

Medicinal Medici

MOTHER EARTHS LITTLE-KNOWN NATURAL HEALERS UNCOVERED





Introduction

Modern medicine has become big business, with huge pharmaceutical companies turning out an ever growing array of specialized medicines to battle one malady or another. While all of these medicines are artificially produced, many of them have their roots in substances found in nature. Since pharmaceutical companies can't patent something found in nature, they find ways of reproducing those substances or producing something that is similar enough that it provides the same desired effect.

The history of medicine goes back literally thousands of years. Ever since the first caveman uttered those famous words "take two lizards and call me in the morning" the world has had its share of medical practitioners, some striving to heal mankind's woes and others content with lining their pockets with mankind's money.

Today, most doctors know little about herbal medicine, having replaced that knowledge with big pharm. That doesn't remove its validity though. Even though the American Medi-

cal Association and the National Association of Doctors doen't officially recognize herbal medicine as being a valid alternative to commercial medicines, those herbs still provide the same benefits they always have.

Before the development of medicines became big business, most doctors found their own in nature. A medical doctor in the olden days had to be a botanist and chemist, as well as being a medical doctor. They would gather herbs and plants or pay others to do so, from which they created the medicines that they would use.

For several decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in herbal medicine. While most of this has been amongst people most of us would refer to as displaced hippies and others who are rebelling against the establishment, more and more mainstream people are becoming interested as well. This interest is especially high amongst those who are attempting to eat healthy and avoid GMOs and other foods which have been contaminated by pesticides and other dangerous chemicals.



his listing is being sorted by the common name of the plant, with the botanical name provided in parenthesis. We are focusing on the uses of the herb, more than how it is grown. To increase the usefulness of the listing, we are limiting ourselves to only herbs which grow in some part of the United States.

While there are literally hundreds of herbs which can be used in some medicinal manner other, we have limited this list to include common ones which can be grown in the United States or found growing in the wild in the United States. An herb which only grows in Southwest Asia isn't going to do you much good as part of your herbal medicine kit.



1. Turmeric (Curcuma longa L.)

Turmeric has long been used for its anti-inflammatory properties, which are some of the best of any herbal medicine. It is also an antioxidant and antimicrobial. This combination of capabilities makes it an excellent treatment for pain that is induced by swelling, such as in the case of rheumatoid arthritis. It is also very effective for reducing pain as a dental treatment. Recent studies show that turmeric dissolved in water at a rate of 10 mg to 100 ml of water (with pep-

permint flavoring added) is as effective for removing plaque as chlorhexidine gluconate, the standard for dental plaque removal.

While turmeric can be used as a seasoning for foods, for medicinal purposes it is most effective to take it in capsules, as that provides a higher concentration. For best results, it should be taken with black pepper or dried ginger to activate it. It can also be mixed with water and applied topically as an anti-inflammatory and for swelling related pain relief. The only drawback to turmeric is for people who have hypoglycemia, who should avoid ingesting more than what would be used in cooking.

MEDICINAL USES: Arthritis, cancer prevention, yeast

infections, cardiovascular, cuts and abrasions, dental/oral care, vision, lupus, pain relief (especially pain caused by swelling), psoriasis, rheumatoid arthritis and to help stop smoking.

2. Pumpkin Seed (Cucurbita pepo)

The pumpkin seeds that most of us throw out when we carve a pumpkin are actually a healthy herbal remedy. The seeds themselves can be eaten or the oil from the seeds can be used. Pumpkin seed oil is best used cold, as heat destroys its healthy properties.

Pumpkin seed has long been used for healing skin damage from burns and wounds. Another traditional use has been in treatment of parasites and worms, as well as bladder infections. Eating pumpkin seeds promotes the production of serotonin, which provides for a restful night's sleep. At the same time, they are good for the heart, providing half the necessary magnesium to maintain hearth health in a half a cup.

One of the most promising uses of pumpkin seeds may be for treatment of prostate problems. Ongoing research shows that consumption of pumpkin seeds help in reducing prostate enlargement.

MEDICINAL USES: Bladder infection, kidney, parasites, worms, prostrate problems and to alleviate insomnia.

3. Barley Grass (Hordeum vulgare)

Young barley grass is one of a group of plants known as "green foods" for their bright green color, which is an indication of high chlorophyll. Studies have shown that high levels of chlorophyll are useful in a number of ways, such as regulating cholesterol and blood pressures, as well as improving the immune response. It is also useful for preventing cancer. The high vitamin level of barley grass makes it an excellent supplement to your diet. Sprinkle it on your cereal in the morning or add it to juices and smoothies.

Medicinal uses: Cancer prevention, cholesterol and hypertension.

4. Butternut (Juglans cinerea)

Butternut is a relative of the black walnut and grows all over the eastern part of the United States. The bark of the butternut tree can be made into a tea or powdered to put in capsules. The inner bark especially is an excellent laxative, more gentle than many other laxatives and not



causing the cramping that they do.

MEDICINAL USES: Constipation, parasites and worms.

5. Apple (Malus domestica)

The old saying of "an apple a day keeps the doctor away" may not be far from the truth. This common fruit is useful in helping prevent two of life's major diseases; diabetes and heart disease. The apple helps by slowing down absorbs ion of glucose, helping to maintain healthy blood sugar levels. It also helps to clear plaque from the arteries, lowering blood pressure. At the same time, it has been shown to help lower cholesterol.

Apple cider vinegar is useful for many things, especially associated with preventing hair loss and maintaining soft skin. Mixed together with honey, apple cider vinegar is one of the best home remedies for arthritis. In addition, the inner bark and blossoms of the apple make an excellent astringent tonic, which is useful in healing sore throats.

MEDICINAL USES: Arthritis, athletes foot, ringworm, cardiovascular, cholesterol, diabetes, facial care, hair care, rheumatoid arthritis, skin care and sunburns.



6. Cayenne Pepper (Capsicum minimum)

All peppers aid digestion and help the heart. The capsicum acid in them, which is what causes the burning sensation, is a useful ingredient for clearing the sinuses and dealing with muscle and joint pain. Some muscle creams have been developed that use capsicum as the main ingredient. For people who have arthritis, the burning sensation of the capsicum will relieve the ache of arthritis, leaving them with greater freedom of movement.

The effects of cayenne pepper increase with usage, especially the ability to aid digestion and boost metabolism. It increases the heart rate, improving circulation. In this way, it can be used to help reduce weight. In addition to using it as an ingredient in cooking, capsicum can be made into creams and oils for topical treatment.

MEDICINAL USES: Arthritis, cardiovascular, congestion, digestion and fibromyalgia. It can also be used for all types of pain relief, from headaches to back pain, nerve problems to rheumatoid arthritis.

7. Aloe Vera (Aloe vera)

The juice of the aloe vera leaf is extremely useful for promoting healing of cuts, burns, insect bites and other skin irritations, including acne. Only the inner leaves are used, as the outer ones can contain dangerous chemicals. It has antibacterial, antifungal and antiviral components, which help to prevent wound infections. At the same time, it stimulates the growth of new cells to heal the wound. It is also an anti-inflammatory.

While aloe vera is applied topically to take care of

skin irritations and wounds, when taken orally, it is believed to improve digestion and cleanse the digestive tract. There is some medical research to support the idea that it is capable of stimulating insulin production to help diabetics, as well as preventing high triglycerides.

The aloe vera gel can be applied topically or taken internally directly from the plant. The fresher it is, the more potent it appears to be. You can also add it to homemade lotions and essential oils. The aloe very that you buy commercially is not as potent as aloe directly from the plant is it is they no longer contain tannins and are thinned with alcohol.

MEDICINAL USES: Acne, beauty, burns, constipation, cuts and wounds, racial care, insect bites, skin care, sunburns, wrinkles.

8. Apricot Oil (Prunus armeniaca)

Apricot oil is extracted from the apricot pit, much as oils are extracted from nuts. It is a fairly thick oil, with high moisturizing capability. This makes it excellent for skin care, moisturizing and wrinkled skin. It is able to penetrate the skin without leaving any oily feeling on the surface. This oil is also useful for the treatment of acne, when applied as

a nighttime moisturizer. Apricot oil is only used in topical applications.

MEDICINAL USES: Acne, facial care, as a massage oil, skin care and wrinkles.

9. Cacao (Theobroma cacao L.)

I always knew that chocolate had to be one of the healthiest foods around. Dark chocolate especially contains a large number of chemicals that are helpful to maintaining health. Products sold as "cacao" rather than "cocoa" generally are less processed. Since additional processing reduces the medicinal effects of chocolate, it is best to buy products which are labeled as cacao. Dark chocolate is more processed than cacao, but holds a higher concentration of cacao than milk chocolate does.

Cacao has been shown to have beneficial effects on the mood, especially for women who are menstruating or in menopause. It is also effective in reducing high blood pressure, improving circulation and otherwise promoting heart health.

MEDICINAL USES: Cholesterol, cough, diet and weight loss, eczema, mood, hypertension and skin care.





10. Castor oil (Ricinus communis)

Castor oil is one of the most time-honored herbal medicines. In times past, this foul tasting oil was given to children daily to prevent constipation. It is still one of the best medicines for constipation available, although it takes about 12 hours to work. The oil can also be applied topically, where its natural analgesic properties help in dealing with bruises, sprains, and muscle pain.

For best results when using castor oil for pain, apply it directly to the skin with a hot pack on top. The combination of the two works extremely well.

MEDICINAL USES: Arthritis, bruises, sprains, constipation, fibromyalgia, back pain, general pain relief, parasites and worms.

11. Yucca Root (Yucca spp)

Yucca's medicinal abilities were known and used by the American Indians living in the Southwest. They used it as an anti-arthritic medicine as well as a general anti-inflammatory. It is a rich enough source of the steroid saponins that it is used commercially for the extraction of this steroid. As such, it assists the body in the use of steroid related hormones. There is some medical evidence as well that yucca root has anti-tumor properties and may be useful in fighting cancer.

Yucca root can be taken in capsule or extract form; however, it is also eaten in Mexico as a vegetable, much like a potato. It is mild tasting and has about the same texture as potatoes we are accustomed to. Overuse of yucca root can cause indigestion, so if it its consumed regularly, it is a

good idea to give your system a break of a couple of days each week.

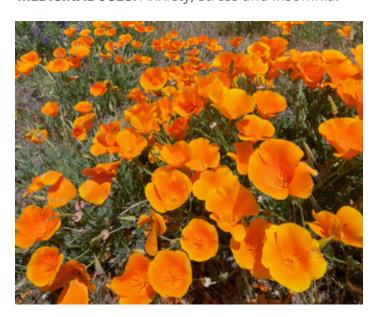
MEDICINAL USES: Arthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, impediment of tumor growth; may have cancer fighting properties.

12. California Poppy (Eschscholzia califirnica)

The California poppy is one of the oldest North American remedies. This plant is not the same one that is used in the making of opium and its effects are much milder. It is excellent for helping deal with stress and anxiety, as well as stress-induced maladies. It can also help in overcoming insomnia.

While it can be made into a tea or encapsulated for ingestion, the most common way of using the California poppy is by making it into a tincture. That requires soaking the plant in an alcoholic beverage and allowing the active ingredients of the poppy to be drawn out into the alcohol. It is commonly combined with birthwort, kava, lavender, passionflower or St. John's wort.

MEDICINAL USES: Anxiety, stress and insomnia.



13. Catnip (Nepeta cataria)

The same catnip that people use as a mild drug stimulant for cats is also useful as an herbal medicine. It is mild enough that it is often prescribed for the treatment of many childhood maladies. Catnip can be mixed with other herbs in a tea or made into a glycerin-based tincture.

Catnip is high in both vitamin C and E, both of which are excellent antioxidants, as such it is excellent for stimulating healing and the immune system. It also soothes the nervous system, making it excellent for helping sick children to sleep. Catnip tea helps women with menstrual cramps as well as digestive disturbances.

MEDICINAL USES: Anxiety, childhood sickness, colds, cramps, abdominal pain, menstrual pain, insomnia.

14. Chickweed (Stellaria media)

This plant often grows as a weed throughout the country. Nevertheless, it is a common herbal medicine, best known for its ability to reduce inflammation, thereby speeding recovery. The leaves of the plant can be made into a poultice for soothing minor burns, skin irritations and rashes, especially those associated with dryness and itching.

Chickweed can also be eaten in salads, where it helps the digestive system and is said to be an old remedy for obesity. Many use it as a spring tonic to cleanse the blood.

MEDICINAL USES: Constipation, weight loss, hemorrhoids, insect bites, psoriasis, skin care and as a spring tonic.

15. Cinnamon(Cinnamomum zelyanicum)

Cinnamon is a strong antibacterial, making it useful in the treatment of colds and the flu. When mixed with essential oils, it is an effective remedy for athletes foot and other fungal infections. However, it should never be applied to the skin alone, merely when mixed with essential oils. One of the newest, most exciting uses of cinnamon that has been discovered is in controlling the blood glucose level of patients with type 2 diabetes.

The cinnamon you find in the grocery store is not the best for use in medicinal purposes, as cinnamon starts losing its potency from the time it is ground. Therefore, you are better off buying your own cinnamon and grinding it yourself. Once ground, keep it in an airtight container until used.

The most common means of using cinnamon is in teas. Powdered cinnamon is also sold in capsules for use medicinally. While it is commonly used in baking, you can't eat enough of it that way to provide any medicinal benefit. Excessive use of cinnamon can worsen bleeding in some people.



MEDICINAL USES: Athletes foot, ringworm, yeast infections, colds, diabetes, digestion, influenza, as an insect repellent, longevity tonics and to eliminate nausea.

16. Corn Silk (Zie mays)

Corn silk, the stringy, off white byproduct of corn which is usually thrown away when preparing the corn is a diuretic. It has long been used to treat chronic inflammation of the urinary tract and kidneys. Treatment is normally accomplished by making a tea from the corn silk. It is also useful as a binder for poultices.

MEDICINAL USES: Bladder and kidney infections

17. Cypress Oil(Cupressus sempervirens)

The essential oil extracted from the cypress tree can be sued as a massage oil or in baths. It alleviates poor circulation, as well as excess fluid retention. As such, it is one of the essential oils used for the treatment of cellulite and varicose veins.

MEDICINAL USES: Cellulite, cuts, wounds, deodorant, detoxification, influenza, hemorrhoids, varicose veins.



18. Dandelion Root (Taraxacum officinale)

Dandelion root, as well as the flower and leaves, is extremely useful for a wide variety of ailments. It contains a wide variety of useful ingredients which help the body in a number of ways. The major way in which it works is as a detoxifier, especially for the liver, eliminating the toxins which cause these problems. It is also a natural diuretic and gentle laxative.

Dandelion stimulates the large organs, especially the liver and kidneys. It is believed that this stimulation increases cellular metabolism, increasing the efficiency of those organs. Being rich in vitamins and minerals, dandelion is a good dietary supplement as well.

The normal way of ingesting dandelion root is as a tea. One teaspoon of dried and chopped root is used per cup of water, allowing it to steep for ten minutes. Regular use increases regularity and reduces acne.

MEDICINAL USES: Acne, alcoholism, bladder infection, bronchitis, colds, detoxification, diabetes, digestion, hypertension, liver lowering cholesterol, osteoporosis, PMS, pregnancy and childbirth sprains and bruises and warts.



19. Elderberry (Sambucus nigra)

The leaves from the elderberry tree are a common folk remedy for bruises and sprains, as well as hard-to-cure skin irritations. The flowers are used to make infusions for the treatment of colds and bronchitis. When cooled, elderberry tea is a soothing salve for eye irritations.

Elderberries are normally made into syrups or teas. The leaves, flowers and berries are all useful; with the leaves and flowers being used in the same ways for medicinal purposes. The bark and roots should never be taken internally, as they will make you vomit.

MEDICINAL USES: Bronchitis, colds, congestion, cough, eye irritations, influenza, sinuses and sore throat.

20. Flax seed (Linum usitatissimum L.)

Flax seed isn't as much a medicine as a dietary supplement. Added to the daily diet, it can help the digestive tract, especially helping to eliminate constipation. It is an important source of fiber, the lubricant for the digestive tract. There is some evidence to show that long-term consumption can slow the development of breast cancer, specifically by blocking estrogen receptors.

As a dietary supplement, Flax seed, the source of linseed oil, adds essential fatty acids to the diet. This is especially important to vegetarians of all types. The right balance of essential fatty acids has been shown to be essential to preventing heart disease. It also lessens the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis.

MEDICINAL USES: Burns, preventing cancer, con-

stipation, vision lupus, rheumatoid arthritis.

21. Garlic (Allium sativum)

While considered a herbal medicine, garlic is gaining a lot of popularity amongst the mainstream medical community for its many benefits. It is one of the most useful healing plants, being effective for a large number of maladies. It can be applied topically for the treatment of burns or taken orally. Many people add garlic to their food as a preventative medicine. Generally speaking, if two or more cloves are eaten in a day, it is considered a medicinal dose.

Garlic is very effective in treating many of the common body chemistry maladies of modern man. Regular doses of garlic can help lower total cholesterol and triglycerides. It has also been shown to be effective in lowering blood sugar for people with diabetes. Added to meats and other heavy foods, garlic aids with digestion.

MEDICINAL USES: Allergies, asthma, athletes foot, ringworm, bronchitis, burns, cancer prevention, yeast, cardiovascular, cholesterol, colds, diabetes, ear, influenza, herpes, cold sores, as an insect repellant, parasites, worms, sinus, sore throat and to help stop smoking.



22. Geranium (Pelargonium graveolens)

Geranium oil is normally used in herbal medicine although the flower itself can be used. It is useful both externally and internally and can be mixed together with a wide variety of other herbs to create herbal medicines. Geranium is extremely good for the skin, as its astringent properties open up and clean out the pores.

The scent of the geranium flower has successfully been used to relax and calm nerves, uplifting the spirit. Recent studies prove that it can be extremely beneficial in reducing the pain caused by shingles. It is also a natural insecticide against head lice.

MEDICINAL USES: Athlete's foot, ringworm, burns, to help circulation, cuts and wounds, depression, diarrhea, as an insect repellant, especially for lice, and for stress relief.

23. Anise Seed (Pimpinella anisum)

Anise, which provides a licorice flavor when added to cooking is both a expectorant and a antiseptic to mucus membranes. This makes it highly effective for cough and congestion, as it will kill the germs while clearing up the congestion. In addition, is highly effective in alleviating gas pain and bloating. Historically, women have used it to increase their estrogen levels while nursing, so that they can increase their milk production.

There are no special requirements for preparing anise for consumption. It can be added to teas or used in baked goods with equal effect. Care should be taken to not use large quantities of anise, as it is slightly narcotic. Pregnant women

should not eat anise.

MEDICINAL USES: Colds, congestion, cramps, abdominal pain, digestion, lice and scabies.

24. Ginger Root (Zingiber officinale)

Ginger is a very useful herb to have in your medicine cabinet, being able to help with the treatment of a wide variety of maladies, ranging from simple nausea to arthritis. It can be used together with other herbs, increasing their effect. It is a blood thinner, which can help reduce menstrual cramps, as well as reducing the risk of angina. Regular dosages of ginger have been shown to be helpful in reducing cholesterol.

You can use ginger as a tea or in cooking, as it mixes well with a wide variety of foods, adding its own unique flavor. While we tend to think of ginger only being a flavoring for gingerbread cookies, it combines well in many types of vegetable soups.

MEDICINAL USES: Arthritis, sprains and bruises, cardiovascular, lowering cholesterol, circulation, colds, abdominal cramps, aids digestion, menstrual cramps, fibromyalgia, influenza, improving length of life, lupus, nausea and rheumatoid arthritis.



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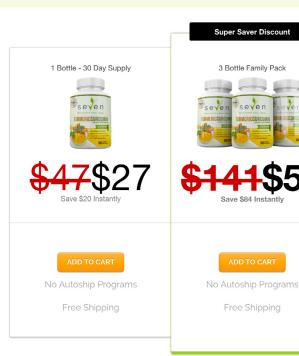


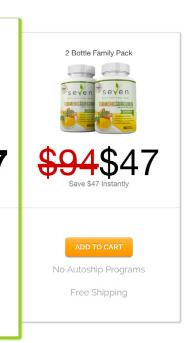




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25. Grapefruit

When eaten or drunk as part of the diet, grape-fruit (or juice extracted from grapefruit) provides to increase circulation, stimulate the lymphatic system and cleanse the kidneys. Studies have also shown that it is useful in the reduction of LDL cholesterol levels. Many people believe that grapefruit will help to reduce excess body weight.

Grapefruit essential oil can be extracted from the seeds, pulp and inner rind of the grapefruit. This oil is useful in combating bacteria and parasitic infections. It is possible to use grapefruit oil as a preservative or to purify water in a pinch. To use it for purifying water, ten drops are added for each gallon of water and the water is allowed to sit for a while (about 30 minutes). Some people take the oil as a preventative when traveling to foreign countries where the water purity is questionable.

MEDICINAL USES: Athletes foot, cellulite, ringworm, weight control, water purification.

26. Grapes (Vitis vinifera)

Grapes, in all their forms (as a fruit, juiced, wine and raisins) are powerful antioxidants as well as having anti-inflammatory properties. They are unique in that they contain the powerful antioxidant resveratrol, which has been medically shown to protect the body from a high fat diet, such as that found with French food. Therefore, the French habit of drinking wine with a meal negates the problems of their high fat diet.

Grapes provide several benefits for the cardiovascular benefits. A glass of red wine per day is said to greatly reduce the risk of heart disease, as well as lowering cholesterol.

MEDICINAL USES: Cancer prevention, cardiovascular, cholesterol, vision, fibromyalgia and varicose veins.

27. Hops (humulus lupulus)

The same hops that are used in the making of beer also have medicinal uses. Aged hops are a natural sedative, while fresh or aged hops contain bitters which help to stimulate digestion. They help in the removal of pain due to bladder infections and other bladder irritations. Traditionally, they are used to help fight insomnia. Combined with other herbs, they can be used to fight anxiety.

To use hops for medicinal purposes, they are normally made into a bitter tea. They can also be used to make a tincture and an extract. For insomnia, it works well to stuff pillow cases with hops. Hops should not be given to children before puberty, as they contain the most potent plant estrogen, prenylnaringenin.

MEDICINAL USES: Anxiety, bruises, sprains, dental and oral care, the ear, female hormones, back pain and insomnia.



28. Horehound (Marrubium vulgare L.)

Horehound grows extensively in the northern part of the United States. Part of the mint family, like other types of mint it is helpful for digestive problems, easing bloating and gas. It is also useful for dealing with cough and cold, often found in cough remedies and cough drops. It is an expectorant, as well as a stimulant for the nervous system.

For cough and colds, horehound is best used as a syrup. It can also be made into a tea for use in dealing with digestive problems or for use as a pain reliever and nervous system stimulant.

MEDICINAL USES: Bronchitis, cardiovascular, colds, cough and sore throats.

29. Horseradish Root (Armoracia rusticana)

The use of horseradish as a garnish or condiment comes from its ability to aid digestion as a stimulant, especially with fatty meats. It is one of the best possible general cold remedies as well, clearing congestion, stimulating nerves and soothing sore throats. It has a high concentration of vitamin C, which stimulates the body's immune system, as well as the ability to promote perspiration, which can be useful in "sweating out" a cold.

As a diuretic, horseradish is helpful in the treatment of urinary tract infections. It has also been used traditionally for the treatment of gout and rheumatism. This may be because it stimulates blood flow, increasing circulation and warmth to cold muscles and joints when applied topically.

MEDICAL USES: Athletes foot, ringworm, bladder

infections, bronchitis, congestion, cough, gout, herpes, cold sores and scabbies.

30. Juniper Berries (Juniperus communis)

The juniper berry has long been highly valued for its detoxifying action on the body. It is also useful as an anti-inflammatory, especially for gout and rheumatoid arthritis. According to studies it inhibits the formation of inflammatory prostaglandins. Additionally, juniper berries help to clear nasal congestion and improve breathing.

Juniper is usually used topically. To prevent loss of the oil, the berries are not crushed until it is time to use them. Dried berries can be used to make tea, using one to two teaspoons of dried berries for every cup of water. Allow the berries to simmer in water for 15 minutes. Juniper should not be used by pregnant women.

MEDICINAL USES: Acne, bladder infection, cellulite, colds, congestion, detoxification, eczema, gout, hemorrhoids, nerve or back pain and rheumatoid arthritis.



31. Lavender (Lavandula spp)

Lavender is an aromatic flower. While the flowers are commonly understood as having medicinal abilities, the stems and leaves do so as well, covering a wide range of diseases. The most common use of lavender is as an additive for baths, where it helps soak away mild depression and anxiety. It can also lower high blood pressure and improve circulation in the bath. It is especially good at relaxing the body in the presence of pain. Its relaxing properties help with overcoming insomnia.

Lavender can be used internally or externally. For internal use, a tea is made from either fresh or dried flowers. The essential oil of lavender can be used externally for massage oil, baths and as a topical treatment for burns. The tea can also be applied externally to relieve itching from flea bites and rashes.

One of the most remarkable traits of lavender is how well it works for burns. A French biochemist discovered this when he accidentally burned his hand in the laboratory. Reacting to the burn he plunged his hand into a vat of lavender to cool it off, not realizing the medicinal properties of lavender in regards to burns. The burn on his hand healed remarkably quickly and without leaving any sign of scarring.

MEDICINAL USES: Acne, anxiety, beauty, burns, Candida yeast, colds, cuts and wounds, depression, ear problems, facial care fibromyalgia, headaches and migraines, hypertension, as an insect repellant, for insect bites, lice, lupus, nausea, skin care and for insomnia.

32. Calamus Root (Acorus calamus)

Calamus root oil has several medicinal properties, including being useful for the digestive system and the lungs. It can be used for the elimination of phlegm, cleaning the congestion. In Europe, calamus is used to aid digestion and counter heartburn. Chewing the root can help reduce toothache and help those who are trying to quit smoking.

Calamus is normally prepared as a tea and drunk for the above ailments. Care must be taken, as it is easy to take too much calamus. It contains acerone, which is highly toxic. In high dosages, it becomes a hallucinogenic.

It is also possible to use calamus root oil externally as a bath additive or dissolved in alcohol for sore muscles and to improve circulation.

MEDICINAL USES: amenorrhea (irregular menstrual period), asthma, colds, congestion, headache, migraines, sore throat and to quit smoking. Calamus root is also an aphrodisiac.

33. Lemon Oil (Citrus liminum)

Lemon is one of the most versatile fruits there is. The high vitamin C content, coupled with its antibacterial and astringent properties make it very useful as a herbal remedy for a number of maladies. It is used as an additive in many commercially available herbal medications, as well as a garnish in herbal teas. Along with honey, it has long been used as an astringent for sore throats.

The custom of adding a lemon slice to water comes from its antibacterial and astringent properties, as a slice of lemon will purify the water. It is also a common standby for beauty treatments,

helping to prevent wrinkles. Lemon oil, as well as lemons themselves can be used for any of these purposes. It can be applied topically or taken orally.

MEDICINAL USES: Acne, cellulite, cleaning, facial care, hypertension, sore throat, varicose veins and wrinkles.

34. Clove Oil (Syzygium aromaticum)

Clove oil is a natural analgesic and antiseptic, which works extremely well for dental pain and gum disease. Care must be taken to not overuse it, as clove oil on the skin can cause irritation. Never use clove oil for pain relief from a root canal.

In addition to dental applications, clove oil is useful to deter colds and viruses as it is a strong disinfectant when used on surfaces. It is also one of the best deterrents for ants in either the home or garden. It can also be used as an antiperspirant and deodorant. While clove oil is used directly, when applied to the skin it should be diluted heavily.

MEDICINAL USES: Athlete's foot, ringworm, bronchitis, cramps, abdominal pain, as an aid to digestion, dental and oral care, as a deodorant, for diarrhea, halitosis, as an insect repellant, for nausea and for nerve and back pain relief.



35. Lemongrass (Cymopogon citatus)

Lemongrass is commonly used as a spice in cooking, especially for poultry and fish. When consumed, it helps with the digestion of fats, making it a good herb to use when preparing foods that are high in fats and cholesterol. It is useful for the breakup of cellulite.

You can also use lemongrass oil as an excellent insect repellent for yourself or your pets. Sprayed in a room, it helps keep insects away. Not only does it smell better than chemical repellents, but it works as well as those chemicals.

MEDICINAL USES: Cellulite, digestion and as an insect repellent.

36. Licorice (Glycyrrhiza glabra)

Licorice acts much like the body's own corticosteroids, making it a natural alternative to hydrocortisone. This allows it to be a fast-acting anti-inflammatory agent, mostly due to the steroid-like action in the body. It supports the body's release of cortisol, while inhibiting some of the negative effects of that hormone. It has long been used as part of cough remedies, to soothe sore throats and for bronchitis. It is an expectorant as well. It can even be used to help regulate normal hormone production.

While licorice is highly useful as an herbal medicine, you must use it in moderation. Never use it for prolonged periods of time, without the advice of competent medical personnel. Along with its beneficial effects, it also tends to elevate blood pressure, lower potassium in the system and

cause water retention. It should never be used by those who have hypertension, kidney problems, diabetes or any sort of heart problems.

MEDICINAL USES: Addictions, anxiety, bronchitis, yeast infections, colds, congestion, fatigue, psoriasis, sore throat and to help stop smoking.

37. Oak bark (Quercus robur)

While we don't normally think of the mighty oak tree as a medicine, the bark of the oak tree goes back centuries for medicinal use. The bark of the tree is a powerful astringent, which is used for treating infections of the mouth and throat, as well as bleeding gums. It is extremely useful in curing acute cases of diarrhea.

One surprising use of oak bark is as a styptic. As such, it reduces bleeding in cuts and wounds. When used in a cold compress, it is excellent for treating burn victims. As a tincture or extract, it can be useful in the treatment of kidney infections and kidney stones.

MEDICINAL USES: Burns, cuts and wounds, oral care, diarrhea, kidney problems and sore throat.



38. Oats (Avena sativa L.)

Although not normally considered an herb, oats have many uses in herbal medicine. Regular ingestion of oats as part of the diet is extremely good for lowering and maintaining correct cholesterol levels. It naturally stimulates the immune system, helping to maintain health, and one bowl of oatmeal provides the daily dose of vitamin D, which helps to fight stress. There is also some evidence that it helps to maintain the balance of hormones in the body, increasing libido.

The oatmeal extract, which is the liquid left over from cooking whole oats is an excellent topical medicine. It can be used for dry skin, sunburns and can help with healing more serious skin diseases like eczema and psoriasis.

MEDICINAL USES: Anxiety, cholesterol, eczema, fatigue, libido, psoriasis, skin care, to help stop smoking, stress and sunburn.

39. Peppermint (Mentha piperita)

We know peppermint for its flavor, but it is one of the best aids for digestive system problems there is. Its natural antispasmodic effects make it ideal for helping with gas and bloating, as well as irritable bowel syndrome. When combined with caraway it is excellent for helping indigestion.

Peppermint is also the first herb of choice for the treatment of colds and flu. It attacks and alleviates multiple symptoms at the same time, including congestion, headaches, nausea and muscle aches. Most often taken in the form of a tea, peppermint oil is also available in capsules. You can even eat the leaves directly to take advantage of their

medicinal characteristics.

Be careful with extensive exposure of the skin to peppermint oil or leaves as it can be an irritant.

MEDICINAL USES: Bronchitis, cardiovascular system, colds, congestion, fatigue, influenza gastritis, ulcers, halitosis, headaches, nerve or back pain, for pain relief and for sinuses. Peppermint can also be used as an insect repellent or for getting rid of lice.

40. Pine Needles (Pinus sylvestris)

Pine needle oil has a long history of use as a pain reliever, especially for people with arthritis. It is equally effective for regular aches, pains and sore muscles. For dealing with pain, the oil is diluted into massage oils and applied to the skin. Caution should be used that pine oil is not applied directly to the skin, without dilution, as it can be an irritant.

To use pine needle oil as a decongestant, the oil is combined into a vaporizer fluid or burned in an aroma lamp. In some places, they put pine needs in mattresses to help alleviate rheumatic ailments, such as arthritis and gout.

MEDICINAL USES: Arthritis, improving circulation, colds, congestion, gout, pain relief and rheumatoid arthritis.



41. Celery Seed (Apium graveolens)

If the celery plant is allowed to flower and seed, the seeds can be harvested and oil expressed out of them for medicinal purposes. Likewise, the plant itself can be eaten, but the concentration of beneficial nutrients is higher in the seed. When used as a medicine, the oil is either made into tea or put into a soup.

Regular uses of celery in cooking reduce the need of salt for flavoring. As excess salt has been linked to high blood pressure, this adds to celery's natural ability to expand blood vessels, lowering blood pressure. It is also a natural diuretic, which can be used to reduce excess water buildup and decrease the uric acid associated with gout and arthritis.

MEDICINAL USES: Cardiovascular, cellulite, gout, rheumatoid arthritis.

42. Prickly Pear Cactus (Opuntia ficus-indica)

The prickly pear, known as "nopal" in Mexico, is one of the most common varieties of cacti. It has received a lot of attention lately for its health benefits. The prickly pear provides many necessary nutrients, including antioxidants, flavonoids and vitamin C. It has been found to be useful in the treatment of diabetes and the various problems associated with obesity.

While nopal can be found in a health food store in capsules and juices, you can use the plant directly as a vegetable. The new leaves, which don't have hard spines are harvested and the hairs sticking out which will eventually become

the cactus' spines are cut off. The remaining leaf is chopped and cooked as a vegetable, often mixed with tomatoes and onions. It has little flavor and readily accepts the flavor of spices or other vegetables cooked with it.

MEDICINAL USES: Diabetes and weight loss.

43. Rosemary (rosmarinus officinalis)

Rosemary is another herb which is useful for a wide range of medical conditions. It stimulates the central nervous system, as well as increasing circulation. This makes it excellent for helping people with low blood pressure or sluggishness. The oil from rosemary alleviates pain from sprains and arthritis. It has also been used traditionally in the relief of asthma.

While rosemary is ingested when used as an herb, it can also be make into an oil for topical treatment or added to massage oils. Greek students would bind rosemary into their hair, with the idea that its effects would quickly migrate to the brain to increase their concentration and aide their memory. When used for cooking, rosemary withstands long cooking times, making it an excellent addition to roasted meats, soups and stews.

MEDICINAL USES: Baldness, arthritis, bronchitis, cardiovascular, cellulite, improving circulation, colds, fatigue, as a hair tonic, hypertension, as an insect repellent, to eliminate lice, as a longevity tonic, lupus, to aid memory and concentration, pain relief, rheumatoid arthritis, scabies and for skin care.

44. Sage (Salvia officinalis)

Although not a commonly used herb in the average American kitchen, except at Thanksgiving time, sage has been used by many people groups for centuries as an herbal medicine. Many of these groups believed that sage was the key to long life. It is an excellent digestive herb when used for seasoning meats or poultry.

It's excellent antibacterial and astringent properties make it useful for healing everything from the common cold to much more serious medical issues. It relieves sore throats, gingivitis and sore gums. It can also be used as a disinfectant and deodorizer. As such, it can be used both in cleaning and as a natural deodorant. It has been shown to have some ability to reduce the hot flashes which normally accompany menopause, as well as slowing heavy menstrual bleeding.

While not really a medicinal use of sage, it can also be used to darken graying hair. This unusual use of sage started with the gypsies, but has moved on to become part of herbal medicine. In addition to making the elderly look younger, it can also help in avoiding those senior moments, by helping increase memory and concentration.

The normal way of using sage is as a culinary herb in cooking. It can also be taken as a tea or added to other teas. In this form, it can be gargled to help eliminate sore throats. The tea can also be applied topically for darkening graying hair.

MEDICINAL USES: Cellulite, colds, dental care, deodorant, digestion, facial care, hair, insect repellent, lice, memory, menopause and sore throats.

45. Cranberries (Vaccinium macrocarpon)

The same cranberries that we eat with our turkey at Thanksgiving time are a powerful medicine. More than anything, they have been used in the treatment of urinary tract health, for preventing bacteria from gaining a foothold in the urinary tract or battling urinary tract infections. Cranberry juice is well known for its ability to help in dissolving kidney stones. It also supports cardiovascular health and healthy aging.

Cranberries can be drunk as a juice, tea or eaten as a relish. When dealing with a stubborn infection, concentrated cranberry, in the form of capsules is recommended. In addition to the conventional uses of cranberry, it has been shown to have some promise in the area of preventing tooth decay.

MEDICINAL USES: Bladder infection, cardiovascular health, kidney stones, kidney health in general, dental and oral care.

46. Sassafras Root (Sassafras albidum)

The use of sassafras root as a medicinal herb in the United States goes back to colonial times. The early colonists learned of it from the Iroquois and Seneca

Indian tribes. It is considered to be a blood detoxifier and was commonly made into drinks which were taken for that purpose. Sassafras can also be combined with prickly ash, cayenne and camphor for use in making liniments for rheumatism.

Combined with sarsaparilla, sassafras has long been used to treat prostrate problems, although there is no modern medical evidence to support the effectiveness of this remedy.

MEDICINAL USES: Detoxification, longevity tonics and prostrate.

47. Slippery Elm (Ulmus fulva)

The bark of the slippery elm is useful in both poultices and taken internally. Normally, the inner bark is preferred, as it is rich in mucilage; a spongy slippery fiber. This fiber sooths the skin when used topically and coats irritated mucus membranes in the throat or urinary tract.

For use in poultices, the bark can be chopped.

Slippery elm is especially useful for soothing burns. However, for internal use it is necessary to turn it into a dried powder. It can then be added to teas and infusions.



MEDICINAL USES: Bladder infection, burns, cuts and wounds, diarrhea, gastritis, ulcers and sore throat.

48. St. Johns Wort (Hypericum perforatum)

St. Johns Wort is surrounded by both superstition and scientific fact. On the superstition side, the dew which felt on the plant on St. John's day, the 24th of June, was expected to be able to prevent eye disease. This led to it being collected, dipped in oil and turned into a balm, used for any type of wound.

More than anything, St. Johns Wort has been shown to be a very effective antidepressant for cases of mild depression. It is a tonic for the entire nervous system, helping those who use it to feel better in all ways. The oil from the plant or a tincture made from it is good for the treatment of burns, skin damage and skin legions, including those caused by herpes.

When taken as an anti-depressant or as a means of stimulating the nervous system, St. Johns Wort

is drunk as tea or can be bought in capsule form. For topical treatment, it is best used as an oil.

MEDICINAL USES: Anxiety, arthritis, burns, congestion, depression, ear, fibromyalgia, influenza, herpes, cold sores, lupus, nerve or back pain, PMS and rheumatoid arthritis.

49. Tea (Camellia sinensis)

Both green tea and black tea come from the same plant. The only real difference between the two is the manner in which they are processed. Black tea leaves have been allowed to ferment, while green tea is made from fresh tea leaves.

There are many studies which show that regular ingestion of tea has positive effects on the metabolic system and can stimulate weight loss. It has also been shown to contain catechin polyphenosl, which inhibit cancerous tumor formation, as well as helping lower cholesterol levels. It has many other beneficial effects as well, such as helping maintain proper blood pressure.

MEDICINAL USES: Anxiety, cancer prevention,



cholesterol, diabetes, diet and weight loss. A poultice can be used as a topical treatment for insect bites, rashes and sunburn.

50. Thyme (Thymus vulgaris)

Thyme is one of the best cough and cold remedies around, with the rare ability of dealing with all of the cold's symptoms. It works as an expectorant to clear the lungs of congestion, while calming coughing spasms as an antitussive. At the same time, it will help you to sleep, sooth a sore throat and relieve aches and pains. It also encourages the body to sweat, helping to eliminate toxins and lower a fever.

While thyme is an excellent culinary herb, for medicinal purposes, it is best taken as a tea.

MEDICINAL USES: Congestion, cough, cuts and wounds, oral care, facial care and as an insect repellent.

51. Chicory Root (Cinhorium intybus)

Chicory is most known for its use as a substitute for coffee, especially in the south. However, it is an excellent digestive tonic, used as a means of detoxifying the digestive tract. Chicory will help to eliminate excess water and uric acid, without re-



ducing the levels of potassium and other minerals. In this way, it is helpful to the heart and liver, as well as being helpful to people with rheumatism and gout.

Chicory is usually prepared in the same way as coffee and can be mixed with coffee. It is often used in conjunction with dandelion, as the two are complimentary.

MEDICINAL USES: Cardiovascular, detoxification, gout and liver.

52. White Willow Bark (Salix alba)

The white willow tree grows naturally all across the eastern half of the United States. The inner bark of this tree contains salicin, which is very similar to conventional aspirin in its effect, but without the negative effects on the stomach. This allows white willow bark to be used in pretty much all cases where one would typically use aspirin.

For protection against heart disease white willow tea can be drunk. Two cupfuls per day has the same effect as a low dosage of aspirin. While white willow bark is normally taken in capsules that contain the bark in powdered form, when using it to make a tea, it is best to use chopped



bark. The effects of white willow bark improve with continued use, as the body becomes more accustomed to it instead of conventional aspirin.

White willow bark is similar enough to aspirin that it should not be used by people who have an allergy to aspirin. Nor should it be used by people who are taking anti-platelet or anticoagulant drugs, as this may increase the chance of stomach bleeding.

MEDICINAL USES: Arthritis, colds, cramps, abdominal pain, cuts and injuries, diet and weight loss, fibromyalgia, headaches and migraines, lupus, osteoporosis, rheumatoid arthritis and as a general pain reliever.

53. Bay Laurel (Laurus nobilis)

The leaves of the bay laurel are commonly used for flavoring in soups and stews, especially for Mediterranean cuisine. Wreathes of this plant once crowned the heads of heroes. Today, we look to bay laurel as an analgesic, which is useful for treating arthritis, lower back pain, sore muscles and sprains. The leaves themselves can be used, but it is more common to use the oil expressed out of those leaves for medicinal purposes. While the leaves can be taken internally, the oil should only be used externally.

Bay laurel is difficult to grow from seeds or clippings. You are better off buying an already growing plant, as you are much more likely to have success with it. The leaves or oil can be used directly, or put into food or tea; either way provides the same effects. Never give bay laurel to pregnant women, as it can bring about spotting or cause a miscarriage.

MEDICINAL USES: Bruises, sprains, dental and oral care, headaches, pain relief, arthritis.



A basic knowledge of herbal medicines and their use can go a long way towards solving any medical problems. While our focus is on what you can grow yourself in your herb garden, don't discount what you can find in the wild. The herbs we use for seasoning and medicine all originated in the wild. While they may not be available in all areas, it can be extremely useful to know the herbs that grow in your area.

Not all herbs can be treated equally. Some need to be fresh for use, while others work best when dried. In many cases, it is only part of the plant which provides the necessary medicine, with the rest of the plant being useless or even poisonous. Using herbs for medicinal purposes requires knowing not only what herbs to use, but how to use them as well. While we are going to try and provide as much of this information as possible, you may wish to do some additional research on your own.

DRYING HERBS

Like all plant life, herbs tend to only grow during certain times of the year. Therefore, it is necessary to harvest the herbs and dry them, so that you can store them until they are needed. Fortunately, herbs are very easy to dehydrate. Once dried, they are protected from attack by bacteria, mold and yeast. Pretty much all herbs can be stored for a minimum of 12 months once they are dried.

If you are harvesting the whole plant, the ideal time of day to harvest them is in the morning, just after the dew has evaporated, but before the heat of the day can affect the plant. Remove any dead, wilted or diseased leaves as soon as you harvest the plant.

If you are harvesting the flower, such as harvesting chamomile flowers for tea, you want to clip the flower off the stem the first day that the flowers fully open. Seeds should be harvested once the head of the plant is dried, turning brown and hardening, but not quite at the point of opening. It is tricky to time this, but better to be a bit early than late, as being late means losing the seeds.

There are several different ways in which you can dry the herbs that you harvest:

AIR DRYING – Tie the stems of the plants in bundles by type. Hang the bundles upside down in a warm dry area with good air circulation. Wrap a mesh produce bag, piece of muslin cloth or a paper bag with holes in it around the herbs to protect them.

- ➤ SOLAR DRYING If you live in a warm dry place, solar drying can be quite efficient. You want a temperature of about 100 degrees F, with a humidity of less than 60%. Be careful about exposing the herbs to too much sunlight, as this can cause them to bleach. Ideally, a solar food dehydrator would be used for this. If one is not available, you can use your car for a makeshift solar food dehydrator.
- ► FOOD DEHYDRATOR Herbs can be dried I an electric food dehydrator, much as dehydrating any other plant. Be careful not to burn the herbs as many will dry fairly fast.
- ➤ OVEN DRYING While ovens can be used to dry herbs, you run the risk of overheating them and burning them. Ideally, herbs should be dried at about 100 degrees, which is lower than most ovens are wont to go. You can solve this problem by cycling the oven on and off, regulating the temperature yourself.
- MICROWAVE OVEN For herbs that start out fairly dry, the microwave can be used.

This is not recommended for herbs which have a high moisture content, as the herbs will cook, rather than dry out. To use a microwave, strip the leaves off the stems and place them between layers of paper towels. Microwave for one minute at a time, checking and allowing the herbs to cool between cycles.

REFRIGERATOR DRYING –

This is probably the easiest way to dry herbs. If you have a "frost free" refrigerator/ freezer, you can use it to dry your herbs. Simply put them in the fridge in an unsealed container and leave them in the fridge. Within a few days, the defroster will have drawn the moisture out of the herbs.

Dried herbs can be stored in plastic containers, herb bottles, or plastic bags. Make sure that whatever method you use to store your herbs protects them from absorbing any moisture. Should your herbs absorb moisture, they will most likely pick up bacteria, fungi or mold.

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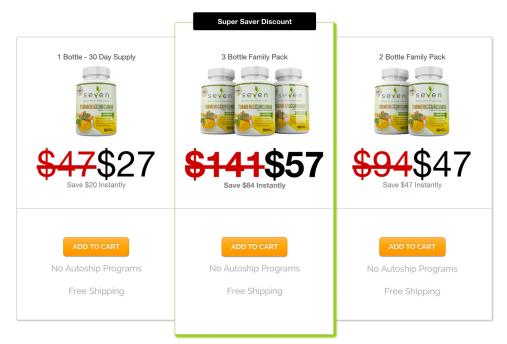








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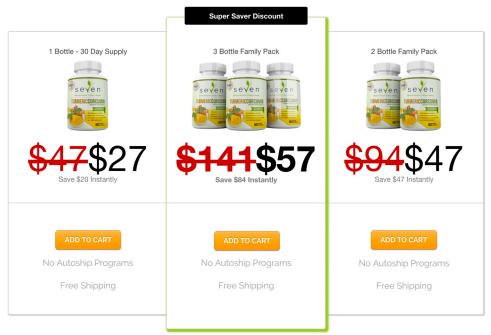
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