss of appetite and dry mouth.

Treatment:

Some researchers have hypothesized that hangovers are caused by inflammation, and Prickly Pear may work to improve hangover by reducing inflammation.

Prickly Pear has been used to treat eye inflammation, rabies, pimples, dysentery and diarrhea. The action is not clearly understood, but the pectin content is believed to bind to bacteria and cause them to be eliminated from the body and is therefore helpful in treating diarrhea and other conditions associated with bacterial infection. Prickly Pear was once also used to treat gonorrhea.

Used externally, Prickly Pear joints are split open and applied as a healing pad for rheumatic and asthmatic symptoms. Applied to the skin in a salve, it is also used to provide topical relief for sun/windburn, wounds, rash, minor burns, hemorrhoids, insect bites and abrasions, and the pulp is used in shampoo.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Prickly Pear, nor should those who have severe liver or kidney disease, since there has been limited research into its effects. The herb may cause abdominal bloating, nausea and diarrhea, and it should never be taken in conjunction with prescription diabetes medications, because it may cause hypoglycemia (blood sugar that is too low), .Diabetics should always monitor their blood sugar levels carefully.

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Prickly Ash Bark



Botanical: *Zanthoxylum americanum* (also spelled *Xanthoxylum americanum*)

Family: Rutaceae (rue)

Other Common Names: Northern Prickly Ash, Suterberry, Suterberry Bark, Yellow Wood Berries, Pellitory Bark, Prickly Ash Berry, Toothache Bush, Toothache Tree, Angelica Tree, Yellow Wood

Did you know...?

Prickly Ash Bark is a traditional treatment for all common ailments caused by insufficient circulation, including leg cramps, varicose veins, cold hands and feet and the feeling of cold throughout the body. The increased circulation has also been used to relieve the joint aches and pains of chronic rheumatism and arthritis.

Plant Description:

Prickly Ash Bark is a beautiful, deciduous tree that is a native of North America, growing anywhere from four to about twenty-five feet in height and may be found in woodlands and on riverbanks, thriving in damp, fertile, well-drained soil in sun or shade. True to its name, the Prickly Ash's branchlets are loaded with thorns and produce alternately growing, pinnate leaves, and the bruised foliage exudes a

delicious, resinous citrus-orange-like fragrance. The tree (or shrub) also bears small, yellowish-green flowers that grow in clusters from April through June, before the leaves appear, and they are followed by small, red, edible berries.

History:

Prickly Ash Bark was widely used by numerous Native American tribes as a treatment for toothache, rheumatism, gonorrhea, sore throat and as a wash for itchy skin. In the case of toothache, a piece of the bark was apparently inserted into the tooth cavity to ease the ache, but it was never clear whether the relief was due to the actual effect on the pain or distraction of attention caused by irritation produced by the bark (although it is interesting to note that rubbing the berries on the skin is said to produce a numbing effect). Native Americans shared their knowledge of the herb with settlers, and Prickly Ash soon became a popular remedy for rheumatism and toothache (giving the tree several of its common names, Toothache Tree, etc.). The herb was included in Dr. Jacob Bigelow's monumental, three-volume *American Medical Botany* of 1817-1820, and he noted: "Many physicians place great reliance on its powers in rheumatic complaints."

Prickly Ash Bark became official in the *United States Pharmacopoeia* from 1820 to 1926 as a treatment for chronic rheumatism, flatulence and diarrhea. Although it was a widely used traditional American remedy for toothache and rheumatism, John Nash introduced the herb into mainstream medicine in the nineteenth century, when he used it to treat typhus and cholera epidemics.

Medical Uses:

Today, herbalists still specify Prickly Ash Bark as a remedy for rheumatism and are recommended for improved circulation. Prickly Ash Bark is a spicy, warming, stimulant herb, and it is said to act in the same manner as Cayenne, but with a somewhat slower action. The bark and fruits are used in herbal medicines, and the essential oils are used in perfumery. Some of the constituents contained in Prickly Ash Bark include alkaloids (chelerythrine, magnoflorine, laurifoline, nitidine, tambetarine, candicine and gamma- and beta-fagarine), coumarins (xanthyletin, zanthoxyletin and alloxanthyletin), an aromatic bitter oil (xanthoxylin), tannin, volatile oils and resin.

Treatment:

Prickly Ash Bark is considered an "alterative" or herb that helps to gradually and favorably alter the course of an ailment or condition. It enhances the process of nutrition and excretion, restores normal bodily function, and acts to cleanse and stimulate the efficient removal of waste products from the system.

As a circulatory stimulant, Prickly Ash Bark improves circulation throughout the body and is beneficial to a wide variety of conditions. It helps to warm "cold" conditions in the body, including abdominal chills, peripheral circulation to the hands and feet, as well as the "dead" or white fingers associated with Raynaud's syndrome. The herb is said to produce arterial/capillary excitement to provide relief for leg cramping, chilblains, varicose veins, varicose ulcers and lymphatic circulation.

Since Prickly Ash Bark promotes general blood circulation, it is also said to be beneficial where poor circulation causes soreness or pain to the bones or joints. The herb is said to be especially helpful in cases of muscle spasms, aches and pains caused by chronic rheumatism and arthritic complaints.

Prickly Ash Bark is believed to stimulate the digestive system and assists in the relief of dyspepsia, colic, indigestion and general stomach problems. It is said to relieve flatulence (the presence of gas in the stomach and intestines) and reduce belching and burping. It is also believed to be a useful tonic in debilitated conditions of the stomach and digestive organs, including the liver.

Prickly Ash Bark is considered a diaphoretic that increases perspiration and reduces intermittent fever. This action also helps to rid the body of toxins through the skin in the sweating process.

As a "nervine," Prickly Ash Bark acts as a tonic to strengthen the function of the nervous system, and in this case, it stimulates and exerts a gentle strengthening effect on the entire body. It is said to restore tone and normal functional activity in the nervous system and help to strengthen feeble conditions, fatigue, convalescents and the elderly.

Prickly Ash Bark is said to destroy toxins. As an antimicrobial, the chelerythrine content in Prickly Ash is believed to destroy microbes, and it is believed to destroy

worms, yeast overgrowth, Candida, cholera, gonorrhoea, typhoid, typhus and dysentery.

As a strong stimulant, Prickly Ash Bark exerts a positive influence upon the entire body, including mucous membranes. This is believed to be of benefit to asthma, colds and sore throats.

Prickly Ash Bark contains tannins that exert an astringent action and help to control diarrhea.

Used externally, Prickly Ash Bark has been used as an anodyne for centuries for chronic joint pain, lumbago and rheumatism and is said to improve old wounds and indolent ulcers. The bark is thought to help relieve sores in the mouth and ease the pain of toothache.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Prickly Ash Bark, nor should those who experience stomach inflammations.

* * * * *

Primula



Botanical: Primula veris

Family: Primulaceae (primrose)

Other common names: Cowslip, Paigle, Fairy Cup, Butter Rose, English Cowslip, Key of St. Peter, Key of Heaven, Arthritica, Crewel, Buckles, Primrose

Did you know...?

Primula is a soothing and very versatile herb that calms the nerves, eases headaches and acts as a mild sedative and tranquilizer. It is also thought to relieve lung congestion and ease bronchitis; and as an anti-inflammatory, Primula is believed to relieve the discomforts of gout, arthritis and rheumatic conditions. And to think, this pretty flower was almost picked to extinction!

Plant Description:

Primula is a hardy, herbaceous and low-growing perennial that is native to Europe, but many other species are common in continental Europe, Great Britain and Asia in north temperate zones. The beautiful, soft yellow flowers are popularly cultivated in gardens, with some varieties growing wild; and at one time, they were so popular that they were almost picked to extinction. The plant favors moist, limy soil in sun or partial shade, and the most common varieties grow from three to nine inches in height.

History:

Primula has a long history as a medicinal herb. The first-century Roman scholar, Pliny, recommended it for paralysis, gout and rheumatism, and Primula was once even known by the names *Herba paralysis*, *Radix arthritica*, and *Palsywort*, because of its widespread use for those conditions. In medieval times, Primula was used to treat conditions involving spasms, cramps, paralysis and rheumatic pain, and in 1653, the great English herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper, recommended it for treating spasms, cramps, paralysis and rheumatic pain, also calling it "as fine a salve to heal wound[s] as any I know."

He also prescribed the flowers for "all infirmities of the head," and the leaves as a beauty treatment, suggesting that they were excellent for "spots and wrinkles of the skin, sun burning and freckles."

The flowers were made into a wine, which was taken as a sedative and nervine, and it is interesting to note that Primula is still used today for most of these same medicinal applications. Today, in Europe, Primula (sometimes called the Primrose, but should not be confused with Evening Primrose, an entirely distinct herb with different applications) is used extensively as a blood purifier. In addition to the medical applications of Primula, it is used in jams, desserts, salads and meat stuffing; boiled as a vegetable; and it is a fragrance in perfumes and potpourris. It is also used in the cosmetic industry as a lotion for skin spots and wrinkles. Some of the constituents in Primula include the fragrant oil, primulin, flavonoids (including quercetin), saponins and salicylates.

Medical Uses:

Primula has been used for centuries as a "nervine," or substance that has a tonic effect on the nervous system and produces a feeling of well-being. It has been used to calm nervous conditions, trembling, anxiety and general weakness.

Further supporting its tonic effect on the nervous system, Primula is also considered a calmative that has mild sedative or tranquilizing effects. It is believed to be helpful in treating insomnia, particularly when related to anxiety and tension.

Primula is a potent expectorant. The saponins in the herb are very helpful in relieving catarrh, mucous congestion, dry coughs, bronchitis and other lung ailments.

Treatment:

As a painkiller, the salicylates in Primula act like aspirin and are said to be effective in relieving ordinary and migraine headaches.

Primula is considered an anti-inflammatory herb. The quercetin content helps to relieve the aches and pains of rheumatism and arthritis. Moreover, as a blood purifier, the herb reinforces this action by easing gouty, arthritic, rheumatic, and various other conditions attributed to contaminated blood.

Used externally, Primula is used for skin problems, blemishes, spots, wrinkles, and is said to promote a healthy glow.

Precautions:

Some people are allergic to Primula and should avoid its use. Moreover, it should not be used by pregnant women, nor by those who take anticoagulant drugs (warfarin, etc.), due to the aspirin-like salicylate content.

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Prunella



Botanical: *Prunella vulgaris*

Family: Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

Other common names: Self Heal, All Heal, Brunella, Woundwort, Wound Root, Heal All, Slough Heal, Blue Curls, Hercules' Woundwort, Hook-Heal, Heart of the Earth, Carpenter's Herb, Xia Ku Cao, Dragonhead, Common Self-Heal

Prunella is an old treatment for internal and external bleeding and wounds, including excessive menstruation and bleeding ulcers. It is said to be a potent antiviral agent and has shown great promise in laboratory tests for possible use in herpes, HIV, and AIDS treatments.

Plant Description:

Prunella is a creeping perennial that is native to Eurasia and grows throughout Europe and North America, where it may be found in damp meadows, pastures, waste places, and on roadsides, thriving in moist, well-drained soil in sunny areas or light shade. When imported to North America and Australia, it quickly became naturalized as a common wildflower and abundant in open and exposed situations, tending to oust native flowers.

It is a diminutive plant but will grow larger in all its parts when growing in more sheltered places. The main stem of the plant is grooved and rough to the touch and bears pointed oval leaves with dense, purple flower clusters (sometimes blue or pink).

History:

Prunella does not appear to have been known to the ancient Romans or Greeks, but it was mentioned in Chinese medical literature during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A. D. 23) as an important herb in the treatment for complaints associated with a disturbed liver, high blood pressure, and conjunctivitis.

In Western medicine, it has always been regarded primarily as a wound herb, giving rise to many of its common names, Woundwort, etc. Its botanical name, Prunella, is derived from Brunellen, a name given to it by the Germans, because it rose to prominence when military physicians used it to treat a contagious fever that raged among the German imperial troops in 1547 and 1566, that was characterized by a sore throat and a brown-coated tongue. The fever was called "the browns" (brun is the German word for "brown").

In John Gerard's Herball of 1597, he claimed there was no "better wound herb[e]" in the world than Self Heal" (another common name) and said it would "heal any green wound[e]." In 1653, the great English herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper, wrote, "Self Heal" would be good taken both "inwardly or outwardly for wounds and bleeding" and would "cleanse the foulness of sores and speedily heal them." Prunella is an astringent, slightly bitter, saline herb that is harvested when in optimum condition (and the plant is in bloom). Although the plant is a member of the mint family, no mint fragrance or flavor is present, and all the aerial (aboveground) parts of the plant are used in herbal medicine. Some of the

constituents included in Prunella are volatile oil, a bitter principle, tannin, rutin, beta-carotene, sugar, cellulose, vitamins B-1, C, and K.

Medical Uses:

Prunella is an astringent that has been effective in controlling both internal and external bleeding. It has been used as a styptic that has been used internally in Western medicine to stop hemorrhage, internal bleeding ulcers, and excessive menstruation, and its gentle astringency also helps to control chronic and sudden diarrhea (although it is recommended that this application be used under the aegis of a health care provider). For external treatment, those astringent qualities may be applied to relieve hemorrhoids and decrease the bleeding of wounds and cuts.

As an antiviral, Prunella is said to be useful for treating herpes virus infection in two ways. It is thought to stop the virus from growing within cells and by preventing it from binding to cells. Moreover, recent and very hopeful research has shown very interesting results with respect to HIV and AIDS. In Japan, studies showed strong anti-HIV effects in laboratory conditions and Canadian scientists claim that Prunella blocks cell-to-cell transmission of the HIV virus and interferes with the virus's ability to bind with T cells, the immune cells that are destroyed by HIV infection. At the University of California at Davis, scientists have identified a complex sugar in the herb that accounts for its actions against HIV.

Treatment:

Prunella is considered an antibiotic and antiseptic (which supports its historical use to help ease sore throats and heal "green" wounds). It is still used externally in gargles to relieve sore throat and ulcerated mouth, in addition to stopping infection from spreading and speeding up the healing of wounds, cuts, bruises, burns, ulcers, and sores. It is also believed to reduce scarring.

Prunella is reported to reduce lymphatic congestion and has been used to relieve swollen glands, mumps, and mastitis.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Prunella was used as a liver and gallbladder stimulant and was used to treat conjunctivitis, hypertension, and headaches, among other disorders.

Precautions:

Those with diarrhea, nausea, stomachache, or vomiting should consult a physician before using Prunella. This herb could potentially interfere with actions of prescription blood thinners (Plavix, Coumadin, etc.).

* * * * *

Psyllium



Botanical: *Plantago psyllium* (also known as *Plantago arenaria*)

Family: Plantaginaceae (plantain)

Other common names: Fleeseed, Fleawort, Branching Plantain, Spogel, Plantago, Psyllium Husk, Ispaghula (*P.ovata* or Indian Psyllium)

Psyllium is Nature's way to help irritable bowel syndrome. One of the highest sources of dietary fiber to be found in any food, this natural laxative will promote a clean, clear intestinal tract and colon that will give you more energy and a healthier life. It has been used to treat ulcers, colitis, diverticulosis and constipation.

Plant Description:

Psyllium is a low-growing annual that is native to the Mediterranean area, northern Africa, and southern Asia and has been cultivated for thousands of years in those regions, as well as Europe and North America. Psyllium is an annual herb that may grow in waste places in full sun to about sixteen inches in height, and it has long occupied an important place among medicinal plants. Its tiny seeds give the herb its name from the Greek, *psylla*, which means "flea," and those tiny seeds contain a high mucilage content that, when combined with water, swell tremendously. The species *Plantago ovata* and *Plantago Psyllium* may be used interchangeably.

History:

The enlarged mass is highly gelatinous, and has been used since ancient times as an effective laxative. For centuries, traditional Chinese and Ayurvedic physicians have used Psyllium to treat constipation, diarrhea and hemorrhoids, and it was one of the first medicinal plants to be carried to the Americas from Europe, where it had been used for good intestinal health since the sixteenth century.

Psyllium did not become popular in the United States until early in the twentieth century, but it is now used extensively for effective intestinal and colon health. The seeds and husks are used for medicinal purposes. Its special asset is that, being a vegetable substance, it has a purely mechanical action, lubricating and cleansing the intestines simultaneously with no harmful side effects. Constituents include mucilage, glycosides, tannins, minerals, polysaccharides, proteins, essential oils, sterol and flavonoids.

Medical Uses:

Psyllium has long been used as one of nature's most effective laxatives that relieves chronic constipation and promotes a free and regular bowel movement. It increases the volume of the intestinal contents that encourages defecation, and the mucilage acts as an intestinal lubricant softening the stool for easier passage.

Treatment:

Psyllium is an effective treatment for inflammatory diverticulitis, Crohn's disease and irritable bowel syndrome. It cleanses the colon and is considered the "colon

broom" that allows the body to gain better health in all bodily areas as a high-fiber detergent that removes colon waste and eliminates the putrefactive toxins in the intestines and colon. By reducing the transit time through the colon, toxins and bad colon bacteria are removed, while friendly bacteria are promoted.

Reduce the risk of heart disease with Psyllium. Recent studies have shown that Psyllium lowered both cholesterol and triglycerides. Soluble fibers prevent cholesterol absorption, and insoluble fibers have a scrubbing action as they pass through the intestines, ridding it of excess cholesterol and old, excess intestinal debris. It could also lower cholesterol by increasing bile-acid excretion. Bile acids are digestive substances that are made from cholesterol and are normally reabsorbed from the intestine after they do their job, but when Psyllium absorbs bile and moves it through the intestines, the body has to take cholesterol out of the blood to make more. Psyllium also helps slow cholesterol productions by the liver, helping cells eliminate bad cholesterol, the kind believed to be responsible for closing arteries.

Psyllium's lubricating action in the intestines and colon make its gentle laxative motion effective in helping hemorrhoid sufferers. The same lubricating action relaxes tones and coats mucous membranes, loosens and reduces phlegm, and is said to be effective in treating bronchitis and pneumonia.

For treating diarrhea, Psyllium's bowel regulating action works by forming bulk that will slow down rapid, loose stools.

Psyllium is popular in weight loss programs, as it fills the gastrointestinal tract with a bulk that is low in calories and helps curb the urge to eat. Its laxative action helps to reduce excess weight by removing it.

Preliminary tests have shown Psyllium to help lower blood glucose levels by slowing the absorption of dietary sugar, which may be beneficial in the treatment for diabetes.

Topically, Psyllium has been used to treat skin irritations, insect bites and stings.

Some herbalists maintain that Psyllium relieves an ailment known as autointoxication, in which the body poisons itself by producing and absorbing an excess of intestinal waste. Psyllium is said to remove the offending substances.

Precautions:

Pregnant women should avoid all laxatives. A possible allergic reaction could result in the use of Psyllium, and since it may affect absorption of medications and vitamins, Psyllium should be taken at least an hour after other medicines. Diabetics should discuss its use with a physician before using. Taking psyllium supplements without adequate liquids may cause it to swell, and, in extreme cases, cause choking. Do not take this product if you have difficulty swallowing. People with esophageal stricture (narrowing of the esophagus) or any other narrowing or obstruction of the gastrointestinal tract should not take Psyllium. It is important to drink at least six glasses of water daily when taking Psyllium or constipation may result.

* * * * *

Pulsatilla



Botanical: *Anemone pulsatilla* (also known as *Pulsatilla vulgaris*)

Family: Ranunculaceae (buttercup)

Other common names: European Pasque Flower, Passe Flower, Easter Flower, Meadow Anemone, Wind Flower

Pulsatilla has been used by herbalists as a nervine to calm and soothe the nerves and relieve pain, neuralgia, tension headaches and insomnia. It is also thought to ease ovarian and menstrual pain, premenstrual syndrome (PMS); and the herb's antibacterial qualities are believed to be effective in alleviating acne and other skin problems.

Plant Description:

Pulsatilla is an anemone and one of over two thousand species of mostly herbs and shrubs in the large ranunculaceae family. It is a handsome perennial with simple, erect, rounded stems, reaching about five inches in height. The leaves are downy; the segments many-parted and the solitary flowers are deep-purple or violet, blooming early in the spring, and, according to some writers, again in the latter part of summer or early in the fall.

History:

Because of the plants early blooming period (about Eastertide), Pulsatilla was given the name, Pasque Flower, by the French. A rich, legendary history has gained the anemone many names and attributes. It is said to have sprung from the blood of Adonis, and the Romans considered it valuable in preventing fever.

The common name, Windflower, is accounted for in several ways, one of which is Pliny's statement that anemone blossoms are opened by the wind. The plant may be found growing wild (although *Pulsatilla vulgaris* does not transplant well) in open meadows, pasture grounds and fields, thriving in dry, sandy, neutral-to-alkaline soil in full sun. Pulsatilla grows in the temperate zones of the northern hemisphere of Europe (where their medicinal uses have been recorded since antiquity by Galen and Dioscorides); with other species growing in North America (where it was considered the chief medicinal plant of the Minnesota tribes of Native Americans and the "great medicine" of the Northwestern tribes); as well as in Asia (where it has been in use as an antibacterial, astringent and anti-inflammatory since the days of the Han Dynasty of 206 B.C-A.D. 23). The European (Old World) and American species greatly resemble each other in appearance and some applications.

Pulsatilla is included in the British Pharmacopoeia, and the North American species (the floral emblem of South Dakota) was formerly listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1882 to 1905, as a diuretic, expectorant and uterine stimulant. It is a bitter, cooling herb that is cut when flowering, then carefully dried for use in herbal medicines. Some of the constituents in Pulsatilla include an oily principle, which decomposes into protoanemonin (the lactone of gamma-hydroxyvinylacrylic acid), and anemonin (a highly active substance), glucose, tannin, resins, pectin, calcium compounds, magnesium compounds and sulphates. Because anemone species contain an acrid compound anemonin, it can be highly irritating to mucous membranes and must always be used under the direction of a qualified health care provider.

Medical Uses:

Pulsatilla is considered an alterative, or agent that helps to gradually and favorably alter the course of an ailment or condition, most often by altering the process of nutrition and excretion and restoring normal bodily function. It may achieve improvement by cleansing and stimulating the efficient removal of waste products from the system.

As a nervine, Pulsatilla has been used to calm and soothe the nerves, as well as reduce stress and anxiety with particular attention to nerve exhaustion in women. It is said to relieve pain, earache, and neuralgia and tension headaches. The anemonin and protoanemonin compounds in the herb are thought to produce a sedating effect, and it is said to be effective in alleviating hyperactivity and insomnia.

Treatment:

Pulsatilla is considered an antispasmodic and, as such, is believed to relieve spasms, relax smooth muscle in the gut, alleviate uterine cramps and allay spasmodic cough of asthma, whooping cough and bronchitis.

Herbalists have used Pulsatilla to relieve inflammation and pain in the reproductive organs (including painful conditions of the testes and ovarian pain), painful menstrual periods, vaginal yeast infections and PMS (premenstrual syndrome). It has also been used as an emmenagogue, which helps to stimulate menstruation and regulate its flow.

Pulsatilla is called a diaphoretic that produces perspiration and elimination through the skin, and this action may help to reduce fevers. A 1988 analysis determined that anemonin is a compound that produces a fever-lowering effect.

As an antibacterial, Pulsatilla is thought to be effective in relieving bacterial skin infections, including boils and acne. A 1990 study demonstrated that protoanemonin has in vitro activity against fungi.

Pulsatilla has been used to relieve catarrhal diarrhea, and anemone is considered one of the most effective herbs for relieving amoebic dysentery.

Precautions:

Because anemones contain the acrid compound, anemonin, Pulsatilla can be poisonous and must always be used under the direction of a qualified health care provider. The herb is harmful if eaten fresh (and only the dried plant is used medicinally), and repeated handling may cause skin irritation. The anemonin compound in Pulsatilla is a powerful irritant, and overdoses cause violent gastroenteritis, vomiting, looseness of the bowels and convulsions. This herb is recommended for use by qualified practitioners only. Pulsatilla is not given to patients with colds.

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Pumpkin Seeds



Botanical: Cucurbita pepo

Family: Cucurbitaceae (pumpkin/gourd)

Other common names: Field Pumpkin

Pumpkin Seeds are a powerful, reliable and safe way to destroy internal parasites. Sometimes called a "Male Tonic," Pumpkin Seeds are a natural way to revitalize the prostate gland, treat inflamed bladder and stimulate male hormone production. Protein- and nutrient-rich Pumpkin Seeds contain four times the amount of beta-carotene than carrots!

Plant Description:

The Pumpkin Seeds are a large, annual, creeping plant that thrives in well-drained soil in full sun. It is native to the Americas and is widely cultivated in warm and temperate climates throughout the world, where the fruit and seeds are included in many foods and the seeds used in herbal medicine.

History:

Pumpkins have been a cultural and dietary staple of Native American cultures since ancient times. The Moche of Peru left a rich artistic record of the Pumpkin's use as a food and offering to the gods in burial sites from the first through eighth centuries, A.D. The Native Americans introduced this variety of winter squash that originated in the New World to the conquistadors, and they, in turn, carried these food plants back to Europe with them.

The name Pumpkin is derived from the Greek word, pepon, meaning "ripe" or "cooked in the sun." Pumpkin Seeds have a rich history in herbal medicine in the Americas: The Navajos used them to relieve the intense pain of burns; the Cherokees used them for treating edema, gout, kidney stones, urinary burning, and difficult urination; the Pueblos used them to cure gout and reduce swollen knees and ankles; the Zunis used them to expel tapeworms and roundworms; Jamaican voodoo witchdoctors used them to cure fevers and diarrhea; and the

Yumas used them to heal wounds.

Use of the seeds were adopted in traditional Chinese medicine in the seventeenth century, where they were considered to be a symbol of prosperity and health, and the Pumpkin known as the "Emperor of the Garden." Pumpkin Seeds are rich in antioxidant vitamins A, C and E, many valuable minerals (especially zinc), amino acids (including the rare amino acid called myosin and the unusual cucurbitin, which is good for worm infestations), essential fatty acids, fiber and four times the amount of beta-carotene than found in carrots.

Medical Uses:

Pumpkin Seeds are known to be a powerful and effective anthelmintic that will kill and expel worm infestations in children and adults. The unusual amino acid, cucurbitin, in Pumpkin Seeds is said to make the herb one of the most efficient remedies for killing intestinal parasites, including tapeworms and roundworms.

Rich in zinc, Pumpkin Seeds have been used as an effective treatment for enlarged prostate. It has been called a male tonic that helps to revitalize and maintain the health of the prostate gland (especially helpful to older men), and it is thought to be a stimulant to male hormone production.

Pumpkin Seeds are a soothing diuretic that have a calming effect on irritated tissues and basic cystic inflammations that result in irritating and scalding urination. Pumpkin Seeds have been used for centuries to relieve irritable bladder.

Another rare amino acid in Pumpkin Seeds is called myosin, and it is the primary protein constituent of nearly all muscles in the body and important in the chemistry of muscular contraction.

Pumpkin Seeds are said to be helpful in alleviating nausea, motion sickness and travel sickness.

Some promising research in Japan has indicated that the high fiber content in Pumpkin Seed offers a huge defense against some malignant diseases and ailments associated with the digestive system.

Pumpkin Seed is highly nutritious, especially in beta-carotene, as well as vitamins and minerals that can be obtained only from very few other fruits or vegetables.

Pumpkin Seeds have been thought to be useful for psychological treatments, and some studies have demonstrated that the L-tryptophan content in the seeds may help ease depression.

Treatments:

Used externally, Pumpkin Seed oil is useful for healing wounds, especially burns and for chapped skin.

Precautions: None

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Pygeum Bark



Botanical: *Prunus africana* (also known as *Pygeum africanum*)

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Other common names: African Cherry, Red Stinkwood, African Plum, African Prune, Wontangue

Pygeum Bark is the drug of choice when European doctors wish to help men with prostate disorders. It has been effective in treating enlarged prostate or benign hyperplasia (BPH), inflamed prostate and urinary problems associated with

prostate complaints (particularly frequent nighttime urination and diminished volume). Pygeum Bark is a natural way to help maintain good prostate health.

Plant Description:



Pygeum Bark is dark, brown-to-black, with a rough, blocky texture, and it is removed from the *Prunus Africana*, a tall evergreen tree that is found in the upper slopes of the tropical Afromontane forests of Cameroon, Madagascar, Zaire and Kenya. The tree produces glossy, dark green, minutely serrated leaves that smell of almonds when crushed and elongated clusters of small white flowers. The tree also bears red fruit (berries) that are an important food source for many exotic birds, and it thrives in volcanic soil in the cooler highland temperatures, measuring over one hundred feet in height.

Pygeum is a relative of the wild plum and has been important as an extremely valuable commercial hardwood commodity, as well as an important factor in traditional African medicine, where it was used as a remedy for urinary and bladder ailments, malaria, chest pain and fevers.

In the 1960s, a liposoluble complex was discovered in the bark that was proven effective in treating prostate gland enlargement, and Pygeum became an important export to pharmaceutical companies worldwide, most notably to France, where it is

sold under the brand name, Tadenan, and to Italy, where it is patented under the name of Pygenil.

It is the drug of choice given by European doctors in cases of benign prostatic hyperplasia (BPH), and it should be noted that prostate enlargement is becoming an increasingly more prevalent condition with American men as the population ages. Some of the constituents included in Pygeum Bark are fatty acids, phytosterols (beta-sitosterol, beta sitosterone, campesterol), pentacyclic terpenoids, sitosterol glucoside, tannins, ferulic and ursolic acids.

Medical Uses:

Pygeum Bark is a natural support for a healthy prostate gland. The phytosterols compete with androgen precursors and inhibit prostaglandin biosynthesis, thereby reducing inflammation. The triterpenes also exhibit anti-inflammatory activity, and the ferulic acid esters reduce the level of cholesterol in the prostate, thereby also limiting androgen synthesis. All these actions appear to work synergistically to improve the symptoms of BPH, a condition that involves a congested, enlarged and inflamed prostate, accompanied by diminished urine flow and an increased frequency of urination, especially at night.

As our population ages, more men have become troubled with BPH and other prostate disorders, and Pygeum has sometimes been called effective after only a few days, but it may also take several months to show improvement. Pygeum may also be taken as a prophylactic to help prevent prostate difficulties and maintain a healthy prostate gland.

Treatment:

Pygeum's diuretic properties help to increase the volume and flow of urine, and it has been used to help flush and dissolve uric acid sediment from the body, which is also helpful in preventing further sedimentation in the prostate, as well as helping to rid the body of uric acid that would be retained in cellular tissue, causing arthritic calcification and gout.

Precautions:

There have been some reports of nausea and gastrointestinal upset with the use of Pygeum Bark.

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Quassia



Botanical: *Picrasma excelsa* (also known as *Quassia excelsa*)

Family: Simaroubaceae (quassia/tree of life)

Other common names: Bitter Wood, *Picrasma*, Jamaica Quassia, Bitter Ash, Bitter Bark, Quassia Lignum

Quassia is a simple, powerful bitter that is an old-time tonic for the digestive system. It is used in Europe to stimulate the appetite and is said to soothe gastric upsets, indigestion, and acute dyspepsia. Quassia is thought to generally tone up a rundown system, which may also be very helpful to convalescents who are recovering after illness.

Plant Description:

Quassia is the name for several tropical trees and for a bitter extract from their bark. The extract containing complex terpenoid compounds called quassinoids is used medicinally as a bitter tonic and a pinworm remedy; it is also used in

insecticides, e.g., in flypaper and against aphids. Surinam Quassia comes from the tree *Quassia amara* of N Brazil and surrounding regions; Jamaica Quassia comes from *Picrasma excelsa* of the West Indies. Some Old World Quassia species are similarly used. The trees are related to the ailanthus. Quassia is classified in the division Magnoliophyta, class Magnoliopsida, and order Sapindales, family Simaroubaceae.

Quassia is a tall, graceful, ashlike tree that is native to tropical America, most notably in the hill forests of Jamaica and Surinam, where it is cultivated as a commercial crop. Quassia is a tender, deciduous perennial that thrives in moist, sandy, humus-rich soil in sun or partial shade. The tree may grow to a height of one hundred feet and requires moderate to high humidity in a minimum of sixty degrees Fahrenheit to succeed. Quassia produces pinnate, coarse-toothed leaves and small, green-white flowers that bloom in late autumn, followed by black, shiny berries, which ripen in the winter. Insect pests never attack the tree, because it is permeated by an extremely bitter resin, whose major chemical constituent is a bitter compound called quashing - an effective natural insecticide. The wood, which is chipped and dried, is used in herbal medicine as an intensely bitter, non-astringent, odorless herb that is fifty times bitterer than quinine and had been used by the native tribes to remedy malaria, dysentery, and venereal disease.

History:

In 1756, Quassia was brought from Surinam to Stockholm by a Swede who had purchased it from a native healer named Quassi, and the drug soon became popular as a digestive tonic and appetite stimulant. In Europe, Quassia is still used as a popular appetite stimulant. Jamaican Quassia soon super ceded the species from Surinam in popularity, but the name continued. In addition to its use in herbal medicine, Quassia is a very valuable commercial crop that is an ingredient in soft drinks, candies, baked goods, marmalades, liqueurs, and other alcoholic drinks and as a substitute for hops in brewing beer and ale. It is enormously valuable in the pesticide industry as an insecticide against flies, spider mites, aphids, and woolly aphids. Although it is an effective pesticide, it spares such beneficial insects as ladybird beetles and bees. Some of the constituents in Quassia include volatile oil, quassin, gummy extractive pectin, woody fiber, tartrate, calcium and sodium chlorides, salts, and sulfates.

Medical Uses:

Quassia is a powerful, simple bitter and stomachic that is widely used to support a healthy digestive system. It has been used as an effective tonic that soothes gastric upsets, indigestion, and acute dyspepsia and is believed to lessen putrefaction in the stomach and prevent the formation of acid substances during the digestive process.

Treatment:

It contains extremely bitter chemical substances known as quassinoids, the major one being quassin, which settles nausea. Quassia is also said to stimulate the production of stomach secretions (as well as those of the liver, kidneys, gallbladder, and intestines), which also help to improve digestion. It has long been used as a reliable way to stimulate a flagging appetite and may be helpful in treating anorexia. It is particularly valuable in cases of convalescence and general debility after acute disease, as well as act as a tonic to tone up a rundown system. As a Febrifuge, Quassia is said to effectively lower fevers.

Quassia has been used for centuries as an effective vermifuge, an agent that kills and expels worms in the intestines (especially roundworms) and nematodes. Used externally as a lotion, it kills parasites, such as lice and as a hair rinse for dandruff.

Many people claimed that Quassia was a cure for drunkenness because it destroyed one's appetite for alcohol.

In some studies, another extract of the resin, quassamarin, has been reported by researchers to be of possible value in the fight against leukemia.

Precautions:

Quassia should not be taken in large amounts (many times the recommended dosage), as it may act as an irritant and produce vomiting.

* * * * *

Queen of the Meadow



Botanical: *Filipendula ulmaria* (also known as *Spiraea ulmaria*)

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Other common names: Meadowsweet, Spiraea, Bridewort, Pride of the Meadow, Meadsweet, Lady of the Meadow, Dolloff

Queen Of The Meadow is the natural version of aspirin without the digestive upsets and bleeding that may accompany the synthetic product. It is even said to soothe digestive upsets, as well as the pains and aches of inflammatory ailments.

Plant Description:

Queen of the meadow is homegrown to central and E Asia, where most of the popular ornamental species come from such as the bridal wreath (*S. x prunifolia*), native to Japan, and its similar hybrid *S. vanhouttei*. In these species the fragrant, spire like flower clusters typical of the genus are borne on long, arching branches.

Queen of the Meadow native to North America include the hardhack, or steeplebush (*S. tomentosa*), a local source of astringent and tonic, and the meadowsweets (several species). The name meadowsweet is also applied to the related genus *Filipendula*, tall, hardy perennials (also often cultivated) formerly

classified as Spiraea because of the similar showy blossoms. Filipendula includes the Eurasian dropwort (*F. hexapetala*), the queen of the meadow (*F. ulmaria*), now naturalized in the United States, and the North American queen of the prairie (*F. rubra*). Spiraeas are classified in the division Magnoliophyta, class Magnoliopsida, and order Rosales, family Rosaceae.

History:

Queen of the Meadow (not to be confused with Boneset/*Eupatorium purfoliatum* or Gravel Root/*Eupatorium purpureum*, two entirely different herbs that are frequently also called Queen of the Meadow and have different properties and applications) is a stout perennial wildflower that thrives in the rich, wet soils of marshes, bogs, ditches, damp meadows, and moist woods in sun or partial shade. The plant, with its fernlike foliage, pinnate leaves and fragrant, cream-white flower clusters, dislikes acid soil and grows up to six feet tall with a creeping, underground root. Queen of the Meadow was introduced to North America from Europe and now grows wild throughout eastern Canada and the United States. One of Queen of the Meadow's common names, Meadowsweet, is derived from its older name, meadsweet, which, like meadow (its oldest English name from Anglo-Saxon times), refers to the plant's use as a flavoring for mead, a honeyed liquor. Its botanical specific, *ulmaria*, is derived from the Latin, *ulmus*, meaning "elm," referring to the resemblance of Queen of the Meadow's leaves to those of the elm tree. Queen of the Meadow was one of the three most sacred herbs of the Druids, the others being water mint and vervain, and in medieval Europe, the fragrant plant was considered an important strewing herb. The sweet fragrance of the plant made it a favorite of Queen Elizabeth I, who favored the herb above all others as the strewing herb on the floors of her chambers. Queen of the Meadow is an astringent, aromatic herb, and the entire plant and flowers are used in herbal medicine. In 1653, the pharmacist, Nicholas Culpepper, noted the use of the herb as a remedy for fevers, colds, and flu. Queen of the Meadow (like Willow Bark) is the mother of aspirin. From these herbs, salicylic acid was first isolated in 1838, and the salicylates are the basis of the herbs' reputation as a reliable remedy. Some sixty years thereafter, the pharmaceutical company Bayer produced acetylsalicylate, a synthetic substance with the same properties as its natural forerunners. They called it aspirin, referring to Queen of the Meadow's oldest botanical name, *Spiraea ulmaria*.

Medical Uses:

Herbalists consider the plant to be one of the best remedies for digestive upsets, and the salicylic acid content is a longtime favorite for the symptoms of cold, flu, headaches, and rheumatic pains and aches. The leaves and flowers have a wonderful fragrance (and pleasant taste, too), and they are often included in potpourris. The whole plant yields a greenish-yellow dye, and the roots produce a black dye. Some of the constituents in Queen of the Meadow include salicylic acid, flavonoids (quercetin, rutin), tannins, mucilage, anthocyanidin, avicularin, coumarin, essential oil (methyl-salicylate, hyperoside), salicin, vanillin, glycoside and citric acid (vitamin C).

Treatments:

Probably the most famous use of Queen of the Meadow is for its aspirin-like qualities. The salicylic acid content provides natural relief for colds, flu, fevers and headaches. It is a great overall pain reliever.

Queen of the Meadow's anti-inflammatory qualities help to soothe and reduce inflammation and are beneficial for the relief of rheumatic pains and the pain of arthritis, aching joints and muscle cramps.

Some herbalists regard Queen of the Meadow as the best plant remedy for hyperacidity and heartburn. It is an antacid herb that heals and soothes the digestive tract and strengthens and tones the system. It also helps to control peptic ulcers and gastritis. Unlike synthetic aspirin, Queen of the Meadow offsets the acidic effects of salicylic acid. Long use of aspirin can lead to gastric ulceration and bleeding, but Queen of the Meadow does not produce these side effects and is actually a gentle digestive remedy for acidity.

Queen of the Meadow promotes sweating, and as such, helps to reduce fevers and clear the body of toxins through the skin.

As an antiseptic, Queen of the Meadow is said to be effective against organisms that cause diphtheria, dysentery and pneumonia.

Queen of the Meadow is an astringent that tightens and tones tissues. The tannins in the herb help to treat diarrhea.

As a mild diuretic, Queen of the Meadow promotes the flow of urine and is beneficial for the elimination of excess fluid in the system. It is said to be helpful in cases of certain urinary infections and cystitis.

Used externally, Queen of the Meadow has been used as a compress for rheumatic pains, neuralgia and sore, aching joints and muscles. It has also been used as cooling eyewash that relieves conjunctivitis and other eye complaints.

Precautions:

Those who are allergic to aspirin should not use Queen of the Meadow. It is not recommended for pregnant or nursing women without first consulting a physician and children under the age of sixteen years of age with symptoms of flu, chicken pox or other types of viral infection should not use Queen of the Meadow, because, like aspirin, there may be a risk of developing Reye's syndrome.

* * * * *

Quercetin



Source: Sophora japonica

Family: Fabaceae (pea)

Common Name: Polyphenolic flavonoid, Bioflavonoid, Pentapentahydroxyflavone

Quercetin is a bioflavonoid (sometimes-called vitamin P) that is packed with natural antioxidant, antiviral, anti-inflammatory and antiallergenic qualities. Normally found in highly nutritious foods and plants, such as citrus, red apples, teas, broccoli and onions, etc., you can easily take it in a supplement form; and because the human body cannot produce bioflavonoids, they must be supplied in the diet - and you should supply them to maximize sound health!

Plant Description:

Quercetin is a bioflavonoid, an important member of a large group of compounds that are found in many herbs and plants, including Onions (thought to have the largest amount), Broccoli, Citrus fruits (especially the white material just beneath the peel of citrus fruits), Grapes, teas (especially Green Tea), Blue-green Algae, Red Apples, Red Wine and many others.

Medical Use:

Although not a real vitamin in the true sense, it is sometimes referred to as vitamin P, a so-called vitamin that maintains the resistance of cell and capillary walls to permeation. Bioflavonoids cannot be manufactured in the body and are necessary for good health and essential for the absorption of vitamin C. It is recommended that Quercetin and vitamin C be taken simultaneously for optimum efficacy. Bromelain, too, is said to help absorption of Quercetin; they are synergistic, and taking them at the same time will enhance the efficacy of Quercetin.

There are many different bioflavonoids, including Quercetin, Rutin, Hesperidin, flavones, citrin, etc., and some of the herbs that contain this essential nutrient include Chervil, Elderberry, Hawthorne, Horsetail, Rose Hips and Shepherd's Purse, to name a few. Recent studies show that bioflavonoids may be a big factor in preventing invasive infection and serious malignant diseases.

Treatment:

Quercetin is said to be more potent than vitamin E as an antioxidant and has been found to block destructive structural changes in cells, helping to prevent abnormal

cell growth. With regard to fighting cancer, Quercetin is thought to be one of the most useful herbal supplements that are thought to help combat invasive infection. It is said to block the transport of fatty, arachidonic acid into the unhealthy cells, which, in turn, inhibits the release of inflammatory chemicals that promote the growth of blood vessels supplying nutrients and oxygen to the unhealthy cells. It is also said to deactivate enzymes that can trigger the multiplication of malignant bladder, breast, ovarian and colorectal cells. Recent studies completed at Johns Hopkins have indicated that Quercetin may, in fact, help prevent colon cancer, and we have provided the direct link to bring you up to date on this recent science.

Pursuant to fighting malignancy, Quercetin is said to stop the chemical signals that give ovarian cancer cells a growth advantage over healthy cells. Furthermore, studies at the Indiana University School of Medicine have found that Quercetin and genistein (a key isoflavone in SOY) will enhance each other's effects when combating ovarian and other malignant cells and may thus be more effective when used together.

Quercetin is considered an anti-allergenic and is said to inhibit allergic reactions by preventing multiplication of cells that secrete histamine, the chemical that causes inflammation and swelling; and it does not induce drowsiness often accompanying the use of antihistamines because its action does not act upon the nerves that stimulate the cells. Quercetin is said to help the lungs deal with dust and particle pollution and can benefit the discomforts of emphysema, asthma, bronchial problems, hives and other allergies.

With regard to cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and macular degeneration, although Quercetin does not correct the blood vessel defects that cause these disorders; it does protect the cells of the retina and the eye's lens from the effects of low oxygen levels and neurological toxins.

Quercetin is thought to help blood vessels injured by debility or high blood pressure by inhibiting the growth of cholesterol that forms into plaque in the blood vessels. It is said to slow the chemical reactions that cause large numbers of macrophages to cluster on the artery walls, reducing plaque formation (clotting), which can be beneficial for promoting improved blood circulation and reducing the risk of arteriosclerosis.

Chemically similar to sodium cromoglycate, a drug that is used to protect against migraines provoked by foods known to cause a migraine attack, Quercetin inhibits many of the pathways of inflammation associated with migraine and is said to prevent headaches associated with allergies.

Quercetin may help to prevent heart problems by reducing the oxidation of LDLs (bad cholesterol) in the blood and promoting normal blood pressure levels. Considered an antiviral, Quercetin has demonstrated effective activity against human immuno-deficiency virus (HIV), herpes simplex, polio virus and respiratory syncytial virus. Quercetin and other bioflavonoids (working in conjunction with vitamin C) are said to be useful for bleeding gums, bruising, varicose veins, hemorrhoids and blood clots.

Quercetin is believed to be an excellent anti-inflammatory that is thought to relieve celiac problems, eczema, gout and prostatitis, among many other inflammatory conditions. With regard to Celiac disease, Quercetin interferes with the chemical pathways by which inflammatory hormones are activated and is a useful supportive treatment. Quercetin also stops the multiplication of neutrophils, the immune cells involved in the production of inflammation-causing hormones, preventing the release of the inflammation-causing bodies known as leukotrienes. Because Quercetin counteracts the effects of xanthine oxidase, an enzyme that promotes uric acid production, it helps to combat gout.

Quercetin increases the production of collagen and fibronectin, which is good news for those of us who want smoother skin with fewer wrinkles. Recent studies show that bioflavonoids may be a big factor in preventing invasive malignant infection and serious illness.

Quercetin initially gained attention several decades ago when it was found to cause DNA mutations in bacteria, a possible sign that it might actually contribute to causing cancer. Animal research done since that time has been inconclusive, and what little evidence there is in humans does not seem to support this idea. Research in recent years has focused on several possible beneficial effects of quercetin, including its potential role in preventing cancer.

Precautions:

Extremely high doses of Quercetin (many times the recommended amounts) may cause diarrhea. Bioflavonoids are essential for the absorption of vitamin C, and Bromelain will enhance efficacy, and the three can be taken together; on the other hand, Quercetin may enhance the effects of prescription drugs, and they should not be taken at the same time. Because of lack of long-term safety data, Quercetin is not recommended for pregnant women and nursing mothers. Those who are allergic to benzoic/benzonic acid should avoid this product.

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Rat Root



Botanical: *Acorus americanus*

Family: Arecaceae (arum/palm) - Acoraceae (sweet flag)

Other common names: Calamus Root, Sweet Flag, Calamas, Sweet Grass, Sweet Root, Sweet Rush, Sweet Calomel, Sweet Cane, Sweet Myrtle, Myrtle Grass, Myrtle Sedge, Cinnamon Sedge, Muskrat Root, Pine Root, Gladdon, Flagroot, Beewort

The American Rat Root has been used mainly to ease digestive disorders, especially relieving flatulence and stomach cramps. It is also thought to be an

effective expectorant that clears nasal and respiratory passages, and some herbal practitioners claim it even clears the mind.

Plant Description:

Rat Root is a vigorous, reed-like, aquatic plant with somewhat vague origins. Some say that it is a native of Europe; others claim Asia, and it is distributed widely in the temperate regions of the United States, Europe, Eurasia, and northern Asia Minor and throughout the Far East (including India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka).

This perennial plant bears sword-shaped leaves with small yellow and green flowers on a fleshy, cane-like stalk and thrives in rich, wet soil (or shallow water) in a sunny position, reaching a height of five feet.

Although the iris-like plant resembles "Yellow Flag" (a member of the lily family and the reason Rat Root is sometime called Sweet Flag), it is actually a member of the palm family and flourishes in ditches, lakesides and marshy places.

History:

The derivation of Rat Root's botanical name, *Acorus*, is also vague: Some say it is derived from the Greek word, *coreon*, meaning "pupil of the eye," referring to the plant's use to cure eye diseases; others say it is derived from an old Latin word meaning "aromatic plant," referring to the pleasant fragrance emitted from the reeds.

One of the herb's common names and botanical specific, *calamus*, is a translation of the Greek word meaning "reed," and its use in herbal medicine may be traced back to the ancients. Dioscorides prescribed it for eye problems, and in ancient India, practitioners employed it as a candied chewing medicine for coughs and bronchitis. In Europe and England, Rat Root was utilized as a popular "strewing herb" to ward off disease and to add a pleasant fragrance to churches; and the esteemed seventeenth-century English herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper, recommended Rat Root as a "strengtheners of the stomach and head." Native Americans had so many medicinal uses for Rat Root that it was actually considered a commodity and medium of exchange.

Plains Indians chewed it for toothache, and the Meskwakis applied the boiled root to treat burns. Some of the Native Americans utilized the herb to increase strength and endurance, while other, more northerly tribes used it to help improve digestion and mental sharpness (echoing Culpepper's earlier recommendations), and the herb was included in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1820 through 1916 and the National Formulary from 1936 through 1950. The sweet-scented roots and leaves are used in perfumes, and its pungent, cinnamon-spicy qualities add flavor to candies, medicines, beers and gins, while the same aromatic, bitter roots and leaves are used in herbal medicines. Some of the constituents included in Rat Root are essential oil, choline, soft resin, gum, starch and the bitter glucoside, acorin.

Medical Uses:

Rat Root is an aromatic stimulant that has been used for centuries in many cultures mainly for digestive complaints. It is considered a "stomachic," or substance that stimulates and strengthens stomach function, and is said to benefit digestion, increase the appetite, ease dyspepsia and stomach cramps. The herb is thought to relieve the discomfort of flatulence, as well as check the growth of the bacteria, which gives rise to it.

As an expectorant, Rat Root has been used to loosen and expel phlegm from the respiratory tract and is said to be useful in cases of bronchitis and sinusitis. The powdered root was included in snuff to relieve nasal congestion and shock, and in European countries, the root was included in lozenges to clear the voice and ease coughs.

Rat Root is considered a parasiticide that has been used to destroy and expel parasites from the intestines (an insecticide is also produced from the essential oil).

As an emmenagogue, Rat Root has been used to stimulate and regulate menstrual flow.

Powdered Rat Root was once smoked or chewed, because it was thought to destroy the taste for tobacco and thus discourage and break the smoking habit.

Rat Root has been used to calm the nerves and act as a mild tonic that restores and nourishes the entire body by exerting a gentle strengthening effect. It was a very

important herb in Ayurvedic medicine and was used as a restorative for the brain and nervous system, especially after a stroke.

Used externally, Rat Root has been used to relieve burns, skin problems, eruptions, rheumatic pains and neuralgia.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Rat Root, as it is considered a uterine stimulant. Overuse (many times the recommended dosage) should be avoided, as it may cause vomiting and further serious problems. The B-asarone content in the essential oil of an Asian variety of the species is thought to be carcinogenic and excluded from the American species, but because the FDA labeled all varieties of *Acorus calamus* as unsafe in 1968, further research has been discouraged with regard to the herb's many historic applications. Thus, it is always recommended that any use of Rat Root be conducted only under the care of a qualified health care provider.

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Red Clover



Botanical: *Trifolium pratense*

Family: Fabaceae (pea) - Leguminosae/Papilionaceae (legume)

Other common names: Trefoil, Purple Clover, Broad Red, Wild Clover, Cleaver Grass, Marl Grass, Cow Grass

The Red Clover has been called one of "God's greatest blessings to man" and is said to be a wonderful blood purifier and cleanser and has been used to treat serious invasive disease, debilitating wasting diseases, excess mucus in the lungs and elsewhere, irritable bowel, gout, kidney and liver ailments, and that is just the beginning! This vitally nutritional, mineral-rich herb is a great tonic for overall good health that no one should be without. It even rebuilds worn out soil; imagine what it can do for your body!

Plant Description:

Red clover is a wild plant, which originated from Asia but has spread throughout the world. Red clover is abundant throughout Europe, Central and Northern Asia and has been introduced in North America. As the name beebread suggests, red clover produce a honey. The roots of red clover have special nodules that house nitrogen-fixing bacteria. These bacteria can grab nitrogen from the air and make it available to the plant. Red clover is widely used as a grazing food for cattle, horses and sheep.

Also:

- It can be grown to increase the fertility of soil and control soil erosion
- Bumblebees and honeybees are attracted to the honey scent and nectar of Red Clover; clover honey is a very popular treat

History:

Red Clover is a hardy perennial of short duration that may be found in abundance throughout Europe, Asia, and the Mediterranean area, and it was introduced to Australia and North America (it is the state flower of Vermont). Red Clover is one of about 230 species of legumes that has been an important forage crop since the Middle Ages, and, in fact, Red Clover is the most important leguminous forage crop in northern Europe that not only benefits animals, but also rebuilds tired and worn out soil. It is also eaten in salads and included in honey as a flavoring.

Red Clover is an erect-to-sprawling plant with long-stalked, hairy stems, arising from one root and bearing smooth leaves that are divided into three leaflets, hence, its botanical name, *Trifolium*, which is derived from two Latin words, *tri*, meaning "three" and *folium*, meaning "leaf."

The stems bear purple-pink, tubular, fragrant flowers that are borne in globose heads that bloom in the late spring. Red Clover grows to a height of two feet and thrives in moist, well-drained, neutral soil in sun, and the flower heads with upper leaves are harvested in summer as they open and are dried as a sweet, cooling herb that is used in medicinal preparations. Red Clover has been used by herbalists for years to treat various cancers.

Used externally in poultices, it has been employed as a local application for cancerous growths (also leprosy, old ulcers and pellagra). When taken internally, it is said to be helpful for serious diseases of the stomach, ovaries, breast, throat and lymphatic system. It has also been made into a gargle for the relief of esophageal disease, and the National Cancer Institute has substantiated the fact that Red Clover does, in fact, contain anti-cancer properties. It is a deeply rooted plant, which is said to account for its abundance of minerals, and some of the constituents in Red Clover include beta-sitosterol, caffeic and other acids, coumarin, eugenol, flavonoids, methyl salicylate, salicylic acid, calcium, chromium, lecithin, choline, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, molybdenum, beta-carotene and vitamins B-3, C and E.

Medical Uses:

Red Clover is considered a fine expectorant and anti-inflammatory and is said to be one of the best mucus-clearing sources in nature. This action helps to loosen and expel phlegm from the lungs and chest and is effective in relieving bronchial troubles, inflamed lungs, colds, dry, unproductive coughs, wheezing and bronchitis.

As an antispasmodic and general relaxant, Red Clover helps to relieve spasms of all kinds, including irritable bowel syndrome, whooping cough, nervous and tension headaches, inflamed bowels, stomach and intestines. In addition, the salicylic acid (the natural forerunner of synthetic aspirin) helps to relieve pain and inflammation.

Red Clover is a wonderful detergent and cleansing tonic. It is considered a depurative that purifies the blood by promoting the body's eliminative functions. By encouraging the production of bile, the herb helps to purify the liver, thus cleansing toxins from the bloodstream. The increased bile also stimulates the production of digestive fluids that speed up digestion and the elimination of morbid matter from the stomach and intestines. Red Clover apparently contains the trace element, molybdenum, which is said to play an important role in discharging nitrogenous waste, another aid in cleansing the system of impurities.

As a diuretic, Red Clover further helps to cleanse the body by stimulating the production of urine and helping to flush impurities from the kidneys and bladder and removing waste from the system in the increased urine flow. The increased urine flushes accumulated uric acid and helps to relieve gout and arthritis. In addition, this diuretic action also helps to relieve urinary tract inflammation and irritation.

Treatment:

As an antibacterial, Red Clover is said to fight bacterial infections and is believed to be effective against tuberculosis and syphilis.

Red Clover is said to be beneficial in cases of wasting and chronic degenerative diseases and a weakened immune system, and current research is hopeful for its use in combating HIV and AIDS.

The flavonoids in Red Clover are said to be estrogenic, and this was discovered when livestock consumed large amounts of the plant. This is especially interesting for women's health in that it is said to increase fertility and reduce the unpleasant side effects of menopause, including hot flashes and dryness.

When taken internally, Red Clover has been used to relieve many skin complaints, especially eczema and psoriasis.

Precautions: None

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Red Raspberry



Botanical: *Rubus idaeus*

Family: Rosaceae (rose/bramble)

Other common names: Raspberry Leaf, Bramble, Hindberry, Reapberry, Bramble of Mount Ida

The Red Raspberry is rich in minerals and vitamins that promote the health of hair, skin, nails, bones and teeth. It has an old reputation as a woman's friend that helps to tone the uterine muscles (particularly valuable during labor and delivery and recovery after birth). Moreover, Red Raspberry is said to provide relief for heavy cramping and excessive bleeding during menstruation.

Plant Descriptions:

The red raspberry is native to Europe, Asia and North America. Commercial cultivars are grown throughout the world for their berries.

Medical Uses:

For medicinal use, mainly the red raspberry leaves are used. They are astringent and stimulant. Tea from red raspberry leaves is used to treat throat infections and diarrhea. Raspberry leaves are often used by pregnant women because of their relaxing and astringent actions. Raspberry leaves were used to facilitate childbirth and to stimulate milk production. Red raspberry leaves are believed to strengthen

the uterus muscles of the uterus and thereby hastening childbirth. Studies with animals and humans have indeed indicated that raspberries leaves have uteronic activity.

The red raspberry fruits (or simple raspberry) are very rich in anthocyanins and in particular ellagic acid. Because of the anti-tumor and anti-cancer activity of ellagic acid, consumption of red raspberries may decrease the risk for cancer. Studies have shown that ellagic inhibits tumor growth caused by carcinogens and that it protects DNA against damage from radiation therapy.

The anthocyanins in red raspberry act as antioxidants, protecting against heart disease and mental ageing problems.

History:

Red Raspberry is a deciduous bramble with perennial roots, native to many parts of Europe, but has wide distribution from the Polar Regions down through temperate North America, Europe and Asia, following higher elevations as it reaches the more southerly latitudes. Red Raspberry is a shrub with erect, spiny, woody, thorny stems (called canes) that bear irregularly toothed, pale green leaves and pretty white flowers, followed by deep red fruit, and it may grow to a height of six feet. The berries are edible and highly nutritious, with a delicate, complex flavor. The brambles may be found growing wild in dry or moist woods, thickets, untended fields and roadsides, but prefers moist, slightly-acid, well-drained loam, rich in humus, in full sun or partial shade. Fossil evidence shows that Raspberries were part of the human diet from very early times, and their presence is noted as both a food and part of herbal medicine in the ancient writings of the Greeks, including Aeschylus (c.525-456 B.C.), and the physician, Hippocrates (460-357 B.C.). The Romans used Red Raspberry to treat sore mouths and inflammation of the bowel, and it was mentioned in the works of Propertius (c.50-16 B.C.). The leaves bark and fruits are employed herbal medicine. It is said that early settlers brought Red Raspberry with them, but there was already a hardier variety growing in North America, where several Native Americans were using it as a food and in herbal remedies.

Red Raspberry has been included for hundreds of years in folk medicine as an astringent and women's aid and was considered important enough to be listed in the

United States Pharmacopoeia in 1882. In the days when "natural" childbirth and midwives were the only way to have a baby, Red Raspberry was the herb of choice. In the 1920s, British researchers isolated a substance called fragerine from the leaves, which was found to be a relaxant that reduces muscle spasms in the uterus.

In both Chinese and European herbal medicine, Raspberry Leaf tea is a classic herbal preparation for pregnant women, which is administered to prepare them for childbirth. Red Raspberry was once also used during pregnancy to ease nausea and morning sickness, prevent miscarriage and increase the production of breast milk, but it is not recommended in this manner now (particularly in the earlier months), because of the possibility of uterine contractions. Some of the constituents in Red Raspberry include flavonoids, high concentrations of tannins, alpha- and beta-carotene, alkaloids (fragarine), organic acids (caffeic acid, ellagic acid, ferulic acid, etc.), geraniol, lutein, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamins C and E.

Medical Uses:

Red Raspberry is considered an excellent astringent, which makes it an effective treatment for a number of complaints. The high tannin content is said to help to control diarrhea by preventing the flow of fluids into the intestines, thereby helping to solidify the stool. The tannins are also thought to be most likely responsible for controlling nausea and vomiting as well. Once again, the tannins are said to cause proteins in healing skin to cross-link and form an impermeable barrier.

Red Raspberry has been used for centuries to strengthen the reproductive system in women, particularly during pregnancy. The herb is thought to tone and regulate the uterine muscles. If the smooth muscle is tight, the herb is said to relax it; likewise, if the muscle is relaxed Red Raspberry causes contractions, and when taken during the last two months of pregnancy, it is believed to strengthen and tone the uterine muscles and stimulate labor and delivery and possibly even help to shorten delivery and ease pain. After birth, Red Raspberry is taken for several weeks to help reduce swelling and bleeding and return the uterus to its normal tone. By toning the pelvic muscles, Red Raspberry has been used as a traditional remedy for bed-wetting.

To further support women's health, Red Raspberry is said to relieve heavy cramping during menstruation. The ferulic acid content in the herb is said to be a uterine relaxant, stimulating the muscles that support the uterus and allowing for easier menstrual flow. It is thought to help relieve premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and reduce excessive menstrual bleeding. There are reports that Red Raspberry may also help to alleviate hot flashes.

Red Raspberry is said to possess antiviral properties, and some studies have shown that it kills virus (including herpes) and fungi in cell cultures. It was said to be effective against herpes virus II, influenza virus, and poliovirus I, among others.

The lutein content in Red Raspberry is believed to be beneficial to good eye health. It is a carotenoid that may be found in many fruits and vegetables, and researchers have claimed that this nutrient may significantly decrease the risk of developing macular degeneration of the eyes. Even normal-sighted people taking this supplement have reported reduced glare and sharper vision, and it may be helpful for anyone exposed to brilliant sunlight or computer screens on a daily basis.

The highly nutritious qualities of Red Raspberry have been effective in promoting healthy hair, nails, skin, bones and teeth. The silicon and magnesium content is said to be very helpful for improving the quality of hair. There are claims that silicon (which can be found in vegetables, fruits, horsetails and oats, etc.) will strengthen hair, and it seems to cause thickening of hair and nails within weeks. There are also reports that it promotes faster growth.

Used as an antiseptic and astringent, Red Raspberry is said to stop burns from oozing and is thought to make an effective gargle for mouth and throat inflammation. Topical applications include treatments for canker and other mouth sores, eye problems in soothing eyewash and in a douche for vaginal discharge.

Precautions:

Pregnant women should not use Raspberry until the last two months of pregnancy, and then, only under the supervision of a knowledgeable physician.

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Red-Root Sage



Botanical: *Salvia miltiorrhiza*

Family: Lamiaceae (mint)

Other common names: Chinese Salvia, Chinese Sage, Danshen, Dan Shen, Red Rooted Sage Red Rooted Salvia, Bunge, Radix Salvia, Salvia Root

The Red-Root Sage is a traditional Chinese herb that has become important in the West for supporting cardiovascular health and improving liver function. It helps to vitalize and detoxify the blood and is one of the most highly regarded circulatory tonics. Red-Root Sage has been shown to inhibit bacterial growth, reduce fever, diminish inflammation, and ease skin problems and aid urinary excretion of toxins.

Medical Uses:

Red root gargles stop sniffing and salivation associated with colds, flu, bronchitis, and asthma. The herb is also used in teas to stop dribbling of urine caused by urinary tract infection.

The roots and root bark of New Jersey tea was used extensively by the North American Indians to treat fevers and problems of the mucous membranes such as catarrh and sore throats.

The roots concentrate on their astringent, expectorant and antispasmodic actions and they are employed in the treatment for complaints such as asthma, bronchitis and coughs.

Plant Description:

Red-Root Sage is a member of the multi-species *Salvia* genus, and despite the fact that any herb of this genus may be called sage; there are significant differences in medicinal components in the tops and roots that influence their uses.

History:

Salvia miltiorrhiza and *Salvia officinalis* (Garden Sage) are in no way similar to another member of the Sage genus, *Salvia divinorum*, which is a dangerous psychoactive plant and subject to regulation as a controlled substance under several states' drug regulation statutes. In an 1833 publication, Russian botanist, Alexander von Bunge (1803-1890), gave the plant its botanical genus, *Salvia*, which is translated from the Latin word, *salvere*, meaning "to be saved" or "to cure," as sage enjoyed the reputation of being able to cure a multitude of ills.

Red-Root Sage grows abundantly in Asia to a height of about thirty-two inches, and because of its importance in herbal medicine, has been cultivated as a crop on farms in China, Japan and Korea.

It is a wild perennial that grows mostly in sunny areas, and can survive in poor soils. It produces small, fuzzy, grayish leaves in the spring; blue, red or purple flowers in summer; and brownish nut-like fruits in the fall. As a member of the sage family of plants, its aromatic leaves are often dried and used to season meats and stuffing, but it is in its distinctive, sundried, bright red roots that considerable medicinal benefits are stored.

Although other species of sage were mentioned in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as early as 206 B.C., Red-Root Sage first appeared in the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* in the first century A.D. and held a very high position for treating the heart, abdomen, gurgling in the intestines, breaking and eliminating stone and relieving fullness. In the late eighteenth century, Father d'Incarville, a French Jesuit, introduced seeds of the plant from Beijing to Paris, where it was cultivated

as a rare botanical specimen, and collectors of Chinese medicinal plants in the United States still regard the plant as a specimen.

It was only during the twentieth century that Red-Root Sage became known for its blood vitalizing and circulatory properties, and it has since become an important herb in modern Chinese clinical practice. Qin Bowei, an eminent physician born at the turn of the twentieth century, who was instrumental in the spread of TCM in modern China after the revolution in 1949, referred to Red-Root Sage as a bitter herb that "quickens the blood, moves the blood and regulates transportation of blood fluid." It is one of the most commonly used Chinese herbs as the key ingredient in numerous formulations or prescribed as a single herb remedy. Its elevation came in recognition of its vitalizing blood circulation qualities that promote heart health by increasing blood flow and relieving pain (angina pectoris), and for its efficacy in treating microcirculation disorders, leading to its use in treating liver fibrosis and cirrhosis.

A patent remedy with Red-Root Sage as the main ingredient was developed and is still widely used in China for treating angina. The main active constituents in Red-Root Sage include diterpene quinones (known as tanshinones I and II and cryptotanshinone), and it also includes caffeic acid, salvianolic acid and magnesium salvianolate.

Treatments:

Red-Root Sage is widely used in the Orient for supporting cardiovascular health and is now gaining popularity in the West for its heart-healthy properties. The isolated chemical, tanshinone, is said to increase the force of heartbeats, while slowing the heart rate and it works as a vasodilator, causing blood vessels to relax and increasing blood circulation. This action inhibits platelet aggregation (clotting), thereby reducing the risk of arteriosclerosis, stroke and heart attack. The tanshinones reduce stasis of the blood (stagnation) and helps to ease the heart pain of angina pectoris.

Red-Root Sage is said to promote healthy liver function and may help to prevent liver damage caused by alcohol, drugs or diseases. Some studies suggest that Red-Root Sage may provide benefits for treating liver diseases such as cirrhosis, fibrosis and chronic hepatitis.

By reducing stasis (stagnation in the blood), Red-Root Sage helps to purify the blood; and detoxified blood is thought to be very beneficial for treating many ailments, including skin problems, such as acne, abscesses and boils. The concept of eliminating stasis to generate new blood simply means that in order for new blood to be generated, old, stagnant and impure blood that is not vital must be removed. This theory of vitalizing blood has been applied to the treatment for bone marrow deficiencies.

The isolated tanshinones are unique to Red-Root Sage and have been shown to inhibit bacterial growth, reduce fever, diminish inflammation and aid urinary excretion of toxins.

A relatively new area of study for blood stasis concerns the process of ageing: In Traditional Chinese Medicine, it is thought that detoxified blood will help nourish the kidneys, liver and spleen; and conversely, stagnant blood results in contraction of ligaments, withering of the flesh and overall reduction in vitality, mental function and health. During the twentieth century, possibly due to changes in the environment, diet and lifestyle (as well as progress in medical research into ageing), it is generally agreed that disorders associated with ageing additionally involve blood stasis. It is interesting to note that this was an idea first presented by Xu Lingtai, a famous physician of the Qing Dynasty who wrote during the mid-eighteenth century that the blood of the elderly did not flow very well, thus creating other health difficulties; however, Xu's concept did not get much attention for another two hundred years.

Red-Root Sage has shown some antiviral and antioxidant activity in several laboratory studies. Salvianolate-B, recently isolated from Red-Root Sage by medical researchers at the Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, was determined to have powerful antioxidant actions in vitro, and the salvianolic acid was shown to be the strongest of Red-Root Sage's constituents in protecting heart mitochondria from free radical damage. Because these are ongoing studies, no conclusions have yet been established.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Red-Root Sage, nor should those who take prescription blood thinning medications (Coumadin, Plavix, aspirin, etc.).

Those who are allergic to members of the mint family (thyme, basil, sage, marjoram, etc.) should avoid this herb. You should not use Red-Root Sage if you take prescription medications or have high blood pressure or heart or blood vessel disease, nor should it be used for prolonged periods (preferably one month on and one month off), and it is advisable to use this herb only under the care of a knowledgeable health care provider. Inform your physician or dentist prior to any surgical or dental procedure if you are taking this herb.

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Red Root



Botanical: *Ceanothus americanus*

Family: Rhamnaceae (buckthorn)

Other common names: Jersey Tea, New Jersey Tea, Wild Snowball, Mountain Sweet

The Red Root stimulates fluid drainage from congested areas and has a profound effect on the lymph system, (draining wastes); the liver (decreasing the harmful

effects of fats); the spleen (reducing chronic enlargement); and the respiratory system (relieving asthma, bronchitis, whooping cough, colds, tonsillitis and sinusitis).

Medical Uses:

For hundreds of years, Red Root has been used in Russia and North America for the treatment for rheumatism and various skin ailments such as warts, eczema, nasal polyps, and skin cancer. In folk medicine, it is used to treat menstrual hemorrhage, nosebleeds, bleeding piles, hemorrhoids, old ulcers and capillary ruptures from vomiting or coughing.

Today Red Root is still used to treat nosebleeds, heavy menstruation, and hemorrhoids. This herb stimulates lymph and inter-tissue fluid circulation; therefore, it can be effective in treating sore throats, enlarged lymph nodes, and for shrinking non-fibrous cysts. It is also an emetic and expectorant and can be used to treat asthma and bronchitis. Red Root is most effective in soothing headaches and inflammation from blood fats after a heavy, late evening meal. Some say though that Red Root can even help reduce and limit the deposition of dental plaque.

Plant Description:

Red Root is a half-hardy shrub that is native to North America. The *Ceanothus* genus encompasses over fifty species of small trees or shrubs that are distributed throughout North America and as far south as Guatemala. The majority of the species are evergreen, but the eastern species have adapted to cold winters and are deciduous. The shrubby tree has a smooth bark that produces erect branches, bearing alternate, downy leaves and numerous small, ornamental white flowers that bloom in summertime.

The flowers are followed by fruits (seed vessels), and the entire plant generally reaches a height of five feet. It can be found in dry woodlands, barrens, open plains or sandy, rocky clearings or hillsides and thrives in well-drained soil in sun. It dislikes alkaline conditions but will tolerate poor, dry soils. The name, Red Root, is derived from the plant's large, red root, which is the medicinal part, and it is dug and partially harvested in late autumn or early spring, when the red color is deepest, and then dried for use in herbal medicines. Red Root is a long, cylindrical,

thick, irregularly contorted and branching root, with both a simple or branched head and knotty tubercles. To the taste, Red Root is astringent and bitter, but has no odor (although some claim it is peach-like). In Canada, the root has been occasionally used to dye wool a cinnamon color.

The leaves are also astringent and slightly bitter and have been used as a substitute for tea, to which they have a strong resemblance when dried, both in taste and in fragrance.

Red Root's common name, Jersey Tea, evolved, because the leaves were used as a tea substitute during the American War of Independence. The plant also has a long history of medicinal use. The Cherokee people of North America used it to treat skin cancer and venereal sores. Red Root is a bitter, astringent herb, and some of its constituents include tannins, a soft resin, gum, volatile substance, lignin, a bitter extract, ceanothic-, ceanothetic-, malonic-, orthophosphoric- oxalic-, pyrophosphoric- and succinic acids, as well as a principle called ceanothine.

Medical Uses:

Red Root is a bitter, astringent, cleansing herb that has traditionally been used to support the lymph system. It is said to have a profound, stimulating influence on the lymphatic system, helping to drain the lymph glands, and increasing its ability to carry waste tissue away from infected areas. It has been shown to increase transport of nutrients from the blood across the capillary cells to the lymph and generally stimulate fluid drainage from congested areas.

As an astringent, Red Root's tannins act to shrink tissues, and these actions help to reduce abnormal uterine bleeding, nosebleeds, hemorrhoids and diarrhea. It is said to increase blood clotting, prevent secretion of fluids and reduce mild bleeding from broken skin capillaries, which may be of help in cases of varicose veins.

Red Root is thought to reduce liver congestion. Because it stimulates fluid drainage from congested areas, the herb acts to cleanse the liver, decrease the negative effects of fats in the blood and tone blood protein. Red Root is also believed to improve circulation to the liver and reduces an enlarged liver.

As an expectorant, Red Root helps to loosen and expel phlegm from the lungs. It is said to both decrease the thickness, as well as increase the fluidity of mucus in the

lungs and bronchial tubes. Because it stimulates fluid drainage from congested areas, it is used to alleviate the discomforts of asthma, chronic bronchitis, whooping cough, consumption, colds, tonsillitis, diphtheria, sinusitis and other upper respiratory tract illnesses.

Red Root is said to have a special influence upon the spleen, to which it is a stimulant, and is thought to relieve enlargement of that organ, particularly when caused by "mono" or fever.

Red Root exhibits antispasmodic properties that relax spasms in skeletal muscle or smooth muscle. Further acting as a relaxant, its sedative qualities are thought to help relieve temporary depression.

Red Root is believed to have antibacterial and antiviral properties, and because it contains triterpenes and flavonoids, the herb is said to make the body environment less hospitable to invaders. It has been used for such viral and bacterial conditions as mumps, mononucleosis, and rocky mountain fever and cat scratch fevers. In recent studies, Red Root's ceanothic and ceanothetic acids have demonstrated antimicrobial activity and growth-inhibitory effects against selected oral pathogens, such as *S. mutans*, *Actinomyces viscosus*, and *P. gingivalis*. It has also been used in the treatment for tonsil inflammations and sore throats.

Its antibacterial and antiviral properties have made it useful in cases of gonorrhea, gleet (a urethral discharge, of either mucus or pus, commonly seen in the form of gonorrheal urethritis), leucorrhoea (a whitish or yellowish vaginal discharge) and syphilis (archaic use).

Treatments:

Used externally, Red Root is useful in mouthwashes and gargles to relieve sore throats and tonsillitis.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Red Root without consulting with a health care provider. This herb may interfere with absorption of iron and other minerals and is best when not taken at the same time. Those who take blood-thinning medications should consult their physicians before using Red Root. It is

important to note that Red Root is NOT Bloodroot (sometimes also called Redroot), which is an entirely different plant (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) of another species and considered unsafe.

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Red Wine Extract



Botanical: *Vitis vinifera*

Family: Vitaceae (grape)

Other common names: Grapeseed Extract, OPCs (Oligomeric Proanthocyanidins), Muskat, PCOs (Procyanidolic Oligomers)

Red Wine Extract is said to be very beneficial in supporting cardiovascular health by strengthening blood vessels, increasing blood circulation, lowering cholesterol and reducing platelet aggregation (clots) in the blood. It is also considered one of the most powerful antioxidants known to exist that helps to combat free radical damage and enhance immunity.

Medical Uses:

- Antioxidant protection

- Source Naturals Red Wine Extract with Resveratrol provides the heart-health benefits of red wine without the alcohol, sulfites, headaches or excess calories. Worldwide research has shown that the components of red wine, including polyphenols and anthocyanidins, support the cardiovascular system by promoting healthy blood flow and strengthening capillaries.
- Provides antioxidant protection, promotes cholesterol wellness, and balances the immune system.

Plant Descriptions:

Red Wine Extract originated in the Mediterranean regions of southern Europe and Middle East, thriving in deep, moist, humus-rich, neutral-to-alkaline soil in sun and warm climates; and the grape's hardiness varies according to the cultivars.

History:

Grapes were first cultivated near the Caspian Sea, and their use as food and drink had spread throughout the Mediterranean world before The Bible was written. They were cultivated in Egypt over four thousand years ago, and even the ancient Greeks knew that wine possessed wonderful health benefits. Wine is the fermented juice of grapes, and it has been used in various cultures for almost five thousand years.

Egyptian records dating from 2500 B.C. refer to wines, and there are frequent references to wine in the Old Testament. Wine was also used by early Minoan and Etruscan civilizations, and we can thank the Roman army for introducing the rootstocks and winemaking throughout Europe as they created an expanding Roman Empire. Centuries later, the role of wine for sacramental use in Christian churches helped to maintain the industry after the fall of the Roman Empire. Modern science has now confirmed the health benefits included in occasional Red Wine consumption, and although you may not be enjoying the taste of this wondrous gift of nature, you will enjoy a convenient way to enjoy its many health benefits (without having to relinquish the keys to your car) in this easy supplement. Red Wine Extracts (not white) possess high concentrations of proanthocyanidins that confer high antioxidant and free radical benefits, as well as phenolic and

polyphenolic compounds (including catechin, quercetin, resveratrol, et al) that combat platelet aggregation (clotting) in the blood.

Treatments:

With regard to good coronary health, Red Wine Extract from Grapeseed has become a popular supplement for preventing heart disease and arteriosclerosis. Numerous studies now say that the level of antioxidants may be a more significant factor than cholesterol levels in determining the risk of developing heart disease.

The powerful antioxidants in Red Wine Extract are said to help prevent the oxidation of cholesterol that ultimately leads to the process of arteriosclerosis, and the high flavonoid content in Red Wine Extract appears capable of significantly reducing the risk of heart attack or stroke. Red Wine Extract is said to help reduce platelet aggregation (clotting) in the blood, thereby also reducing the risk of arteriosclerosis, stroke and heart attacks. Moreover, it appears to raise the levels of high-density lipoproteins (HDLs or "good" cholesterol) in the blood, while decreasing the low-density lipoproteins (LDLs, or "bad" cholesterol) and thereby help to prevent heart attacks and strokes.

The HDL is said to help clear the "bad" cholesterol from the arterial walls and help eliminate it from the body. This action also helps to promote better circulation of blood throughout the body, especially to the heart.

For good vascular health, Red Wine Extract is considered the best herbal supplement that will maintain the health of capillaries, through which the blood delivers nutrients to individual cells and carries away waste products.

Red Wine Extract is also said to improve peripheral blood circulation, resulting in less pain and swelling in arms, ankles, legs, and fewer nighttime cramps. Use of Red Wine Extract is thought to relieve numbness and tingling, as well as varicose veins. When the walls of small blood vessels weaken, the fluids they transport leak out, causing swelling, and OPCs strengthen capillary walls by blocking the degradation of the two proteins that give them strength and elasticity, collagen and elastin. This action stops edema and swelling.

Red Wine Extract is believed to significantly improve blood circulation, which benefits both cardiac and cerebral function. Furthermore, because OPCs are able to

cross the blood-brain barrier, they can protect the brain and spinal nerves against free radical damage. Recent studies indicate that Red Wine Extract's compounds (OPCs) may also be helpful in inhibiting Alzheimer's disease and dementia and possibly improving cognitive and brain function (particularly in women).

As one of the finest antioxidants found in nature, Red Wine Extract from Grapeseed supports the immune system and works to combat free radical damage to cells and tissue and defend the body against serious malignant disease and infection. This herbal supplement contains an important source of nature's most potent antioxidants, tannin compounds called proanthocyanidins (also called OPCs for oligomeric procyanidins or PCOs for procyanidolic oligomers) that provide a high degree of antioxidant capacity, which fight free radical damage in the body.

These compounds allow the body's cells to absorb vitamin C, which is helpful in protecting cells from the free radicals that can bind to and destroy cellular compounds. Such qualities are believed to be helpful in building the immune system and fighting invasive material and other infections.

They are classified as flavonols, and the way in which these versatile healing compounds are distinct from flavonoids is their simple chemical structure, which allows them to be readily absorbed into the bloodstream. They work actively against fat-soluble and water-soluble oxidants, thus protecting the cells from damage. OPCs may also be derived from Pine Bark (the original source) and are present in Pomegranate, Hops, various flowers, fruits, berries, nuts and beans. Clinical tests suggest that OPCs may be as much as fifty times more potent than vitamin E and twenty times more potent than vitamin C in terms of bioavailable antioxidant activity. Studies have shown that Red Wine Extract not only enhances the development of normal cells, but may also inhibit abnormal cell growth.

Macular degeneration may be slowed by the use of Red Wine Extract, and it may reduce myopia and improve vision that is stressed by computer screens or glare.

Red Wine Extract's OPCs are said to promote tissue regeneration, strengthen and repair connective tissue, enhance collagen production, revitalize ageing skin and promote tissue elasticity, all of which helps to reduce the tendency to bruise easily and increases the healing of injuries.

Test tube research has shown that the polyphenols in Red Wine Extract inhibit the growth of the Streptococcus mutans bacteria that causes tooth decay.

Red Wine Extract is said to reduce histamine production, thus moderating allergic and inflammatory responses, and this action has helped many allergy sufferers.

Precautions:

Do not take Red Wine Extract if you have anemia or if you are taking blood-thinning medication (aspirin, Coumadin, etc.). Since the tannin content of Grapeseed is high, it may counter the effects of iron supplements and should be taken at a different time.

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Red Yeast Rice



Botanical: *Monascus purpureus* - (also known as *Monascus rubus*)

Family: Monascaceae - Mucorales (mostly saprophytic fungi)

Other common names: Chinese Red Yeast Rice, Red Rice, Fermented Rice, Red Yeast, Anka, Ankak, Hung-Chu, Hongu, Red Koji, Red Leaven

The use of Red Yeast Rice as a treatment for colic, diarrhea, digestive disorders and poor circulation may be traced back to the Tang Dynasty in China; and throughout Asia, it is an important traditional food. More importantly, however, is its recent introduction in Western society as a supplement that may significantly reduce serum cholesterol and triglyceride levels in the blood.

Facts:

- Botanical Names: *Monascus purpureus*; *Monascus ruber*
- Family: Mucorales (mostly saprophytic fungi)
- Other common names: Chinese Red Yeast Rice, Red Rice, Fermented Rice, Red Yeast, Anka, Ankak, Hung-Chu, Hongu

Medical Uses:

Red Yeast Rice may significantly lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels in the blood. In one clinical trial, including 502 patients with hyperlipidemia, there was a 17% reduction of total cholesterol in the treated group. Low-density lipoproteins (LDL or "bad cholesterol") were reduced an average of 24.6%, and serum triglyceride levels fell an average of 19.8%. High-density lipoproteins (HDL or "good cholesterol") rose by 12.8% in the treatment group. The monacolin content in Red Yeast Rice is believed to account for the majority of the cholesterol-lowering activity of the yeast. Monacolins include the hydroxymethylglutaryl coenzyme-A, the enzyme involved in cholesterol biosynthesis. The mechanism of hypolipidemic activity is not entirely clear, but the presence of monacolin I (lovastatin mevinolin) and its corresponding beta-hydroxy acid appear to be responsible for the lipid lowering activity. There are claims that the hypolipidemic effects of Red Yeast Rice have been found to be greater than those obtained from equivalent doses of the pharmaceutical form of lovastatin.

Plant Description:

Red Yeast Rice is the product of fermentation of rice with various strains of the yeast (*Monascus purpureus*), and it has been utilized for centuries in China and throughout Asia as both a food and herbal medicine. The traditional method of

making Red Yeast Rice is to ferment the yeast naturally on a bed of cooked, non-glutinous, whole rice kernels.

History:

It was apparently first noted as a medicine during the Tang Dynasty (A.D. 618-917) and employed for treating indigestion, diarrhea, and congestion of the spleen and for improving blood circulation, among other applications. Red Yeast Rice was introduced to Taiwan by winemakers in Fukien, China, about a century ago and became popular in the preparation of foods, including fish, meat, rice wine (fu chiu), red soybean curd, and pickled vegetables. It was (and still is) employed as a coloring agent and is said to add flavor to foods.

The fungus, *Monascus*, which has been isolated from Red Yeast Rice, was introduced into Western society by Dutch scientists who noted its beneficial effects on the people of Java in 1884. It was introduced into the United States during the latter half of the 1990s as a dietary supplement for the promotion of healthy serum lipid levels.

The botanical specifics, *purpureus* and *rubus*, are recognition of the herb's purple or moderate rose/red coloration. Some of the constituents in Red Yeast Rice include starch, protein, fiber, fatty acids (oleic, linoleic, linolenic, palmitic, stearic), phytosterols (beta-sitosterol and stigmasterol), isoflavones, polyketides (monacolins) and natural pigments.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should avoid Red Yeast Rice, and those with active liver disease or who take prescription blood thinners, hyperlipidemia drugs, prescription statins, antifungal, antibiotics, and protease inhibitors, should consult with a health care provider before using Red Yeast Rice.

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Rehmannia Root



Botanical: *Rehmannia glutinosa*

Family: Scrophulariaceae (figwort/snapdragon, but placement still uncertain)

Other common names: Chinese Foxglove, Shen di huang, Yellow Earth, Ti Huang Chiu

Rehmannia Root was long used in China to heal many ailments and even as a tonic to prolong life; Rehmannia Root is becoming popular in the West as a blood refresher. It is often recommended to regulate deficient blood patterns, such as anemia, irregular menses, uterine and postpartum bleeding, pallor and light-headedness. Healthy blood is a good start for a better body.

Plant Description:

Rehmannia is a perennial herb with reddish-violet flowers native to China, Japan and Korea. Its common name is Chinese Foxglove.

Medical Uses:

Rehmannia's root is used medicinally in Oriental medicine to replenish vitality, to strengthen the liver, kidney and heart, and for treatment for a variety of ailments like diabetes, constipation, anemia, urinary tract problems, dizziness, and regulation of menstrual flow.

History:

Rehmannia Root is a native of China and is one of the first species of the genus to be introduced and cultivated in the West. It thrives in light, moist, well-drained, neutral-to-acid, sandy soil in full sun, and when cultivated, the thick, reddish-yellow roots are lifted in autumn or early winter for use in herbal medicine. Rehmannia Root is one of the most popular tonic herbs in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), where it has been used for thousands of years. Listed as one of the fifty most important Chinese herbs, it was first mentioned in Chinese medical literature during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C. - A.D.23). The fresh or dried roots have been used in China for centuries to treat a long list of ailments and were even used as a tonic to counter the effects of ageing! Some of the constituents included in Rehmannia Root are beta-sitosterol, calcium, copper, glucose, glucosamine, histidine, mannitol, zinc, amino acids and vitamins A, B, C and D.

Treatments:

Rehmannia Root is considered a tonic for the blood and enhances circulation throughout the body, especially to the brain. As a blood energizer, the herb has been used to treat blood-related deficiencies, including anemia, dizziness, pallid face and light-headedness. It is also said to control hemorrhage of all kinds, including excessive menstruation, and women find the herb helpful when used to regulate flow and strengthen the body after the weakening effects of childbirth.

The glycoside content in Rehmannia Root helps to manufacture certain hormones that are believed to ease many unpleasant symptoms of menopause, including hot flashes, restlessness, insomnia and loss of bone strength. Rehmannia Root has also been regarded as an effective fertility enhancer.

Rehmannia Root is thought to protect the liver and shows promise in relieving hepatitis (when used by herbalists in combination with licorice). Some studies echo the ancient claim that the herb may actually strengthen the liver, kidneys and heart.

By preventing the depletion of stored glycogen, Rehmannia Root may be effective in the treatment for hypoglycemia.

Rehmannia Root is a mild diuretic, promoting the flow of urine and helping to reduce fever. It is sometimes referred to as a refrigerant that helps to disperse heat from the body.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Rehmannia Root, and overuse of the herb (many times its recommended use) may lead to abdominal distension and loose stools. Other side effects may include nausea and abdominal pain.

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Reishi Mushroom



Botanical: *Ganoderma lucidum*

Family: Ganodermataceae/Basidiomycetes/Polyporaceae (button mushroom)

Other common names: Lucky Fungus, Ganoderma, Happy Fungus, Lingzhi, Ling Chi, Chaga, Mushroom of Immortality

Reishi Mushrooms have been revered in China for thousands of years as an almost magical fungus that was believed to not only prevent serious ailments, but also help seriously ill persons to recover from disease. Modern studies have shown remarkable medical potential for the use of Reishi Mushrooms in promoting healthy heart function and combating viral infection and other serious malignant diseases. It is considered a fine antihistamine, and it appears that this tasty treat is

becoming an important support for the immune system and maintaining optimum health!

Facts:

Reishi Mushroom grows in coastal areas of China and is found on decaying logs and tree stumps. The fruiting body is used medicinally. In Asian medicine, the Reishi Mushroom is prized for its health-promoting effects. The Chinese call it "herb of spiritual potency" and it is used for treatment for fatigue and weakness, asthma, insomnia, coughs and more.

Plant Description:

The Reishi Mushroom is called the "Phantom Mushroom" in Japan, because it is so rare and difficult to find. In China, the fungus grows on old tree trunks in the coastal areas, and in Japan (*Ganoderma japonicum*); over ninety-nine percent of all the Reishi Mushrooms found growing in the wild are located on old Japanese plum trees. Fewer than ten mushrooms will be found on 100,000 trees! Happily, the art of growing Reishi indoors was perfected in Japan by developing an elaborate, two-year-long method of culturing wild spores on plum tree sawdust. Because of the growing popularity of the Reishi Mushroom as a food and as a remarkable medicinal source, it is now cultivated commercially in North America, China, Taiwan, Japan and Korea. Reishi grows in six different colors, with the red variety most commonly used.

History:

The botanical name, *lucidum*, is derived from the Latin word, meaning "shiny" or "brilliant," obviously referring to the shiny, varnished surface of the Reishi Mushroom's cap, which may be reddish-orange to black. The stalk is usually attached to the cap at the side, and the fruiting body of the Reishi Mushroom is utilized for medicinal purposes. For four thousand years, the Chinese and Japanese have used the Reishi Mushroom to treat liver disorders, hypertension, arthritis and other ailments. Reishi Mushrooms have been regarded in China as the "Medicine of Kings" and "Elixir of Life" and are still used to boost energy, help the body resist disease and stress and promote longevity. In the Orient, mushrooms (including Reishi) have been used for thousands of years to maintain health and

preserve youth, and their healing qualities have been passed down through the centuries. Only recently, has the scientific community of the West begun to understand the enormous medical potential that may be derived from this fungus, and many studies are being conducted into the mushrooms' great health benefits. Some of the constituents in Reishi Mushrooms include lanostanoid triterpenes (including ganoderic acids, the free radical scavengers), lucidenic acids, coumarin, heteropolysaccharides, polysaccharides (including the powerful beta-1, 3-glucan and beta-1, 6-glucan), beta sitosterol, uridine, oleic acid, amino acids, acid protease, enzymes and mannitol.

Medical Uses:

Reishi Mushroom is used as a tonic that will not only improve vitality, but it is also thought to strengthen internal organs and normalize body functions. It is considered an adaptogen, an herb that maintains health by increasing the body's ability to adapt to environmental and internal stress and generally work by strengthening the immune system, nervous system and/or glandular system. As such, it works to normalize bodily functions during stressful situations that might alter those functions, helping the body to adapt and return to an overall sense of well-being.

Reishi Mushroom is believed to be a powerful immune system stimulant that wards off many types of malignant diseases by enhancing the activity of key immune cells known as T-helper cells or CD4 cells. Japanese researchers say that a hardy system may be able to resist invasions and microbes that weaker host systems may not. It should also be mentioned that Reishi does not produce some of the negative effects associated with the use of antibiotics, which can often stop the invasion of microbes, but will further weaken the immune response after continued use and are also ineffectual in cases of viruses, pollens and malignant cells.

Reishi apparently does not simply stimulate the immune system, it regulates it. If the immune system is excessive, as in the case of autoimmune ailments and allergies, Reishi can have a significant positive influence. If it is deficient, as in colds, flu, chronic fatigue syndrome or hepatitis, Reishi activates the immune response. Reishi Mushroom has shown particular efficacy against wasting and

degenerative conditions, such as the effects associated with the AIDS virus in laboratory tests.

Many studies are being conducted with respect to the Reishi Mushroom, and it is said to stimulate the body's production of interferon and immune system chemicals, interleukin-1 and two, which combat several types of serious health conditions, and the polysaccharides activate macrophages (immune cells are our first line of defense against intruders). They attack unhealthy cells but not healthy ones. Reishi contains compounds called ganoderic acids, which act against serious liver ailments. It is also believed to stimulate the creation of protein in bone marrow and counteract the suppression of red and white blood cells that can often result from cyclophosphamide treatments (Cytosan and Neosar). Ongoing studies are being conducted in Korea, Japan and China that claim the remarkable polysaccharides, beta-1, 3-glucan and beta-1, 6-glucan, have demonstrated powerful antioxidant properties.

The polysaccharide-K (PSK), a specific glucans in Reishi, was shown to extend the survival time by five years or beyond for people with serious malignant diseases of the stomach, colon/rectum, esophagus, nasopharynx and lung. Polysaccharide-P (PSP) was shown to improve the quality of life, provide substantial relief and enhance the immune status in patients suffering from these conditions, and it is thought to be very compatible with chemotherapy and radiation.

Treatment:

Reishi Mushroom is thought to promote healthy heart function. For thousands of years, mushrooms have been used to lower blood pressure levels and relieve hypertension in the Orient. Today's research claims that it will promote and maintain both normal blood pressure and blood cholesterol levels. Russian scientists found that Reishi stops the accumulation of cholesterol in the arteries of lab animals, and other evidence claims that Reishi thins the blood in a manner similar to aspirin by reducing agglutination of platelets (blood clotting). These actions appear to reduce the risks of heart attacks, hardening of the arteries and stroke.

Reishi Mushroom is said to relieve stress and neurasthenia (fatigue due to exhaustion of the nervous system). There has been no scientific proof of this, but it

is said to have a self-protecting mechanism of the central nervous system. Research at Oral Roberts University found that compounds in Reishi reduce the flow of nerve impulses through the sympathetic nervous system, keeping down emotional stress, and may help to reduce emotional outbursts. Japanese scientists say it decreases the physical pain of neuralgia and shingles by enhancing muscle relaxation, and that action may relieve insomnia.

Reishi Mushroom was used to treat liver disorders thousands of years ago. Today's research claims that it helps to inhibit alcohol-induced fatty liver and cirrhosis, which may be beneficial for people in the earlier stages of alcoholic liver debility, who have not yet experienced severe loss of liver function. It is also thought to protect the liver against chemical damage.

As an antiviral and antibiotic, Reishi appears to stimulate the maturation of immune cells into macrophages, which engulf and digest infectious bacteria. This can prevent secondary infections from developing (particularly effective in cases of chronic bronchitis). The macrophages are active against yeast infections and may improve conditions of viral hepatitis.

Reishi Mushroom has demonstrated excellent antiallergenic properties, and studies claim that it inhibits the growth of histamine, a chemical that causes inflammation. It is also said to be good for people with asthma, contact dermatitis, conjunctivitis or colds.

Reishi has traditionally been used as an anti-ageing herb and has been said to promote a youthful, healthy glow. It is also believed to fight age-related intellectual decline and promote memory, sharpen concentration and build willpower.

Precautions:

Research is so new that not much information is available; therefore, pregnant and nursing women should not use Reishi Mushroom supplements. There should be a time break if you take it on an ongoing basis (one month's break for every three months' use), and then resume. Do not use Reishi if you take blood-thinning medication (Coumadin, etc.), unless under a doctor's supervision.

* * * * *

Rhodiola Root



Botanical: *Rhodiola rosea*

Family: Crassulaceae (orpine)

Other common names: Golden Root, Roseroot, Roseroot Crenulin, Russian Rhodiola

Rhodiola Root can help fight fatigue and help combat temporary depression. Athletes like the stamina-building properties of Rhodiola Root, and this arctic native has been used to fight infection, anemic conditions and heart problems, while helping to enhance mental clarity and sexual function. It may also be useful for fighting fat!

Facts:

Rhodiola is an adaptogenic herb that can increase serotonin activity by up to 30%. Rhodiola also increases the activity of two other mood-related neurotransmitters - dopamine (DA) and norepinephrine (NE) - by inhibiting the activity of COMT, an enzyme that breaks DA and NE. Rhodiola produces quick results, usually within a few days. Rhodiola users report increased energy and motivation, reduced anxiety, and elevated feelings of confidence and optimism.

Numerous double blind, placebo-controlled clinical trials show that Rhodiola can increase general well-being, reduce mental fatigue, and improve learning and memory.

Until recently, Rhodiola was virtually unknown in the United States, but it has been extensively studied by Russian scientists and was used for decades in the former Soviet Union as an energy-enhancer.

Plant Description:

Rhodiola Root is a native of the arctic regions of eastern Siberia and may be found in the mountainous regions of Asia and Europe at altitudes of eleven- to eighteen-thousand feet above sea level. The herb grows to about two and a half feet in height, and the fragrance of its flowers is similar to attar of roses, which is the reason it was given its botanical specific, *rosea*, and one of its common names, Roseroot.

Rhodiola Root is a perennial plant with red, pink or yellowish flowers and is not related to the "common" rose, but due to its similar fragrance, it has been used as a substitute for attar of roses.

History:

Its use in herbal medicine reaches back for centuries: Dioscorides, the Greek physician, reported on its use in his treatise *De Materia Medica*, and The Emperor of China organized expeditions to Siberia to bring back this highly valued plant. Rhodiola Root was used by the Vikings to enhance their physical stamina and strength and has long been used in traditional medicine, primarily in Russia and Scandinavia and by other people of the North, to treat fatigue, poor physical endurance, nervous system disorders and infections, and to enhance fertility.

Rhodiola was included in the first Swedish Pharmacopoeia, and in the 1930s, extensive research began in Russia, Scandinavia and Germany to seek the secrets of the "Golden Root" that had been used for centuries as an anti-ageing miracle that helped the people of Siberia cope with the cold climate and stressful life. In recent history, Rhodiola Root has been widely used by Russian athletes and cosmonauts to increase energy. Some of the constituents in Rhodiola Root include glycosides (rosavin, rosin, and rosarin) and monoterpene (rosiridin and salidroside), as well as flavonoids (rodiolin, rodionin, rodiosin, acetylrodalgin, tricin); triterpenes (daucosterol, beta-sitosterol) and phenolic acids (chlorogenic, hydroxycinnamic and gallic acids).

Medical Uses:

Rhodiola Root is an "adaptogen" and is said to stimulate and protect the immune system by reinstating the metabolic balance in the body after stressful situations. It helps the body adapt and return to normal function and a sense of well-being when exposed to stresses that would alter those functions. Use of Rhodiola Root is also thought to promote faster adaptation to climatic and social changes.

Rhodiola Root is believed to be an aphrodisiac for both men and women, helping to increase sexual potency in men, managing erectile dysfunction and/or premature ejaculations, and normalizing prostatic fluid. In traditional medicine, the herb was given to married couples to increase fertility.

Researchers have recommended Rhodiola Root for anyone suffering from temporary depression, stress or anxiety. Used as an antidepressant, all subjects in clinical tests showed a positive therapeutic effect with its use. It is thought to work by making serotonin precursors (tryptophan and 5-HTP) more available to the brain and by optimizing the amount of serotonin, dopamine and other neurotransmitter levels in the brain.

Athletes use Rhodiola Root to improve physical performance and maintain energy and endurance levels in various sports. It is said to be particularly valuable for body builders, because it is thought to stimulate muscle energy status, glycogen synthesis in muscles and liver, muscle protein synthesis and anabolic activity. The herb is believed to increase strength and mobility and to shorten recovery after strenuous and prolonged exercise and workouts.

Rhodiola Root is considered a heart healthy herb that may protect against heart ailments. It appears to decrease the amount of adrenalin and cortisol released during stress and defends the heart against "adrenalin burn." It is believed to lower serum fats and cholesterol, while increasing the resistance of blood vessels to cholesterol plaques, thus helping to increase blood circulation and reducing the risk of arteriosclerosis, strokes and heart attacks. In clinical tests, Rhodiola Root was shown to reduce and/or prevent stress-induced cardiac damage, decrease myocardial catecholamines and cyclic adenosine monophosphate levels and activated receptors in the heart muscle, preventing arrhythmias.

With regard to thyroid function, Rhodiola Root was shown in clinical tests to enhance thyroid function without causing hyperthyroidism.

Rhodiola Root has been recommended for or anyone requiring more mental clarity or anyone who has memory problems. Because the herb is believed to improve blood circulation, this activity apparently increases the blood supply to the brain, enhancing both cognitive function and attention span. It is also thought to increase bioelectrical activity in the brain, which also may improve memory and brain energy.

Studies show that Rhodiola Root may be effective in promoting weight loss by stimulating the "lipolytic processes." It seems to have the ability to mobilize from adipose tissue and activate adipose lipase, a key enzyme required to burn the body's fat stores. This process helps to stimulate the natural fat burning system in your body that is needed for weight reduction.

Rhodiola Root combats the effects of asthenia, an emotional stress condition that is characterized by sluggishness, low motivation, muscle weakness, continual fatigue, labored breathing, palpitations and excessive sleeping. In clinical tests, use of Rhodiola Root reversed this condition.

It is thought that Rhodiola Root may possess potent antioxidant properties. Russian researchers have found that in laboratory tests, it inhibited the growth of, and improved immunity to, various types of serious invasive illness.

Precautions:

Currently, there are no known warnings or contraindications with the use of Rhodiola Root, but because there is limited clinical information, it would be wise for pregnant and nursing women to consult their physicians before using.

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Rhubarb Root



Botanical: *Rheum officinale*

Family: Polygonaceae (buckwheat)

Rhubarb Root is an ancient and gentle, but extremely effective, laxative. It supports good colon health by cleansing it and treating constipation, and in smaller doses, its astringents have eased diarrhea, bleeding and hemorrhoids. Rhubarb Root is considered a wonderful cleanser for the intestines, bowels, liver and blood, helping to rid the system of accumulated toxins. It is also an anti-microbial, antibacterial, and antibiotic and antiviral, and it may even help to improve your digestion.

Plant Description:

Rhubarb, also called sweet round-leaved dock or pie plant, is usually thought of as a fruit, but it is actually one of the few perennial vegetables in existence. Ordinary garden rhubarb carries the botanical name of *Rheum rhaponticum*, though there are other members of this botanical group that are also used for medicinal purposes. Chinese rhubarb, which is called da huang in traditional Chinese medicine, has the botanical name *Rheum palmatum*. Chinese rhubarb has a much stronger taste and properties than the common American variety. Rhubarb is a member of the same

family as buckwheat, the Polygonaceae family. It originally came from Mongolia in northern Asia, but was long ago introduced to both India and Turkey. It was formerly called India or Turkey rhubarb.

History:

Rhubarb Root is a leafy, hardy perennial that is one of many species native to the cool mountains and high plateaus of western and northwestern China, India, Tibet, Russia and Turkey, that have been used in Asia for their laxative properties as far back as the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D.23).

Rhubarb occurs in commerce under various names (Russian, Turkey, East Indian and Chinese), but the general geographical origin of all species is the same; the commercial names simply refer to the route by which the herb was formerly transported to European markets.

The origin of the name of Rhubarb's botanical genus, *Rheum*, is somewhat vague: Some believe that it is derived from the Latin words, *Rha Babrum*, an ancient name for the Volga River, where the plant grew in profusion; others claim that it comes to us from the Greek word, *rheo*, which means "to flow," an allusion to the root's purgative properties. In the first century A.D., Dioscorides, the most influential pharmaceutical writer of antiquity, spoke of a root known as *rha* or *rheon*, an herb that came from the Bosphorus Strait that separates Europe from Asia. Rhubarb Root was introduced to Europe in 1767, although specimens of another rhubarb species, *Rheum palmatum* (Turkey Rhubarb/Chinese Rhubarb), were cultivated as early as 1762, in the Botanical Gardens in Edinburgh; and in the eighteenth century, cultivation of *Rheum palmatum* was given preference, but the two are frequently used interchangeably, with only minor variations in chemistry. The roots of *Rheum officinale* are much smaller than those of the Chinese/Turkey Rhubarb and appear more shrunken, spongier, and distinctly pink in color, bearing star-shaped spots and thriving in well-drained, moist, humus-rich soil in sun.

The familiar, edible garden Rhubarb that we include in our diets is a hybrid that was developed during the nineteenth century, and the roots have no medicinal value. Rhubarb Roots are lifted in autumn from plants that are at least three years of age, then dried and used in herbal medicine. Only the roots of this bitter, astringent, cooling herb are used medicinally; the leaves are highly poisonous.

Current research in China is investigating the potential use of Rhubarb Root as an antineoplastic in cancer therapy that may prevent the development, growth or proliferation of malignant cells and tumors. In animal trials, Rhubarb Root caused damage to sarcoma-27, and the emodin content inhibited melanoma growth. The herb is also an ingredient in the controversial Essiac formula, which is an herbal mixture that was invented by Canadian nurse, Rene Caisse, as a treatment for cancers (its efficacy has not been established, nor is its use sanctioned by the established medical community).

Some of the constituents found in Rhubarb Root include anthraquinone glycosides (the active purgative ingredient), tannins (astringents), a bitter principle, pectin, rutin, starch, catechin, phytosterols, physcion, gallic acid, oxalic acid, aloe-emodin, rhein (sennosides A and B) and flavones. Paradoxically, because of the opposing nature of the tannins and anthraglycosides, the health of the colon is supported by the dosage, and the effects vary, i.e., larger amounts treat constipation, and lower doses treat diarrhea.

Medical Uses:

Rhubarb Root has been used for over two thousand years as a mild, yet powerful and effective, laxative that empties the intestines and cleanses the bowels thoroughly. The anthraquinone glycosides (also found in Senna, Buckthorn and Cascara Sagrada) are natural stimulants and produce a purging action, which make it useful for treating chronic constipation. At higher doses, the anthraquinone activity is thought to predominate, resulting in more watery and more frequent stools. Its mild action has been considered suitable for children, and it is often used to soften stool in the presence of anal fissures and hemorrhoids and used post-operatively for recto-anal operations. In China, it is included in some standard bowel preparation programs for colonoscopy.

The tannins in Rhubarb Root produce astringent properties, when taken in small doses, the tannin activity in Rhubarb supersedes the anthraquinone activity, thus leading to a lower water content of stool, and this action has been effective in relieving diarrhea. Moreover, the pectin content in Rhubarb Root is also thought to work well with tannins as an anti-diarrhea. As an effective astringent, Rhubarb

Root has been used to alleviate hemorrhoids, internal bleeding and inflamed mucous membranes.

Rhubarb Root is considered an "alterative" or agent that helps to gradually and favorably alter the course of an ailment or condition. It helps to modify the process of nutrition and excretion and restore normal bodily function, acting to cleanse and stimulate the efficient removal of waste products from the system. As such, it not only cleanses the intestinal tract and blood, but it is also thought to cleanse the liver by encouraging bile flow. The herb is said to enhance gallbladder function and relieve both liver and gallbladder complaints by releasing an accumulation of toxins.

The bitter principle included in Rhubarb Root is said to stimulate good digestion and improves the appetite. It is considered a "stomachic" that relieves gastric disorders, improves the appetite and gives tone and strength to the stomach. Rhubarb Root is thought to be particularly effective in treating atonic dyspepsia, helping the digestive organs when in a condition of torpor and debility. In addition, the herb is also believed to encourage gastric flow, which also aids the digestive process.

Rhubarb Root is considered an anti-microbial that has been used to treat internal pinworms, threadworms and ringworms.

Treatments:

Rhubarb Root is thought to possess antibacterial, antibiotic and antiviral properties. In vitro studies, the anthraquinone in Rhubarb exhibited virucidal activity against HSV I, measles, polio and influenza virus; and the rhein component showed antibacterial activity against *Bacteroides fragilis*, but thus far, no conclusions have yet been published.

Rhubarb Root may be used externally to fight inflammation and infection (skin eruptions, boils and carbuncles, etc.) and to promote healing (wounds, cold sores and burns, etc.).

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Rhubarb Root, nor should it be used by those who suffer from colitis or have intestinal obstruction. Long-term use is not recommended, as it may cause dependence and tendency toward chronic constipation, nor should it be taken when the colon is already empty. People with a history of renal stones should avoid Rhubarb Root (and any herbs with oxalates). Never eat or cook Rhubarb leaves as a food. Oxalates are contained in all parts of Rhubarb plants, especially in the green leaves, and are considered extremely toxic. There is some evidence that anthraquinone glycosides (the active purgative ingredient) are also present and may be partly responsible. The stalks and roots contain low levels of oxalates, so this does not cause problems.

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Rose Hips



Botanical: *Rosa canina*

Family: Rosaceae (rose)

Other common names: Hip Tree, Wild Brier, Dog Brier, Dog Rose, Rose Haws

Rose Hips are rich in many nutrients, Rose Hips have gained an honored place as a healthy supplement to help maintain good health and prevent colds, flu and

infections. They contain sixty times the amount of vitamin C than found in lemons! Rose Hips help to strengthen body tissues, build and maintain a healthy vascular system and prevent damage to fragile capillaries. Rose Hips are thought to prevent many types of infectious ailments before they happen by using a prophylactic dosage on a daily basis.

Medical Uses:

This well-known source of vitamin C is often recommended for boosting resistance and fighting infections, although scientific proof of its effectiveness is still considered lacking.

Rose Hip seed is recommended for urinary tract infections, although here too, effectiveness awaits further confirmation. Other unverified uses of the seed include treatment for rheumatism, gout, kidney disease, water retention, and sciatica (nerve pain in the lower back and thigh). The plant's seed receptacle contains its vitamin C, while the seeds themselves harbor compounds that flush excess water from the body and exert a laxative effect.

Plant Description:

Roses are a group of herbaceous shrubs found in temperate regions throughout both hemispheres and grown in sunny or light shade and thrive in well-drained, slightly acid soil. Probably cultivated first in ancient Persia and carried to Greece and Rome, there are now hundreds of species of this beautiful flower cultivated throughout the world that occupy a vital place in medicine, as well as cosmetics, perfumes, soaps, and foods. The leaves of *Rosa canina* were once even used as a substitute for tea.

History:

The botanical name, *Rosa*, is derived from the Greek, *rodēn*, meaning "red" and the Latin, *ruber*, also meaning "ruby" or "red," as apparently, the Roses of the ancient Mediterranean region were deep crimson, giving birth to the legend that the flowers sprang from the blood of Adonis. Roses have a long tradition of medicinal use. The ancient Romans used *Rosa canina* (or Dog Rose) for the bites of rabid dogs, and in the first century A.D., the Roman, Pliny, recorded thirty-two different disorders that responded well to Rose preparations.

An oriental species (*Rosa laevigata*) was mentioned in Chinese medical literature about A.D. 470, and in China, Rose Hips are still used for chronic diarrhea with stomach weakness. In Ayurvedic medicine, Roses have long been considered "cooling" to the body and a tonic for the mind, and Native Americans used Rose Hips to treat muscle cramps. In 1652, the British herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper, prescribed them for "consumptive persons," for "tickling rheums," to "break the stone" (kidneys) and to help digestion. Long used for medicinal purposes in Great Britain, Rose Hips remained listed in the official British Pharmacopoeia well into the 1930s, and were considered an overall cooling tonic, an astringent, a great help for sore throats and a source of the essential vitamin C.

During World War II, there was a shortage of citrus fruit in England, and the British government organized the harvesting of all the Rose Hips in England as a substitute for vitamin C.

This illuminated the importance of Rose Hips as a superior source of the vitamin and began its worldwide popularity. Rose Hips have a reported sixty times the amount of vitamin C than citrus fruit, and we now know how absolutely essential vitamin C is to the maintenance of good health and the prevention of many diseases. Rose Hips are the fruits of the Rose, the ripe seed receptacles that remain after the petals are removed, and they contain many vitamins and other beneficial supplements, including beta-carotene, bioflavonoids, pectin, sugar, resin, wax, malates, citrates and other salts, tannin, malic and citrus acids, magnesium, calcium, iron, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, sulfur, zinc, vitamins B-1, B-2, B-3, B-5, C, E and K. Rose Hips contain the highest measure of vitamin C than is known in any other herb.

Treatments:

Probably the greatest known use of Rose Hips is as an extraordinary source of vitamin C, which is most beneficial for the prevention and treatment for infection and a great many common diseases, including the common cold, flu and pneumonia. It is said to prevent ailments before they happen by using a prophylactic dosage on a daily basis. Vitamin C is necessary for every cell in our bodies and without it; we would not be able to sustain life.

Natural vitamin C and bioflavonoids are combined in nature, and for efficacy, it is vital that they be used together. Rose Hips are rich in both, and together they help to strengthen body tissues and build and maintain a healthy vascular system and are said to heal and prevent damage to fragile capillaries. The combination is also thought to enhance the body's ability to absorb vitamin C in those who have difficulty absorbing it.

Rose Hips, with its abundance of vitamin C, are useful in treating infections of all kinds and have been used for centuries for the relief of diarrhea and dysentery. It is considered a cleansing agent and may be helpful for temporary bladder problems, gallbladder dysfunction, kidney health, general debility and exhaustion.

Current research indicates that large doses of vitamin C in Rose Hips could be helpful in enhancing our immune systems, which may be valuable in warding off infectious invaders and serious disease.

Rose Hips are said to have mild laxative and diuretic properties.

Precautions:

As a natural diuretic, Rose Hips may increase the efficacy of prescription diuretics and should not be used at the same time

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Rosemary



Botanical: *Rosmarinus officinalis*

Family: Labiatae/Lamiaceae (mint)

Other common names: Compass Weed, Old Man, Dew of the Sea, Poplar Plant, Compass Plant, Incensor

Rosemary has an old reputation for strengthening the memory and sharpening the senses (including vision). Long used to stimulate circulation to virtually all parts of the body, it enhances good digestion, eases pain and nervous anxiety, and may even help restore the look and glow of youth.

From the Latin word *rosmarinus* (dew of the sea); rosemary grew on the Italian coast in the spray of the sea in ancient times. It is said that scholars of the past wore fresh rosemary sprigs in their hair believing it would help them remember their studies.

Rosemary is excellent in many dishes, and once the leaves have been stripped, the stems can be used as skewers for grilling a multitude of vegetables and mushrooms. After removing the leaves, it is important to snip them into small

pieces in order to release the oil - rosemary has a fabulous aroma, and the stems can be tossed into the fireplace to add a wonderful scent to the home.

Plant Description:

Rosemary is a tender, aromatic evergreen that is highly ornamental and may be trained into topiary shapes. It is a perennial shrub that generally grows from three to six feet in height, with new varieties reaching eight feet, and it thrives in light, well-drained, neutral-to-alkaline soil in sun, but does require shelter in cold areas.

History:

Its botanical name, *Rosmarinus*, is derived from the Latin, *ros*, meaning "dew" and *marinus*, meaning "of the sea," since it was found in abundance near seashores.

Rosemary has been used since ancient times as a symbol of friendship, loyalty, and remembrance, and was traditionally carried by mourners at funerals and brides during their weddings.

Greek scholars wore garlands of Rosemary when taking examinations to improve their memory and concentration, a use echoed to this day. In the thirteenth century, Queen Elisabeth of Hungary claimed that at seventy-two years of age and crippled with gout and rheumatism, she had regained her beauty and strength by using Hungary Water (Rosemary), and the King of Poland even proposed marriage to her!

The Spanish revered Rosemary as the bush that sheltered the Virgin Mary on her flight to Egypt, and as she spread her cloak over the herb, the white flowers turned blue. In times past, the resinous herb was burned in sick chambers to purify the air and was placed in law courts as a protection from "jail fever" (typhus), and during the Plague of 1665, Rosemary was carried and sniffed in suspicious areas to protect against plague. Reinforcing those antiseptic uses, a mixture of Rosemary and Juniper was burned during World War II in French hospitals to kill germs.

The herb has long been used as a digestive and condiment and is a popular flavoring in soups, stews, and in meat preparation and preservation. It also flavors such liqueurs as Benedictine and Danziger Goldwasser. Some of the constituents included in Rosemary are high levels of volatile oils, flavonoids, and phenolic

acids, plus alpha-pinene, beta-carotene, a camphor compound, resin, betulinic acid, geraniol, hesperidin, rosmanol, salicylates, tannin, thymol, calcium, magnesium, iron, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Rosemary is an excellent memory and brain stimulant that is said to improve to brain function by feeding it with oxygen-rich blood. It also contains compounds that are said to prevent the breakdown of acetylcholine, a brain chemical that allows the nerve cells responsible for memory and reasoning to communicate with one another.

Rosemary is believed to fight free radicals and show anti-cancer and anti-tumor activity. The herb is said to possess strong antioxidant qualities that prevent cancer-causing chemicals from binding and causing mutations in cellular DNA (particularly in liver and bronchial cells).

Rosemary is an excellent stimulant for the circulatory system that not only improves brain function, but has also been used to treat disorders characterized by chronic circulatory weakness, such as high and low blood pressure, varicose veins, bruises and sprains. The flavonoid, diosmin, in Rosemary is reputedly more effective than rutin in reducing capillary fragility, enhancing a stronger flow of blood.

Treatment:

As an effective aid to good digestion and relaxant, Rosemary gives strength and tone to the stomach, stimulates digestion, and relaxes the smooth muscle of the digestive tract, which helps to calm upset stomach, ease cramps and spasms in the intestines, alleviate flatulence, dyspepsia, and relieve bloated feelings. It is also said to stimulate the release of bile, aiding the digestion of dietary fat. Rosemary is thought to be particularly helpful in treating indigestion caused by anxiety.

Rosemary calms and soothes the nerves, relaxes muscles, eases pain, and reduces tension and anxiety throughout the body. It has thus has been very helpful in treating headache, migraines (particularly when related to stress), depression, nervous exhaustion and apathy. The herb is said to also be effective in alleviating

the pain of neuritis, neuralgia, tendonitis, rheumatism, aching joints and overall muscle pain and spasms.

As an antiseptic, Rosemary cleanses the blood and helps to control many pathogenic organisms. It is potent enough to help kill bacterial infection but not so potent, however, to completely wipe out the natural bacterial population of the digestive tract that keep the intestines in healthy balance.

Its diuretic action increases the flow of urine that flushes bacteria from the body before they have chance to cause infection. Rosemary has shown some promise in treating toxic shock syndrome, and used externally, Rosemary's antiseptic qualities make it a fine gargle, mouthwash, and cleanser for wounds.

Rosemary's fungicidal properties have been effective in killing yeast infections, such as *Candida albicans*.

Rosemary is said to be an emmenagogue, which promotes menstruation and regulates its flow, treating low or excessive bleeding. It also thought to ease menstrual cramps and pain in the uterus.

Because Rosemary stimulates and improves circulation throughout the body, it increases the blood supply to the skin, which is thought to help restore a youthful glow; and used externally, it is believed to stimulate hair bulbs and prevent baldness.

Precautions:

Pregnant women should not use Rosemary in therapeutic doses, as it is a uterine stimulant, and it should never be used continuously by women with heavy menstrual flow. Rosemary should not be used in excessive amounts (many times the recommended dosage), as it may produce convulsions.

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Royal Jelly



Other Common Names: Apilak, Gelée Royale, Queen Bee Jelly

Royal Jelly has been called the "Crown Jewel" of the beehive that has become extremely popular since the 1950s as a wonderful source of energy and stamina and the reason why the Queen Bee is so strong and enduring. It is also thought to be a great nutritional source of enzymes, proteins, sugars, and amino acids, but there is no scientific proof to verify the supplement's efficacy for its use as an overall health tonic. You will have to decide.

Facts:

Royal Jelly is a creamy white substance synthesized by the common worker bee for the sole nourishment of the Queen bee.

The Queen bee is remarkable in its extended longevity and reproductive capability when compared to the worker bee. The Queen lives almost ten times longer than the worker bee: five years for the Queen, and less than six weeks for the worker bee. The Queen grows to be almost 50% larger than the worker and has exceptional reproductive capabilities, laying almost 2500 eggs in a single day.

The Queen is hatched from the same egg as the worker bee but is selected to receive a diet of pure royal jelly, while the common worker bee feeds off honey and other substances around the hive. Royal Jelly transforms the queen into an incredible insect, enhancing its physical performance to remarkable levels.

Not surprisingly, man has shown much interest in this substance, regarding it as the 'elixir' or 'crown jewel' of the hive. Many studies have been performed to try to establish its nutritional content and the effect of its nutrients on living beings.

Despite these extensive studies, the actual chemical make-up of royal jelly is still something of a mystery.

Royal jelly is the only natural source of pure acetylcholine. It has antibacterial and antimicrobial properties and has been implicated as beneficial in a wide range of health conditions. It is associated with benefits to bronchial asthma, insomnia, and many skin problems. It is known to support the immune system and may be of benefit in liver, kidney, and pancreatic diseases as well as stomach ulcers and bone fractures.

The amino acids in royal jelly are of significant interest to nutritionists. Long associated with the ability to fight 'free-radicals' in the body, amino acids form the very basis of our chemical make-up, and are essential to growth and the ability to fight infection and disease. In most cases, we cannot create our own amino acids; we must ingest them through the foods that we eat. The importance of amino acids and the fact that they are so abundant in bee products warrants special attention. It is in our section 'Amino Acids' that we will reveal the true potential of Royal Jelly as a nutritive substance that is rich in amino acids.

Plant Description:

Royal Jelly is a thick, milky material that is secreted from the salivary glands of the young nurse bees between the sixth and twelfth days of life, and when honey and pollen are combined and refined within the nurse bee, Royal Jelly is naturally created. It is the only food that is fed to the Queen Bee.

All female eggs may produce a Queen Bee, but this occurs only when - during the whole development of the larvae - she is cared for and fed by this material. Because of this special nutrition, the Queen develops reproductive organs (while the worker bee develops traits that relate only to work, i.e., stronger mandibles, brood food, wax glands, and pollen baskets). The Queen develops in about fifteen days, while the workers require twenty-one; and finally, the Queen endures for several years, while workers survive only a few months. Perhaps this is the reason

why so many positive qualities have been attributed to Royal Jelly as a truly rare gift of nature, but it should be noted that there is no clinical evidence to support the claims.

There is even great controversy as to the constituents included in the supplement. Some say it includes all the B vitamins, and vitamins A, C, D, and E; some disagree. It does contain proteins, sugars, lipids (fatty acids), and minerals. It is said that Royal Jelly may be most effective when combined with honey. You can decide whether any improvements you derive from Royal Jelly's use are purely coincidental, but if you feel better when using it, just enjoy the benefits.

Medical Uses:

Royal Jelly is said to be useful as an energy and stamina booster, as well as a way to enhance the immune system and maintain overall health.

Royal Jelly is said to alleviate a variety of problems, such as exhaustion, anxiety, mild depression, insomnia, and lack of energy and stamina.

Some people claim that Royal Jelly has helped to improve skin disorders and has slowed down the ageing process.

Other benefits attributed to the qualities of Royal Jelly include relief of bronchial asthma, liver, pancreatic and kidney ailments, stomach ulcers, and bone fractures.

Treatments:

Many of the benefits of are associated with its high concentration of essential amino acids, and we refer you to our chapter on amino acids for more information and more possible benefits to explore.

Royal Jelly has been noted for its positive benefits on:

- Energy
- Chronic fatigue
- Skin / hair / nails / bones / joints
- Hormonal regulation
- Asthma

- Sexual vitality / impotence
- Weight regulation
- Rejuvenation - recovery from illness
- Immune system stimulant
- Cholesterol levels
- Cardiovascular health
- Anti-depressive / anti-anxiety
- High blood pressure
- Mental condition / memory
- Depression
- Arthritis
- Liver ailments / conditions
- Eczema / impetigo / skin disorders
- Diabetes

Precautions:

Royal Jelly is a natural bee product and may induce allergic reactions in some people and should, therefore, be tested in very small amounts before continued use

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Rue



Botanical: *Ruta graveolens*

Family: Rutaceae (rue)

Other common names: Garden Rue, Countryman's Treacle, German Rue, Herb-of-Grace, Herbygrass, Vinruta, Ruta Herba, Common Rue

Rue helps relieve nervous spasms, painful cramps, menstrual pain and headache. It is also said to ease the discomforts of indigestion, coli, and flatulence, and because Rue contains powerful rutin (which strengthens capillaries), it is not only used to enhance eyesight, but it is also believed to improve cardiovascular health by stimulating circulation through stronger blood vessels.

Plant Description:

The name rue is properly restricted to the shrubby herbs of the genus *Ruta*, ranging from the Mediterranean to E Siberia. The common rue of history and literature is *R. graveolans*, which has greenish-yellow flowers and blue-green leaves sometimes variegated, with a very strong odor and a bitter taste.

The leaves are now sometimes used in flavorings, beverages, and herb vinegars and in the preparation of cosmetics and perfumes. In medieval times, rue was much used as a drug; its use as a condiment was thought to prevent poisons from

affecting the system. Rue was strewn about law courts in parts of Great Britain as a preventive against diseases carried by criminals. It was sometimes associated with witches but also symbolized grace, repentance, and memory. Shakespeare in *Richard II* refers to it as the "sour herb of grace." The family Rutaceae is classified in the division Magnoliophyta, class Magnoliopsida.

Rue is a hardy, somewhat shrubby (sub-shrub), evergreen perennial that may grow to three feet in height in full sun (but will tolerate light shade) in well-drained, alkaline soil. The soil may be poor and suitable only for the hardiest plants. Rue bears erect, branching stems and aromatic blue-green leaves, yellow flowers with green centers that emit a powerful, disagreeable odor, and an exceedingly bitter, acrid and nauseous taste.

History:

The plant is native to southern Europe and northern Africa and has been naturalized throughout Europe and North America, where it is cultivated in gardens (it is one of the oldest garden plants grown for medicinal purposes). It has also escaped from gardens and may be found growing wild in pastures, roadsides, waste place, and abandoned lots. The botanical name, *Ruta*, is derived from the Greek word, *reuo*, which means, "to set free," because this herb is so effective in treating various diseases. Hippocrates noted that Rue was the main component in "mithridate," a Greek all-purpose antidote for poisons, and the Greeks regarded it as a powerful anti-magical herb, because it remedied the nervous indigestion attributed to witchcraft. The Romans introduced Rue throughout Europe, as the plant had already been recognized as medicinally sound for more than eighty complaints by the time of the early Roman Empire. The first-century Roman scholar, Pliny, reported that Rue preserved eyesight and noted that painters and engravers ate it to sharpen their sight. Supposedly, Leonardo Da Vinci and Michelangelo both claimed that Rue's metaphysical powers improved their eyesight and creative inner vision.

In the Middle Ages, Rue was considered a powerful defense against witches and would bestow a "second sight" or psychic powers in those who used it. Rue was considered an important "strewing herb" and anti-plague plant, and sixteenth- and seventeenth-century "herbals" advocated its use to ward off pestilence and as an

antidote for all sorts of poisons, from toadstools to serpent bites. The plant was carried in nosegays to repel the lice of beggars, and was even used well into the eighteenth century in law courts to counteract prisoners' vermin and germs (jail fever).

In 1625, the Neapolitan physician, Piperno, commended Rue as a specific against epilepsy and vertigo, and in 1653, the great English herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper, prescribed it for sciatica and joint pain. European settlers introduced Rue to North America, where it became a popular folk remedy, and doctors and apothecaries specified it for many medicinal and practical uses. The strong, musky odor has been used to repel noxious insects and fleas, and because it is so pungent and bitter, very small amounts are used for culinary purposes and are added to cream cheese, egg and fish dishes, and meat sauces to provide an interesting musky flavor.

Italians ate it in their salads for good eyesight, and the leaves were used to flavor Italian grape liqueur (grappa). It is a bitter, pungent, warming herb, and the entire plant is used in herbal medicine. Some of the constituents included in Rue are essential oil (containing capric, plagonic, caprylic, and oenanthylic acids) and flavonoids (most notably rutin).

Medical Uses:

Rue is considered a "calmative" substance that soothes the nerves and reduces tension and anxiety, since it has a direct effect on the nervous system. It is thought to be effective in cases of nervous heart problems (including palpitations), hysterical spasms and nervous headaches. Rue has been used by herbalists for giddiness, hysteria, nightmares, convulsions, confusion, dizziness, vertigo and epilepsy and is said to be useful for nervous disturbances due to female irregularities.

As an antispasmodic, Rue is believed to help relieve cramps in the bowels, stomach and muscles, as well as menstrual cramps, and generally relax overall spasms.

Rue is considered strongly stimulant that is a tonic for the digestive system. The herb has been used for centuries to relieve stomach cramps due to nervous

indigestion, pep up the appetite and alleviate gas and colic. It is also said to induce bile production, which is also important to the digestive process.

Rue is thought to be a circulatory tonic that supports good cardiovascular health. The flavonoid, rutin, is an agent that reduces capillary fragility and is known to strengthen capillaries, reduce blood pressure and increase circulation and blood flow to the heart. Herbalists use Rue to control abnormal blood pressure. That same action also strengthens the capillaries in the eyes, thus improving eyesight and sharpening vision (supporting the historical use of the herb for failing eyesight). This quality is also useful in preventing and easing varicose veins.

Treatment:

The strong, stimulating properties in Rue greatly affect the uterus. It has been used as an emmenagogue, or agent that brings on suppressed menstruation. It is also thought to ease painful menstruation and the cramping associated with it. Because Rue is so stimulating to the uterus, it has been called an abortifacient, or substance that induces the premature expulsion of the fetus. The alkaloid, skimmianine, in Rue has a direct, stimulant effect on the uterine muscles (causing abortion in lab animals) and, thus, should never be used by pregnant women.

Rue is thought to relieve gouty and rheumatic pains, tennis elbow, joint pain, arthritis, neuralgia and sciatica.

As a diaphoretic, Rue is thought to promote perspiration and may help in lowering fevers and clearing toxins from the system through the skin. As an anti-tussive, it loosens phlegm and is said to be good for coughs, croupy affections, and bronchitis.

Rue is considered an anthelmintic, an agent that will destroy and expel intestinal worms.

Used externally, Rue may be included in a bath for sore, strained and tired eyes and in topical washes for skin diseases. It has also been used to ease the pain of earache and in poultices to relieve the pain of sciatica, neuralgia, backache and rheumatic pains.

Precautions:

Great care should be taken with the use of Rue, and it is advisable to consult a health care provider when using this herb for specific conditions. Pregnant women should never use this herb, as it may cause abortion and may have a toxic effect as well. Nursing women should not use this herb. Rue should never be used in large doses, as it may cause fatal poisoning, nor should it be used for long periods. Use of Rue may cause photosensitivity, and when used topically, it may cause skin irritation (some people have experienced dermatitis and blistering when touching the leaves).

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Rutin



Source: Sophora japonica flowers (Japanese pagoda or Japanese scholar tree)

Family: Fabaceae (pea)

Other common names: Bioflavonoid, Polyphenolic Flavonoid

Rutin is one of a class of flavonoids that also includes hesperidin, quercetin, eriodictyl and citron and is essential for the absorption of vitamin C. Normally found in highly nutritious foods, such as citrus, red apples, teas, broccoli and onions, etc., you can easily take it in supplement form; and because the human body cannot produce bioflavonoids, they must be supplied through the diet - and we should supply them to make the most of our health.

They are said to boost vitamin C's efficacy, improve eye health, strengthen fragile capillaries, reduce cholesterol, improve blood circulation and act as antioxidants. Recent studies indicate that bioflavonoids may be a big factor in guarding the body against invasive attack and serious illness.

Plant Description:

The flavonoid rutin is a flavonol glycoside comprised of the flavonol quercetin (see Quercetin) and the disaccharide rutinose. Rutin is found in many plants, especially buckwheat. Other rich dietary sources of rutin include black tea and apple peels.

Rutin is considered an important nutritional supplement because of its ability to strengthen capillaries, whereby helping people suffering from arteriosclerosis (the hardening of the arteries), high blood pressure or venous insufficiency. Rutin belongs to a group of plant compounds called bioflavonoids that also include the important catechins of green tea and the polyphenols of red wine. Recent studies have shown that the bioflavonoids are powerful antioxidants that fight free radicals. Free radicals are said to be responsible for as much as 90 percent of all the human diseases such as cancer, arteriosclerosis, strokes, senility due to aging, etc.

Rutin is one of many bioflavonoids that are not actual vitamins in the strictest sense, sometimes being referred to as Vitamin P, and may be found in herbal plants, fruits, vegetables and nuts, etc., and because they cannot be manufactured by the body, they must be supplied through the diet. Bioflavonoids are a class of flavonoids that include rutin, hesperidin, quercetin, eriodictyl and citron, and they are essential for the absorption of vitamin C, which should be taken simultaneously, so they may act synergistically for maximum benefit. Citrus fruits are a great source of bioflavonoids, and other sources include apricots, nuts, peppers, grapes, buckwheat (which supplies Rutin), blackberries, black currants, cherries, plums, prunes and rose hips.

History:

Several herbs also provide bioflavonoids, including Chervil, Elderberry, Hawthorne Berry, Horsetail and Shepherd's Purse. Flavonoids have been studied since the 1940s, and their antioxidant activity is now considered undisputed. With

the immense volume of research being released every year with regard to the effects of free radicals on human health, the role of flavonoid antioxidants cannot be ignored.

Medical Uses:

Rutin is a bioflavonoid, and it provides essential support molecules for vitamin C absorption (and should, in fact, be taken at the same time to gain maximum benefit). Rutin supplementation prevents the breakdown of vitamin C in the body before it is metabolized and intensifies its beneficial immune-enhancing effects in the body.

With regard to eye health, the bioflavonoid, Rutin, is said to improve capillary integrity and believed to help lower ocular pressure when used in conjunction with conventional drugs. (Bilberry extract is particularly rich in Rutin and can be beneficial in cases of diabetic retinopathy.) Rutin may be very helpful in combating cataracts, macular degeneration (the most common cause of blindness) and free radical damage to the retina. The antioxidant activity that fights free radical damage appears to play a role in the prevention of cataracts and other forms of visual impairment.

Because Rutin improves capillary integrity (it works synergistically with vitamin C in this regard) by protecting and preserving the structure (permeability) and strength of those capillaries, this action is said to be of great help for capillary fragility (easy bruising and bleeding) and venous insufficiency (varicose veins and spider veins). The bioflavonoid, Rutin, is thought to lessen symptoms associated with prolonged bleeding and help in cases of bleeding gums and hemorrhage.

Rutin is believed to stabilize the collagen matrix by preventing free radical damage, thereby helping to maintain the health of the body's collagen (the intercellular cement). Collagen is a major structural protein, forming molecular cables that strengthen the tendons and vast, resilient sheets that support the skin and internal organs, and Rutin supplements help to support this critical function of the body.

Rutin, like all bioflavonoids, is said to be a good source of antioxidants that act as free radical scavengers searching for and engulfing the unstable molecules that are

produced during the body's use of oxygen, which may cause damage to tissues and cells. This activity may have a beneficial impact in building immunity against invasive infection, and some current studies have asserted that ingesting supplemental flavonoids may be beneficial in combating harmful infectious attack.

Current research claims that Rutin supplements may promote healthy cholesterol levels in the blood, thereby promoting good circulation and possibly reducing hypertension.

Rutin (once again, like all bioflavonoids) is used extensively in the treatment for athletic injuries, because bioflavonoids are thought to relieve the pain of bumps and bruises. They are also reported to reduce pain located in the legs or across the back and may ease the pain of carpal tunnel syndrome.

Precautions:

Extremely high doses (many times the recommended dosage) of Rutin may cause diarrhea.

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Safflower



Safflower oil is rich in polyunsaturates, has become synonymous with maintaining good heart health by reducing cholesterol levels in the blood. Now Safflower is available as a dietary supplement that is also used to cleanse the blood and improve its circulation, and alleviate the painful, stiff joints of arthritis and gout.

Plant Description:

Eurasian like herb (*Carthamus tinctorius*) of the family Asteraceae (aster family). Safflower, or false saffron, has long been cultivated in S Asia and Egypt for food and medicine and as a costly but inferior substitute for the true saffron dye. In the United States, where it is sometimes called American saffron, it is more important as the source of safflower oil, which has recently come into wide use as cooking oil. Safflower is classified in the division Magnoliophyta, class Magnoliopsida, and order Asterales, family Asteraceae.

Safflower is a spiny-leaved annual with prickly oval leaves and a red/orange/yellow flower that grows to a height of three feet and thrives in light, dry soil in sunny places. This bitter, aromatic herb is native to the Mediterranean area and Middle East, but the exact country of origin is undetermined.

It is now widely cultivated in Europe and North America and is enormously commercially valuable for its oil. Safflower is not related to saffron, although the flowers are used similarly, and were both used as a brilliant dye for silks.

History:

The Portuguese, in the 1700s, added Safflower to foods as saffron substitute, hence the reasons that Safflower is sometimes commonly called "False Saffron."

Safflower's use dates back to the ancients, and its utilization in textile dyeing was evident in mummy wrappings of 3500 B.C. The herb was described in traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) in 1061 A.D., and in medieval records of medicinal use, Safflower was prescribed by physicians as a highly stimulant antispasmodic and to relieve menstrual cramping and pain in women.

A tonic was made in the Middle Ages to relieve constipation and respiratory problems, and a tea was prescribed for colds, flu and fevers. Originally grown for its rich dye, Safflower is still used for the yellow and red dyes that the flowers yield. Mixed with talc, it is included in cosmetic rouges, and the flowers are often part of fragrant potpourris. The oil is also incorporated into varnishes and paints. However, since scientists found that Safflower oil has one of the highest percentages of polyunsaturates available and the lowest cholesterol content, the demand for Safflower has become huge as part of a heart-health conscious diet.

Safflower is rich in the valuable and essential, fatty linoleic acid, and other constituents include linolenic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, lignins and pigment.

Medical Uses:

Safflower has become famous for its help in lowering cholesterol and maintaining good coronary health. It is rich in linoleic acid, the essential fatty acid that lowers blood cholesterol and helps to prevent heart disease. Consumption of polyunsaturates in the diet helps to remove plaque and reduce blood cholesterol, which make it effective in preventing heart attacks and strokes.

Safflower improves circulation and aids in blood vascular cleansing. It has been used to treat and reverse a condition of congested and stagnant blood (poor blood circulation), reduce blood clots, and ease lower abdominal pains caused by blood congestion in women. Safflower also helps to stimulate congested or obstructed menstrual blood flow.

As a laxative, Safflower is said to be an effective bowel cleanser that also improves colon function.

Safflower has been used for centuries to induce perspiration, thereby helping to diminish fevers. The herb is also considered an effective diuretic and bladder cleanser.

As an anti-inflammatory, Safflower is believed to be very helpful in treating arthritis, gout and painful, stiff joints. The herb helps to clear toxins and wastes from the system and acts indirectly by stimulating hydrochloric acid production that helps to neutralize, dissolve and eliminate uric acid deposits from the system. It also has become part of sports formulas to help reduce lactic acid build-up in athletes after strenuous exercise.

Safflower is believed to aid good digestion. It is a bitter herb, sometimes called a soothing, digestive-tract healant that is good for heartburn, gas, diverticulitis, and ulcers.

Safflower is said to improve liver function and increase the production and release of bile, thereby helping to treat jaundice. The herb has been found to have a calming effect on hysteria and panic attacks.

Safflower is thought to help the respiratory tract by helping to remove phlegm from the system and clear the lungs.

Used externally, Safflower has been used to alleviate skin diseases and is a good wash for measles rash, scarlatina, and other inflammatory eruptions of the skin, including those of viral origin.

Precautions:

Pregnant women should not use Safflower.

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Saffron



Botanical: *Crocus sativus*

Family: Iridaceae (iris)

Other common names: Spanish Saffron, Crocus, Karcom, Krokos, Saffron Seed, Autumn Crocus, Thistle Saffron

Saffron is the most expensive spice in the world that has been used for thousands of years in cuisines, dyes, and medicines. Saffron is an excellent supplement to

stimulate good digestion, purify and circulate the blood, suppress the appetite, promote weight loss and perhaps even as an aphrodisiac.

Saffron being a natural herb, all its benefits and contents cannot be fully quantified chemically and as everybody knows that statistics can be made to prove anything. There are many contents in a herb which even scientists agree that at times cannot be identified let alone quantified and even if so, there are many inexplicable benefits that are proved by a variety of testaments and age old experiences which cannot be explained by science.

Saffron is a prime example of one such Herb. Therefore, it is important for every supplier to state the origin or source of his saffron, for you to judge its quality because the growing area, its soil and climate creates the basic characteristics and strength of the saffron.

Saffron is grown in the world, its production is in the hands of small individual farmers and not in the hands of co-operatives or large corporations and traditional methods of quality control are the only form of checking the quality and originality of the Saffron. Chemical analysis at time of each purchase is hardly practical.

True Saffron is a low, ornamental perennial with grass-like leaves that thrives in well-drained soil in warm situations in full sun.

History:

Saffron is said to be a native of Asia Minor and has been cultivated there and in southern Europe since ancient times. Now it is cultivated worldwide, especially in Spain (where it was introduced by Arabs) and the Mediterranean areas for its extraordinary culinary value (paella and risotto Milanese).

The word, Saffron, is derived from the Arabic, za fan, meaning "yellow," referring to its ancient use as a dye. The shoes of Persian kings were dyed with Saffron, and the ancient Greeks regarded it as a royal dye, as well as an ingredient in perfumes. This pungent, bittersweet herb is one of the world's oldest medicinally used plants. The Chinese prescribed it to treat the emotional problems of depression, shock, and fright, and in India, Saffron was used as an aphrodisiac.

The English herbalist, John Gerard, attributed almost miraculous powers to Saffron when he wrote in 1597 that the herb might restore life to a person on the verge of death. The herb was at one time included in the Edinburgh Pharmacopoeia and was thought to be an effective treatment for measles, among other ailments.

Medical Uses:

Saffron has long been used to improve digestion and improve the appetite. In May 2010, a small trial was published in the journal of Nutrition Research. In the study, a natural medicine by the name of Satiereal was under investigation as a satiety enhancer. The active ingredient in Satiereal is *Crocus sativus* or saffron. The authors of the study reported that saffron appears to possess a “mood-improving effect” which they hypothesized would result in reduced appetite and snacking.

In addition, it is said to stimulate circulation to the organs of digestion, including the gallbladder, liver, and spleen. It also coats the membranes of the stomach and colon and soothes gastrointestinal colic and acid-burning digestive problems. Saffron is considered a carminative that helps to relieve stomach gas.

As a diuretic and diaphoretic, Saffron induces perspiration and reduces fever, which is helpful in treating colds and la grippe. In addition, toxins are released through the skin when there is profuse perspiration.

Saffron is thought to be a blood purifier and anti-inflammatory. It is said to help relieve gout by ridding the uric acid build-up that accumulates in the tissues, causing joint pain. Additionally, athletes are greatly helped by Saffron, because it also rids the tissues of lactic acid build up after strenuous exercise and eases fatigue and muscle inflammation. The herb also relieves the inflammation of arthritis and bursitis.

Saffron is said to be a mild sedative that may be used for insomnia.

One of Saffron's oldest uses has been as an expectorant, helping to expel phlegm from the lungs.

As a blood purifier, Saffron is thought to increase the oxygen content of the blood, which may help to lower blood pressure by reducing plaque and thereby helping to prevent arteriosclerosis and strokes.

Saffron is an emmenagogue that will stimulate the onset of menstruation and regulate its flow. By checking menstrual flow, it is also useful for reducing chronic hemorrhage of the uterus.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Saffron. Large doses (many times the recommended amount) should not be used.

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Sage



Botanical: *Salvia officinalis*

Family: Labiatae (mint)

Other common names: Common Sage, Garden Sage, Kitchen Sage, Dalmatian Sage, Meadow Sage, True Sage

Sage has medicinal uses abound, including its antioxidant, anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and anti-ageing qualities. Improve your memory; calm your digestive and nervous systems with Sage.

A holiday favorite, this fabulous herb with silver-green leaves has been part of the culinary world going back to ancient Rome. Charlemagne ordered that sage be planted on all farms, and sage tea was enjoyed by many in years past - it has a somewhat sweet, savory flavor, and was awarded "Herb of the Year" in 2001 by the International Herb Association.

Fresh sage should be very fragrant, without soft spots, and stored wrapped in towels in a loosely closed container in your refrigerator. You can also keep fresh herbs in a vase as you would fresh flowers - simply cut stem ends at an angle, and put in a vase with room temperature water - a bouquet of fresh herbs add a beautiful addition to all kitchens!

From anti-oxidant/anti-inflammatory action to memory enhancer (July 2003 issue of "Pharmacological Biochemical Behavior" confirmed that sage is an outstanding memory enhancer), sage has the longest history of medicinal use of any herb. Because of the many terpene antioxidants that have been isolated in sage, its use as an effective food preservative (pre-refrigeration) - sage was used to reduce food spillage - has now been confirmed by science.

Fresh sage is outstanding for use in beans, seasoning tomato sauces, omelet's, frittatas, pizzas toppings, fresh salads, stuffing mixes, flash-fried as a topping for risotto, soups, stews - sage can be included in many dishes using one's imagination.

Sage is an evergreen shrub with a distinctive fragrance that may grow to a height of almost three feet, and it thrives in rich, well-drained soil in sunny locations.

History:

It is native to the Mediterranean region and was introduced to North America in the seventeenth century, where it continues to grow throughout the temperate regions. Sage is a member of the multi-species *Salvia* genus, and despite the fact that any herb of this genus may be called Sage; there are significant differences in medicinal components in the tops and roots that influence their uses.

Salvia officinalis (Garden Sage) and *Salvia miltiorrhiza* (Salvia Root/Red Root Sage) are in no way similar to another member of the Sage genus, *Salvia divinorum*, which is a dangerous psychoactive plant and subject to regulation as a controlled substance under several states' drug regulation statutes. In an 1833

publication, Russian botanist, Alexander von Bunge (1803-1890), gave the plant its botanical genus, *Salvia*, which is translated from the Latin word, *salvere*, meaning "to save" or "to cure," as Sage enjoyed the reputation of being able to cure a multitude of ills. The many varieties of Sage possess virtually all the same properties. The Romans, who named this robust herb, held it in the highest regard and thought it to be the herbal savior of humankind.

Those ancients considered it a sacred herb and believed that its growth in one's garden would promote immortality. Sage's botanical name, *Salvia officinalis*, is derived from the Latin, *salvere*, which means "to save" or "to cure," and it enjoyed the reputation of being one of those herbs used to cure a multitude of ills. An old Arab proverb asked, "How a man shall die who has Sage in his garden?" - A reference to the plant's power of immortality.

Traditional Chinese medicine mentioned the use of Sage in 206 B.C., to increase physical strength, mental equanimity and alertness, and body heat. It was so valued in China in the seventeenth century that Dutch merchants discovered the Chinese would trade three chests of their China tea for one chest of Sage leaves. Native Americans massaged their gums and teeth with Sage and used it for healing skin sores. Included in Sage's chemical constituents are beta-carotene, essential acids, essential oils (thujone, camphor and eucalyptol), flavonoids, saponin, tannins, and minerals, B-vitamins and Vitamins B and C.

Medical Uses:

Sage is a mild tonic that fortifies a generally debilitated nervous system. Instead of sedating the nervous system as some nervine herbs do, it actually stimulates the central nervous system, strengthening it to reduce excess nervous energy. This mild tonic quiets the nerves, relieves spasms, helps induce sleep and combats depression, mental exhaustion, trembling and nervousness. It has been used to calm seasickness, and traditional herbalists even thought it useful in treating certain forms of insanity.

As a powerful astringent, Sage has the ability to slow down the secretion of fluids in the body. It is considered an antiperspirant and natural deodorizer that works from inside out. Apparently, the tannins and volatile oils account for its ability to

dry up perspiration and slow excessive saliva flow. This quality helps to reduce the heavy perspiration of night sweats and hot flashes.

Sage is an old and trusted remedy for drying up breast milk when women wish to stop nursing.

Mucous congestion in the nasal passages and airways of the respiratory tract is also dried by the use of Sage. Its drying effect is also used to treat diarrhea.

Sage promotes good digestion and is considered one of the best remedies for stomach troubles. Sage stimulates the appetite, eases gas pains, removes mucus in the stomach, relieves biliousness and dyspepsia, and is beneficial in digesting foods of all kinds, both savory and sweet. Its "bitter" component stimulates upper digestive secretions, increasing bile flow and pancreatic function, and it is said to keep the stomach, intestines, kidneys, liver, spleen and sexual organs healthy.

Living up to its name, Sage is said to be a stimulant that strengthens the brain and promotes wisdom. Since antiquity, it has been reputed to slow down the ageing process and endow long life. It appears to be a memory strengthener, helping to restore failing memory in the elderly and improving concentration in all who use it.

Sage is considered an "emmenagogue," an agent that is used to bring on suppressed menstruation. Additionally, it is said to help regulate its flow. Researchers claim that Sage has estrogenic effects on the body that may treat estrogen deficiency. This may be a contributing factor in Sage's use for the relief of hot flashes that result from either hysterectomy or menopause.

Recent studies claim that as a stimulant Sage increases circulation and relieves headache. It is also gaining a reputation for improving circulation to the heart.

Sage is a powerful antioxidant that will inhibit destructive and harmful free-radical compounds. It is also an anti-inflammatory that will help to shrink and soothe inflamed tissue. As an antifungal, Sage has been shown to exhibit anti-yeast activity against *Candida albicans*; and in cell cultures, Sage inhibited antiviral activity in herpes simplex virus II and influenza virus A2.

As a "vulnerary" Sage will assist in healing wounds by protecting against infection and stimulating cell growth. Used topically, Sage's antiseptic properties will clean

sores and old ulcers, treat cuts, wounds and bruises, and will help to stop bleeding and encourage healing.

A Sage gargle is a well-known, old-fashioned antiseptic remedy for disorders affecting the mouth and throat, such as dental abscesses, infected gums, mouth ulcers, sore and bleeding gums, loose teeth, cold sores, sore throat, tonsillitis and throat infections.

The medicinal uses of Sage abound. The antiseptic properties in Sage are useful in treating intestinal and respiratory infections, and the essential oil, heated in a vaporizer, will disinfect a sick room. The herb has also been effective in breaking fevers, reducing cold symptoms, treating dysentery, and expelling worms and parasites.

Sage's cosmetic uses are numerous. It is used in baths as a relaxant and to soothe sore muscles, in shampoos to cleanse the scalp and stimulate hair growth, in soaps to cleanse and restore ageing skin, and in hair rinses to promote shine (especially in dark hair).

Precautions:

Sage is not recommended for pregnant or nursing women, nor should it be taken by individuals with seizure disorders. Sage may interfere with the absorption of iron or other minerals in the body. Those who are allergic to members of the mint family (thyme, basil, sage, marjoram, etc.), should avoid this herb.

* * * * *

Salvia Root



Botanical: *Salvia miltiorrhiza*

Family: Lamiaceae (mint)

Other common names: Red-Root Sage, Chinese Salvia, Chinese Sage, Danshen, Dan Shen, Red Rooted Sage, Red Rooted Salvia, Bunge, Radix Salvia

Salvia Root is a traditional Chinese herb that has become important in the West for supporting cardiovascular health and improving liver function. It helps to vitalize and detoxify the blood and is one of the most highly regarded circulatory tonics. Salvia Root has been shown to inhibit bacterial growth, reduce fever, diminish inflammation, and ease skin problems and aid urinary excretion of toxins.

History:

Salvia Root is a member of the multi-species *Salvia* genus, and despite the fact that any herb of this genus may be called sage; there are significant differences in medicinal components in the tops and roots that influence their uses. Salvia

miltiorrheza and *Salvia officinalis* (Garden Sage) are in no way similar to another member of the Sage genus, *Salvia divinorum*, which is a dangerous psychoactive plant and subject to regulation as a controlled substance under several states' drug regulation statues.

In an 1833 publication, Russian botanist, Alexander von Bunge (1803-1890), gave the plant its botanical genus, *Salvia*, which is translated from the Latin word, *salvere*, meaning "to be saved" or "to cure," as sage enjoyed the reputation of being able to cure a multitude of ills. *Salvia* Root is part of a small plant that grows abundantly in Asia, and because of its importance in herbal medicine, it has been cultivated as a crop on farms in China, Japan and Korea. It is a wild perennial that grows mostly in sunny areas, and can survive in poor soils. It produces small, fuzzy, grayish leaves in the spring; blue, red or purple flowers in summer; and brownish, nut-like fruits in the fall.

As a member of the sages in the mint family of plants, its aromatic leaves are often dried and used to season meats and stuffing, but it is in its distinctive, sundried, bright red roots that considerable medicinal benefits are stored. Although other species of sage were mentioned in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) as early as 206 B.C., *Salvia* Root first appeared in the *Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing* in the first century A.D., and it held a very high position for treating the heart, abdomen, gurgling in the intestines, breaking and eliminating stone and relieving fullness. In the late eighteenth century, Father d'Incarville, a French Jesuit, introduced seeds of the plant from Beijing to Paris, where it was cultivated as a rare botanical specimen; and collectors of Chinese medicinal plants in the United States still regard the plant as a prized specimen. It was only during the twentieth century that *Salvia* Root became known for its blood vitalizing and circulatory properties, and it has since become an important herb in modern Chinese clinical practice. Qin Bowei, an eminent physician born at the turn of the twentieth century, and instrumental in the spread of TCM in modern China after the revolution in 1949, referred to *Salvia* Root as a bitter herb that "quickens the blood, moves the blood and regulates transportation of blood fluid." It is one of the most commonly used Chinese herbs as the key ingredient in numerous formulations or prescribed as a single herb remedy. Its elevation came in recognition of its vitalizing blood circulation qualities that promote heart health by increasing blood flow and

relieving pain (angina pectoris), and for its efficacy in treating microcirculation disorders, leading to its use in treating liver fibrosis and cirrhosis.

A patent remedy with Salvia Root as the main ingredient was developed and is still widely used in China for treating angina. The main active constituents in Salvia Root include diterpene quinones (known as tanshinones I and II and cryptotanshinone), and it includes caffeic acid, salvianolic acid and magnesium salvianolate.

Medical Uses:

Salvia Root is widely used in the Orient for supporting cardiovascular health and is now gaining popularity in the West for its heart-healthy properties. The isolated chemical, tanshinone, is said to increase the force of heartbeats, while slowing the heart rate and it works as a vasodilator, causing blood vessels to relax and increasing blood circulation. This action inhibits platelet aggregation (clotting), thereby reducing the risk of arteriosclerosis, stroke and heart attack. The tanshinones are said to reduce stasis of the blood (stagnation) and help to ease the heart pain of angina pectoris.

Salvia Root is believed to promote healthy liver function and may help to prevent liver damage caused by alcohol, drugs or diseases. Some studies suggest that Salvia Root may provide benefits for treating liver diseases such as cirrhosis, fibrosis and chronic hepatitis.

By reducing stasis (stagnation in the blood), Salvia Root is said to purify the blood, and detoxified blood is thought to be very beneficial for treating many ailments, including skin problems, such as acne, abscesses and boils. The concept of eliminating stasis to generate new blood simply means that in order for new blood to be generated, old, stagnant and impure blood that is not vital must be removed. This theory of vitalizing blood has been applied to the treatment for bone marrow deficiencies.

The isolated tanshinones are unique to Salvia Root and have been shown to inhibit bacterial growth, reduce fever, diminish inflammation and aid urinary excretion of toxins.

A relatively new area of study for blood stasis concerns the process of ageing: In Traditional Chinese Medicine, it is thought that detoxified blood will help nourish the kidneys, liver and spleen; and conversely, stagnant blood results in contraction of ligaments, withering of the flesh and overall reduction in vitality, mental function and health. During the twentieth century, possibly due to changes in the environment, diet and lifestyle (as well as progress in medical research into ageing), it is generally believed that disorders associated with ageing additionally involve blood stasis. It is interesting to note that this was an idea first presented by Xu Lingtai, a famous physician of the Qing Dynasty, who wrote during the mid-eighteenth century that the blood of the elderly did not flow very well, thus creating other health difficulties; however, Xu's concept did not get much attention for another two hundred years.

Treatment:

Salvia Root has shown antiviral and antioxidant activity in laboratory studies. Salvianolate-B, recently isolated from Salvia Root by medical researchers at the Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica, was determined to have powerful antioxidant actions in vitro, and the salvianolic acid was shown to be the strongest of Salvia Root's constituents in protecting heart mitochondria from free radical damage.

In traditional Chinese medicine, danshen has been used to prevent and treat heart conditions and strokes. Results from animal and human studies support these uses of danshen to some extent. Danshen is known to decrease the blood's ability to clot in at least two ways.

First, it limits the stickiness of blood components known as platelets. It also decreases the production of fibrin — threads of protein that trap blood cells to form clots. Both these effects help to improve blood circulation. In addition, chemicals in danshen may relax and widen blood vessels, especially those around the heart. In animal studies, chemicals in danshen have protected the inner linings of arteries from damage. Some other research also suggests that danshen potentially may increase the force of heartbeats and slow the heart rate slightly. All these effects potentially could improve heart function and help to restore functioning after a stroke.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Salvia Root, nor should those who take prescription blood thinning medications (Coumadin, Plavix, aspirin, etc.). Those who are allergic to members of the mint family (thyme, basil, sage, marjoram, etc.) should avoid this herb, and you should not use Salvia Root if you take prescription medications or have high blood pressure, heart, or blood vessel disease.

* * * * *

Sandalwood



Botanical: Santalum album

Family: Santalaceae (sandalwood)

Other common names: East Indian Sandalwood, White Saunders, Yellow Sandalwood, Yellow Saunders, Chandana, Chandan, Chandal, Sandal, Santalwood

Did you know...?

Sandalwood has been used both internally and externally for thousands of years, and we still benefit from its antibacterial qualities to relieve urinary tract disorders, such as cystitis, urethritis and bladder infection. It also helps to relieve pain, sore throat, stomachache, spasms and chronic bronchitis.

Plant Description:

The Sandalwood tree is an evergreen that is cultivated in a semi-wild state, usually in open forest; and because it is semi-parasitic, it depends upon a host for its nutrients that help it grow. Over three hundred plants have been recorded as hosts, which can include nearby grasses, herbs, shrubs or other trees. The wood of the tree is straight-grained and heavy and varies in color, and the tree bears oval leaves and small flowers of varying colors that bloom twice a year.

Sandalwood (Chandanam) is a fragrant wood, and the name may be applied to any of a number of woods. The 'true' sandalwood is the wood of trees in the genus *Santalum*; found in southern India and Sri Lanka, Hawaii, and many south Pacific islands. It is most commonly used for incense, aromatherapy, perfume, and fine woodworking. Although not commonly used as a construction material, temples have been built with sandalwood in India and retain the aroma after centuries. It is said to have been used for embalming the corpses of princes in Ceylon since the 9th century. Jewelry boxes, fans, and ornate carvings continue to be made in many parts of Asia using sandalwood.

Sandalwood is the highly aromatic wood of the medium-sized Sandalwood tree (reaching about fifty feet in height), is native to eastern Asia (probably to the islands in southeastern Indonesia), and has been known in India and other areas of the subcontinent for thousands of years.

History:

Some claim that it is native to India, but it is actually thought to have been introduced there well over two thousand years ago. Sandalwood is now also

distributed throughout Sri Lanka, Malaysia, China, Taiwan and northern Australia and generally thrives as a crop in drier climates in well-drained, moist, fertile soil in partial shade at a minimum of fifty-nine degrees Fahrenheit, so it is interesting to note that Sandalwood was cultivated in the Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew, London, in the nineteenth century.

Sandalwood's name comes to us from the Sanskrit word, Chandana, and it has a rich history in India as one of the luxury goods (including gold, gems, spices, silks, ivory and perfumes) that were sent along the coastal route to the Persian Gulf for trade.

However, aside from its commercial importance, Sandalwood was highly valued in Hindu rituals (including symbolic caste marks on the face and carved into figures and deities on temple doors, etc.) and devotional practices (including incense, etc.); and it was an important factor in Ayurvedic medicine that was (and still is) used to cool the body, decrease thirst and to treat headaches, scorpion stings and snake bites.

The trees are usually felled when at least fifty years old, and because it is somewhat soft, the wood is highly prized for carving, and the oil is invaluable in perfumes, aromatherapy and the cosmetic industry. The wood, oil and roots are used in herbal medicine. There are about nineteen species of Santalum, but the Sandalwood (*S. album*) has the highest oil content. Some of the constituents in Sandalwood include a rich essential oil, with at least ninety percent sesquiterpene alcohols, called santolols, the active ingredients present in all parts of the tree.

Medical Uses:

Sandalwood is considered a diuretic, which promotes the increase and flow of urine and is considered excellent for the genito-urinary system. Because it is also regarded as an antiseptic, its efficacy for urinary tract problems is enhanced, and it is used to relieve gleet (a discharge of mucus or pus from an inflamed urethra), gonorrhea, bladder infection, chronic cystitis and other infections of the urinary system.

Considered an expectorant, Sandalwood helps to loosen phlegm and congestion from the respiratory system, and is used to ease chronic bronchitis, dry cough, sore throat and inflammation of mucous tissue.

Sandalwood is an aromatic, bittersweet herb that is said to help treat digestive disorders and has been used to relieve indigestion, stomachache and vomiting.

Sandalwood is considered an analgesic, or substance that relieves pain and the herb is said to be effective in easing the pain of headaches, abdominal pain and spasms.

For thousands of years Sandalwood has been used to cool the body and relieve fevers.

Recent research has claimed that the santolols in Sandalwood not only possess antibacterial activity, but they may also be valuable in slowing the growth of warts and the herpes virus.

Used externally, Sandalwood is said to be beneficial for skin problems, especially those of bacterial origin and useful in cases of dermatitis, acne, psoriasis, scorpion stings and other inflammatory skin conditions. It is also used in lotions that alleviate dry skin, rash, itching and prickly heat. Its antibacterial qualities have also made it effective in deodorants and as a mouthwash to treat bad breath.

The oil of Sandalwood is used externally in aromatherapy and is said to calm the mind and body. It has been employed in the rooms of patients with mental health problems, as its fragrance is said to have a calming effect. It is also thought to help those who are suffering from stress and to soothe tension and anxiety.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women and young children should not use Sandalwood, nor should those who suffer from chronic liver disease.

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Sarsaparilla



Botanical: *Smilax aristolochiaefolia* (also known as *Smilax medica*)

Family: Smilacaceae (smilax/greenbrier) – Liliaceae (lily)

Other common names: Gray Sarsaparilla, Mexican Sarsaparilla, Vera Cruz Sarsaparilla, Equadorian Sarsaparilla, Shot Bush, Red-bearded Sarsaparilla, Brown Sarsaparilla, Smilax, Jamaican Sarsaparilla, Honduran Sarsaparilla, Rabbit Root

Sarsaparilla has long been used as a blood purifier and tonic that boosts stamina and energy. Although there is no definitive evidence, many body-builders strongly maintain that Sarsaparilla (or Smilax) helps to build muscle mass, while avoiding the harmful side effects of anabolic steroids. Sarsaparilla is considered a fine tonic herb, an antibacterial and anti-inflammatory, and the herb may even act as an aphrodisiac. Perhaps this is the reason that the "Good Guys" of the Old West, who disdained whiskey in favor of Sarsaparilla, always seemed to have that extra edge.

Plant Description:

Sarsaparilla is a woody, perennial, climbing vine, native to the rain forests of Central and South America, Jamaica and Caribbean regions, and grows in other temperate zones such as Southeast Asia and Australia. The root is long and tuberous and supports a ground-trailing evergreen vine that may reach fifty feet in

length, and the fragrance of the root (which has been used for centuries in herbal medicine) is spicy-sweet and it has a pleasant taste.

Sarsaparilla contains vitamins A, B-complex, C and D. Also the minerals iron, manganese, sodium, silicon, sulfur, copper, zinc, and iodine. It contains the amino acids methionine and cysteine.

It also contains diogenin, a saprogen that in turn contains the female hormone progesterone and the male hormone testosterone. Sarsaparilla helps strengthen the nerve fibers and tissues of the brain, spinal cord, lungs, and throat. Sarsaparilla is especially good for removing heavy metallic contaminants from the blood, which are received through the nostrils in the foul, smog-filled air of urban areas. Sarsaparilla root, which contains testosterone, will help hair grow again.

History:

Its name is derived from two Spanish words, sarza, meaning "bramble" and parilla, meaning "vine."

The indigenous tribes of Central and South America used Sarsaparilla for centuries for sexual impotence, rheumatism, skin ailments and as a tonic for physical weakness. New World traders of the 1400s and 1500s soon discovered and adopted the herb and introduced it into European society, where physicians there considered it a fine tonic, blood purifier, diuretic and diaphoretic, as well as a strong remedy for syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases. Since that time, Sarsaparilla has gained popularity for its medicinal effects, and it became registered as an official herb in the United States Pharmacopoeia as a treatment for syphilis from 1820 to 1910. Some of the constituents included in Sarsaparilla are beta-sitosterol, starch, fatty acids, calcium, cetyl-alcohol, chromium, cobalt, glucose, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, resin, saponin, silicon, sitosterol-d glucoside, tin, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamins A, C and D.

Medical Uses:

Sarsaparilla is considered to be a fine tonic and blood purifier that is said to attack and neutralize toxins (including environmental poisons) in the blood. In addition, the herb also promotes urination and sweating; and that action is believed to further

rid the body of toxins through bodily secretions. It also helps to cool the body and break intermittent fevers.

As an antibacterial, Sarsaparilla has been used internally and externally to counteract infections of all kinds. Internally, the herb is said to attack microbial substances in the blood and counteract urinary tract infections. It was used for centuries as a treatment for syphilis, gonorrhea, and other sexually transmitted diseases, being officially listed in both the United States Pharmacopoeia and the United States Dispensatory for those ailments. Externally, it is said to treat psoriasis, leprosy, boils, abscesses, skin diseases, wounds and eczema. Conventional medicine recognized Sarsaparilla's value in treating skin conditions in the 1940s, when The New England Journal of Medicine officially praised it for treating psoriasis.

Sarsaparilla is an anti-inflammatory that is believed to ease rheumatism, arthritis and other inflammatory conditions. Because of its diuretic properties, the stimulation of urine production increases the excretion of uric acid, which also helps to relieve gout; and although it does not relieve acute cases of gout, its use may prevent attacks when taken over a period of weeks or months.

There is much mystique and controversy surrounding Sarsaparilla's hormonal properties in both men and women. In men, the herb is said to stimulate production of natural hormones (testosterone), which may help to restore both sexual interest and erectile function. This action is different from many other male aphrodisiacs that act by increasing blood to the penis, which also carries the risk of creating high blood pressure. In women, hormonal production is also said to be encouraged, which may not only boost diminished sex drive, but may also help to alleviate the symptoms of menopause.

Bodybuilders claim that the natural steroidal glycosides in Sarsaparilla help to build muscle mass, while avoiding the harmful side effects of anabolic steroids, although there are no clinical results to prove this. Additionally, they maintain that use of the herb boosts energy and stamina, and eases the inflammatory conditions brought about by strenuous exercise.

Sarsaparilla is said to be a fine tonic and "alterative," an agent that may favorably alter an unhealthy condition of the body with the tendency to restore normal bodily function. The herb is also thought to help keep the glandular system in balance.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should avoid Sarsaparilla. Large amounts of Sarsaparilla (many times the recommended dosage) may cause gastrointestinal irritation, and if that occurs, dosage should be reduced or stopped. People who take blood-thinning medications (Coumadin, etc.) should not use Sarsaparilla, and other prescription medication should not be taken at the same time as Sarsaparilla, because the medicine may be absorbed or excreted more rapidly. According to the German Commission E monograph, Sarsaparilla may cause stomach irritation and temporary kidney irritation. In general, it is recommended that people who take prescription drugs regularly should avoid its use. Men with prostate disorders should not use it, since it may increase testosterone production.

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Sassafras



Botanical: Sassafras albidum

Family: Lauraceae (laurel)

Other common names: Cinnamon Wood, Fennel Wood, Red Sassafras, White Sassafras, Silky Sassafras, Saxifrax, Ague Tree, Smelling Stick

Sassafras has been used for centuries as a tonic to cleanse the liver and blood, which thus helps to alleviate internally caused skin ailments, such as acne, eczema, and psoriasis, as well as relieve gout, arthritis, rheumatism, and liver ailments. It is said to help the body rid itself of toxins and pollutants through efficient removal of wastes.

Plant Description:

Sassafras is very common in Virginia, and it can be a shrub or a tree. As a tree, it can grow up to 60 feet. Sassafras has three differently shaped leaves: three-lobed (see above), mitten-shaped and simple (no lobes). Leaves are three to five inches long. In fall, they turn red, yellow and orange. Sassafras are most often seen as an under story shrub beneath larger trees, such as Virginia Pine, Eastern White Pine, Sweetgum, Yellow Poplar, or oaks. They often grow alongside Black Cherry, American Beech, American Hornbeam, Eastern Red Cedar, as well as others. Sassafras is allelopathic to some plants, such as American Elm. This means it releases a chemical, which keeps these plants from growing well. This allows Sassafras to grow better, without so much competition.

Sassafras is one of three species of laurel and the only one that is native to eastern North America (the other two are found in eastern Asia), and it is considered the most important. It may be a small, aromatic bush or grow as a large, deciduous tree to a height of fifty or sixty feet with a rough, gray bark, bearing many slender branches and hairless leaves, which can be three different types (a smooth oval, a two-lobed, or a three-lobed leaf) - sometimes all three being found on the same tree and even the same branch.

The roots are large and woody, with a spongy bark, and the plant produces small greenish-yellow flowers followed by small, pea-sized fruit (actually, a blue berry on a red stem).

Sassafras is an attractive ornament that thrives in deep, rich, neutral-to-acid soil in sun or shade, sheltered from late spring frosts. When the Spanish arrived in Florida

in the early sixteenth century, they discovered the fragrant Sassafras tree but mistook it for a cinnamon tree, which has given it one of its common names, Cinnamon Wood.

History:

Native Americans added many drugs to our modern pharmacopoeia, including Sassafras, and they used the bark as a general tonic and as a diaphoretic and diuretic or "blood purifier," by urinating or sweating out impurities from the system. They also used it to remedy malaria and skin diseases. Word soon spread about the plant's amazing curative powers, reaching Europe, and Sassafras may have been the first American plant drug to reach the Old World, where it was widely used as a medicine, first in Spain in the 1500s, and under cultivation in England before 1633.

For a time it became a major colonial export, second only to tobacco. Europeans also created Sassafras tea, which soon became highly fashionable but lost its luster when Sassafras also gained the reputation as a cure for syphilis (unjustified). Early settlers considered the root bark as a virtual cure-all and fermented the roots with molasses to make beer, and during the Civil War Sassafras, tea became a popular beverage. Oil extracted from the bark of the roots (eighty percent of which is safrole) remained in use as an antiseptic for dentistry and as a flavoring for toothpastes, root beer, and chewing gum until the early 1960s, when the FDA banned its use as an additive, as safrole was found to be a carcinogen.

The root bark extract and leaves are now treated commercially to produce a safrole-free product, and today, the safrole-free root extract is used in herbal medicines, perfumery, and as a flavoring agent for candy, beverages, and aromatic teas, and the leaves are used for file powder (an important thickening ingredient in the Creole dish, file gumbo). It is not possible to make safrole-free Sassafras at home. Sassafras is a sweet, aromatic, warming herb (with a fennel-like fragrance) and contains lignins, tannin, resin, alkaloids and volatile oil.

Medical Uses:

Sassafras has been used as a general tonic that restores and nourishes the body's overall good health. More importantly, it has also been used as an alterative, or

agent that cleanses and stimulates the efficient removal of waste products from the system and purifies the blood, frequently favorably altering overall health.

As a diuretic, Sassafras promotes increased urine flow and helps to rid the kidneys and bladder of impurities, and this action facilitates the flushing of uric acid and other toxins from the system, which makes it most useful in the treatment for gout, arthritis and rheumatic conditions. Moreover, these blood-cleansing qualities are also believed to make it an excellent treatment for all internally caused skin disorders such as acne, eczema and psoriasis.

The diuretic action of increased urine flow, in addition to Sassafras's antiseptic properties, help to clear the urinary tract of various infections, such as cystitis, etc.

Sassafras is a diaphoretic that stimulates perspiration and sweating, which not only cools the body and lowers fever, but also helps to expel toxic wastes through the skin. It should be pointed that all the above cleansing actions work to purify the blood and rid the body of pollutants.

Sassafras has been known to help gastrointestinal complaints, particularly as a carminative, or substance that relieves intestinal gas pain and distension.

Sassafras is considered an antiseptic or substance that combats and neutralizes pathogenic bacteria and prevents infection. It has been used to treat syphilis, gonorrhea, and dysentery.

Regarding women's health, Sassafras has been used to correct dysmenorrhea, a condition marked by painful and difficult menstruation, usually by promoting and regulating menstrual flow.

There are some claims that Sassafras may have antiviral properties, helping to relieve herpes, measles and shingles.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should avoid Sassafras, and excessive use (many times the recommended dosage) may produce a narcotic effect. Sassafras should not be used for a prolonged period of time.

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Saw Palmetto



Botanical: *Serenoa repens* (also known as *Serenoa serrulata* and *Sabal serrulata*)

Family: Palmae/Arecaceae (fan palm)

Other common names: Pan Palm, Dwarf Palmetto, American Dwarf Palm Tree, Cabbage Palm, Sabal, Serenoa, Palmetto Berry

For a healthy prostate, many men have been enjoying the benefits of Saw Palmetto. It is said to be helpful in treating many prostate disorders, including prostate enlargement and the discomforts of frequent urination. As an overall tonic for good health, Saw Palmetto is helpful for those who are convalescing or who suffer from wasting diseases, such as HIV/AIDS. It is an expectorant and an old-time remedy for bronchitis and asthma. Many herbalists consider Saw Palmetto to be an aphrodisiac in both men and women.

Plant Description:

Saw Palmetto (*Serenoa repens*) is the most commonly used herb in USA and Europe by men to maintain prostate health. Research has shown that standardized Saw Palmetto extract helps reduce symptoms related to prostate enlargement (benign prostatic hyperplasia, or BPH) such as the frequency and urgency of urination. It may be as effective as proscar yet has fewer side effects.

Saw Palmetto is a low-growing palm tree native to the West Indies and the southern Atlantic coast of the United States. The plant grows from six to ten feet with a high crown of leaves forming a circular fan-shaped outline, and the berries are used for medicinal purposes. Its botanical designation, *Serenoa*, is named after the nineteenth-century botanist, Sereno Watson.

History:

American Indians used Saw Palmetto as a treatment for genitourinary tract disturbances, a tonic to support the body nutritionally and as a love potion. Components in Saw Palmetto include essential oils, saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, sterols (including beta sitosterol and glucoside), tannins, carotenes, polysaccharides and sugars. The lipid soluble compounds are thought to be its major pharmacological components.

Medical Uses:

Benign Prostate Enlargement is also called Benign Prostate Hyperplasia and is caused by the accumulation of testosterone in the prostate where it is converted into a compound (DHT) that stimulates cells to multiply excessively, thus causing the prostate to enlarge. Saw Palmetto appears to inhibit the intraprostatic conversion of testosterone to dihydrotestosterone (DHT). Although it is a condition that does not decrease sexual function, it does cause swelling, pain and excessive urination in men. In Germany, Saw Palmetto is sold as an over-the-counter treatment for benign prostate enlargement, and modern researchers are now rethinking about Saw Palmetto's age-old treatment for prostate disorders. Many studies, although inconclusive, are shedding new light on the subject of Saw Palmetto's efficacy as a viable treatment.

Saw Palmetto has been used to treat impotence and other diseases of the prostate gland. It is administered to men to increase the function of the testicles and relieve irritation in mucous membranes, particularly in the urinary tract and prostate.

Administered to women, Saw Palmetto is said to support mammary gland health. It may also help women with polycystic ovarian disease, cystitis and help to decrease androgen (a hormone that stimulates male characteristics in women).

Saw Palmetto is a diuretic and a urinary antiseptic.

Treatment:

As a good expectorant, Saw Palmetto clears the chest of congestion. It has been useful in treating bronchial complaints (coughs due to colds, asthma and bronchitis), and it is especially beneficial when there is an excessive discharge of mucus from the sinuses and nose.

Saw Palmetto is an overall tonic that builds strength during convalescence from an illness and has been helpful for those who suffer from wasting diseases, such as HIV/AIDS. Long ago, an American medicinal botanist, John Lloyd, noted that animals fed Saw Palmetto berries grew sleek and fat. In human diets, Saw Palmetto is said to stimulate the appetite and have a beneficial effect on body weight.

Saw Palmetto is said to regulate hormones and is considered beneficial to the reproductive organs of both sexes. It is also considered an aphrodisiac.

Saw Palmetto is recommended as a tonic promoting good general health. As a mild sedative and tranquilizer, it is said to improve the disposition.

Precautions:

Men taking the prescription drugs Propecia and Proscar should inform their doctors if they are also taking Saw Palmetto. Saw Palmetto may counter the efficacy of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) and birth control pills. Pregnant women should not use Saw Palmetto.

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Schisandra Berry



Botanical: *Schisandra chinensis*

Family: Schisandraceae (schisandra)

Other common names: Schizandra, Gomishi, Magnolia Vine, Schisandra Fruit, Wu-wei-zi, Fruit of Five Flavors, Sandra Berry Vine, Omicha

Women in China rely on Schisandra to preserve their beauty and maintain youth, and both men and women are said to benefit from its qualities as a sexual enhancer. For thousands of years it has been cherished as an anti-ageing tonic that is believed to increase stamina and mental clarity and fight against fatigue and stress. It was once a favorite of Chinese emperors, Schisandra has enjoyed a reputation as one of the most effective treatments for liver disorders. Because it helps the body to respond to stressful situations and act as a mild sedative, Schisandra is even being touted as an antidepressant.

Medical Uses:

Its most popular use can be recorded in these same Asian producing countries as a widely used Male tonic and adaptogenic. Its Chinese name is wu-wei-zi, which means five taste fruit. Most research has been conducted in China where double

blind studies suggest that Schisandra has the ability to help those that suffer from Hepatitis. The lignans in the berry appear to protect the liver by stimulating cells that produce much needed antioxidants. Because of its adaptogenic properties, it has been applied next to some herbal medicines like Ginseng as a stimulator for the central nervous system, increased brain efficiency, improved reflexes, and an accelerated rate of endurance.

Plant Description:

Schisandra Berries, and the beautiful vines upon which they grow, are native to China, Russia, Korea and, some claim, to the eastern part of the United States. The woody plant is valued for its attractive flowers, foliage, and fruit (the berries), which are used in tasty and nutritious juices, and as an important ingredient in herbal medicine. The plant is compact, adaptable to arbors and walls, and bears oval leaves, pink flowers and spikes of red berries. The vine reaches a length of up to twenty-five feet and thrives in moist, well-drained soil in partial shade, and the aromatic berries are dried and used medicinally.

History:

Schisandra Berry was highly coveted by the wealthy and was a favorite among Chinese emperors. It was also considered one of the most useful herbs from the herbal traditions of Asia for the treatment for liver diseases, a tradition that has been echoed in many modern herbal treatments. In China, it was also used as a health tonic and aphrodisiac that was thought to nourish the genitourinary system and sexual organs, and until recently, Schisandra was a rather rare and expensive herb. Some of the constituents in Schisandra include sesquiterpene, lignins (schizandrin, deoxyschizandrin, gomisins and pregomisins), citral, phytosterols (stigmasterol and beta-sitosterol), volatile oils, essential fatty acids, Vitamins C, and E.

Treatment:

Schisandra Berry is considered an adaptogen, in that it normalizes body functions during stressful situations that might alter those functions, helping the body to adapt and return to an overall sense of well-being and increasing the body's

resistance to disease and stress. It is also said the Schisandra helps to energize RNA and DNA molecules to rebuild cells.

Used for centuries in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) to remedy liver ailments, Schisandra has maintained its fine reputation as a support to strengthen the liver. It is considered a cholagogue, or substance that increases the production of bile in the liver and delivers it to the gastrointestinal tract. It is said to protect against the progression of cirrhosis into liver cancer and protect the liver from chemical damage, particularly damage from chemicals that have to be activated by the liver to become poisonous, such as carbon tetrachloride.

Laboratory studies have demonstrated its ability to make the enzyme, glutathione peroxidase, which deactivates several kinds of toxic free radicals that attack the outer membranes of liver cells. This substance is believed to offset damage done to the liver by chronic viral hepatitis, alcohol and HIV/AIDS. Schisandra contains lignin compounds that are said to lower high levels of glutamic pyruvic transaminase (GPT) in the blood, which is an indication of hepatitis.

Further support for the liver comes in the form of another constituent in Schisandra, gomison-A, which blocks the production of inflammation-inducing leukotrienes. Gomison-A helps to prevent liver inflammation and tissue destruction without compromising the immune system's ability to fight the underlying infection. This substance also helps to stimulate the growth of healthy liver tissue and helps to hasten recovery after liver surgery.

Schisandra is thought to balance the body's functions and improve mental function. Active constituents help to relieve emotional and physical depression and reverse depression of the central nervous system. The herb is said to reduce fatigue and physical exhaustion, as well as improve stamina and physical performance and increase the body's capacity to work. Moreover, it is also said to help sharpen mental ability and concentration and counter forgetfulness.

For thousands of years, Schisandra has been cherished by Chinese women (and men) to combat ageing. Women have utilized it as a tonic to preserve their beauty and maintain youthful skin, and both men and women use it as an aphrodisiac. In men, it is also thought to increase sexual stamina.

Schisandra is considered a mild sedative that exerts a soothing and quieting effect on the body, and has been helpful in cases of insomnia, stress, dizziness, motion sickness, excessive sweating, headache, heart palpitations, anxiety and other problems associated with emotional stress. Furthermore, Schisandra increases the efficacy of prescription tranquilizers (Valium, Librium, etc.), allowing patients to take lower doses of these potentially addictive drugs.

Schizandra improves digestion. The increased bile flow from the liver hastens the digestion of fatty foods and improves utilization of the digested foods, which is thought to relieve many digestive-related disorders, including chronic gastritis, heartburn and indigestion, while it provides a healthy atmosphere for clear, problem-free skin.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Schisandra (it is a uterine stimulant). People who have gallstones or blockages of the bile ducts and those with peptic ulcers, epilepsy and high blood pressure should also avoid Schisandra.

* * * * *

Sea Cucumber



Botanical: *Staurocucumis liouvillei*

Family: Holothuroidea

Other common names: Bêche de Mer, Holothurian, Trepang, Gamat, Hai Shen, Sea Ginseng, Sea Slug.

For thousands of years, Sea Cucumber has been used to ease inflammatory conditions, such as rheumatoid arthritis, osteo-arthritis, spondylitis and other musculo-skeletal diseases, as well as fatigue, impotence and urinary problems. And guess what? Sea Cucumber is not a cucumber at all; it is a marine animal that is rich in protein, vitamins and minerals and yet another gift to our good health from the sea.

Plant Description:

Sea Cucumber is an oblong-shaped, gelatinous, invertebrate marine animal that is distantly related to starfishes and sea urchins. It is aptly named, because it is shaped like a cucumber, and has been thought to have a distinctly phallic appearance, which may account for its reputation as an aphrodisiac.

The holothuroideans, commonly called sea cucumbers, are a unique group of echinoderms. They are the only class that is soft bodied rather than hard with well-developed circular and longitudinal muscles. Their axis of symmetry is horizontal unlike other echinoderms. The mouth and anus are located at separate ends of the sea cucumber's elongated body. The mouth is surrounded by modified tube feet that form a ring of tentacles. The number of tentacles varies from 8-30 depending on the order. This one feature is used to divide this class into smaller groups. Tube feet can be found all over the holothuroideans body that is usually contracted within the external body wall. Sea cucumbers are sessile and very sluggish. They ingest large amounts of sand and filter out what is not used. Both eggs and sperm are ejected into the water where fertilization takes place. The body wall contains reduced spicules found in shapes of rods, crosses or hooks. The respiratory system takes up most of its internal mass and is found in no other echinoderm.

- Sea cucumbers have the ability to eviscerate parts of, or its entire internal mass to ward off prey. In a least two species, autoevisceration occurs on a seasonal basis, but it is not known exactly why.
- Sea cucumbers lack arms unlike other echinoderms. Tentacles have taken their place.
- Respiratory trees evolved and are found in no other echinoderm. These trees are outgrowths of the cloaca.
- Sea cucumbers can live from 5-10 years.
- They are found in all seas at all depths. Some ocean trenches contain more than 90% of the total biomass.
- Sea cucumbers are considered a delicacy in many countries around the world.

History:

In China, Sea Cucumber is called Hai Shen, which translates roughly into Sea Ginseng, and it is unclear whether this refers to its aphrodisiacal qualities or healthful properties as a tonic for the kidneys and blood. It has been used in China for thousands of years as a treatment for arthritis, fatigue, impotence, constipation,

frequent urination and joint pain, and the herb was listed as a medicinal agent in the Bencao Congxin of 1757.

Sea Cucumber is also a great delicacy in Chinese and other Asian cuisines, often eaten at feasts and on holiday celebrations. Cooking it is very complicated and takes place over several days, requiring careful cleaning, gutting, soaking and boiling (several times). Like tofu, it is flavorless but will absorb the flavors of its surrounding seasonings and foods and is highly nutritious - an ideal tonic food - providing more protein than most foods and less fat than most foods. It is frequently included in soups and stir-fries. Sea Cucumber is rich in mucopolysaccharide (mainly chondroitin sulfate) and provides protein, fatty acids, saponins (triterpene glycosides), Vitamins A, C, B-1 (thiamine), B-2 (riboflavin), B-3 (niacin), calcium, iron, magnesium and zinc.

Medical Uses:

Sea Cucumber is rich in mucopolysaccharide (mainly chondroitin sulfate), which is a cartilage builder and often lacking in people with arthritis and connective tissue disorders; and, consequently, it has been used to ease joint pains and arthritic conditions.

Modern researchers believe that Sea Cucumbers improve the balance of prostaglandin's (hormone-like substances that act as chemical messengers in many bodily functions), which regulate the inflammatory process and are beneficial for musculo-skeletal inflammatory diseases, especially rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and ankylosing spondylitis (a rheumatic disease that affects the spine).

Sea Cucumber is considered a fine health tonic, especially for the kidneys and has been used to nourish the kidneys and treat cases of frequent urination.

Promising new research indicates that the saponin content (triterpene glycosides) and fatty acids in Sea Cucumber may possibly be useful as an agent to treat malignant growths and diseases, as well as an anti-proliferative agent. Moreover, those same constituents may also be responsible for antiviral activities in vitro that have shown promise in inhibiting herpes viruses.

Some of the historical benefits attributed to Sea Cucumber are its nutritive tonic qualities that ease fatigue, cleanse the blood, relieve constipation, and act as an aphrodisiac to help impotence.

Precautions: None

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Self Heal



Botanical: *Prunella vulgaris*

Family: Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

Other common names: Prunella, Brunella, Wound Root, All Heal, Woundwort, Heal All, Slough Heal, Blue Curls, Dragonhead, Hercules' Woundwort, Hook-Heal, Heart of the Earth, Carpenter's Herb, Xia Ku Cao, Common Self Heal

Self Heal is an old and reliable treatment for internal and external bleeding and wounds, including excessive menstruation and bleeding ulcers. It is said to be a

potent antiviral agent and has shown great promise in laboratory tests for possible use in herpes, HIV and AIDS treatments.

Plant Description:

It is a diminutive plant but will grow larger in all its parts when growing in more sheltered places. The main stem of the plant is grooved and rough to the touch and bears pointed oval leaves with dense, purple flower clusters (sometimes blue or pink).

Self-heal is used on every continent. The fact that this plant is also known as heal-all and cure-all should give you some insight into what people have found to be true of it. They do not call it sometimes-heal, or might-heal, or every-once-in-a-while-heal, they call it heal-all.

Self-heal is a mint relation, and as with all the other mints, if you plant it once, you never have to plant it again. Incredibly vigorous, the plant spreads by underground stems that shoot out in every direction once the first root is stuck in the ground. If there is anything to the doctrine of signatures, *Prunella* should make anyone who takes it into his or her body stronger than an ox.

History:

Self Heal is a creeping perennial that is native to Eurasia and grows throughout Europe and North America, where it may be found in damp meadows, pastures, waste places and on roadsides, thriving in moist, well-drained soil in sunny areas or light shade. When imported to North America and Australia, it quickly became naturalized as a common wildflower and abundant in open and exposed situations, tending to oust native flowers.

Self Heal does not appear to have been known to the ancient Romans or Greeks, but it was mentioned in Chinese medical literature during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.- A. D. 23) as an important herb in the treatment for complaints associated with a disturbed liver, high blood pressure and conjunctivitis. In Western medicine, it has always been regarded primarily as a wound herb, giving rise to many of its common names, Woundwort, Wound Root, Heal All, etc. Its botanical name, *Prunella*, is derived from *Brunellen*, a name given to it by the Germans, because it rose to prominence when military physicians used it to treat a contagious fever that

raged among the German imperial troops in 1547 and 1566, that was characterized by a sore throat and a brown-coated tongue. The fever was called "the browns" (brun is the German word for "brown"). In John Gerard's "Herball" of 1597, he claimed there was no "better wound herb[e] in the world than Self Heal" and said it would "heal any green wound[e]." In 1653, the great English herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper, wrote, "Self Heal" would be good taken both "inwardly or outwardly for wounds and bleeding" and would "cleanse the foulness of sores and speedily heal them." Self Heal is an astringent, slightly bitter, saline herb that is harvested when in optimum condition (and the plant is in bloom).

Although the plant is a member of the mint family, no mint fragrance or flavor is present, and all the aerial (aboveground) parts of the plant are used in herbal medicine. Some of the constituents included in Self Heal are volatile oil, a bitter principle, tannin, rutin, beta-carotene, sugar, cellulose, Vitamins B-1, C and K.

Medical Uses:

Self Heal is an astringent that has been effective in controlling both internal and external bleeding. It has been utilized as a styptic that has been used internally in Western medicine to stop hemorrhage, internal bleeding ulcers and excessive menstruation, and its gentle astringency also helps to control chronic and sudden diarrhea (although it is recommended that this application be used under the aegis of a health care provider). For external treatment, those astringent qualities may be applied to relieve hemorrhoids and decrease the bleeding of wounds and cuts.

As an antiviral, Self Heal is said to be useful for treating herpes virus infection in two ways. It is thought to stop the virus from growing within cells and by preventing it from binding to cells. Moreover, recent and very promising research has shown very interesting results with respect to HIV and AIDS. In Japan, studies showed strong anti-HIV effects in laboratory conditions and Canadian scientists claim that Self Heal blocks cell-to-cell transmission of the HIV virus and interferes with the virus's ability to bind with T cells, the immune cells that are destroyed by HIV infection. At the University of California at Davis, scientists have identified a complex sugar in Self Heal that accounts for its actions against HIV.

Self Heal is considered an antibiotic and antiseptic (which supports its historical use to help ease sore throats and heal "green" wounds). It is still used externally in

gargles to relieve sore throat and ulcerated mouth, in addition to stopping infection from spreading, and speeding up the healing of wounds, cuts, bruises, burns, ulcers and sores. It is also believed to reduce scarring.

Self Heal is reported to reduce lymphatic congestion and has been used to relieve swollen glands, mumps and mastitis.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), Self Heal was used as a liver and gallbladder stimulant and was used to treat conjunctivitis, hypertension and headaches, among other disorders.

Precautions:

Those with diarrhea, nausea, stomachache or vomiting should consult a physician before using Self Heal. This herb could potentially interfere with actions of prescription blood thinners (Plavix, Coumadin, etc.).

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Senna



Botanical: Sennae folium

Family: Leguminosae (legume)

Other common names: Cassia Senna, Senna Leaf, Alexandrian Senna, Egyptian Senna, Ringworm Bush, East Indian Senna, Nubian Senna, Rajavriksha

Senna is a stimulating and powerful purgative that promotes the vigorous evacuation of the bowels and is very helpful in relieving severe constipation or when an easily passed stool is recommended after rectal surgery or prior to a colonoscopy.

Plant Description:

Senna is a smallish shrub with an erect, smooth, pale green stem and long, spreading branches, bearing lanceolate leaflets and small flowers; and depending upon the geographic location, the plant may grow anywhere from two to six feet.

History:

It is a native of Africa, the Middle East and India, and it was first brought into medicinal use by the ninth-century Arabian physicians, Serapion and Sesue, who gave it its Arabic name and employed it as a purgative. The *Cassia acutifolia* plant (also called *Senna alexandrina* or *Cassia Senna*) was exported from Egypt, via Cairo and the Red Sea, and *Cassia angustifolia* from India, via Madras; and by 1640, Senna was cultivated and being utilized in England for its cathartic properties. The herb was officially listed in both the British Pharmacopoeia and the United States Pharmacopoeia, and the herb is one of the few herbal medicines approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter use and may be one of the most widely used herbal medicines in the United States. In the United States, Senna leaf, fruit and extract are used in over-the-counter laxatives (e.g., Correctol®, ExLax®, Senokot®, Smooth Move®).

In Germany, Senna leaf, Alexandrian Senna pod and Tinnevelly Senna pod are licensed as standard medicinal teas available only in a pharmacy, official in the German Pharmacopoeia and approved in the Commission E monographs. They are used alone and in more than 110 prepared drugs, mostly laxatives and biliary remedies. The plant is well distributed throughout the world as an annual or perennial, depending upon its geographic location, and the herb encompasses many species within the genus *Cassia*. All are virtually used interchangeably in herbal medicine. Some of the constituents in Senna leaves include anthraquinone compounds, including dianthrone glycosides, sennosides (aloe-emodin derivatives), flavonoids, naphthalene glycosides, mucilage, tannin, resin and beta-sitosterol.

Medical Uses:

Senna is an effective and potent purgative with its action being chiefly on the lower bowel. The anthraquinone stimulate the bowel and increase the peristaltic movements of the colon by its local action upon the intestinal wall, leading to evacuation in approximately ten hours. The herb has been recommended for people who require a soft, easily passed stool, especially when following rectal surgery or preparing for a colonoscopy). This active purgative principle (a glycoside) was discovered in 1866.

As a vermifuge, Senna has been used to destroy and expel worms and parasites from the intestinal tract, possibly due to the herb's powerful laxative action.

By cleansing the colon, Senna may have positive results in improving skin afflictions (pimples, etc.) and helping in cases of obesity.

Treatments:

Senna is an ingredient that is primarily used to help with constipation.

Senna is not known to treat constipation, but can be associated with alleviating this problem for a short period. A natural herb that comes from a plant that is grown and cultivated in places like India, Sudan, Egypt and Pakistan, Senna is also used in many over the counter laxatives and may be found in pharmaceutical products.

Precautions:

Great care should be taken with the use of Senna. Pregnant, nursing or menstruating women should not use Senna, and it is not appropriate for children under six years of age. People with intestinal blockage, inflammatory bowel disease, intestinal ulcers, and undiagnosed stomach pain or appendicitis symptoms must avoid Senna. Senna can cause cramping, nausea and diarrhea, and the urine may take on a reddish hue (which is harmless). Long-term use is not recommended, since it may cause dependence and a weakened colon, aggravate constipation and result in a loss of potassium and other vital minerals, which is particularly dangerous to people with heart rhythm irregularities. Chronic constipation is usually indicative of another condition and should always be discussed with a physician.

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Skull Cap



Botanical: *Scutellaria lateriflora*

Family: Labiatae-Lamiaceae (mint)

Other common names: Scullcap, American Scullcap, Scutellaria, Blue Pimpernel, Blue Skullcap, Hood Wort, Mad Dog Weed, Mad Dog Skullcap, Helmet Flower, Side Flower, Madweed, Virginia Skullcap, Quaker Bonnet, Mad Weed

Are you experiencing an overabundance of stress in your life? Try Skull Cap as a natural way to ease frayed nerves, relax, and get a restful sleep. It is an old remedy that helps to relieve "women's complaints," such as premenstrual syndrome and monthly cramps. Skull Cap is also considered very useful for alleviating the difficulties of barbiturate and drug withdrawal.

Plant Description:

Skull Cap (also spelled Scullcap) is a small, herbaceous perennial, indigenous to North America, with an erect and branching square stem and flowers that may grow to a height of three feet.

It is abundant throughout the land and thrives in damp places, meadows, ditches and waste places from Canada to Florida. Different varieties of this herb grow throughout the world in temperate regions (most notably in China and Russia) with some similar medicinal applications as the "American Scullcap," but they are not generally used interchangeably.

History:

The name, Skull Cap, is derived from the helmet-shaped flower that resembles a helmet with the visor raised, and a "Skullcap" was the word for a type of military helmet that was familiar to early colonists.

Native Americans wisely used this herb as a sedative and to promote menstruation. Skull Cap was believed to treat rabies in the 1700s, a use that was later discredited, but several of the herb's common names (Mad Dog Weed and Madweed) remained to describe it.

In the nineteenth century, Skull Cap was a popular medicinal treatment for nervous disorders and was used to subdue undue sexual desires without damage. The aboveground (aerial) part of the plant is used in herbal preparations. Some of the constituents included in Skull Cap include essential oil, albumen, tannins, a bitter principle (scutellaine), flavonoids (scutellarein, isoscutellarein, wogonin, and baicalin), acids, beta carotene, lignin, tannins, chloride of soda, salts of iron, silica, calcium, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, beta-carotene, B-vitamins and Vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

The time-honored use of Skull Cap has been as a nervine and tonic to renew and revive the central nervous system and treat nervous disorders of all kinds. The herb calms the nerves, quiets and strengthens the system, and is a valuable remedy for controlling nervous irritation, excitability, restlessness, hysteria, anxiety, hyperactivity, fatigue, night terrors and nervous headaches. The flavonoid, scutellarein, is thought to be the active ingredient that acts as a natural sedative and stimulates the brain to produce more endorphins, promoting a feeling of calm. Use of the herb has helped to aid sleep and treat insomnia.

As an antispasmodic, Skull Cap has been useful in relieving menstrual cramps, premenstrual syndrome, muscle spasms, and cramps due to stress. The herb is used to help treat St. Vitus dance, convulsions and shaking palsy, and some modern herbalists use it to prevent epileptic seizures.

Skull Cap has been given to alcoholics who are suffering from withdrawal symptoms and delirium tremens. It is believed to be helpful in treating barbiturate, tranquilizer, and drug withdrawal symptoms.

Skull Cap is thought to be a powerful antioxidant that appears to protect red blood cells from free radical damage more effectively than Vitamin E, and it shows some promise in preventing the oxidation of blood fats.

Skull Cap is said to strengthen the heart muscle, improve circulation, and be helpful for treating cardiovascular disease.

Skull Cap has been used to treat snakebites and the bites of poisonous insects.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Skull Cap. Large doses (many times the recommended amount) may cause giddiness, confusion, twitching and stupor, but the herb works well when taken consistently over a period. Skull Cap should not be given to children.

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Slippery Elm Bark



Botanical: *Ulmus fulva* (also known as *Ulmus rubra*)

Family: Ulmaceae (elm)

Other common names: Indian Elm, Red Elm, Winged Elm, Rock Elm, Moose Elm, Sweet Elm, American Elm

Did you know...?

As its name implies, this lubricating and nutritious herb coats irritated areas, allowing the body to heal itself. Its high level of mucilage helps to soothe a sore throat, ease indigestion and lubricate the bowel, which has made Slippery Elm Bark useful for easing Crohn's disease, colitis and irritable bowel disease.

Plant Description:

Slippery Elm is a large, deciduous tree that is native to North America and grows in the moist, well-drained (but not waterlogged) woods of the eastern half of Canada and the United States. The tree may reach a height of sixty feet and may now be found planted along streets, as well as in the forests throughout North America. Native American Indians were the first to discover the healing powers of the Slippery Elm and found that when the tree's inner bark is exposed to water, the gummy substance (or mucilage) swells and produces a soothing, softening ointment. Native Americans applied it to heal wounds, and when it dried, it

became a natural bandage, and they wrapped Slippery Elm Bark around meat to prevent spoilage.

History:

The English settlers soon noticed its widespread use by Native Americans and included it into their medicinal applications for wounds, cold sores and boils. The colonists also used the bark to treat coughs, sore throats and urinary tract infections. Slippery Elm Bark was used during the American Revolution to treat gunshot wounds and in Valley Forge as a survival food.

Mixed with water, Slippery Elm Bark makes a highly nutritious and soothing gruel for children and for sick people of any age, and the herb was once listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia. Slippery Elm bark has a soothing and healing effect on any part of the body with which it comes into contact. The bark's high mucilage content is composed of easily digested, nontoxic, complex carbohydrates, and Slippery Elm Bark also contains beta-sitosterol, campesterol, tannin, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, beta-carotene and Vitamins B-1, B-2, B-3 and C.

Medical Uses:

The Principal use of Slippery Elm Bark is to soothe sore throats. The high level of mucilage makes it extremely soothing for the inflamed mucous membranes of the throat and esophagus. Herbalists use it in cough medicines for scratchy, raw, sore throats and mouth irritations, and it is an effective ingredient in throat lozenges.

Slippery Elm Bark reduces inflammation of the intestinal tract. It soothes the inflamed mucous membranes of the bowel and neutralizes excess acids in the intestines, which make it beneficial for Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, diverticulosis, diverticulitis and irritable bowel syndrome. It has also been used to ease both constipation and chronic diarrhea.

One of Slippery Elm Bark's oldest uses has been as a digestive tonic. Again, its high mucilage content soothes the inflamed mucous membranes of the stomach and neutralizes excess stomach acids, making it an excellent remedy for the entire digestive system. It is said to soothe stomach irritation and the sore feeling that

often follows vomiting. Old time herbalists use it as a remedy for ulcers and gastritis.

Slippery Elm Bark generally reduces inflammation and is useful for soothing the mucous membranes of the urinary tract and easing the inflammation of aching joints.

Midwives used Slippery Elm Bark to lubricate and ease childbirth.

Slippery Elm Bark is a highly nutritious food product. It is good for babies as a nutritive and benefits those babies who are unable to digest milk products. Because it is so soothing and easily digested, it is one of the few foods that will stay in a cancerous or ulcerated stomach when nothing else will and is beneficial for invalids and those recovering from illness or who have wasting diseases. In times of famine or food shortage, a gruel made from Slippery Elm bark was highly valued for its nutritive qualities.

Slippery Elm Bark works with the body to draw out impurities and toxins and has been a longtime treatment for cuts, bruises, wounds, burns, and to relieve inflamed or itchy skin.

Precautions:

People with known allergies to elm bark should avoid Slippery Elm Bark. Other medications should be taken at a different time, because the herb's high mucilage content may interfere with their absorption.

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Spearmint



Botanical: *Mentha spicata*

Family: Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

Other common names: Garden Mint, Green Mint, Spire Mint, Sage of Bethlehem, Lamb Mint, Bethlehem Sage,* Mackerel Mint, Our Lady's Mint, Pea Mint

Spearmint has been used for thousands of years as a pleasant way to support the gastrointestinal system, with particular emphasis on the lower bowel. The herb is said to relieve flatulence, indigestion, colic, irritable bowel syndrome, nausea, heartburn, as well as stomach, abdominal and bowel pains. This is one old home remedy that no one should be without.

Plant Description:

Spearmint is a hardy, herbaceous perennial that is native to the Mediterranean region but also grows wild and is cultivated in temperate climates over most of the world. Plants of the mint family are a complex group, involving hybridization in

both the wild and in cultivation, and are so numerous that it is sometimes difficult to identify the individual plants within the species.

Spearmint is a leafy plant with square stems that bear short, uneven, serrate leaves topped by slender, terminal spikes and pale purple or mauve flowers that bloom from July to September. The plant may be found in rich, moist, alkaline soils in sun or partial shade and grows to a height of about two feet.

History:

The genus, *mentha*, is derived from the name of a nymph, Minthe, who was seduced by Pluto and whom the jealous Persephone turned into a seedling (mint). There is evidence that mint was cultivated by the Egyptians, and the Romans revered it so much that they are said to have introduced it from southern Europe to other parts of Europe.

Medicinal interest in mint dates from the first century A.D., when its use was recorded by the Roman naturalist, Pliny. The use of mint as a medicine is mentioned in the Icelandic Pharmacopoeias of the thirteenth century, and in Elizabethan times, more than forty ailments were reported to be remedied by mint.

It is interesting to note that a seventeenth-century visitor to New England included mint on a list of plants that had been taken to the New World. However, the herb only appears to have arrived into the popular medicine of Western Europe by the eighteenth century. Cultivation of Spearmint takes place worldwide as a very important commercial crop that is used for flavoring candy, ice cream, gum, liqueurs, tobacco and medicines; for its fragrance in perfumes, potpourris, lotions and pomanders; for its efficacy in repelling insects; and finally, for its all-important medicinal applications. Spearmint shares many of the uses of peppermint, in slightly weaker proportions, but will precipitate all the same actions, which are simultaneously warming and cooling. The primary use of Spearmint in herbal medicine has been for digestive complaints, but the almost countless lists of applications also includes pain relief (including headache and joint pain), cold and flu relief, and skin problem treatments, among many others. Some of the ingredients in Spearmint include an important essential oil, which contains the simple terpene derivative, *corvone* (its major active principle), choline, tannin, acids, minerals, vitamins, alpha- and beta-carotenes, azulenes and a bitter principle.

A ninth-century monk, writing about the plants, said he would rather count the sparks in a furnace than count the different varieties of mint. Nonetheless, mints have been known and appreciated since antiquity for their fragrance and taste and their important use in herbal medicines.

Medical Uses:

Spearmint is an aromatic herb that is primarily known to stimulate and act mainly on the digestive and gastrointestinal system (it is even an ingredient in some antacid medications). The bitter principle has been highly esteemed for thousands of years to relieve nausea, indigestion, heartburn, colic, irritable bowel syndrome, dyspepsia, gastric ulcers, gastroenteritis and stomach, abdominal and bowel pains (especially the lower bowel). Spearmint is particularly known for its ability to help expel stomach and intestinal gas and otherwise remedy the deleterious effects of too much food or an improper diet.

Also considered an antispasmodic, Spearmint is frequently given to relieve cramping (including menstrual and abdominal cramps), bowel pain and spasms (including further support for irritable bowel syndrome).

Spearmint is a diuretic that promotes urine flow and is often given for suppressed or painful urination (particularly scalding urine). This property is useful for dropsy (or edema) and helps rid the body of excess water. In addition, it is also thought to help flush gravel from the bladder. Moreover, the herb is also said to promote perspiration, which not only helps to cool the body and lower fever, but it helps to rid the body of toxins through the skin. This diaphoretic quality is very helpful in cases of flu and colds (particularly accompanied by fever).

As an analgesic and calmative, Spearmint is used as a pain reliever and nerve tonic and is believed to quiet the nerves, ease tension and relieve headaches (including migraines) and vomiting, especially when related to nervous causes.

Spearmint is considered an effective expectorant that helps to expel excess mucus (good for sinusitis) and bring relief to the upper respiratory tract (easing coughs and asthma).

As a flavoring, Spearmint is sometimes combined with other less palatable medicines to make them more agreeable in taste or to allay their tendencies of

producing nausea or griping (the grumbling pains in the bowel or intestines). It is frequently used in this manner in cough medicines, in addition to augmenting their expectorant applications.

Used externally, Spearmint is thought to be mildly anesthetic and anti-inflammatory and has been used for hemorrhoids and joint pain. It is also included in mouthwashes (good for sore throats) and in toothpastes. Other external uses for Spearmint include its addition to fragrant potpourris, pomanders, toiletries, perfumes, cigarettes and pesticides.

Related News

From MSNBC's >Technology & Science > Science Section - 08/25/06

"The doctors of ancient Greece and China had it right when they applied cool and mint salves to soothe aches and pains, a new study suggests. A synthetic treatment with the same properties as mint oil is an effective painkiller when applied directly to the skin. The new cooling compounds could be especially beneficial to millions suffering with the chronic pain of arthritis and diseases affecting nerve endings, scientists say."

Precautions: None

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St. John's Plant



Botanical: *Artemisia vulgaris*

Family: Compositae (daisy) - Asteraceae (aster)

Other common names: Mugwort, Felon Herb, Cingulum Sancti Johannis, Common Artemisia, Wild Wormwood, Chinese Moxa, Sailor's Tobacco

St. John's Plant is a bitter digestive that relieves stomach acidity, dyspepsia, indigestion, travel sickness and acute bowel and stomach pain. It also soothes the nerves, reduces tension and insomnia. St. John's Plant is beneficial for female complaints, easing menstrual cramps and painful menopausal symptoms, and it improves liver and gallbladder function.

Plant Description:

St. John's Plant is a native of temperate Europe and Asia and was introduced to the Americas, where it grows on roadsides, riverbanks and in vacant lots and waste places, thriving in well-drained, neutral-to-slightly-alkaline soil in sun and growing to a height of six feet.

It is an aromatic, multi-branched shrubby perennial with red-brown stems, bearing deeply cut, dark-green leaves (that are downy white underneath) and clusters of yellow-to-red-brown flower heads that bloom from July to September.

History:

It is one of the few palatable wormwoods of the Artemisia family, and its botanical genus, Artemisia, is derived from Artemis, the Greek name for Diana, who is said to have found the plants and delivered their powers to the centaur. In ancient Greece, the Father of Medicine, Hippocrates (circa 400 B.C.), and the first-century physician, Dioscorides, prescribed St. John's Plant as a specific to ease and hasten childbirth, and the herb was frequently mentioned in first-century Greek and Roman writings.

Legend claims that the Romans planted St. John's Plant on roadsides, so that passing soldiers might put it in their sandals on long marches to soothe sore feet, and herbalists still recommend it in footbaths to invigorate tired feet. St. John's Plant appears in Chinese medical literature dating back to A.D. 500, and was used to ease rheumatism and is still used for acupuncture points on the skin. In Ayurvedic medicine, St. John's Plant has been used for the female reproductive system, nervous complaints and as a wash for fungal infections.

Legend tells us that in the wilderness, Saint John the Baptist wore a cingulum, or belt, that was woven from the plant, giving us its name and one of its common names, Cingulum Sancti Johannis. Moreover, another of its common names, Felon Plant, comes to us because the plant was said to draw the pus from a "felon" or purulent infection at the end of a finger or toe. St. John's Plant was important in Druidic and Anglo-Saxon times and was one of the nine sacred herbs given to the world by the god, Woden, that were used to repel evil and poisons. Called the "Mother of Herbs," St. John's Plant was associated with witchcraft and fertility rites.

Placed on a pillow, it was said reveal the future in dreams, and it was a traveler's remedy, not only protecting medieval pilgrims from fatigue and sunstroke, but also from wild beasts and demons. Old-time wayfarers put it in their shoes to keep from becoming footsore (echoing one of its ancient uses). In 1636, John Gerard's important "Herbal" was published in England, and he recommended St. John's Plant for epilepsy and palsy, noting that it "cureth the shakings of the joints, inclining to the palsy."

Long ago, it was used in England as a tea substitute and in beer brewing, and St. John's Plant is natural insect repellent that has been utilized in clothes closets as a

protection against moths. St. John's Plant is very popular in Europe as a medicinal herb, and it is an important ingredient in traditional recipes of the U.K., Germany and Spain in dishes of eels or carp and in stuffing's for geese, duck, pork and game. St. John's Plant is a bitter, aromatic, tonic herb, and the roots and leaves are used in herbal medicines. Some of the constituents included in St. John's Plant are essential oil (containing terpenes and terpene derivatives, such as cineol, camphor, linalool, thujone, borneol, etc.), flavonoids (quercetin), silica, antibiotic polacetylenes, inulin, hydroxy coumarins, resin, tannin, beta-carotene, fiber, calcium, zinc and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

St. John's Plant root contains a bitter principle that makes it a fine digestive stimulant and stomachic. It tones and gives strength to the stomach, helping to relieve gastric disorders and bowel complaints and is said to relieve acute bowel and stomach pain. As a digestive, it cools the digestive tract, peps up the appetite, and eases nervous and sluggish digestion, dyspepsia, stomach acidity, travel sickness and indigestion.

As a cholagogue, St. John's Plant stimulates bile flow from the gallbladder and bile ducts into the duodenum and has a beneficial effect on liver and gallbladder function. It is used for liver stagnation and is useful in cases of jaundice. The improved liver function also helps the digestive tract.

St. John's Plant is said to be splendid for female complaints. As an emmenagogue, it promotes the onset of suppressed menstruation and, further, regulates its flow, easing prolonged bleeding. It is said to relieve menstrual pain and cramps; and as a uterine stimulant, it has been employed by herbalists to facilitate childbirth when labor is prolonged, and to expel retained placenta. (It should be noted that because it is a uterine stimulant, pregnant women should never use this herb.) Some herbalists recommend it as a sedative for women during menopause and for painful symptoms of menopause.

St. John's Plant is a mild tonic for the nervous system that is soothing for the nerves, helping to reduce tension and nervousness. It is said to be mildly narcotic and has been used to calm hysteria, uncontrollable shaking and as a sedative to promote sleep in cases of insomnia. St. John's Plant is believed to be helpful in

cases of depression, especially with loss of appetite. Long ago, it was used to treat epilepsy and palsy.

As a mild purgative, St. John's Plant is said to be helpful in cases of constipation.

St. John's Plant is a parasiticide and has been used to destroy and expel intestinal parasites, especially roundworm and threadworm infestations. The herb's laxative qualities may also facilitate this action.

As a diuretic, St. John's Plant encourages the flow of urine and helps to flush the kidneys of impurities and the bladder of gravel and stones, and may be helpful for gout.

St. John's Plant is considered a diaphoretic that promotes sweating and helps to clear toxins through the skin as well as lower intermittent fever. It is said to be excellent at the outset of a cold, helping to reduce fever and ague (fever with chills), and some even claim that it prevents malaria.

St. John's Plant acts as an antifungal and antiseptic, combating infections, and it is thought to be an antidote for many poisonous mushrooms.

Used externally, St. John's Plant has been used to alleviate bruises, the itching of poison oak and is said (probably because of its antiseptic qualities) to be good for abscesses, carbuncles, whitlows/felons (a painful, purulent, pus-filled infection at the end of a finger or toe in the area surrounding the nail). Added to baths, the herb was used to relieve rheumatism, gout, and soothe tired legs and sore feet.

Precautions:

As a uterine stimulant, St. John's Plant should not be used by pregnant women, and it is not recommended for nursing mothers. Overuse (many times the recommended amount) or prolonged use should be avoided, as it is toxic in large doses.

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Tea Tree Oil



The Tea Tree is unique to Australia, and although a native of New South Wales, where it flourishes in wet, swampy ground, it is cultivated on plantations in other Australian states, including Queensland.

Plant Description:

The shrubby tree produces needle-like leaves, similar to cypress, with heads of pale flowers, and it generally reaches about twenty to twenty-five feet in height. It is an aromatic tree, owing to glandular dots on the leaves, which, when crushed, release its precious essential oils. The Tea Tree is fast growing, and it possesses a distinctive feature in that even when the tree is cut down, it will “re-grow” and be ready for harvesting again in two years.

History:

Long before Captain Cook named the plant after he arrived in New South Wales in the eighteenth century, the aboriginal people had used Tea Tree Oil to heal wounds and infections. In 1923, Dr. Penfold proved that Tea Tree Oil was not only much stronger than the common antiseptic of the day, carbolic acid, but Tea Tree Oil did not burn the skin. In World War II, a severe outbreak of foot-fungus hospitalized hundreds of Australian soldiers with no effective treatment at hand.

An Australian aboriginal medic remembered Tea Tree Oil, and after the doctors applied the infected feet with the pungent oil, the fungus was killed within a few

days. During the war, the producers of Tea Tree Oil were exempted from military service until there was an adequate supply to meet the demands of the military. All Tea Tree Oil was issued to the army, and every service member was required to carry it in his first-aid kit to treat tropical infections and wounds.

Next to Lavender, Tea Tree Oil is one of the most popular essential oils in the world, and aside from its therapeutic value, it is an important ingredient in soaps, lotions, deodorants, disinfectants and even air-fresheners.

The essential oil that is extracted from the leaves and twigs of the Tea Tree is produced only in Australia and has a yield of about 1.8%.

Facts about Tea Tree

Common Method of Extraction: Steam Distilled

Color: Clear with a Yellow Tinge

Consistency: Thin

Aromatic Description: Light, spicy, pungent with a myristic fragrance

Ingredients it Carries: 1, 8-cineole, γ-terpinen-4-ol, α-terpineol, cineole, α-pinene, α-terpinene, β-caryophyllene, linalool, p-cymene, myrcene

Therapeutic properties: Antibacterial, anti-fungal, anti-microbial, antiseptic, antiviral, balsamic, cicatrisant, expectorant, insecticide, stimulant and sudorific

Contraindications: Most references list no precautions when using Tea Tree Oil, but it may cause skin sensitization in some people

Medical uses:

1. **Abrasions & Minor Cuts:** After cleaning the area well, apply a few drops of the oil directly. If a bandage is needed, allow a few drops of the oil to penetrate a cotton ball, and then lay face down on the wound. Bandage on top.
2. **Acne:** Add 20 – 40 drops of the oil to your regular face wash. After cleansing, dab each affected area with neat (undiluted) oil and let dry.

3. **After Waxing:** Make a gel of 5 drops oil to 1 TBS aloe vera gel. Smooth onto area after waxing or shaving.
4. **Arthritis:** To help reduce pain associated with swelling of arthritis, add 20 drops of tea tree oil to 2 ounces of grapeseed oil. Massage into affected area 2-3 times a day.
5. **Asthma:** Add a few drops of oil to a pan of water and heat on stove. When cooling, drape a towel over head and breathe in for a few minutes.
6. **Athletes Foot:** Clean feet thoroughly, especially between toes. Add oil directly to feet every two weeks, dusting with corn starch after. Or add 10 drops oil to 1 tbsp. of grapeseed oil. Massage on feet and between toes.
7. **Bad Breath:** Rinse with 1 ounce water and 1 drop oil. Do not swallow!
8. **Bath for Colds and Aches:** Add 10-15 drops of oil to half cup Epsom salts, and dissolve in bath.
9. **Bladder Infection:** In a shallow bath, add 10 – 15 drops of oil. Sit and wash area carefully.
10. **Blisters:** Wash area carefully, and then apply as for cuts and wounds.
11. **Boils:** Apply a warm washcloth for a few minutes. Then apply a drop or two of oil to the area – the infection should rise to surface and eventually be released.
12. **Bronchial Congestion:** Use as directed for Asthma. Add 5 – 10 drops to 1 ounce grapeseed oil, and massage into chest and throat 2 – 3 times daily.
13. **Bruises:** After icing, apply oil as directed for Arthritis.
14. **Bunions:** Massage area with 5 drops oil to 1 tbsp. grapeseed oil.
15. **Burns:** Run icy cold water on area. After a few minutes, add a mix of 5 drops oil with 1 tsp. raw honey. Repeat 3 – 5 times daily.
16. **Calluses & Corns:** Massage area with 5 drops oil to 1 tbsp. grapeseed oil. Repeat 2 times daily. Once the corn or calluses have become soft use

tweezers to remove, and apply a few drops of tea tree oil and cover with bandage.

17. **Canker Sores:** Apply a drop or two of oil directly to infected area with a cotton swab, 2 times daily. Also, rinse as directed for bad breath.
18. **Carbuncles:** Add a drop or two of oil to cotton swab and apply directly to carbuncle. Repeat twice daily.
19. **Chapped Lips:** Add 1 or 2 drops of oil to lip balm. Apply to lips as necessary.
20. **Chicken Pox:** Apply a drop of oil directly to blisters. Allow to dry, and then dust with corn starch. Repeat every few hours or until blisters disappear.
21. **Chigger Bites:** Apply a drop of oil directly to bites.
22. **Cold Sores (Herpes Simplex 1):** Apply a drop or two of oil directly to the sore with a cotton swab. Re-apply 2 – 3 times daily.
23. **Coughs:** Use as directed for bronchial infections. For a vaporizer, add 10 drops to steamer and leave on 5 – 10 minutes.
24. **Dandruff:** Add 20 – 30 drops oil to any shampoo. Apply a few drops to scalp and massage after washing.
25. **Dermatitis:** Add 10 drops oil to 1 tbsp. grapeseed oil and massage into affected areas. Repeat 2-3 times daily.
26. **Dry Skin:** Add 5 drops oil to 1 tbsp. sweet almond oil. Massage into skin.
27. **Earache and Infection:** Add 2 – 3 drops of oil to 2 tbsp. warm olive oil. With a dropper, drop a small amount into aching ear, tilting head to one side for a moment. Use cotton swab to absorb oil. Repeat 2 – 3 times daily.
28. **Eczema:** Add 10 drops oil to 1 tbsp. grapeseed oil and massage into affected areas. Repeat 2-3 times daily. Also can be applied undiluted.
29. **Emphysema:** Use as directed for bronchial infections. For a vaporizer, add 10 drops to steamer and leave on 5 – 10 minutes.

- 30.**Flea Bites:** Apply a drop of oil directly to bites.
- 31.**Gout:** Add 10 drops of oil to 2 tbsp. grapeseed oil; massage into affected area 2-3 times a day.
- 32.**Head Lice:** Add 20 drops of oil to 2 tbsp. shampoo. Massage into scalp and hair, leave on for 10 minutes. Rinse. Repeat 3 – 4 times daily, until eggs are gone.
- 33.**Hives:** Add 10 drops of oil to 4 tbsp. of witch hazel. Apply with cotton ball.
- 34.**Ingrown Hairs:** Add 1 – 2 drops of oil directly to area. Repeat every 2 hours or until signs of infection disappear.
- 35.**Jock Itch:** Apply 10 – 15 drops of oil to 2 tbsp. grapeseed oil. Apply 2 times daily. Dust with corn starch, to reduce chapping.
- 36.**Laryngitis:** Add 5 – 10 drops of oil and pinch of sea salt to 1 cup of warm water, gargle 2-3 times a day. Do not swallow!
- 37.**Mosquito Bites:** Apply a drop of oil directly to bites.
- 38.**Mouth Ulcers:** Dab ulcer with undiluted oil on cotton swab, every two hours.
- 39.**Muscle Aches and Pains:** Add 10-15 drops of oil to half cup Epsom salts, and dissolve in bath. Add 10 drops of oil to 2 tbsp. of grapeseed oil. Massage well.
- 40.**Nail Fungus:** Add 1 – 2 drops of oil directly to nail and tissue surroundings. Allow to dry completely on hands before touching anything. Repeat morning and night for a week.
- 41.**Plantar Warts:** Apply oil undiluted to affected area 2-3 times daily.
- 42.**Psoriasis:** Add 10 drops oil to 1 tbsp. grapeseed oil and massage into affected areas. Repeat 2-3 times daily. Also can be applied undiluted.
- 43.**Rheumatism:** To help reduce pain associated with rheumatism, add 20 drops of tea tree oil to 2 ounces of grapeseed oil. Massage into affected are 2-3 times a day.

- 44.**Ringworm:** Apply a drop or two of oil undiluted, repeat 2 times daily.
- 45.**Scabies:** Apply 1 – 2 drops of oil directly to area in the morning and at night.
- 46.**Sciatica:** Add 10 drops oil to 1 tbsp. grapeseed oil and massage into affected areas. Repeat 2-3 times daily. Also can be applied undiluted.
- 47.**Seborrhea:** For skin: Add 10 drops oil to 1 tbsp. grapeseed oil and massage into affected areas. Repeat 2-3 times daily. For scalp: Add 10 drops of oil to 2 tbsp. shampoo. Massage into scalp and hair, leave on for 10 minutes. Rinse. Repeat 3 – 4 times daily. Bath: Add 10-15 drops of oil to bath.
- 48.**Shingles:** Add 10-15 drops of oil to half cup Epsom salts, and dissolve in bath. Add 10 drops of oil to 2 tbsp. of grapeseed oil. Massage well.
- 49.**Sinusitis:** Use as directed for bronchial infections. For a vaporizer, add 10 drops to steamer and leave on 5 – 10 minutes. Also add 2 drops to neti pot.
- 50.**Sore Throat:** Add 2 drops of oil to 1 cup of warm water with pinch of sea salt, gargle 2-3 times a day. Do Not Swallow!
- 51.**Sty:** Add 5 drops oil to a pan of steaming water. Drape towel overhead and steam 5 minutes. Apply warm compresses directly to sty.
- 52.**Sunburn:** Add 10 drops oil to 2 tbsp. rosehip seed oil, repeat as often as necessary.
- 53.**Ticks:** Apply a drop or two directly to tick and area.
- 54.**Warts:** Apply undiluted directly to wart. Use morning and night, until wart begins to disappear.

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Thyme



Botanical: *Thymus vulgaris*

Family: Lamiaceae/Labiatae (mint)

Other common names: Common Thyme, Mother of Thyme, Creeping Thyme, Mountain Thyme, Wild Thyme, French Thyme

Thyme is indispensable in the kitchen, but it is also indispensable in your herbal closet as a powerful antiseptic (it is an ingredient in Listerine) and expectorant that has been used for thousands of years to loosen phlegm in deep-seated chest infections and to ease bronchitis and asthma. It also supports the gastrointestinal system, especially helping to rid the body of flatulence, as well as easing indigestion, gastritis, dyspepsia and stomach cramps. Thyme is said to calm the nervous system, induce sleep, dispel nightmares, and lift the spirits during depression and increase energy.

Plant Description:

Thyme is a small, shrubby evergreen that is native to the Mediterranean regions of southern Europe and widely cultivated in the warm, sunny fields of Europe and North America, where it also grows wild in some places. There are many varieties of Thyme, and the cultivated, garden plant is most commonly used in herbal medicine. The woody, downy stems of this hardy perennial are stiff and bear gray-green leaves with blue-lavender-pink to whitish flower clusters that bloom from

April to July. The highly aromatic plant, which may reach a height of fifteen inches, has a strong, spicy taste and odor and has been esteemed as an important medicinal herb for thousands of years.

History:

It was known to the Egyptians, who used it in the embalming process (it is still used in embalming fluid) and as a preservative. The Greek physician, Dioscorides (c.40-90 AD), described its use to calm convulsions and other spasms and nervous conditions, and the first-century Roman scholar, Pliny, recommended it for snakebites, headaches and the poisons of marine creatures.

The origin of the botanical name, *Thymus*, is slightly ambiguous, but it is believed to be derived from the Greek word, *thymon*, or *thumus*, meaning "strength" or "courage," and although it is a Greek derivative, its roots go deeper. Tracing it back beyond the world of Socrates and Plato, we find that *thymos* comes from the Indo-European root *dheu*, which is the base of a wide variety of derivatives meaning, "To rise into flames," "to rise in a cloud" or "to smoke." In Sanskrit, the word was *dhuma*, from which comes "fume" and "perfume," and in ancient Greece, the Thyme plant itself was burned as incense to the gods. The altar like elevation in the center of the orchestra of a Greek theater was called the *thymele*, and sacrificial incense was placed in the *thymiaterion*, or censer.

Thymos, then, was a rising of smoke, a burning of incense, a sacrifice to the gods - all taking place within the chest, the inner altar. Roman soldiers bathed in it to maintain their courage and strength before battle, and in medieval times, departing Crusaders received Thyme-embroidered scarves from their women to keep up their spirits and inspire courage. There was a popular belief that a tea made from Thyme's leaves prevented nightmares and even encouraged dreams of fairies and nymphs. Herbalists in the Middle Ages considered Thyme as an important tonic stimulant and antispasmodic that treated epilepsy and melancholy.

During the waves of plague that spread across Europe from the fifteen to the seventeenth centuries, Thyme was used as a germicide (they were right!), and in 1653, the great English herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper, recommended Thyme to treat respiratory ailments as "a noble strengthener of the lungs" (he was right!). In 1725, a German apothecary discovered that the plant's essential oil contains a

powerful disinfectant, thymol, which is effective against bacteria and fungi, supporting the herb's historical use as an antibacterial disinfectant and preservative. (It was not only used for embalming, but was also used to preserve meats, as well as botanical and anatomical specimens. In World War I, Thyme was used extensively as an antiseptic to treat soldiers' wounds and purify the air of hospitals and sickrooms (a practice that continued well into the twentieth century).

Thyme is an indispensable flavoring for foods, adding a distinctive flavor to sauces, stews, stuffing, meats, poultry and soups, while at the same time aiding the digestive system. It is a key herb in the bouquet garnish that is so important in French cuisine and is used in many cosmetic and pharmaceutical preparations, including toothpastes, mouthwashes (Listerine) and insect repellents. Some of the constituents included in Thyme are essential oils (cymol, linalool, carvacrol and the simple terpene, thymol, which is a powerful disinfectant), alpha-pinene, flavonoids (apigenin, luteolin), beta carotene, geraniol, limonene, camphor, citral, amino acids, caffeic, caprylic, chlorogenic, cinnamic acid, gallic, vanillic and other essential fatty acids, salicylates, tannin, calcium, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, zinc, B-vitamins and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Thyme is considered an excellent expectorant and antitussive that has been used since ancient times to treat upper respiratory and lung disorders. The herb is said to be ideal for deep-seated chest infections that are marked by thick, yellow phlegm and will help loosen and expel mucous congestion from the lungs and head. Thyme's thymol content is the active principle that acts not only as an expectorant, but also acts as a germicidal that simultaneously treats infections of the upper respiratory passages. It has been used effectively for sore throats, coughs, croup, whooping cough, acute bronchitis, laryngitis and asthma.

The bitter principle in Thyme acts as a digestive that supports the gastrointestinal system. It is said to relax the smooth muscle of the stomach, relieving all kinds of stomach upsets (with particular influence on flatulence by calming the stomach and releasing entrapped gas). Thyme is also used to alleviate chronic gastritis, lack of appetite, enteritis, dyspepsia, griping (the sharp pains and grumbling usually associated with trapped gas or diarrhea), indigestion, irritable bowel and colic.

Thyme is considered a reliable antispasmodic that has been used to ease convulsions, stomach cramps, epilepsy, menstrual cramps and spasm-induced coughing and diarrhea. As a "nervine" with sedative properties, Thyme is believed to be a good tonic that stimulates and tones up the nervous system, alleviating such nervous disorders as neurasthenia (a functional neurosis marked by intense nervous irritability and weakness), depression, nightmares, nervous exhaustion, insomnia and melancholy.

Thyme contains the very active thymol, which is a powerful antiseptic, antiviral and antifungal agent (it is said to equal carbolic in strength and efficacy), and it is very helpful in treating yeast infections, Candidiasis and athlete's foot. The astringent tannins in the herb cause proteins in the skin tissue to cross-link, forming a barrier to infection. It is potent germicidal properties clean tissue and may be best known commercially as an ingredient in Listerine Antiseptic Mouthwash. Used externally, Thyme is helpful for tumors, dental decay, plaque, thrush, tonsillitis, halitosis, deep wounds, and bruises and as an ingredient in relaxing baths, which alleviates nervous exhaustion. It is said to be effective for destroying skin parasites, such as scabies, crabs and lice. Used internally, Thyme's antimicrobial properties work to destroy and expel parasites in the gastrointestinal tract, and it is said to destroy hookworms, roundworms and threadworms.

Precautions:

Pregnant and nursing women should not use Thyme, as it is a uterine stimulant. Habitual and excessive usage (many times the recommended dosage) is not recommended, as it may cause gastric irritation, and those who are allergic to members of the mint family (Thyme, basil, sage, marjoram, etc.), should avoid this herb.

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Witch Hazel



Botanical: *Hamamelis virginiana*

Family: Hamamelidaceae (witch hazel)

Other common names: Snapping Hazelnut, Winterbloom, Hamamelis, Hazel Nut, Snapping Hazel, Spotted Alder, Striped Alder, Tobacco Wood

This native shrub is an old and reliable astringent that has been used for internal and external bleeding, cleaning and soothing bruises, curbing diarrhea, relieving the pain of hemorrhoids and stitches after surgery, as well as a variety of aches and complaints. Witch Hazel should always be in your cabinet.

Never drink Witch Hazel purchased from the drug store; it contains an alcohol that is not intended for internal use.

Plant Description:

Witch Hazel is a deciduous shrub or small tree that is native to the eastern seaboard of the United States, grows in damp woods from Canada to Georgia, and extends to Nebraska. It is cultivated elsewhere for its autumn-blooming flowers and the tree is considered endangered in Minnesota.

It is a twisted shrub that grows from five to fifteen feet in height with leathery leaves that are shiny green on top and a dull gray on the bottom. The tree stands

out in the forest in the autumn, because as other trees begin to lose their leaves, Witch Hazel is covered with golden yellow, threadlike flowers, thus making it appealing to landscapers as an ornamental plant.

History:

Centuries ago, Native Americans drank Witch Hazel tea as a general tonic and used it as a gargle for mouth and throat irritations. They also applied it to small wounds, insect bites and sore muscles and joints. The tribes introduced and shared the numerous medicinal applications of Witch Hazel to the European settlers, who promptly adopted it into their own daily lives.

The name, Witch Hazel, was given to the shrub by the English settlers, who attached their own lore to the American species. Back home in England, the forked twigs of various European trees had been used as divining rods to locate water and minerals, and the twisted, bent branches of the Witch Hazel actually referred to an Anglo-Saxon word meaning, "To bend" and not at all to magic or broomsticks. In the nineteenth century, an alcoholic extract of Witch Hazel was one of the most popular herbs in the United States; it was a distillation of the bark, twigs and leaves, mixed with alcohol and water. Witch Hazel steam baths were also considered very beneficial in helping to loosen heavy phlegm and coughing it up. Witch Hazel was officially listed in the United States Pharmacopoeia, and it is still one of the commonest home remedies in America. The bark, leaves and twigs of the plant are used medicinally for internal and external ailments, and its non-toxic, astringent qualities are highly prized in many cosmetics and pharmaceuticals as soothing ointments and after-shave lotions, etc. Some of the constituents in Witch Hazel include beta-ionone, gallic acid, isoquercitrin, kaempferol, myrcetin, phenol, quercetin, quercetrin, essential oils, saponins, tannins, bitters and resin.

Medical Uses:

Witch Hazel is a wonderful astringent, and that quality is applied both externally and internally. It is effective in stopping bleeding with a unique kind of astringency whose main focus of action is on the venous system, acting to restore tone, health and vigor throughout the system. The tannin called hamamelitannin has been shown to constrict blood vessels and stem bleeding. Internally, it is one of best

remedies for stopping excessive menstruation, hemorrhages from the lungs, stomach, nose, uterus, kidneys and rectum (including bleeding piles).

The same astringent properties are also effective in easing diarrhea, dysentery and mucous discharges, including female congestive conditions of the uterus, cervix and vagina (vaginitis and prolapsus). It is also said to calm an upset stomach.

Witch Hazel is a painkiller and antiseptic that will help to kill bacteria and is used as an effective gargle for sore throats and to keep wounds clean and combat infection.

Witch Hazel is an anti-inflammatory and anesthetic that is included in several over-the-counter preparations (Preparation H and Tucks) that reduce swelling and soothe the discomforts resulting from rectal and vaginal surgery and stitches. It also helps to relieve the pain and inflammation of hemorrhoids and soothes minor burns, sunburn (Eucarin), sores, and inflamed eyes, bedsores, oozing skin disease, eczema and wounds. Witch Hazel may also be used to ease the inflammation of sore muscles or inflamed, irritated sensitive tissues.

The haemostatic properties of Witch Hazel's tannin (hamamelitannin) constricts blood vessels and helps to stem bleeding from abrasions and scratches and is beneficial for varicose veins and phlebitis. Witch Hazel is also used to help dry out cold sores.

Witch Hazel is a complement for fine skin care. It helps to smooth wrinkles, cleanse and tone the skin and prevent oily buildup on the tissues of the skin. Its antiseptic properties help to keep skin clear of pimples and acne and heal wounds. Witch Hazel is included in many soothing aftershaves.

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Wormwood



Botanical: *Artemisia absinthium*

Family: Compositae (daisy)

Other common names: Absinthe, Artemisia, Green Fairy, Green Ginger, Absinthium, Old Woman, Southern Wood, Madderwort, Wermutkraut

Long used by herbalists to eliminate worms and other parasites from the body and as an aid for improving gallbladder, liver, gastric and vascular disorders, as well as migraine headaches, Wormwood is more commonly known in the preparation of alcoholic beverages (absinthe) as a digestive that improves the appetite and relieves many digestive disturbances. The herb is also said to calm the nerves and stimulate menstruation. Applied topically, *Artemisia* aids in healing wounds, skin ulcers, blemishes and insect bites.

Plant Description:

Wormwood is a native of Eurasia (Europe and Siberia) and North Africa, and the plant has been naturalized in North America where it occurs as a casual weed. In England, it grows in many places and appears to thrive near the sea. It is a perennial root, which arises to a height of two to three feet with leafy, flowering stems. The leaves and flowers are extremely bitter, with the characteristic odor of thujone, and the whitish plant is closely covered with fine, silky hairs. The plants are harvested in July and August, and only the leaves and tops are used.

History:

The name of the botanical genus, *Artemisia*, is derived from Artemis, the Greek name for Diana, who is said to have found the plants and delivered their powers to Chiron, the centaur, and the ancient Greeks claimed that the plant counteracted the poisons of hemlock and toadstools. The name, wormwood, is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *wermode* or *wermut*, meaning preserver of the mind, since the herb was thought to enhance mental functions and which accounts for its use in treating nervous temperament and melancholia. In 1577, in *July's Husbandry*, Tusser advised people to lay its flowers among "stuffs and furs" to keep away moths and insects, and in 1772, Dr. John Hill made an infusion for treating indigestion. With the exception of rue, wormwood is the bitterest herb known, but it is wholesome and was very much in demand by brewers for use, instead of hops.

The major constituent of Wormwood is a volatile oil, dark green or blue in color, with a strong odor and bitter taste. The essential oil in was an ingredient in the alcoholic aperitif called absinthe, which was first created by Henri Pernod in 1797. Today's successors to absinthe - anisette and vermouth - do not contain thujone. Wormwood oil contains thujone (absinthol or tenacetone), thujyl alcohol (both free and combined with acetic, isovalerianic, succine and malic acids), cadinene, phellandrene and pinene. The herb also contains the bitter glucoside, absinthin, and other salts. Other phytochemical and nutrient contents include beta-carotene, chamazulene, chlorogenic acid, isoquercitrin, p-coumaric acid, rutin, salicylic acid, tannins, vanillic acid and vitamin C.

Medical Uses:

Wormwood has been used as a powerful tool to fight worm (notably pinworm and roundworm) and other parasitic infestations in humans and animals. It has long been used as an anthelmintic that expels intestinal worms.

Used as a bitter, Wormwood aids in secretions of the gallbladder and liver and is an old and trusted remedy for bilious and liver troubles, jaundice and gallbladder ailments.

Wormwood is a nervine tonic that nourishes the nervous system and, thus, eases stress and nervous disorders. The herb calms and soothes the nerves and reduces tension and anxiety.

Traditional herbalists claim that Wormwood is a febrifuge, lowers intermittent fevers, and fights infection.

Because Wormwood increases stomach acidity, it aids in the whole digestive process, particularly when there is a deficiency of gastric juice. It has been used to help alleviate gastritis, stomachache, bloating and flatulence. Moreover, as a bitter, aromatic herb, Wormwood is also said to improve a poor appetite.

Wormwood has been called an effective emmenagogue and uterine stimulant that is said to help regulate irregular menstrual cycles (and thus, should not be used by pregnant women).

Well known for its commercial use in the preparation of liquors, notably absinthe and vermouth, Wormwood has also been used medicinally as a mild sedative. This bitterest of herbs includes a narcotic analgesic that affects the portion of the brain dealing with pain. If not used habitually, the herb's absinthum has been known to stimulate the cerebral hemispheres and act as a direct stimulant on the cortex cerebri, aiding in the relief of migraine headaches, nervous diseases, in addition to soothing nervous temperament.

Applied topically, the oil extracted from Wormwood acts as an anti-inflammatory that is used as a liniment to relieve pain and sore muscles. It is useful for healing wounds, skin ulcers, blemishes and insect bites.

Wormwood may also be used as an insect repellent when sprayed on organic gardens or when prepared as a sachet to keep moths from clothing.

Precautions:

Wormwood should not be used by nursing mothers nor taken during pregnancy, as it is a uterine stimulant and can cause spontaneous abortion. Do not overuse; it may be habit forming with long-term use, and prolonged use may cause nausea, vertigo and insomnia. Do not exceed recommended dosage (many times the recommended amount). Wormwood should never be given to children.

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Yarrow



Botanical: *Achillea millefolium* (also known as *Achillea lanulosa*)

Family: Compositae (daisy) - Asteraceae (aster-sunflower)

Other common names: Bloodwort, Milfoil, Soldier's Woundwort, Noble Yarrow, Thousand-Leaf, Old Man's Pepper, Nosebleed, Thousand Seal, Knight's Milfoil, Yarroway, Bad Man's Plaything, Stanchweed, Sanguinary, Devil's Nettle, Devil's Plaything, Green Arrow, Thousand Leaf Gandana, Lady's Mantle

Yarrow has been used for thousands of years as a healer of wounds, helping to control hemorrhages and infection. The herb is also thought to have a wonderful tonic effect on the gastrointestinal system (easing indigestion, flatulence, and dyspepsia) and act as a system purifier that rids the body of toxins through the skin and urinary tract.

Plant Description:

Yarrow is a hardy, herbaceous, creeping perennial that grows everywhere - in grass meadows, pastures, and by roadsides - in North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia, thriving in well-drained soil in full sun and growing to a height of three feet. One of the plant's common names, Milfoil, refers to its "thousand leaves," which grow alternately on an erect central stem that bears white or pink flower heads with yellow centers.

Yarrow is an extremely potent plant; one small leaf will speed up the decomposition of a wheelbarrow-full of raw compost, and Yarrow's root secretions will frequently activate the disease-resistance of nearby plants in a garden. Moreover, it is said to intensify the medicinal actions of other herbs. As a garden plant, Yarrow is known to attract beneficial insects such as ladybugs, and the leaves, stems and flowers are used in herbal medicine as an aromatic, cooling, bitter astringent herb with powerful healing qualities.

History:

Since the dawn of man, Yarrow appears to have been used as a healer. An archaeological excavation unearthed a 40- to 60,000-year-old Neanderthal, who carried Yarrow, as well as other herbs, proving its historical value. Yarrow has long been associated with divination and clairvoyance and was considered "sacred" to the Druids, who used the stems to foretell the weather, and in China, the stems were employed to see into the future. It was even thought to be associated with evil and earned further common names, such as Devil's Plaything and Bad Man's Plaything, among others, and was used in casting spells and as a mild sedative. Historically, Yarrow was employed mainly to stop the flow of blood and treat wounds. The botanical name, *Achillea*, refers to the Greek legend of Achilles, who used Yarrow in an ointment during the Trojan War to stop the flow of blood in the wounds of his soldiers. (It is a wonder that Achilles ever had a vulnerable heel at all, while using Yarrow!) In 1653, the great English herbalist, Nicholas Culpepper, recommended Yarrow for its painkilling properties as a "profitable herb in cramps and pain." In North America, Native American warriors, including the Utes, used Yarrow to treat cuts and wounds, and the Zunis considered it a remedy for burns. The Shakers employed Yarrow as a treatment for a variety of ailments, from hemorrhages to flatulence. Yarrow was included in the United States Pharmacopoeia from 1863 to 1882 as a tonic stimulant and as a means for controlling menstruation. Traditional herbalists in Europe, China and India have used Yarrow to stanch minor bleeding and treat wounds and inflammation (especially in the intestinal and female reproductive tracts); and today, it is mainly used for colds, flu and for its positive effects on the circulatory, digestive and urinary systems. Some of the constituents (over forty have been isolated) in Yarrow include essential oils (including the anti-inflammatory, azulene), achilleic, formic and salicylic acids, resin, tannin, gum, sterols, flavonoids, bitters,

coumarins, nitrates, phosphates, potash and lime chlorides, and vitamins A, C, E, F and K.

Medical Uses:

Yarrow is a stimulating tonic for the digestive tract. Traditionally, the herb was used as a "stomachic" or agent that strengthens the stomach and digestive functions. The presence of the bitter principles, azulenes and sesquiterpene, stimulates the production of gastric juices, helping to speed the processing and elimination of foods. Yarrow has been used to improve the appetite and ease gastrointestinal inflammation, flatulence, dyspepsia and indigestion. Moreover, Yarrow encourages bile flow and is thought to balance the function of the liver and has a positive influence on secretions produced throughout the alimentary canal (the mucous-membrane-lined tube of the digestive system, extending from the mouth to the anus, including the pharynx, esophagus, stomach and intestines). As an antispasmodic, Yarrow is believed to soothe smooth-muscle spasms (also helping to improve certain gastrointestinal conditions). It relieves general cramping and menstrual cramps.

Yarrow is believed to help purify the system. As a diuretic, the herb promotes the release of toxic wastes (including uric acid) through increased urine flow, which is also helpful in cases of many urinary problems. As a strong, soothing diaphoretic, Yarrow naturally increases the body's temperature, opens skin pores and stimulates free perspiration, thereby increasing the elimination of toxins through the skin. By inducing sweat, the herb also helps to lower fever, which is particularly useful for feverish illnesses, especially colds, flu and measles. Yarrow helps to purify the blood of morbid waste material, which must be eliminated in sickness, and Yarrow's tonic action is most invigorating and will greatly assist nature's own measures to remove congestion and disease.

As an astringent, Yarrow has been used to treat diarrhea, especially mucous diarrhea, hemorrhoids and excessive menstruation and bladder conditions, particularly relating to involuntary urination in children.

Yarrow may be good for cardiovascular health. It is thought to lower blood pressure, help hypertension and protect against thrombosis after a stroke or heart attack. It is also believed to relax peripheral blood vessels and be good for

thrombotic conditions, whereby a blood clot blocks a blood vessel or is formed in a heart cavity.

Treatment:

Considered an anti-inflammatory with pain-relieving qualities, Yarrow has been used to help ease the discomforts of rheumatism, gout and arthritis, and provide relief for menstrual pain and headache. Modern research confirms the historical use of Yarrow as a pain reliever for many conditions. Sterols and triterpenes stop the inflammatory processes, restore circulation and accelerate healing. These compounds stop the formation of enzymes for chemical reactions that cause inflammation and pain. The sesquiterpene lactones stop the action of pain-provoking hormones called prostaglandins.

Yarrow has been used for centuries as a haemostatic, an agent that controls or stops the flow of blood. It has been used internally to control hemorrhaging from the lungs and the bowels, among other applications. Externally, the herb has been a reliable remedy for healing wounds and arresting the blood flow from shaving cuts, nosebleeds, etc. Because it is believed to be so effective and quick when used in this manner, it is always wise to clean a cut first (before applying Yarrow), because the herb may begin the healing process while the dirt and infection are still within the wound. Of course, all deep or infected wounds should be treated by a doctor.

In recent tests, Yarrow demonstrated antibiotic and antibacterial qualities that appeared to kill many kinds of bacteria found on human skin and destroyed pain-causing infection. It was also effective against yeast infections and microbial infections and boils. When used externally, Yarrow makes an excellent tonic lotion for oily skin (with eruptions), inflamed eyes, ulcers and wounds, and is a fine addition to a relaxing bath and steam facial.

Precautions:

Pregnant or nursing women should not use Yarrow, as it is a uterine stimulant, nor should women with heavy periods or pelvic inflammatory disease. Continued or long-term use of Yarrow may cause skin irritation and/or allergic reactions. If so, discontinue its use. Yarrow may produce photosensitivity. If using Yarrow to treat wounds, be sure to clean the affected area first, as the herb can stop blood flow so

quickly that it may seal in dirt or other contaminants. People with gallstones should avoid its use. Yarrow may cause severe allergic skin rashes when applied topically.

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About the Authors



Author Stacey Chillemi Bio

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As one of the non-fiction genre's most successful authors, Stacey Chillemi enjoys an ever-expanding and tremendously loyal following.

My books regularly appear on Amazon's best-seller lists and have sold more than 60,000 copies. The most recent original paperback, *The Complete Herbal Guide: Heal Your Body Naturally and Maintain Optimal Health Using Alternative Medicine, Herbals, Vitamins, Fruits and Vegetables* (December 2012) debuted at # 1 on Amazon's best-seller list and has been rated five stars from numerous readers who purchased the book.

My first published book, *Epilepsy You're Not Alone* in 1998, helped millions of people understand and cope with their disorder enabling them to live a happy, healthy and productive life. Since that time, I have published numerous non-fiction and fiction books including *The Complete Herbal Guide: A Natural Approach to*

Healing the Body, Epilepsy and Pregnancy: What Every Woman Should Know, Co-authored by Dr. Blanca Vasques, M.D., Faith, Courage, Wisdom, Strength and Hope, Natural Cures for Common Conditions and The Secrets of Happiness and Success: The Power Of Positive Thinking.

My love affair with non-fiction and with health genre in general, began during my junior year of college when I was faced by numerous obstacles due to my epilepsy disorder. Hoping and praying that I would be able to finish college and not let my epilepsy disorder get the best of me, I decided to research my disorder hoping to find out more about my disorder and ways to cope with it.

Sadly, there were not many books written about epilepsy during that era. The few books written were by doctors and the medical terminology flew right over your head. Determined to find the answers to my questions, *“How can I graduate college when I am constantly having seizures?”*, *“How can I become a success in life and not let epilepsy destroy my hopes and dreams?”*, *“How do people with epilepsy cope with their disorder?”*

I decided to write an article to epilepsy foundation and asked them to publish it. I wanted to learn how others coped with their disorder. I received hundreds of letters from all over the United States and Canada. I decided to use the knowledge I gained to help myself and others by writing a self-help book called, *Epilepsy You're Not Alone*. Writing that book changed my life. Letters poured out from readers thanking me for writing the book. I never realized how powerful words could be. My greatest gift was not figuring out how to help myself, it was being able to help others who struggled from the same problem. There is no greater gift in life than the gift of giving.

I graduated college, received an Associate's Degrees in Business, and then went on to receive a Bachelor Degree in Marketing and Advertising, but in the end, I changed my career choice to journalism. I graduated Richard Stockton College in 1996.

I began writing seriously in 1994, penning the manuscript that would become *Epilepsy You're Not Alone*. I held many jobs during those first years as a writer, finally settling in (much to our delight) to write full time in 2000.

I am an active member in my community and I help organizations in New Jersey. I have written features for journals and newspapers. My articles have appeared in dozens of newspapers and magazines in North America and abroad. I won an

award from the Epilepsy Foundation of America in 2002 for my help and dedication to people with epilepsy.

Born in 1972, I was born in New York and I live in New Jersey with my husband Michael, and my three children, Michael, Alexis and Anthony. The family pets include two Shih Tzu's, Rocco and Princess, and two birds Elmo and Tweedy.

When I am not writing, I chase after my three Shih Tzu's, takes long walks, hit the gym, and goes to all my kids' football, soccer, wrestling, basketball and cheerleading practices and games.

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Other Books by Stacey Chillemi

If you'd like more information on products offered by Stacey Chillemi, please see the website at www.staceychillemi.com

The following books/ebooks can be found on the website:

- The Complete Herbal Guide: A Natural Approach to Healing the Body (First Edition)
- The Complete Herbal Guide: Heal Your Body Naturally and Maintain Optimal Health Using Alternative Medicine, Herbals, Vitamins, Fruits and Vegetables (Second Edition)
- Asthma: Clear Answers and Smart Advice for Someone Diagnosed with Asthma
- Epilepsy You're Not Alone: A Personal Approach on How to Cope with Epilepsy
- Eternal Love: Romantic Poetry Straight from the Heart

- My Mommy Has Epilepsy (Children's Book)
- My Daddy Has Epilepsy (Children's Book)
- Keep the Faith: To Live and Be Heard from the Heavens Above (poetry book)
- Live, Learn, and Be Happy with Epilepsy
- Epilepsy and Pregnancy: What Every Woman Should Know
- Co-authored by Dr. Blanca Vasques
- Faith, Courage, Wisdom, Strength and Hope
- Life's Missing Instruction Manual: Beyond Words
- How To Become Wealthy Selling Products on The Internet
- Breast Cancer: Questions, Answers & Self-Help Techniques
- How Thinking Positive Can Make You Successful: Master The Power Of Positive Thinking
- Beginners Tips for Horse Training: What Every Horse Trainer Should Know
- The Ultimate Guide to Living Longer and Feeling Younger
- How to Buy a Home Using a VA Loan: What Every Home Buyer Should Know
- How to Purify Your Drinking Water: Understanding the Importance of Purifying Water and How Purified Water Can Keep You Healthy and Prevent Unwanted Illnesses and Diseases from Occurring
- Learning to Be Kind: Over 300 Ways to Be Kind & Show Appreciation
- THE PERFECT WEDDING GUIDE: How to Have the Wedding of Your Dreams without Stressing Out
- GANGS: How to Keep Your Children Away from Gangs, Drugs & Violence

- Natural Cures for Common Conditions: Learn How to Stay Healthy and Help the Body Using Alternative Medicine, Herbals, Vitamins, Fruits and Vegetables

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Dr. Michael Chillemi, D.C. Bio



Dr. Chillemi enjoys helping people achieve optimal health by relieving their pain, strengthening their bodies, and revolutionizing their lifestyles through implementation of evidence-based, treatment and training protocols.

He is licensed in the state of New Jersey, New York, Florida, and Pennsylvania. He is certified by the National Board of Chiropractic and by the American International Sports Association. He is also certified in Flexion Distraction, Functional Capacity Evaluations, and Certified in Cardiac Resuscitation.

Dr. Chillemi maximizes his treatments with postural, strengthening and stretching exercises. Dr. Chillemi has enjoyed a high success rate with stabilizing displaced spinal discs. He has adopted and mastered cutting edge examination methodology and has developed a system of X-ray analysis to screen out potential risks.

Dr. Chillemi offers extensive care and treatment ranging from acute to chronic injuries, cervical and lumbar disc conditions, sports related injuries, shoulder dysfunction, knee dysfunction, and rehabilitation of the functional body.

Dr. Chillemi's diagnostic talents have been sought out by insurance companies and other professionals to render second opinions in light of his extensive experience and expertise.

He believes strongly in educating people in all aspects of health and fitness. His diverse background and skill set allow him to administer effective integrated treatment and therapy to assist in the areas of pain management, acute-injury care, post-surgical rehabilitation, functional training and rehabilitation, weight loss and balanced nutrition, increasing muscle mass, improving athletic performance, flexibility, cardiovascular fitness, stress management and sport-specific personal training.

Dr. Michael Chillemi has pursued his passion for herbal and alternative medicine one of the reasons for his participation and hard work to help with the completion of this book.

<http://chiroptnj.com/> (Website)

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