

## **The Northwest School for Botanical Studies**

### **Herbal Write-Ups**

**By Christa Sinadinos**

#### **Introduction**

The following herb write-ups were composed by Christa Sinadinos. Christa, a clinical herbalist, is the founder and director of The Northwest School for Botanical Studies. She teaches both long-term and short-term programs in herbalism, including the Professional Herbalist Training Program. Christa is also the proprietor of Alpine Meadow Botanicals, an herbal extract company. More information on programs and classes offered by Christa Sinadinos at The Northwest School for Botanical Studies is available online at [www.herbaleducation.net](http://www.herbaleducation.net).

These herb write-ups were originally intended to be placed on herb jars. Therefore, the descriptions below are very concise. This information was also intended to be used as an educational quick-reference, with brief explanations of the uses of herbs. The Herbal Materia Medica curriculum at The Northwest School of Botanical Studies covers these herbs in much greater depth. Please contact the author for permission to use this writing in any publication, as the author owns the copyright.

This information is not intended to diagnose or prescribe. The author recommends consulting with an herbalist or other health care provider before taking herbs, especially for serious health conditions, and before combining herbs with prescriptions or over-the-counter medications.

#### **Alfalfa** (*Medicago sativa*)

Alfalfa is a nourishing herbal tonic which contains vitamins C, D, and E, as well as beta-carotene and chlorophyll. It is also rich in minerals including calcium, potassium, iron, and phosphorus. One cup of tea, drunk before meals, can be useful to strengthen the digestive system. Alfalfa aids in the assimilation of proteins, carbohydrates, iron, and calcium. It also helps to regulate the pH level of the stomach and can be useful for those who suffer from hyper-acidic stomach conditions and stomach ulcers.

#### **Alkanet** (*Alkanna tinctoria*)

Alkanet root is a non-irritating, red dyeing agent. When infused in oil, it imparts a red color. Alkanet can be used to color lip balms, oils, and salves. It is also sometimes added to henna. An ointment of alkanet can be used topically for sores, bruises, or cuts. It is mainly used in topical preparations.

#### **Angelica** (*Angelica archangelica*)

Angelica root acts as an antispasmodic to the smooth muscle tissues. A decoction or a tincture can be used to allay respiratory spasms--this can be beneficial for dry, irritating coughs and asthma. The root also has expectorant properties. A cup of angelica tea (or 30-60 drops of the extract) works effectively to reduce cramping of smooth muscle spasms of the small and large intestines and the uterus. The root can also be used as an emmenagogue to stimulate menses delayed by stress, illness, or exposure to cold. However, angelica consumption should be avoided during pregnancy.

**\*\*Contraindications: do not consume angelica during pregnancy. Angelica may also cause photosensitivity in some individuals.\*\***

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#### **Anise Seed** (*Pimpinella anisum*)

Anise seed has carminative properties which enhance digestion. It prevents and expels gas, and allays nausea. Anise can safely be used to combat morning sickness. It is also helpful for treating infant colic. Anise tincture has antitussive properties. Anise is commonly used as a flavoring agent, e.g. in black licorice candy.

#### **Ashwaganda** (*Withania somnifera*)

Ashwaganda is an Ayurvedic herb that is traditionally used similarly to ginseng. It is a nervous system restorative and has adaptogenic properties which increase vitality and physical endurance. Ashwaganda is useful for the following conditions: fatigue, general debility, anorexia, senility, irritability, anxiety, tremors, and stress-induced disorders. It also rebuilds and nourishes the immune system following a deep infection. Ashwaganda enhances libido. Additionally, it has anti-inflammatory actions which are beneficial for the treatment of arthritis, Fibromyalgia, chronic muscle pain, and joint weakness.

**\*\*Contraindications: do not consume ashwaganda during pregnancy. Avoid consuming ashwaganda during an acute infection.\*\***

#### **Barberry** (*Berberis vulgaris*)

Barberry and Oregon grape are plants of the same genus (*Berberis*) which can be used interchangeably. The root can be used as a digestive bitter to stimulate the liver's metabolism. The root stimulates liver, pancreatic, and gallbladder secretions, which can enhance the digestion of fats and proteins. It is also helpful for symptoms which arise from poor digestion such as the following: chronic gum or teeth problems, poorly healing or dry skin, rapid shifts in blood sugar levels, and chronic constipation. It can be used as an antimicrobial. It is useful for the treatment of intestinal infections.

**\*\*Contraindications: barberry contains berberine alkaloids and should be used with caution or avoided during pregnancy.\*\***

#### **Basil** (*Ocimum basilicum*)

Basil has medicinal properties, in addition to being a delicious culinary herb. It is high in vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron, and it contains up to 14% protein by weight. It can be useful to relieve mild stomach and intestinal cramps. In many Mediterranean countries, hot basil tea is used as a folk remedy to break children's fevers. Basil increases the flow of breast milk. It is said to have a mild calming effect on the nervous system and it may relieve nervous headaches. It is also an aphrodisiac.

#### **Bay** (*Laurus nobilis*)

Bay leaves are a common spice used to flavor soups, stews, sauces, poultry, and meat. They aid digestion and help to expel gas. The leaves have both carminative and mild diuretic properties. Bay also has some disinfectant and lymphatic actions.

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#### **Bayberry** (*Myrica cerifera*) (Wax Myrtle)

Bayberry has potent astringent actions. It tightens the tissues, improving circulation and reducing chronic inflammation. Taken internally, bayberry is beneficial for treating conditions which result in excessive mucus secretions, such as allergies and sinus infections. It can also be used to reduce bleeding. A decoction of the root bark, gargled, is helpful for treating a sore throat or for tender, bleeding gums. A well-strained tea can be used as a douche to reduce excessive vaginal discharge. A fomentation can be applied topically to varicose veins and hemorrhoids.

**\*\*Contraindications: discontinue using bayberry if it is overly drying.\*\***

#### **Black Cohosh** (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)

Black cohosh can be used as an anti-inflammatory, which often works most effectively when combined with other herbs for the treatment of arthritis and headaches. It has an antispasmodic effect on smooth muscle tissues, which makes this herb helpful in treating digestive cramps, menstrual cramps, cramping of the gall bladder or kidney caused by passing of stones, as well as asthmatic bronchial spasms. Black cohosh helps to relieve nervous conditions. It can also enhance female reproductive health and can be used to tone the uterus. Black cohosh is said to mimic estrogen in the body without actually raising estrogen levels. It can be used by women who are perimenopausal or menopausal to reduce hot flashes and to tone the uterus. It does not affect uterine and breast tissue negatively as synthetic estrogen might.

**\*\*Contraindications: do not consume black cohosh during the first 36 weeks of pregnancy. High doses of black cohosh can cause a frontal headache.\*\***

#### **Black Walnut Hull** (*Juglans nigra*)

The hull of black walnut has potent antibacterial and antifungal properties, and can be used internally to treat microbial infections of the digestive tract. The hulls can be applied externally in various forms (powder, salve, and poultice) for the treatment of athlete's foot, ringworm, skin tinea, and staph infections.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid using black walnut hull internally during pregnancy, and use with caution during lactation.\*\***

#### **Blessed Thistle** (*Cnicus benedictus*)

Blessed thistle can be used as a digestive and a liver tonic. Like its relative, milk thistle, it is known to repair damaged liver cells. Blessed thistle also stimulates blood flow to the mammary glands, thus increasing and enriching the flow of mother's milk.

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#### **Blood Root** (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)

Blood root can be used topically to heal skin conditions such as lesions, tumors, and cysts. It has also been used topically as a successful treatment for melanoma. This herb is beneficial in the treatment of numerous lung conditions. It has expectorant properties and thus thins and expels mucus. It also has antispasmodic effects on the lower respiratory system, which can be useful to treat dry, hacking coughs, including whooping cough, croup, bronchitis, and some kinds of asthma. Blood root has been shown to have strong antibacterial properties. This may be why it is used in many dental care products as an anti-plaque agent. Unfortunately, this plant is threatened because of its overuse in dental products and as a result of deforestation. Please use this herb sparingly.

#### **Blue Cohosh** (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*)

Blue cohosh is an effective uterine tonic. It can be used in small amounts in formulas for the treatment of endometriosis, uterine and ovarian cysts, and fibroids. A decoction of the root or the root extract is often used as a partus preparator during the last two to three weeks of pregnancy. It encourages a speedy recovery after birth, and it decreases the intensity of post-birth uterine contractions. The root is an antispasmodic and is helpful to relieve cramping of the uterus, intestines, and bronchioles. The root has emmenagogue actions, which can stimulate menstrual bleeding. Please consult a medical practitioner before using blue cohosh during pregnancy.

**\*\*Contraindications: do not consume blue cohosh during the first 36 weeks of pregnancy. Excessive doses can cause nausea, vomiting, and gastric upset. Avoid use in cases of high blood pressure or labile hypertension.\*\***

#### **Blue Vervain** (*Verbena officinalis*)

Blue vervain has both sedative and antispasmodic properties. It can be useful to treat insomnia, especially for those who awaken in the middle of the night. Take 20-100 drops of the liquid extract in the evening and / or before bed. Blue vervain helps to reduce menstrual cramping and to stimulate suppressed menses which result from stress. It also reduces intestinal cramping. Additionally, it is a strong digestive bitter. It stimulates hydrochloric acid and bile secretion, which improves the digestion of proteins and fats. It also acts as a diaphoretic, which induces sweating and helps to break a fever. Blue vervain is specific for children or individuals whose nervous systems become aggravated from illness.

**\*\*Contraindications: do not consume blue vervain during pregnancy.\*\***

#### **Boneset** (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)

Boneset is a valuable remedy for colds, flu, and fevers. It is a strong diaphoretic, which helps to break a fever. The herb was used extensively during many flu epidemics including “break-bone fever”, which is how it acquired its common name. Boneset is also used as a remedy to reduce catarrh (excess secretions of the mucous membranes). One glass of the warm tea is encouraged every half hour to an hour to break up mucus and to reduce a fever. The tea is also useful to relieve general dyspepsia. The bitterness of the tea stimulates digestive juices and helps to soften stools. Drink 4-8 ounces of the hot tea at frequent intervals to break a fever. Drink the tea at room temperature for the digestive tonic actions.

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#### **Borage** (*Borago officinalis*)

Borage can be used as an emollient to soothe dry, inflamed, and irritated skin. The leaves and flowers can be consumed following an accident or surgery in order to stimulate tissue regeneration, speed the recovery rate, and reduce scarring. Borage can either be taken internally as an infusion (i.e. a tea) mixed with calendula and horsetail, or it may be applied externally as a poultice or salve. Borage also has mild demulcent properties that can help to soothe and coat mucus membranes. It is a remedy for sore throats and irritated lung conditions. Borage has traditionally been used for courage; it assists in the energetic process of moving through heartbreak, the death of a loved one, and other difficult times.

Borage, like its well known relative, comfrey, contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids (P.A.s). However, borage contains much lower levels of P.A.s than comfrey does. Both borage and comfrey should be used cautiously due to the Pea's' potentially damaging effects on the liver (when taken internally in excessive amounts).

**\*\*Contraindications: borage leaf consumption should be avoided during pregnancy and in cases of liver disease or liver problems, due to its pyrrolizidine alkaloid content.\*\***

#### **Burdock** (*Arctium lappa*)

Burdock root is a cooling liver tonic. It is useful in treating moist skin conditions including eczema, psoriasis, and dermatitis. These conditions often manifest when the liver is overloaded from a diet high in fat and protein. Burdock aids the liver in metabolizing these nutrients and encourages the removal of waste products. This is in part why it is considered a "blood tonic."

Burdock also aids in the removal of uric acid waste products, which makes it useful for those who suffer from joint conditions such as gout, rheumatoid arthritis, and bursitis. Such conditions often result from an excess of acidic waste products. Both burdock root and seed can act as a diuretic, making it useful for people who experience swelling in the hands and feet. Burdock root is safe to use during pregnancy for this purpose, but the seed should be avoided during pregnancy.

**\*\*Contraindications: burdock seed consumption should be avoided during pregnancy.\*\***

#### **Calamus (Sweet Flag)** (*Acorus calamus*)

Calamus is an aromatic bitter herb that improves digestion and reduces gas, bloating, and excess stomach acidity. It acts as an antispasmodic and can be used to relieve stomach and intestinal cramping. Calamus can be beneficial for individuals who suffer from digestive problems. It is also said to reduce cravings for tobacco, which may be due to its calming action or the fact that it may fill nicotinic receptors.

**\*\*Contraindications: calamus consumption should be avoided during pregnancy.\*\***

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#### **Calendula (European Marigold) (*Calendula officinalis*)**

Calendula is renowned for its ability to heal the skin; this herb is helpful to treat cuts, burns, abrasions, bruises, sprains, abscesses, eczema, and varicose veins. A well-strained tea of calendula can be used as an eyewash for conjunctivitis (be sure to use a sterile eye cup or cotton ball, as well as to make a fresh batch of tea daily). The tea can also be used as a topical wash for impetigo and thrush. Calendula acts as a soothing emollient for skin conditions characterized by dryness or flakiness, including the following: eczema, dandruff, psoriasis, and the final stages of poison oak rash.

#### **Caraway (*Carum carvi*)**

Caraway seeds are a flavorful addition to applesauce, apple pie, soups, sauerkraut, cheese, and salad dressing. They are often added to rye bread. They contain small amounts of protein as well as several B vitamins. Caraway seeds help to expel gas and to prevent griping (intestinal cramping). When they are chewed, they may help to relieve toothaches.

#### **Cardamom (*Elettaria cardamomum*)**

Cardamom has carminative actions which help to relieve gas and bloating. It acts as an antispasmodic and can slow the rate of stomach muscle cramping, as well as numb the nerves in the stomach. Cardamom is often added to digestive bitters formulas. It is safe for children, although catnip and chamomile are generally more effective for treating infant colic. Cardamom can be used in combination with other warming herbs such as ginger and cinnamon to enhance circulation. Cardamom also acts as an aphrodisiac.

#### **Cascara Sagrada (*Rhamnus purshiana*)**

Cascara is well known as a classic heroic treatment for constipation; its action is relatively potent. The bark acts as a bitter tonic directly improving the function and the motility of the intestines. It helps to restore digestive secretions, as well as to strengthen the musculature of the intestinal walls. Excessive doses can cause cramping and griping. Carminative herbs such as fennel, anise, and coriander should be combined with cascara in order to prevent cramping.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid consuming cascara sagrada during pregnancy and while lactating.\*\***

#### **Catnip (*Nepeta cataria*)**

Catnip is a mild antispasmodic which is beneficial in cases of digestive cramping. It is a cooling astringent for the digestive tract. Catnip helps to relieve intestinal inflammation, and can be used as an adjunct treatment for diarrhea, ulcerative colitis, irritable bowel syndrome, and Crohns disease. The aromatic oils will pass through nursing mothers' breast milk, which can be useful in treating infant colic. The tea is also helpful for children with digestive cramps and restlessness (combine with peppermint and chamomile). Catnip also reduces irritability which can result from fevers and teething. This herb acts as a gentle nervine and sedative. For children who do not like the flavor, pour the strained tea into the bath.

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#### **Cayenne** (*Capsicum annuum*, *C. frutescens*)

Cayenne is high in vitamins A, B, and C, as well as calcium, iron, and phosphorus. Consuming small amounts of cayenne can increase salivary secretions and improve digestive secretions. Cayenne has a warming effect which can be beneficial for those who tend to feel cold. It can help to increase blood flow to the extremities and is useful for individuals who suffer from cold hands and feet, when consumed in small amounts internally. It can also be used in small quantities in a formula context, as a catalyst. It will increase blood circulation and act as a carrier, which aids in directing the other herbs in a formula to their respective locations.

**\*\*Caution: keep cayenne out of reach or away from children and pets. Avoid touching the eyes or other sensitive areas after handling cayenne. Avoid using cayenne directly on the skin.\*\***

#### **Celery Seed** (*Apium graveolens*)

Celery seed can be used to flavor soups, sauces, and other foods. Celery seed tea has diuretic properties. It can be helpful to rid the body of uric acid, which, in excess, can build up in the joints and cause and / or irritate rheumatoid arthritis and gout. Thus, the extract or tea of celery seed is sometimes recommended for those who suffer from arthritis. It also has very mild nervine actions, as well as carminative properties.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid consuming larger volumes (more than 16 ounces of tea) during pregnancy as celery seed may act as an emmenagogue. Also, avoid consuming celery seed with acute or chronic inflammation of the kidneys.\*\***

#### **Chamomile** (*Matricaria recutita*)

Chamomile is a safe and effective remedy for children, as well as for adults. The tea or bath of chamomile can soothe and calm a baby or child who is restless and irritable, as well as encourage sleep. Chamomile can also be useful for teething or colicky babies, as well as for reducing children's fevers. It has anti-spasmodic, carminative (gas expelling), and anti-inflammatory properties. These properties can be helpful for the treatment of stomach and duodenal ulcers, diarrhea, indigestion, stomach ache, and stomach cramps. A compress, bath, or tea of chamomile can reduce the pain and inflammation which results from arthritis and joint aches.

**\*\*Contraindications: if you are allergic to ragweed or anything in the daisy family, there is a possibility that you may experience an allergic reaction to chamomile. Test chamomile topically by placing some of the tea on the inside of the elbow before consuming internally, if you have daisy family allergies.\*\***

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#### **Chaparral (Creosote Bush, Greasewood) (*Larrea tridentata*)**

Chaparral is very useful as a topical treatment for skin abrasions and injuries. It slows the rate of bacterial growth and kills bacteria due to its anti-microbial properties. It also has antioxidant properties and it can be added to salves and oils to prevent rancidity. This herb can be used internally but only with caution. Please consult a practitioner before consuming internally.

**\*\*Contraindications: chaparral can both inhibit and stimulate the growth of cancerous cells. It is not recommended for people who have been diagnosed with cancer.\*\***

#### **Chaste Tree Berry (*Vitex agnus-castus*)**

Chaste tree berry is a valuable hormone-balancing agent for both women and men. It is useful for women who have progesterone deficiency, for example women who experience erratic or long menstrual cycles (over 30 days), or for those with slow-starting, crampy menses. It is also helpful for balancing excess estrogen, which can be the cause of uterine cysts and fibroids. It has the potential to dissolve ovarian and uterine cysts. Chaste tree berry has also been shown to reduce uterine fibroid growth and to help dissolve fibroids. For this purpose, it is often used synergistically with other herbs that support the liver and lymphatic system. Chaste tree berry appears to stimulate the synthesis of luteinizing hormone (LH) by the pituitary gland. In turn, this stimulates the production of progesterone by the corpus luteum. This indirect stimulation of progesterone production may have a regulating effect on estrogen. Corpus luteum insufficiency can cause many menopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, depression, dizziness, and vaginal dryness. Chaste tree berry harmonizes and restores balance to the female reproductive system.

**\*\*Contraindications: chaste tree berry consumption should be avoided during pregnancy. Discontinue use if heavy menstrual bleeding occurs.\*\***

#### **Chervil (*Anthriscus cerefolium*)**

Chervil is a flavorful culinary herb that is often used in the French spice blend known as *fines herbes*. Basil, chives, parsley, sage, savory, and tarragon are also combined in the mixture. Chervil has a mild anise or tarragon-like flavor. The subtle flavor of chervil is easily lost, so it may be necessary to add more chervil than the other herbs in a spice blend. Chervil enhances the taste of soups, sauces, egg dishes, and baked potatoes. It contains up to 23% protein by weight, as well as trace minerals including calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium. It also contains smaller amounts of potassium, iron, and zinc. Chervil is a diuretic, a mild diaphoretic, and an expectorant.

#### **Chicory Root (*Cichorium intybus*)**

Chicory is well known as a substitute for coffee. It helps to reduce the acidifying effects of coffee and also enriches coffee's color. Some might agree that it enhances the flavor of coffee. Add one portion of ground chicory to two portions of coffee. Chicory root is a stomachic and it improves the tone of the stomach. It also stimulates bile secretion and can act as a mild laxative.

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#### **Chickweed** (*Stellaria media*)

Chickweed is high in vitamins and minerals. The flesh leaves of this plant are a delightful addition to salad greens in the spring and summer. Chickweed soothes the skin and decreases inflammation, both internally and externally. The tea decreases inflammation and helps to heal ulcers of the mouth, the stomach, and the intestines. A fresh plant poultice is effective as a drawing agent for boils and pus-filled wounds. Apply the fresh plant poultice to mosquito bites, bee stings, and inflamed hemorrhoids. A tea or poultice can aid with itchy, inflamed skin conditions such as eczema or psoriasis. Used internally, this plant may help to reduce and eliminate breast cysts, ovarian cysts, and uterine fibroids. It can also be used as a diuretic, and can aid in reducing water-related weight gain.

#### **Cinnamon** (*Cinnamomum cassia*)

Cinnamon is a well-known warming, aromatic spice. It is often added to baked goods, and also to Mediterranean and Indian cuisine, including curry blends. It can be used to relieve flatulence, diarrhea, and dysentery. It is also useful as an acute remedy to check nausea and vomiting. Cinnamon is specific for any form of mild gastric or intestinal hemorrhage. It can help to slow or stop bleeding for most forms of passive hemorrhage. A strong infusion or decoction can reduce excessive menstrual bleeding. Midwives have used cinnamon both during labor and afterwards, to control post partum hemorrhage and to restore tone to uterine muscles. In addition, it helps to reduce pulmonary bleeding, as well as nose bleeds. Long term use of cinnamon may be too heating for some individuals.

**\*\*Contraindications: discontinue use of cinnamon if it aggravates the stomach.\*\***

#### **Cleavers** (*Galium aparine*)

Cleavers is an effective lymphatic tonic, especially in the form of a fresh plant or a fresh plant extract. When cleavers is used as a daily tea, a fresh plant tincture, or topically as a salve, it has been known to relieve lymphatic swelling of the throat, armpits, or breasts. It is a supportive lymphatic therapy for treating herpes and ovarian cysts. It can be useful for treating long-term debilitating diseases when there is lymphatic congestion and / or lymphatic tenderness. In addition, cleavers can be helpful for skin conditions such as eczema and psoriasis. Cleavers is a valuable diuretic, useful for the treatment of bladder infections (along with other antibacterial agents). It also facilitates waste excretion and aids in the removal of catabolic waste products via the kidney. Cleavers helps to reduce acute inflammation of the urinary tract, as well as to reduce prostate irritation.

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#### **Coltsfoot - Eastern Coltsfoot** (*Tussilago farfara*)

Coltsfoot leaves and flowers have demulcent, emollient, and expectorant properties. A tea of the leaves can be used as a remedy for lung ailments such as bronchitis, laryngitis, asthma, whooping cough, and sore throats. A traditional European tea recipe used for the conditions previously listed contains equal parts of coltsfoot, mullein, and peppermint. Like comfrey and borage, coltsfoot contains small amounts of liver toxic pyrrolizidine alkaloids (P.A.s). The effects of the P.A.s are cumulative.

**\*\*Contraindications: coltsfoot consumption should be avoided during pregnancy, or limited to short term use, due to its pyrrolizidine alkaloids content. There is little known about the effects of the P.A.s on the fetus. Any person with debilitating liver conditions or compromised liver function should also avoid using coltsfoot.\*\***

#### **Comfrey** (*Symphytum officinale*)

Comfrey is well known to many as “knit bone”. For hundreds of years it has been used to help knit tissue together. It helps to speed the healing of the skin, tendons, and bones. Poultices placed directly over the affected area will dramatically speed the healing process. The root contains *allantoin* which stimulates cell proliferation. The root is also highly mucilaginous. Its soothing characteristics render it useful for laryngitis, tonsillitis, bronchitis, pneumonia, whooping cough, and diarrhea. It also helps to treat ulcers and dyspepsia (indigestion). The leaves contain calcium, phosphorus, potassium, beta-carotene (pro-vitamin A), and up to 22% protein.

**\*\*Contraindications: comfrey contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids (P.A.s) which have been shown to cause cumulative liver damage. Any person with debilitating liver conditions or compromised liver function should avoid using comfrey. It should be used in moderation when taken internally, and for a limited duration of time. The roots contain higher PA levels than the leaves. Due to its PA content, internal use of comfrey is contraindicated during pregnancy. Generally speaking, the homeopathic form of comfrey (Symphytum) is safe for internal use.\*\***

#### **Copal** (*Bursera microphylla*)

Copal is a resinous pitch which comes from trees that are sacred to the Mayan Indians. Traditionally, it was burned as incense. Currently, in Mexican tradition, it is still added to love and purification incense blends. Many Hispanic communities burn copal in honor of departed relatives during Day of the Dead ceremonies.

#### **Coriander Seed** (*Coriandrum sativum*)

Coriander is a gentle anti-spasmodic, carminative, and stomachic. This spice enhances the flavor of both Mexican and Indian dishes. It also enhances the digestion of beans. Coriander can also be used as an aphrodisiac. Coriander seeds come from the plant known as cilantro.

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#### **Corn silk** (*Zea mays*)

Corn silk acts as a demulcent for the urinary tract. It is a beneficial addition to tea formulas for the treatment of urinary tract infections. It soothes the urinary tract, and reduces inflammation and irritation of the bladder. Long-term use of corn silk also helps to strengthen the tone of the base of the urinary bladder. This action can be helpful for any individual with urinary incontinence and bladder weakness, including the elderly, menopausal women, children, postpartum women, and men with prostatitis. It is also a beneficial long-term tonic for individuals who suffer from regular urinary tract infections.

#### **Crampbark** (*Viburnum opulus*)

Crampbark is a very useful for relieving irregular spasmodic pains of the uterus and ovaries. It is an antispasmodic for all of the pelvic organs including the reproductive tract, the digestive tract, and the bladder. It is useful for reducing menstrual cramps. Crampbark is specifically indicated when there is menstrual pain or pain of the pelvic organs which begins in the back and extends through the loins and down the thighs. Crampbark can be consumed by pregnant women up to two weeks prior to their due date to prepare for labor and to help relieve afterbirth pains.

#### **Damiana** (*Turnera diffusa*, *T. aphrodisiaca*)

Damiana is helpful in the treatment of sexual impotence. It is a stimulant tonic to the sexual organs, and can assist in increasing the sexual appetite as well as sexual functions. Damiana has mood-enhancing properties and can be used to treat mild forms of depression. It is also useful for individuals with a debilitated nervous system, as it is a gentle nervine and relaxant. Additionally, Damiana reduces irritation of the urinary tract. The herb has a soothing influence on irritated mucous membranes, which renders it useful for respiratory disorders. Damiana has emmenagogue actions and can be used in the treatment of delayed or suppressed menstruation, as well as for young women experiencing amenorrhea (lack of menses) or irregular menstruation. It reduces menstrual cramping and, for some women, helps reduce premenstrual headaches.

**\*\*Contraindications: damiana consumption should be avoided during pregnancy, except to bring on labor. It also should not be used during menstruation by women who regularly experience heavy menstrual bleeding.\*\***

#### **Dandelion** (*Taraxacum officinale*)

Dandelion has been used for centuries as a liver tonic. The bitter flavor stimulates the secretion of digestive juices. Its cholagogue properties increase the flow of bile, which improves the emulsification and digestion of fats, and also acts as a gentle laxative. Dandelion is a supportive herb for the treatment of hepatitis, jaundice, gallstones, and other liver problems. In addition, the leaves of this herb act as a potassium-sparing diuretic. The leaves encourage the release of excess water, which is helpful in the treatment of edema. Dandelion leaves can also be used as an adjunct treatment for kidney stones and urinary tract infections.

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#### **Devil's Club** (*Oplopanax horridum*)

Devil's club is a member of the ginseng family. It is an expectorant and a respiratory stimulant. It softens and expels thick, viscous mucus, and also regulates the mucus membrane secretions. The cold infusion is useful for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis and other autoimmune disorders. Devil's club can enhance the liver's ability to metabolize acidic waste products.

Native Americans have long used this herb, in conjunction with other herbs, for adult-onset, insulin resistant diabetes. It decreases sugar cravings, and reduces blood glucose and blood cholesterol levels. Devil's club has adaptogenic properties similar to the other members of the ginseng family. It decreases the hypothalamic and pituitary response to stress, thereby allowing the body to cope more successfully with stress and anxiety. It also gently energizes the body, without over-stimulating the nervous system.

**\*\*Contraindications: devil's club consumption should be avoided during pregnancy. \*\***

#### **Dill** (*Anethum graveolens*)

Many people are familiar with using dill as a culinary herb. It is a flavorful addition to omelets, salads, dressings, quiches, and of course dill pickles. Dill also has valuable medicinal uses; for instance, it is useful in treating infant colic (stomach cramps). Historically, colicky infants were placed to sleep on top of fragrant dilly pillow beds and given *la grippe*, a diluted syrup which contains dill and fennel seeds. Dill can also be consumed by nursing mothers to increase the flow of breast milk and to reduce infant colic.

#### **Dragon's Blood** (*Daemonorops draco*) (*Sanguis draconis*)

Dragon's blood is a resin that comes from a palm tree. When this resin is sprinkled around the house or burned as an incense, it creates a protective energy and helps to drive out "negative" energy. It is said to increase the potency of other resins with which it is combined.

#### **Dulse** (*Pamaria palmata*)

Dulse is a sea vegetable that is an incredibly rich source of vitamins and minerals. Sprinkle dulse flakes on salads, vegetables, sauces, soups, and fish. Dulse has a mild, salty flavor. It contains about 25.3% protein by weight. Dulse also contains iron, potassium, phosphorus, sodium, and iodine. It is a good source of beta-carotene and vitamins B6, B12, C, and E. In addition, it contains numerous other minerals and trace minerals including the following: boron, bromine, calcium, magnesium, radium, rubidium, sulfur, and titanium.

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#### **Echinacea** (*Echinacea purpurea*, *E. angustifolia*) (Purple coneflower)

Echinacea was used by the plains Indians to treat bee stings as well as spider and snake bites, and thus acquired the name “snake root”. Echinacea slows the rate of tissue degradation and necrosis (tissue death), which limits tissue injury and speeds healing, especially after a spider or snake bite.

Echinacea has been used in more recent years for the treatment of acute cold and flu, and as a preventative when one feels symptoms of illness emerging. It stimulates and increases white blood cells, and enhances the body’s innate immune response. However, echinacea should not be used on a regular long-term basis for prevention. It is a cooling herb, and in order for it to work most effectively for immune conditions, it usually needs to be combined with warming herbs.

**\*\*Contraindications: regular use of echinacea should be avoided by individuals with Lupus. Consult an herbalist before consuming echinacea, when treating other autoimmune conditions, as it may be contraindicated.\*\***

#### **Elder Flower** (*Sambucus nigra*, *S. mexicana*)

Elder flower is beneficial as a diaphoretic; a hot infusion of the flowers induces sweating. Elder flower is indicated for viral infections accompanied by muscular aching, stiffness, rheumatic pains, and fever. It has mild expectorant actions. Elder flower is also a diuretic which is used to treat urinary inactivity, or as an adjunct diuretic to aid in the excretion of kidney (gravel) stones.

**Note:** elderberry is also used medicinally, but has different uses.

#### **Elecampane Root** (*Inula helenium*)

Elecampane can be used as a respiratory tonic and can also help to speed the recovery process for lingering lung infections. It is specific for respiratory conditions with excessive bronchial secretions, such as bronchitis, and for irritation of the trachea and bronchi which results in persistent and irritable coughing. Elecampane exerts a soothing expectorant action, but also acts as an astringent to reduce excess mucous. It also has carminative properties and bitter actions which encourage digestive secretions. It is especially useful for skin eruptions or skin discolorations which result from sluggish activity in the digestive tract. This root is both a diuretic and a diaphoretic. Drink a hot decoction of the root to induce sweating and to help break a fever.

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#### **American Ephedra** (*Ephedra nevadensis*) (Mormon Tea)

American ephedra can be used as a preventative for seasonal allergies. Consume one or two cups of ephedra tea daily, one to two months before the allergies usually occur. American ephedra is much milder, as far as its stimulant properties, than Chinese ephedra (Ma Huang). Thus, it can be used more safely and for a longer period of time. The tea is also used to decrease lung and sinus congestion, because of its astringent properties and its respiratory dilating actions. The tea also acts as a bronchial dilator, and it is a helpful treatment for breathing difficulty or the constriction of the bronchioles. Ephedra tea also acts as a volume diuretic, which can assist people experiencing edema (water retention). The astringent properties can also be useful for people who have an acute case of diarrhea; however, ephedra has no known antimicrobial properties.

**\*\*Contraindications: consult an herbalist or avoid using American ephedra if you are taking heart medications, have heart problems or heart conditions, anxiety, or nervous system conditions. Discontinue using ephedra if it over-dries the mucous membranes.\*\***

#### **Eucalyptus** (*Eucalyptus globulus*)

Many people are familiar with the strong aromatic and camphorous odor of eucalyptus. It is often used as an antiseptic spray in sick rooms, and it is added to liquid soaps for similar reasons. It exhibits a strong antiseptic action in both upper respiratory diseases and infections of the digestive tract. Steams with either the herb or 1-3 drops of the essential oil are useful in clearing nasal passages. Eucalyptus steams dilate the bronchioles and aid in breathing. The steams also encourage expectoration of excess mucous of the sinuses and lungs. Thus, eucalyptus is useful for sinusitis, bronchitis, bronchial asthma, and for chronic post-nasal drip. Eucalyptus tea can be taken internally, in small doses, as an intestinal antiseptic (to kill digestive bugs). It also exhibits a diaphoretic action, encouraging secretion of the sweat glands and thus reducing fevers. Eucalyptus has also become very popular as an anti-malarial agent.

**\*\*Contraindications: discontinue using eucalyptus essential oil or herb if it aggravates asthma or any other respiratory conditions. Use caution during pregnancy.\*\***

#### **Eyebright** (*Euphrasia officinalis*)

Eyebright is a specific remedy for acute infections of the upper and lower respiratory tract when there is thin, profuse discharge. It is useful if there is pressure behind the eyes, pain or heat in the frontal sinus, and if the pressure causes a headache or an earache. Another indication is when the eyes or throat are red or watery, and there is an inclination to sneeze or to blow the nose constantly. It can be highly beneficial for the treatment of allergies and sinus infections, although another disinfectant is needed with the latter condition.

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#### **False Unicorn Root** (*Chamaelirium luteum*)

False unicorn root is an endangered herb, and it should be used as infrequently as possible. It is currently on the United Plant Savers threatened list. However, false unicorn root can be used in case of threatened miscarriage, in combination with black haw. It can also be extremely useful for women suffering from a prolapsed uterus. False unicorn root's traditional use was as a tonic for the reproductive organs. It is specific for women with feeble constitutions, who are easily fatigued. Often, their nervous and digestive systems are weakened. False unicorn root is a general tonic improving the functional operations of all of the internal organs, especially the digestive system. It is an active nutritive and restorative tonic. It is also specific for males with a dull ache or dragging sensation in the prostate. It has a toning effect on the genital-urinary organs.

#### **Fennel Seed** (*Foeniculum vulgare*)

Fennel, in tea or extract form, can reduce gas and bloating in both children and adults. Fennel is a safe remedy for infants with colic, and its properties pass through the breast milk and are delivered to the infant. The seeds also stimulate and increase the flow of breast milk in lactating mothers. Fennel can be used alone or in combination with other carminative herbs to reduce gas and bloating. It has a sweet, anise-like flavor, but also a hint of bitterness. Fennel is also an expectorant and an antispasmodic for both the respiratory system and the digestive system. It is a helpful addition to tea formulas for the treatment of a dry, hacking cough. Fennel tea also has diuretic properties. Fennel contains various nutrients, including calcium, iron, potassium, vitamin A, vitamin C, protein, and phosphorous.

#### **Fenugreek Seed** (*Trigonella foenum-graecum*)

Fenugreek tea is an invaluable remedy for stomach or intestinal ulceration and inflammation. It is a demulcent and an astringent, which helps to soothe the mucus membranes and to improve their structure. It is useful for both acute and chronic digestive problems. Fenugreek also has carminative properties. The tea is useful in treating lung conditions such as bronchitis and sore throats. Fenugreek soothes dry, irritated membranes and encourages the expectoration of mucus. It also helps to reduce excess mucus. One could use fenugreek as a recuperative tonic after a long, debilitating illness. The seeds can be used as an emollient poultice for boils, sores, carbuncles, and irritated eczema. Fenugreek is also considered an aphrodisiac. Although the seeds have a maple syrup-like smell, they taste moderately bitter, but also somewhat sweet. Add fresh lemon, honey, licorice, or Indian sarsaparilla to improve the taste of fenugreek tea.

**\*\*Contraindications: fenugreek consumption should be avoided during pregnancy; it can also alter the smell of urine.\*\***

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#### **Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*)**

Feverfew is well known for its effectiveness in treating migraine headaches caused by the constriction of capillaries in the head. Although it can be effective for some individuals as an acute treatment for migraines, most research suggests using feverfew on a daily basis for 3-6 months. The average dose for preventative measures is often 15-30 drops of the fresh plant liquid extract or 1-3 freeze dried capsules per day. When feverfew is used daily for an extended period of time, migraine-induced headaches, nausea, and vomiting should become less severe and less frequent. This herb has bitter components that stimulate digestive secretions and decrease liver congestion. Feverfew's action on the liver could help decrease pelvic pain and congestion, and improve sluggish menstrual flow. It helps to ease menstrual cramping and to stimulate menses when delayed.

**\*\*Contraindications: feverfew should not be used during pregnancy. Fresh feverfew can cause mouth ulceration in some individuals; discontinue use if this occurs. Feverfew has blood-thinning properties. Avoid using this herb for one to two weeks prior to surgery and for one week following surgery.\*\***

#### **Frankincense (*Boswellia carterii*)**

Frankincense is a resin which is often used as an incense; when burned it helps encourage purification and protection. It is also said to drive out "negative" energy. It is burned in temples and churches to aid in meditation and to encourage spiritual growth.

Frankincense has medicinal properties as well: it contains resins that are antiseptic and anti-inflammatory to the lungs, urinary tract, and genitals. As a tincture, it can be used to treat stomach ulcers and diarrhea.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid using frankincense internally in cases of acute or chronic kidney inflammation or kidney conditions.\*\***

#### **Fringe Tree Root Bark (*Chionanthus virginicus*)**

Fringe tree root bark is a powerful cholagogue which stimulates the flow of bile from the gall bladder. One of its primary uses is to relieve the referred pain caused by gall bladder attacks; it also helps to speed the passing of gallstones. This herb is quite bitter; it improves the appetite, aids in the assimilation of nutrients, and also helps to tone the digestive organs. It can be used for chronic liver ailments including the following: jaundice, hepatitis, hypertrophy of the liver, and portal vein congestion. Fringe tree root bark relieves irritation of the stomach caused by alcohol, as well as inflammatory conditions of the duodenum.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid using fringe tree root bark with individuals who have a blocked bile duct.\*\***

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#### **Garlic** (*Allium sativum*)

Garlic is a multifunctional herb that bridges the gap between medicinal herb, culinary herb, and dietary supplement. It is easily incorporated into foods such as pesto, sauces, soups, and salad dressings. Its nutritional components are very impressive; garlic contains numerous vitamins and minerals. The fresh cloves in particular have potent expectorant and respiratory anti-spasmodic properties. Garlic has strong broad-spectrum effects against bacteria, especially those that are highly resistant to antibiotics. It has anti-viral properties, and it prevents the random attachment of viruses. For this reason, garlic is used in the treatment of colds, flu, coughs, bronchitis, sinus congestion, and digestive microbes. Garlic also produces a favorable effect on the intestinal micro-flora and enhances the absorption of minerals. Garlic can be used as a post-antibiotic therapy to either prevent or treat yeast infections (candida) and to encourage the growth of beneficial intestinal flora.

**\*\*Contraindications: garlic has blood-thinning properties and should be used with caution by individuals taking blood-thinning medications or who have blood clotting disorders. Avoid consuming garlic for two weeks prior to surgery and for one week following surgery.\*\***

#### **Ginger** (*Zingiber officinale*)

Ginger has a broad range of beneficial medicinal and culinary uses. It is a digestive stimulant which increases salivary and gastric secretions. It can be used to reduce flatulence and to quell nausea. Ginger also reduces cramping of the stomach and bowels, as well as menstrual cramping. It can be used in the treatment of motion sickness, and can also help to reduce morning sickness. As a warming diaphoretic, it can aid in breaking a fever. Ginger can be used as an adjunct treatment for the common cold or flu, bronchial pneumonia, and for chronic auto-immune conditions. It also has anti-microbial and anti-parasitic properties. Ginger has anti-inflammatory actions which can be of value in treating rheumatoid arthritis. It is a circulatory stimulant which is helpful for individuals with cold hands and feet. Its blood-thinning actions may be useful in the prevention of heart attacks, and for individuals with high blood pressure.

**\*\*Contraindications: ginger has blood-thinning actions. Take similar precautions to those listed under the contraindications for garlic.\*\***

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#### **Ginkgo Leaf** (*Ginkgo biloba*)

Ginkgo can be used to improve circulation. It increases the blood supply to all tissues of the body, including the extremities, the skin, the heart, the brain, and other vital organs. Due to the increase in blood supply to the brain, ginkgo can be used to treat cerebral insufficiency which may adversely affect memory, equilibrium, balance, concentration, and vision. Ginkgo can also be used specifically in treating cases of Alzheimer's disease. Other symptoms or conditions that may be helped by taking ginkgo include the following: headaches, depression, ringing in the ears (tinnitus), vertigo, glaucoma, mental confusion, and impaired vision. Studies have shown that ginkgo improves mental alertness, mood, and memory. Due to ginkgo's ability to prevent normal blood clotting, it may be helpful in preventing strokes.

**\*\*Contraindications: ginkgo has blood-thinning actions. Avoid taking ginkgo for two weeks before surgery and for one week following surgery. Consult and / or monitor with a health care practitioner before taking ginkgo in combination with other blood-thinning medications.\*\***

#### **Goldenrod** (*Solidago virgaurea*)

Goldenrod is traditionally used to treat conditions of the kidneys and the urinary tract. It is helpful for the treatment of difficult or scanty urination, for suppressed or retained urine, especially with dark color, and for chronic and acute nephritis. Goldenrod can, to some extent, help to reduce pain in the kidneys which results from passing gravel stones. It can also improve symptoms associated with prostatitis (prostate inflammation) and cystitis (bladder infection).

#### **Goldenseal** (*Hydrastis canadensis*)

Goldenseal is considered endangered because it has long been over-harvested in the wild. The use of *organically cultivated* goldenseal is strongly encouraged so as not to contribute to the extinction of the plant. Choosing an appropriate alternative to goldenseal depends on a person's health conditions and constitution, but some substitutes include yerba mansa, barberry, bayberry, coptis, or Oregon grape.

Goldenseal is highly astringent and has anti-bacterial properties. It works effectively to treat bacterial infections of the mouth, sinus, lungs, urinary tract, and digestive system. It also helps to reduce excessive mucus that is produced as a result of infection; as in conjunctivitis (pink eye), sinusitis, and bronchitis. When the sinuses or lungs feel dry, irritated, or are bleeding, goldenseal's astringent properties may aggravate these conditions. If a person has lost his or her appetite due to a debilitating illness or a gut infection, goldenseal's bitter properties will encourage digestive secretions and increase the appetite. Goldenseal contains berberine alkaloids which will help to kill any foreign bacteria in the digestive system. **Do not use this herb for a duration exceeding two weeks without consulting a practitioner.**

**\*\*Contraindications: goldenseal consumption should be avoided during pregnancy due to its berberine alkaloid content.\*\***

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#### **Gotu Kola** (*Centella asiatica*)

Gotu kola tones and strengthens the connective tissues and the skin. It also strengthens collagen and elastin fibers that make up the muscles, the skin, and the vascular system. This renders it useful for numerous conditions. It speeds the healing of broken bones, torn ligaments, and tendons. It also improves the healing of cuts, wounds, burns, and bruises, and reduces scar tissue. It is a supportive agent for the treatment of tendonitis, carpal tunnel, and rheumatic joints, as it both stimulates tissue regeneration and brings more blood flow to the damaged tissues. Gotu kola also helps to strengthen and maintain the vascular system. It aids in the treatment of varicose veins, anal fissures, and poor circulation. Gotu kola also improves the strength of the nails and hair. It is an appropriate treatment for hair that splits easily, lacks luster, or has a tendency to fall out. Gotu kola is a useful treatment for chronic eye conditions such as poor vision and retinal detachment, as well as for weak, tender, or bleeding gums.

**\*\*Contraindications: consult with a health care practitioner before using gotu kola if an individual has a hyperthyroid condition or is taking thyroid medications.\*\***

#### **Gravel Root** (*Eupatorium purpureum*)

Gravel root has diuretic properties which can be helpful in the treatment of kidney stones, hematuria, and dropsy, as well as diseases of the kidney and bladder that result from excessive uric acid. Gravel root not only helps with the referred pain often experienced by people passing gravel (kidney stones), it also helps to rid the body of excessive uric acid. It can reduce symptoms such as the constant desire to urinate, feelings of suppressed urine, and burning sensations or dull ache of the bladder. Gravel root's diuretic properties enhance the excretion of uric acid which can be helpful in improving rheumatism and gout. In the past, gravel root was used to stimulate and impart tone to the female reproductive organs. Traditionally, this herb was used to treat chronic uterine diseases such as endometriosis and leucorrhea, as well as for insufficient labor pains.

#### **Guarana** (*Paullinia cupana*) (Brazilian cocoa)

Guarana is a mild nerve stimulant used in very low doses; however, taken in high doses it can be uncomfortably enervating and may cause anxiety. Guarana contains a molecular structure similar to caffeine, and it can be used to encourage nerve stimulation when a person has been debilitated for a long period of time and has recuperated from an initial infection. It can also be helpful in low doses at the onset of a migraine headache, in which caffeine improves the symptoms.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy, lactation, and in children of all ages.\***

#### **Gum Benzoin** (*Styrax benzoin*)

Gum benzoin is a valuable preservative for oils and salves. Thirty to sixty drops of the tincture or several drops of essential oil can be added to two ounces of oil salves for this purpose. The essential oil can add a sensual base note to perfume blends. Steam inhalations of the essential oil are helpful for chronic and acute laryngitis. Gum benzoin is useful for many forms of bronchial irritation (without secretions).

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid internal use during pregnancy and lactation, or with renal weakness or disease.\*\***

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#### **Hibiscus** (*Hibiscus salbdariffa*)

Hibiscus has a tart, fruity flavor, with both astringent and demulcent properties. The demulcent actions help to decrease excessive acidity of the stomach, which can improve conditions such as gastritis and gastric ulcers. Aiding in cooling symptoms of excessive heat, this herb is useful as a summertime tea to improve the body's adaptability to heat. Hibiscus can be helpful with fevers that result from overexposure to the sun or heat.

#### **Horsetail** (*Equisetum arvense*)

Horsetail contains high amounts of silica. Silica is a mineral that helps to strengthen and maintain connective tissue, including arteries and skin. Horsetail helps to strengthen fingernails if they are weak and break easily, and aids with lingering infection around the nail. It also improves the condition of the hair when it becomes thin, lacks luster, or splits at the ends. An infusion or topical poultice is useful to strengthen bones, joints, and arteries. To speed the healing of broken bones, broken capillaries (bruises), and weak joints, combine horsetail, oat straw, nettle, comfrey leaf, and rosehips. This combination is useful before and after surgical procedures.

**\*\* Contraindications: one may want to avoid using horsetail if one has a kidney disease or kidney weakness. Limited use of horsetail is recommended during pregnancy.\*\***

#### **Hyssop** (*Hyssopus officinalis*)

Hyssop is useful as an expectorant for ailments of the lungs including bronchitis, asthma, and respiratory conditions associated with coughs and colds. Extracts of hyssop have antiviral effects and can be beneficial in the treatment of herpes simplex. Externally, a strong tea or poultice is useful for relieving muscular rheumatism, sprains, strains, and wounds.

#### **Irish Moss** (*Chondrus crispus*)

Irish moss contains high amounts of mucilage, which helps to coat and soothe irritated or inflamed membranes of the lungs, stomach, or intestines. It is an expectorant and can aid with bronchitis, whooping cough, sore throats, and laryngitis. One could make a cold infusion or add the tea to soups, sauces, and grains. The tea is also beneficial for the treatment of stomach and intestinal ulcers, and can aid the treatment of chronic diarrhea or dysentery.

#### **Jamaican Dogwood** (*Piscidia erythrina*)

Jamaican dogwood is a powerful analgesic, and is useful in treating numerous kinds of pain. It can help to relieve facial neuralgia and toothaches, and it reduces headache pain. Topical and internal use of the herb can be beneficial in the treatment of inflammatory rheumatism. As a strong antispasmodic, it sedates tracheal spasms which can result from respiratory infections such as bronchitis or whooping cough. It also helps to control night coughing and induces restful sleep. Additionally, Jamaican dogwood can reduce acute intestinal cramping, as well as gallstone and renal colic. It is effective for ovarian cramps and painful menstruation, and can reduce labor pains without interfering with normal uterine contractions. Jamaican dogwood promotes quiet, restful sleep in cases of insomnia that is caused by nervous excitement, mental worry, anxiety, or pain.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid using with other analgesic medications and use caution while operating heavy machinery. Use with caution during pregnancy.\*\***

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#### **Juniper** (*Juniperus communis*)

Juniper berries have disinfectant properties, and can be used to treat upper and lower respiratory infections. Juniper has warming, expectorant actions. It also stimulates the production of white blood cells, and thus can be beneficial in the first phase of a cold or flu. The hot tea has diaphoretic actions, and can help in treating a fever. Juniper also has diuretic properties. It can be used in the treatment of stubborn urinary tract infections. However, Juniper can be irritating to the kidneys and may aggravate acute inflammation.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid using juniper during pregnancy and lactation, and in children. Discontinue using juniper if it aggravates the kidneys or in individuals who have kidney problems or existing kidney damage. Juniper is best used as a short-term treatment.\*\***

#### **Kava Kava** (*Piper methysticum*)

Kava is an analgesic (i.e. a pain relieving agent) which is beneficial for treating many forms of pain. It is useful both topically and internally to relieve a toothache, however it should not be used in infants or children. Kava has antispasmodic properties which are useful for treating cramping of the stomach, intestines, and uterus. Kava is specific for addressing pain in the bladder and the urethra; and can be helpful in addressing chronic dysuria and acute urethritis. It can also help to reduce prostatic and testicular pain. Some find it useful in treating trigeminal neuralgia, and in relieving muscle tension. Kava can have various effects on the nervous system. For many individuals it has nervine and sedative actions, which can be helpful in treating nervousness, anxiety, and insomnia. However, kava can also increase the intensity of the dream state. For others, kava is a euphoric or a mood elevator which can be helpful for relieving depression. Kava also has potent anti-fungal properties. It can be consumed internally to address a yeast infection, and the strained tea can also be used as a douche for candida. Kava also has topical anti-fungal actions which treat athlete's foot, ringworm, and skin tinea.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy, lactation, in infants, and in children. Do not combine kava with other prescriptions, over the counter medications, alcohol, or narcotics. Avoid operating heavy machinery when consuming kava. Avoid using kava if it causes unpleasant dreams or nightmares.\*\***

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#### **Kelp** (*Fucus vesiculosus*, *Laminaria spp.*)

Kelp provides a wide variety of minerals, including iodine. Kelp can stimulate the production of iodine-containing hormones (i.e. thyroid hormones), but mainly in iodine-deficient individuals. Iodine deficiency can result in low thyroid hormone levels or hypothyroidism. Increasing dietary iodine levels in iodine deficient individuals can increase thyroid hormone levels; this can increase the body's metabolic rate and help to reduce obesity. It can also be helpful for treating fibrocystic breast disease.

Kelp also contains algin (sodium alginate), which is a polysaccharide. Kelp's algin content is likely responsible for its demulcent properties. A soup broth, tea, or cold infusion can be consumed to coat and soothe the mucus membranes throughout the digestive tract. The polysaccharides have immune-stimulating potential, which can help enhance one's resistance to disease. The algin, the fiber, and the potassium present in kelp contribute to its bulk laxative effect. Regular consumption of kelp has also been found to provide protection against radioactive strontium, helping to protect from the effects of radiation as well as to reduce the risks of exposure to radio-active materials.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid the use of kelp in individuals with hyperthyroidism, or consult a practitioner prior to use.\*\***

#### **Kola** (*Cola acuminata*)

Kola nut has stimulant actions which closely resemble those of caffeine-bearing drugs. Indeed, it contains caffeine and can therefore become addictive. Kola can exhaust the body's vital reserves, and thus should only be used short-term and in low doses. However, it is an effective stimulant and can be used to increase mental alertness. Kola also acts as a vascular dilator at the onset of a migraine headache. It is used medicinally, in low doses, short-term, to treat muscular and nerve depression which may occur with muscular debilitation.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy, lactation, and in children. Kola consumption should be avoided while consuming other stimulants. Discontinue using kola if it causes nervousness, anxiety, irritability, or insomnia. Kola should not be used by individuals taking prescription medications, as well as some over-the-counter medications. Kola contains caffeine, and can therefore be an addictive substance.\*\***

#### **Lemon Balm** (*Melissa officinalis*)

Lemon balm is a gentle nervine and a mild sedative. It can help to reduce anxiety and nervousness, and in some cases it can assist in the treatment of insomnia. Lemon balm can also be helpful as a treatment for hyperactive children, and sometimes for children with attention deficit disorder. Lemon balm also has antiviral properties which are helpful for preventing herpes and shingles, as well as speeding the healing process once the sores have erupted. The tea of lemon balm also acts as a cooling diaphoretic. It can be used in the first stages of a cold or flu to break a fever. It is most specific for children's fevers, or fevers in which a person feels aggravated or nervous.

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#### **Lemon Verbena** (*Aloysia triphylla* / *Lippia citriodora*)

Lemon verbena has an uplifting aroma and is a delightful flavoring agent. It is a flavorful addition to any herbal infusion or iced tea. The fresh herb can be used to flavor fruit salads, melons, jellies, beverages, desserts, and fish. The leaves have carminative and stomachic properties, and can be useful in the treatment of indigestion, dyspepsia, stomach aches, and diarrhea. Lemon verbena also has mild smooth muscle antispasmodic properties, which are mainly beneficial for conditions of stomach and intestinal cramping or gas and bloating.

#### **Linden Flowers** (*Tilia europa*)

Linden flowers have a gently calming action on the nervous system. They can be useful as a mild relaxant for children as well as adults. The flowers contain both tannins and mucilage, which help to reduce inflammation of the mucus membranes, as well as to reduce excess secretions. The tea can be used to soothe irritated membranes in the upper respiratory system and in the digestive tract. Additionally, linden has diaphoretic properties, and most specifically it is considered a cooling diaphoretic. It can be used to reduce a fever in the first phase of a cold or flu. Linden contains several flavonoid compounds including quercetin and kaempferol, which may be partly responsible for its anti-inflammatory and diaphoretic actions.

#### **Lomatium dissectum** (*Biscuit root*)

Lomatium has impressive antimicrobial properties. It is an antiviral agent which works effectively for the first phase of a cold or flu, as well as for upper and lower respiratory infections. It also has antibacterial properties which strongly inhibit gram positive bacteria. The aromatic resins contained in Lomatium are excreted in the respiratory mucosa, thus making Lomatium an effective expectorant, encouraging the thinning and expulsion of mucus. The resins also help to prevent the infection from spreading throughout the respiratory system. A person with a head cold, chest cold, sinus infection, bronchitis, or pneumonia may benefit from using Lomatium root. The root also stimulates the immune system by increasing the number of white blood cells, as well as their rate of phagocytosis.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid using Lomatium root during pregnancy, and in cases of liver disease. One should also exercise caution during lactation. Discontinue using Lomatium if it causes a skin rash. Lomatium may cause photosensitivity in some individuals.\*\***

#### **Marjoram** (*Origanum marjorana*)

Marjoram is a sweet, aromatic, and pungent culinary herb. It imparts a distinct and pungent flavor to soups, sauces, tomato sauce, salads, vinaigrettes, egg dishes, fish, and meat. The leaves contain up to 13% protein by weight, and are high in vitamin A and C. The leaves also contain minerals including calcium, phosphorus, iron, magnesium, and trace amounts of manganese. Marjoram has carminative and smooth muscle antispasmodic properties. It can be added to bean dishes to reduce gas and bloating. It also enhances digestion of food. Marjoram also has antimicrobial properties.

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#### **Meadowsweet** (*Filipendula ulmaria*, *Spirea ulmaria*)

Meadowsweet contains both mucilage and tannins. It is beneficial in tea form for healing stomach and duodenal ulcers, as well as for healing the intestinal lining. Meadowsweet helps to regulate gastric secretions and protect the lining of the stomach. The mucilage appears to act as a buffer in the stomach. Meadowsweet also contains aspirin-like salicylic acid, and can be used as an herbal alternative to aspirin. The salicylic acid acts as an anti-inflammatory agent, and can help to reduce inflammation of the joints and muscles. Meadowsweet can be helpful for treating headaches, rheumatic joints, fever, and sore muscles. Additionally, meadowsweet is a diuretic which enhances the removal of uric acid, and can be useful in the treatment of gout, arthritis, and kidney stones. The hot tea can be used as a cooling diaphoretic to help break a fever.

#### **Milk Thistle** (*Silybum marianum*)

Milk thistle seed is an important liver protectant and liver regenerative agent. It can be used to enhance detoxification of hormones, recreational and pharmaceutical drugs, alcohol, endogenous toxins, and heavy metals. One of the means by which milk thistle works is to prevent liver damage by inhibiting the formation of free radicals. Free radicals have been shown to damage other cells, which can result in immune problems, cancer, and cardiovascular disease, as well as other conditions. Milk thistle can be used by individuals who have poor liver function or liver disease; it can also be beneficial for the treatment of skin conditions such as psoriasis, eczema, and acne. It can also be used as a short or long term treatment for liver disease such as hepatitis, cirrhosis, or jaundice. There is a concentrated form of milk thistle called "Silamarin" which is used to prevent liver damage. It can be helpful if used immediately after toxic alkaloid poisoning from mushrooms. In particular, it prevents damage of the cells of the liver which results from Amanita alkaloids phalloidine and alpha-amanatine. It is speculated that Silamarin prevents phalloidine from reaching its receptors in the liver cell membrane, which prevents the toxins from destroying the liver cells. Silamarin also protects undamaged liver cells from renewed poisoning by breaking the entero-hepatic circulation of alpha-amanatine.

## The Northwest School for Botanical Studies

### Herbal Write-Ups

By Christa Sinadinos

#### **Mugwort** (*Artemisia vulgaris*)

A hot infusion of mugwort is a strong diaphoretic (i.e. it induces sweating), and can be used to break fevers. Mugwort encourages mucus secretions in dry membranes of the sinuses and lungs. It also acts as a uterine stimulant (emmenagogue) for women who experience slow, cramping menses. **Do not use during pregnancy or if experiencing excessive menstrual bleeding.**

A cold infusion of mugwort is effective for chronic gastritis and gastric ulcers. It protects the cells of the esophagus and stomach from harm caused by excessive secretions of acids. It should be avoided during acute flare-ups of the stomach ulcers, since it is more appropriate as a long term treatment for chronic conditions. The cold infusion will also improve the breakdown of dietary fats in the liver. If one is binging on fried foods, cheeses, or other rich foods, the blood becomes more viscous and tends to coagulate more easily. Mugwort improves the quality of the blood, and enhances the ability of the blood cells to repel each other, thus encouraging the smooth flow of blood through the capillaries. It also cools liver heat.

The tea, poultice, or salve can be applied topically as an anti-fungal and anti-microbial. Topical use is also helpful for the treatment of sprains, hyperextensions, and bruises.

Mugwort pillows may be placed near sleeping quarters to stimulate and intensify one's dream state. It should not be used near children's beds as it can cause nightmares.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy and lactation. Internal use can cause heavy menstrual bleeding and should be avoided accordingly. Mugwort can heighten one's dream state.\*\***

#### **Mullein** (*Verbascum thapsus*)

Mullein is a useful remedy for dry, irritated lung conditions or a dry, raspy throat. The leaf is an expectorant and a demulcent which encourages secretions in dry mucus membranes. An infusion of mullein is most appropriate when addressing conditions with dry tissues.

The leaves can be used as an alternative to tobacco, as an expectorant by smokers, during the course of a lung infection. The smoke of mullein can reduce respiratory spasms, which can be helpful for treating asthma and dry coughs. The author does not recommend smoking the leaves unless a person already smokes.

#### **Mustard Seed** (*Sinapis alba*)

Mustard is useful as an external application for pain. A poultice increases blood flow to the area to which it is applied. A poultice made of one part powdered mustard seed and two parts flour, and moistened with hot water, is appropriate for topical applications. Mustard has little therapeutic influence internally. If too much is consumed it can cause a burning sensation in the stomach, mild gastritis, or even vomiting. Small quantities used for culinary purposes should not produce these effects.

**\*\*Contraindications: please note that the direct or prolonged application of mustard may cause painful blisters. Do not leave the poultice on for more than 15-20 minutes.\*\***

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#### **Myrrh Gum** (*Commiphora molmol*, *C. myrrha*)

Myrrh is renowned for its age-old use as incense. Burning myrrh in one's home or office helps to purify energy, aid in meditation, create a sense of peace, and lift the energy in a dark or dreary atmosphere.

Myrrh is a potent anti-microbial and astringent. One could gargle with the tincture diluted in water as a mouthwash for gingivitis and gum infections. Consuming small quantities of myrrh extract (5-15 drops) stimulates the immune system by increasing the number and quality of white blood cells. It can increase one's resistance when feeling tired or run-down, as well as relieve symptoms and speed the recovery of laryngitis.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid using myrrh internally during pregnancy, lactation, and in young children. The resins contained in myrrh gum can also aggravate the kidneys, and therefore use should be discontinued if one experiences a dull ache in the mid- to lower back, or if one has existing kidney weakness or disease.\*\***

#### **Nettles** (*Urtica dioica*)

Nettles are one of the most nourishing plants growing on land. It contains a wide variety of nutrients, including the following: calcium, chromium, cobalt, iron, magnesium, manganese, niacin, phosphorus, potassium, protein, riboflavin, selenium, silicon, sodium (trace), thiamine, tin, zinc, and vitamins A and C. Nettles are also rich in chlorophyll. Nettles can be used as a nutrient-rich daily tea. Nettles provide a fantastic source of easily-assimilated nutrients. They can be an important source of nutrients for all individuals, but especially for individuals with compromised digestion. Nettles' nutritional properties support the immune system, the muscular-skeletal system, and the connective tissue, as well as stabilizing blood sugar. The minerals have an alkalinizing effect, which can be beneficial for conditions aggravated by hyperacidity. Nettles are an important herb used in the treatment of iron deficiency anemia. Nettles also have anti-allergic, astringent, diuretic, hemostatic, and galactagogue actions. The author could go on for pages about this herb, but this writing is limited by lack of space.

#### **Oat Straw** (*Avena sativa*)

Oat straw is high in vitamins A and C. It also contains vitamins E, G, and K, as well as B vitamins including thiamine, riboflavin, niacin, folic acid, and B6. Oat straw contains the following amino acids: histadine, argentine, leucine, lysine, and phenylalanine. The minerals contained in oat straw include calcium, chromium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, selenium, silicon, sodium, and zinc. Oat straw's nutritive properties are highly beneficial for most individuals, and especially for pregnant and nursing mothers. The minerals contained in oat straw have an alkalinizing effect. These minerals can also help to reduce sugar cravings and to balance blood sugar levels. The calcium contained in oat straw is easily assimilable and can help to prevent osteoporosis. Additionally, the minerals contained in oat straw aid in the development and maintenance of healthy bones, teeth, hair, and nails.

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#### **Orange Peel** (*Citrus sinensis*)

Orange peel has a bitter, aromatic flavor and is considered a digestive tonic. It stimulates bile flow, increases digestive enzymes, and helps to reduce stagnation of the liver. It contains high amounts of pectin, which binds with and removes radioactive compounds, heavy metals, and environmental toxins that are stored in the body. Orange peel has carminative actions which reduce the cramping that may potentially result from taking potent bitter, cholagogue herbs such as gentian and Oregon grape. It also contains flavonoids that help to strengthen connective tissues, improve the integrity of the blood vessels, and enhance free radical scavenging (i.e. antioxidant) properties. It is a tasty addition to most tea blends when used in small quantities.

#### **Oregano** (*Origanum vulgare*)

Oregano is a flavorful and pungent culinary herb. It is a tasty addition to beans, omelets, deviled eggs, meats, and tomato dishes. Oregano has carminative properties which help to reduce indigestion, gas, and bloating. It is an antifungal and an antibacterial; it also has worm expellant properties. The herb may be added to the diet to reduce intestinal and vaginal Candida. A tea or the herb cooked in soup stock is useful as an expectorant for respiratory ailments such as bronchitis. Oregano contains aromatic oils that are antibacterial, anti-oxidant, and anti-inflammatory.

#### **Oregon Grape** (*Berberis vulgaris*)

Oregon grape root can be used as a digestive bitter to stimulate the liver's metabolism. The root stimulates liver, pancreatic, and gallbladder secretions, which can enhance the digestion of fats and proteins. It is also helpful for symptoms which arise from poor digestion, such as chronic gum or teeth problems, poorly healing or dry skin, rapid shifts in blood sugar levels, and chronic constipation. Oregon grape root can be used as an antimicrobial for intestinal infections, including salmonella and candida. It can also be beneficial for the treatment of liver conditions including jaundice, hepatitis, cirrhosis, and gall stones.

**\*\*Contraindications: Oregon grape root contains berberine alkaloids and should be used with caution or avoided during pregnancy. Consult a practitioner before using Oregon grape root as a long-term treatment. \*\***

#### **Osha Root** (*Ligusticum porteri*)

Osha can be highly effective in the treatment of acute viral infections. The root soothes and anesthetizes sore throats and bronchial inflammations. It is also an expectorant that encourages the thinning and expelling of mucus, which is very appropriate for dry, hacking coughs. Additionally, it increases oxygenation in the lungs. The tea or tincture in hot water acts as a diaphoretic, which causes sweating and helps to break a fever. This is especially useful in the first phase of an infection, to aid in the elimination of toxins. It is also useful for treating fevers which waver from hot to chilled, allowing the body to conserve energy.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy. Discontinue use if the condition is aggravated.\*\***

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#### **Pau d'arco** (*Tabebuia heptaphylla*) (Lapacho, Taheebo)

Pau d'arco has shown strong anti-bacterial activity against *Staphylococcus aureus* and *Brucella*. Research demonstrates that pau d'arco has also been useful in the treatment of tuberculosis, dysentery, and anthrax. Pau d'arco also displays anti-fungal properties against *Candida albicans* and other forms of *Candida*. Research has shown that the bark demonstrates activity against some viruses including Herpes virus I and II, influenza, polio virus, and vesicular stomatitis virus. Additionally, pau d'arco has anti-parasitic properties. It can increase the numbers of red corpuscles, and is used as an adjunct therapy for treatment of cancer and tumors. It is used specifically in the treatment of leukemia, and also in supportive therapy for other kinds of cancer.

#### **Parsley** (*Petroselinum crispum*)

Parsley leaf is delicious in salads, tabouli, tomato dishes, baked potatoes, fish, meat, pizza, egg dishes, omelets, and sauces. Parsley leaf stimulates digestive secretions and gastric activity. It is both a carminative and a stomachic. Chewing the leaves after a meal will help to freshen the breath.

The root and seeds are diuretic, increasing the flow of urine. This makes it useful for conditions that result from excessive uric acid such as gout. It is also helpful in the treatment of urinary tract infections.

#### **Pennyroyal** (*Mentha pulegium*)

Pennyroyal tea has been used historically as an emmenagogue, to encourage menses, and as an anti-fertility herb. It contains the ketone pulegone, which is the primary constituent responsible for its emmenagogue effects. Pennyroyal can also be used to soothe nervous headaches, and to relieve upset stomachs and cramps. Pennyroyal is known as an insect repellent which helps to deter mosquitoes, fleas, mites, and ticks. It does not appear to repel ants.

**\*\*Contraindications: even small amounts of the essential oil of pennyroyal can be extremely toxic if ingested. Ingestion of the essential oil may result in convulsions, irreversible kidney damage, coma, or even death. Use of the essential oil should always be avoided in children, animals, pets, and individuals who are prone to seizures. Also, pennyroyal should not be used in any form (herb or oil) during pregnancy or lactation, or by women who experience heavy menstrual bleeding.\*\***

#### **Peppermint** (*Mentha piperita*)

Peppermint is an age-old remedy which can be used in the treatment of nausea, dyspepsia, and stomach cramps. The tea of peppermint is a safe remedy for morning sickness. Peppermint also anesthetizes the nerves in the intestinal tract, making it an herb of choice for stomach pain or an upset stomach. The tea is helpful to reduce gas pain and hiatal hernia pain. Peppermint can decrease heartburn and esophageal acidity from hiatal hernia. However, for some individuals peppermint may aggravate the latter two conditions.

**\*\*Contraindications: discontinue use of peppermint if it aggravates acid indigestion or gastric reflux disease.\*\***

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#### **Pleurisy Root** (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Pleurisy root can be useful for bronchial diseases with a dry, irritating character. It encourages proper secretions in the bronchioles, and acts as an expectorant, aiding in the removal of mucus. It also can reduce pulmonary irritation and relieve tightness and pain of the chest. Pleurisy root has helped to improve the following conditions: acute bronchitis, pneumonia, croup, coryza, and catarrh. It is also useful for dry, non-spasmodic asthma. Pleurisy root is a true diaphoretic, for it increases circulation and helps sweat glands in removing waste products.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy and lactation.\*\***

#### **Poke Root** (*Phytolacca americana*)

Although poke root can be dangerous, the tincture can be useful in very low doses. For instance, poke root is a strong lymphatic that is useful in treating hard, swollen and engorged glands, as well as tonsillitis. It can be used internally (use with caution and in low doses) for the treatment of mastitis and soreness or swelling of the mammary glands. Poke root can also be used in the treatment of ovarian cysts.

Poke root is extremely potent and its use should be regulated very carefully, both internally and externally. Only very small doses are recommended for internal use. Please consult an herbalist before using poke root.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy and lactation, and in children.**

**Use with great care.\*\***

#### **Prickly Ash** (*Zanthoxylum americanum*)

Prickly ash can be used as a digestive bitter tonic for individuals with poor digestion. It increases salivary, gastric, and biliary secretions, which improve digestion and assimilation of starch, proteins, and fat. This herb causes a tingling sensation on the tongue, which is likely how it acquired the name “prickly” ash. It stimulates circulation and increases blood supply to the extremities, as well as dilating the blood vessels in the digestive system. Prickly ash can be beneficial for individuals who tend to have cold hands and feet. Additionally, it can increase the blood flow to the brain, the lungs, and the liver. Prickly ash’s circulatory stimulant properties improve the overall health of the tissues by increasing oxygen and nutrient supply. Prickly ash can also be used as an agent to stimulate sluggish or depressed individuals.

**\*\*Contraindications: people with acid indigestion should avoid consuming prickly ash. Discontinue use of this herb if it causes uncomfortable sensations of heat in the body.\*\***

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#### **Red Raspberry** (*Rubus idaeus*)

Red raspberry contains a variety of nutrients including calcium, chromium, cobalt, iron, magnesium, manganese, niacin, phosphorus, potassium, protein, riboflavin, selenium, silicon, sodium, thiamine, tin, zinc, and vitamins A and C. It has uterine tonifying properties, and can be used during pregnancy as a partus preparator. Red raspberry's astringent properties can help to reduce excessive bleeding which may accompany childbirth, as well as reducing spotting and heavy menstrual bleeding. In addition, red raspberry's astringent properties can help to reduce inflammation in the mucus membranes, thus aiding in the treatment of sore throats, diarrhea, and digestive inflammation and bleeding. The tea can also be used as a douche to reduce excess vaginal secretions.

#### **Red Root** (*Ceanothus americanus*)

Red root is most commonly used to reduce lymphatic swelling and inflammation. It strengthens the lymph tissue and improves the quality of the blood charge, thus helping the blood to move more gracefully through the lymph. A tea or tincture can decrease lymphatic swelling in the throat, armpits, and groin. It can also accelerate the healing process in cases of pharyngitis, tonsillitis, sore throats, and nasal catarrh. This root can assist in the healing process for individuals with chronic illnesses, including viruses such as chronic fatigue, mononucleosis, Epstein-Barr, and hepatitis. Red root does not kill the virus, but it decreases swelling of the liver and spleen, and speeds the movement of fluids through the lymph. Red root can be useful for the long term treatment of breast cysts, ovarian cysts, testicular cysts, hemorrhoids, and varicose veins.

**\*\*Contraindications: although red root has hemostatic properties, it also acts similarly to blood thinning agents. Avoid consumption two weeks prior to and following surgery.\*\***

#### **Red Clover** (*Trifolium pratense*)

Red clover has been used traditionally as a "blood purifier" and a gentle cleansing agent. It contains alkaloids known as coumarins, which have mild blood thinning properties. It can be useful in the treatment of chronic skin conditions including dermatitis, eczema, and psoriasis. For such conditions, red clover combines well with nettles, alfalfa, oat straw, and horsetail. Red clover is a gentle expectorant and a mild antitussive agent. It can be also be used in the treatment of coughs, colds, and mucus congestion in the lungs. Red clover is also used as an adjunct therapy for tumors and cancer (it is a supportive agent, not a cure-all). It is known as an "alterative," which is a substance that alters chronic conditions. Red clover can be useful in the long-term treatment of auto-immune conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis and chronic fatigue syndrome.

**\*\*Contraindications: red clover has mild blood thinning properties. Avoid use for two weeks prior to and following surgery.\*\***

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**Rose Hips** (*Rosa canina*)

Rose hips became recognized as a rich source of vitamin C during World War II. The vitamin C and the high flavonoid content strengthen connective tissues and help to reduce inflammation. This can be useful in cases of capillary fragility, and can aid those who bruise easily or have varicose veins. The high vitamin C content can also help speed the healing of wounds and support healthy tissue function. Rose hips are a tasty addition to tea blends.

**Rosemary** (*Rosmarinus officinalis*)

Rosemary contains vitamins A and C as well as phosphorus, potassium, iron, magnesium, zinc, and calcium. It aids circulation and is therefore helpful in the treatment of chronic circulatory weakness. This herb is used as a treatment for patients with cerebral arteriosclerosis. Rosemary is known as “the herb of remembrance” and it is often used in herbal formulas for memory. Rosemary is also a tasty and pungent culinary herb; it can be used both fresh and dried in cooking. It has carminative and cholagogue actions, which enhance digestion.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use in cases in which the bile duct is blocked.\*\***

**Rue** (*Ruta graveolens*)

Rue is an herb used in European tradition to improve the appetite and digestion. It is also used topically to treat neuralgia, cramps, nervous spasms, gout, and rheumatoid arthritis. Rue can be beneficial when applied topically to relax strained muscles and tendons. It is most helpful when applied externally as a poultice or salve. Rue is also used as an emmenagogue, to promote the onset of menstruation.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy and lactation, and in children. Rue can be toxic when consumed in high doses.\*\***

**Sage** (*Salvia officinalis*)

Sage is a warming, astringent herb. The tea can be useful for diarrhea, gastritis, and enteritis. The tea can also be used as a gargle for sore throats, laryngitis, tonsillitis, or ulcerations of the mouth. Sage is an expectorant, and aids in the elimination of mucus. It also helps to reduce fluid secretions. Sage will reduce excessive perspiration, and can aid with night sweats. It can also decrease excess vaginal discharge; thus it is beneficial for the treatment of leucorrhea and yeast infections. Sage can also be used to dry up the flow of breast milk.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during lactation, and use in moderation during pregnancy.\*\***

**Sassafras** (*Sassafras albidum*)

Sassafras is well known as a flavoring agent for root beer, tea, and recreational beverages. It makes a tasty addition to tea blends. It is considered a diuretic and a “blood purifier.” Sassafras was traditionally employed to treat arthritis and rheumatism, as well as acne, eczema, and psoriasis. Sassafras can be used externally as a wash for poison oak rashes, as it can help to dry the rash and soothe the itching.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy and lactation.\*\***

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**Savory** (*Satureja hortensis*, *S. montana*)

Savory is a pungent culinary herb with a hot, peppery flavor somewhat similar to that of oregano. It combines well with beans, fish, meat, and vegetables. Adding savory to foods helps to improve their digestibility. The Italians were among the first to use this plant. Savory has carminative actions which can help relieve indigestion, digestive cramps, nausea, and lack of appetite.

**Saw Palmetto** (*Serenoa serrulata*)

Saw palmetto can be used long-term to prevent and address prostate problems. It is beneficial for the treatment of benign prostatic hypertrophy and prostatitis. Saw palmetto decreases swelling and irritation of the prostate and the urethra, and can be used to alleviate prostate pain. Saw palmetto also improves the tone of the bladder. It enhances the bladder's ability to contract during urination, which aids in the expulsion of urine and decreases dribbling. Saw palmetto is also beneficial as a long-term tonic for individuals who have interstitial cystitis and / or recurring bladder infections.

Saw palmetto is also beneficial as a reproductive structural tonic for women. It improves the tone of the uterus and the cervix. It increases blood flow to the reproductive organs, increasing the delivery of nutrients and oxygen, and decreasing stagnation of blood. Saw palmetto can be used for women with a dull ache or dull throbbing pain in the reproductive region. Some female reproductive conditions that may be improved by the long-term use of saw palmetto include cervical dysplasia, endometriosis, ovarian cysts, polycystic ovary disease, uterine fibroids, and uterine cysts. Saw palmetto is a wonderful recuperative tonic and restorative agent for a woman to take after childbirth.

Additionally, saw palmetto is a galactagogue agent which increases the flow of breast milk.

Saw palmetto will improve the appetite, as well as digestion and assimilation. It can help to increase a person's strength and vitality if he or she is feeling depleted or exhausted.

**Senna Leaves** (*Senna angustifolia*)

Senna is a very stimulating laxative and should only be used for the short-term, temporary relief of constipation. (The author recommends first considering other options such as demulcent herbs, carminative herbs, cholagogue agents, and / or psyllium.)

However, when a more heroic treatment is needed, an infusion of the senna leaves is effective. In doses such as 2-4 ounces of tea at a time, it produces normal evacuation of the bowels, but can cause griping if excessive doses are consumed. The author recommends combining senna with other carminative agents such as fennel or anise to prevent griping. Senna is sometimes used when constipation results after surgical operations, post-confinement, and in feeble, inactive bowel states. Senna leaves are the active constituent in the Eclectic formula "Compound Licorice Powder." The recipe is as follows: combine two ounces each of senna and licorice powder, one ounce fennel powder, and five ounces of sugar (optional). The dose ranges from ¼ gram to 1 gram in water. An additional simple laxative remedy that works well is as follows: make a strong infusion of senna leaves and strain. Stew prunes in the liquid until they are thoroughly cooked. Eat one prune 3-4 times throughout the day. Senna may take up to twelve hours to take effect.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy and lactation, and in children. Senna should also be used with caution with some prescription medications.\*\***

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#### **Shepherd's Purse** (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*)

Shepherd's purse is a potent hemostatic, which reduces bleeding--especially when the fresh tincture is used. It can help to reduce excessive bleeding resulting from extended menstruation or uterine hemorrhage, as well as severe bleeding during labor or postpartum. Shepherd's purse can be used to treat hematuria (blood in the urine) which results from cystitis or from passing kidney stones. It can aid with bleeding from flare-ups of ulcerative colitis, as well as bleeding hemorrhoids. Note that shepherd's purse is not a curative for the conditions listed above; it primarily reduces bleeding which may accompany some of these conditions. Bleeding is often a sign of a more serious problem. Shepherd's purse also has diuretic properties.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy, except to bring on labor.\*\***

#### **Skullcap** (*Scutellaria lateriflora*)

Skullcap has nervine properties, which can help to reduce nervous anxiety and to decrease the negative effects of stress on the body. Skullcap can be helpful in treating insomnia, and is especially useful if a person is unable to sleep due to an overactive mind. It has anti-spasmodic actions, and can help to reduce muscular cramping of the back, the uterus, and the intestines. It can also help to reduce the pain associated with bursitis, tendonitis, herpes, and shingles flare-ups. Skullcap is useful for people who are recovering from addictions to substances such as tobacco, caffeine, pharmaceutical pain relievers (including morphine), and heroin.

#### **Slippery Elm** (*Ulmus fulva, U. rubra*)

Slippery elm tea is very soothing to irritated sore throats and dry coughs, and is beneficial in addressing most conditions which result in dryness of the throat and lungs. A potent decoction can be consumed as a nutrient when a person is recovering from stomach flu, or if he or she is having difficulty digesting foods. It is also very nourishing for people who are debilitated and / or deficient. To make gruel, add three to five tablespoons of slippery elm to one quart of water, mix together, and cook on low until the desired consistency is attained. The gruel or the capsules are also useful in the treatment of gastrointestinal inflammations. Slippery elm can reduce inflammation caused by gastric ulcers, ulcerative colitis flare-ups, Crohns disease, irritable bowel syndrome, or diarrhea. The poultice, used topically, helps to heal dry conditions of the skin, including ulcers, boils, and wounds. The inner bark is the most potent part of the plant.

**Note: Slippery elm is an endangered plant. Try marshmallow root as an alternative.**

#### **Spearmint** (*Mentha spicata*)

Spearmint shares most of the properties of peppermint, but it is not as stimulating and has a milder flavor. The tea can be used to relieve gas and digestive upset. Spearmint is sometimes used as a mild diaphoretic to treat the first stages of colds, flu, and fevers. It combines well with elder flower for this purpose. Spearmint is a delightful flavoring agent in tea blends.

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**Spikenard** (*Aralia californica*, *A. racemosa*)

Spikenard has soothing expectorant actions. It can be used for both chronic, moist lung conditions and for dry, irritating lung conditions. The tea or tincture can be useful as an adjunct treatment for lung infections such as bronchitis or pneumonia. It is also beneficial for those with emphysema or asthma, or for smokers. The root is anti-microbial and anti-inflammatory. It also contains aromatic resins that aid in restoring proper mucous membrane secretions. Spikenard is a nourishing lung tonic.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy. Discontinue using spikenard if it causes a rash.\*\***

**Spilanthes** (*Spilanthes achmella*)

Spilanthes closely resembles Echinacea in many of its actions. One should notice a strong tingling sensation on the tongue after ingesting the flowers or extract. Spilanthes stimulates the parotid glands and causes increased salivation. It also stimulates blood flow to the oral mucosa. It can be useful as a mouthwash and rinse for gum infections, degenerative gum diseases, and toothaches. It has a stimulating effect on the immune system and increases white blood cell count. Spilanthes also has anti-bacterial, antiviral, and anti-fungal actions.

**Spirulina** (*Spirulina platensis*)

Spirulina is a chlorophyll-rich algae. It is a concentrated source of nutrients, which can be used to supplement the diet. It contains vitamins A and E, vitamin B complex, and minerals. Spirulina contains 0.5- 2 micrograms of B-12 per gram. This compares well to liver, which contains 0.2-1.8 micrograms of B-12 per gram. Spirulina contains 50-70% protein, with limited amounts of methionine and cystine. The chlorophyll content can be useful in cases of anemia, and to prevent altitude sickness.

**\*\*Contraindications: individuals with hyperthyroidism should avoid consuming Spirulina. Spirulina can also be too energizing for some individuals, so discontinue use if it over-stimulates the nervous system or causes anxiety. Only very low doses should be used by children (if at all).\*\***

**St. John's wort** (*Hypericum perforatum*)

St. John's wort helps to calm the nervous system and repair nerve damage. It is useful for a variety of conditions including nerve pain, nerve inflammation, herpes, shingles, insomnia, anxiety, and A.D.D. St. John's wort is an anti-inflammatory, and can reduce pain and swelling in cases of arthritis, tendonitis, carpal tunnel, sore muscles and joints, and hemorrhoids. It can also reduce ulcer pain and encourage healing of stomach ulcers. St. John's wort has been used for centuries to treat depression. Studies have shown that St. John's wort possesses properties similar to both classes of anti-depressant drugs. This herb is an MAO inhibitor and a serotonin re-uptake inhibitor (Blumenthal, 1989; Hobbs 1988/1989; Richo Cech 1997). It may take anywhere from three weeks to three months before the effects are noticed. The oil of St. John's wort can be applied to hemorrhoids, fistulas, cuts, bruises, sore muscles, and mild sunburns. St. John's wort tincture and oil are most effective when prepared from the fresh flowers and leaves.

**\*\*Contraindications: this herb should not be combined with certain pharmaceutical prescriptions, including birth control pills. Consult a practitioner before using St. John's wort internally if you are taking medications. Internal consumption of this herb may cause photosensitivity in some individuals.\*\***

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This information is not meant to diagnose or prescribe. Please consult with your health practitioner for serious health conditions, or before combining herbs with prescription or over-the-counter medications.

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By Christa Sinadinos

#### **Tarragon** (*Artemisia dracunculus*)

French tarragon has a rich, sweet, anise-like flavor. This herb is a flavorful addition to chicken, fish, salad and salad dressings, and vegetable dishes. The leaves contain vitamin A, niacin, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, and iron. Tarragon can be used to stimulate the appetite and to relieve an upset stomach.

#### **Thyme** (*Thymus vulgaris*)

Thyme has earned its reputation as a culinary herb. It enhances the flavor of egg dishes, fish, poultry, meat, stuffing, gravy, vinaigrettes, and vegetables. Thyme leaves contain vitamin A, niacin, potassium, phosphorus, calcium, iron, magnesium, and zinc. Thyme has antioxidant properties, and can be used as a preservative agent for foods, oils, and salves. Internally, the antioxidant actions prevent free radical formation, and can aid in preventing cancer, strengthening the immune system, and improving cardiovascular health.

Thyme also has potent medicinal properties. It has antiviral, antibacterial, and antifungal properties, and can be used in the treatment of numerous conditions of the respiratory tract including colds, flu, bronchitis, asthma, sinus infections, and whooping cough. Thyme also has expectorant and antitussive actions, and can be helpful for dry, unproductive coughs.

Thyme has carminative properties which help to relieve digestive cramping and gas. It is useful for dyspepsia and sluggish digestion. Historically, thyme was used to expel hookworms.

#### **Turmeric** (*Curcuma longa*)

Turmeric has been used for centuries in India as both a spice and a medicine. It is a pungent, warming carminative which enhances digestion. Turmeric increases blood flow to the digestive system, and helps to warm the body from the core. One can cook with turmeric to improve the digestibility of foods. Turmeric acts as an antispasmodic to the smooth muscles. It inhibits prostaglandins, which are agents that can cause the smooth muscles to spasm. Consuming turmeric on a regular or semi-regular basis can help to improve digestive conditions which result in cramping or intestinal spasms, as well as to reduce menstrual cramping. Turmeric can even be beneficial as a tonic for some individuals with asthma; as decreasing prostaglandins can reduce respiratory spasms. It is most specific for asthma which is aggravated by cold weather, and when the mucus is clear or cloudy. Additionally, turmeric has liver protectant properties. It shrinks engorged hepatic ducts in the liver and encourages bile secretion. Turmeric's cholagogue properties encourage detoxification via the liver and the gall bladder, as well as enhancing the digestion of fats. Turmeric can aid in the treatment of some liver conditions, including hepatitis, cirrhosis, and jaundice. Additionally, both the anti-inflammatory properties and detoxifying actions are beneficial for some individuals with skin conditions.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid consuming turmeric regularly if one has night sweats, hot flashes, or yin deficiency with heat signs. Turmeric should be with caution by individuals with anemia or blood deficiency. Use in moderation during pregnancy.\*\***

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This information is not meant to diagnose or prescribe. Please consult with your health practitioner for serious health conditions, or before combining herbs with prescription or over-the-counter medications.

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### Herbal Write-Ups

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#### **Usnea** (*Usnea barbata*) (Old Man's Beard)

Usnea is a lichen that is renowned for its anti-bacterial and anti-fungal properties. Usnea contains lichen acids, particularly usnic acid, which is effective against gram positive bacteria. Examples of these fast-growing bacteria are the following: streptococcus (strep throat), staphylococcus (impetigo), mycobacterium tuberculosis, and pneumococcus. Usnea can be helpful in treating the following acute bacterial infections: bronchitis, pneumonia, sinus infections, and pleurisy. The lichen acids have little effect on salmonella and E. coli, a gram-negative bacterium that inhabits the gastrointestinal tract. Usnea may also be included in formulas as an anti-bacterial for urinary tract infections and some kinds of digestive infections. It can be used as an alternative to the drug Flagyl. Usnea can be used as an anti-fungal internally and as a douche for yeast infections. Topically, usnea works well for fungal infections like athlete's foot and ringworm. Salves, powders, creams, and tinctures are effective for topical use.

#### **Uva ursi** (*Arctostaphylos uva ursi*)

Uva ursi can be used to treat urinary tract infections. It is best combined with other disinfectant herbs, as well as mucilaginous herbs such as marshmallow root, when treating a bladder or urinary tract infection. However, this plant is very high in tannins and should not be used for more than one week, as it may irritate the kidneys and the bladder. A strong, well-strained tea of uva ursi can be added to sitz baths. It acts as an astringent to relieve the irritation and inflammation of the local tissues which often accompanies bacterial vaginosis, yeast infections, vulvitis, as well as the acute pain of herpes outbreaks.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid internal use during pregnancy and lactation. Avoid using this plant internally for more than one week, as the tannins can irritate the kidneys. Discontinue use if kidney irritation occurs. Consult a practitioner when treating a urinary tract infection. \*\***

#### **Valerian** (*Valeriana officinalis*)

Valerian is well known as a sedative. It can be especially helpful for insomnia resulting from pain or an overactive mind. The fresh plant extract of valerian has a strong antispasmodic action that helps to relax both smooth muscles and skeletal muscles. It is helpful for digestive and reproductive cramps, as well as muscle spasms of the neck, back, and legs. It can also be used topically and internally to reduce tooth pain. Valerian can help to reduce nervous anxiety and tension. It can be helpful as a nervine for individuals who are recovering from the use of addictive substances such as caffeine, tobacco, barbiturates, heroin, and morphine. Some people may experience the opposite effects on the nervous system from taking this herb. For instance, it may stimulate the nervous system, cause heart palpitations, or nausea. If this occurs, discontinue use and choose another nervine herb.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid using this herb with other pain medications. Do not operate heavy machinery or drive while taking valerian. Avoid using this herb if it causes unpleasant side effects. Consult a practitioner before using valerian during pregnancy.\*\***

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#### **White Willow** (*Salix alba*)

White willow can be used as an anti-inflammatory to treat fevers and arthritis. White willow bark contains salicin or salicylic acid, a constituent that is the basis for aspirin. The salicin has anti-inflammatory actions that can be beneficial in cases of rheumatoid arthritis, headaches, and other inflammatory conditions. Unlike aspirin, white willow can also be beneficial for stomach ulcers and heartburn. White willow is most helpful to treat fevers when consumed as a hot or warm beverage, or when added to a tepid bath. The tea is also useful as a gargle for sore throats, due to its tannin content.

#### **White Oak** (*Quercus alba*)

White Oak is rich in tannins and is a powerful astringent. A gargle with the tea or tincture can help soothe a sore throat. A well-strained, cooled tea can be used effectively as an eyewash or as a douche for leucorrhoea. Internally, white oak has been used to stop diarrhea and gastroenteritis. Topical compresses are useful for the treatment of burns, cuts, varicose veins, poison oak, and piles.

#### **White Sage** (*Salvia apiana*)

White sage inhibits bacterial and fungal growth. The salve or tea, as a nightly foot soak, is useful in the treatment of athlete's foot. The salve or tea (as a topical wash) is beneficial for skin fungus and for impetigo. The tea (once cooled and strained) can be used as a douche for vaginal yeast. Consuming a hot cup of white sage tea encourages sweating (i.e., it is a diaphoretic) and can help to break a fever in the first stages of cold and flu. The hot tea will also encourage stomach secretions for a person who is having difficulty digesting food, or who has a reduced appetite from illness. Drinking the tea at room temperature has the opposite effects; for instance, decreasing sweating and gastric secretions. White sage tea can also be used to help dry up mother's milk when the child is weaning.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during lactation, as white sage can dry breast milk. Avoid consuming the hot tea internally during pregnancy.\*\***

#### **Wild Cherry** (*Prunus serotina*, *P. virginiana*)

Wild cherry is a respiratory sedative and antitussive agent. If someone is breathing too quickly or shallowly as a result of asthma or a bronchial infection, wild cherry can be very helpful. It helps to relax and strengthen the respiratory system in cases of infection. It is often used in cough syrup and other cough formulas.

**\*\*Contraindications: Avoid use the of wild cherry bark with individuals who have very low blood pressure, respiratory depression, or cardiovascular depression.\*\***

#### **Wild Yam Root** (*Dioscorea villosa*)

Wild yam acts as an antispasmodic for smooth muscles. It can be helpful for intestinal and uterine cramping. It can also be used to relieve colic, griping, and pain from passing gallstones. Wild yam is both a carminative and a bitter. It has been used safely as a remedy for morning sickness and nausea during pregnancy. Some find it useful for tinnitus (ringing in the ears) and to decrease the pain of inner ear infections. One of its folk names is "Rheumatism root" which is an indication of its use for arthritis; it has moderate anti-inflammatory properties.

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#### **Wood Betony** (*Stachys officinalis*) (Bishop's wort)

Wood betony has a mild calming effect on the nervous system. It helps to reduce anxiety and nervous tension. It can be used to treat headaches and migraines, especially when they are caused by nervous tension. It also contains tannins, which have astringent actions.

#### **Wormwood** (*Artemisia absinthium*)

Wormwood can be used as a bitter digestive stimulant; even low doses (such as 5-10 drops of the tincture) are effective. It stimulates the appetite by increasing digestive secretions and peristalsis. It also promotes bile secretion. Wormwood can also be used, with caution, to expel roundworms and threadworms. Wormwood has traditionally been used in liqueurs such as absinthe and vermouth.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid use during pregnancy and lactation.\*\***

#### **Yarrow** (*Achillea millefolium*)

Yarrow has hemostatic properties. Both topical poultice and internal use are appropriate. In fact, yarrow seems to help the arteries to re-assimilate blood that has flowed out into tissues as a result of a torn vessel. Yarrow is well known as a diaphoretic; it is specific for high fevers when the skin feels hot to the touch, dry, and constricted. Yarrow contains volatile oils which stimulate mucus membrane secretions in the respiratory mucosa. It can be helpful for irritated lung conditions. Yarrow is an effective digestive tonic; its bitter components stimulate digestive secretions. Yarrow has astringent properties which can be useful as a treatment for diarrhea. It helps tone the digestive tract and reduce bleeding and sensitivity of the membranes. It can also be helpful as both an astringent and a hemostatic for the treatment of diverticulitis, colitis, and bleeding hemorrhoids.

**\*\*Contraindications: avoid internal use during pregnancy.\*\***

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#### **Yellow Dock** (*Rumex crispus*)

Yellow dock can be used to improve the health of the digestive system and the liver. It has mild astringent actions, and when used in lower doses it can help to reduce inflammation of the mucus membranes in the digestive tract. These mild astringent properties make yellow dock beneficial as a gentle, long-term tonic for inflammatory conditions of the lower digestive system, including irritable bowel syndrome, Crohns disease, ulcerative colitis, leaky gut syndrome, celiac disease, and intestinal candida. Low doses, such as 5-10 drops of the tincture, can also help to reduce diarrhea and loose stools (when the condition is not caused by a microbe). Interestingly, moderate doses of yellow dock (e.g. 20-60 drops of the tincture) have gentle laxative properties. The root has cholagogue actions, and it also contains anthraquinone derivatives, both of which account for the laxative actions. Yellow dock is beneficial in the treatment of constipation; in this case consume the tea or tincture up to twenty minutes before meals. Yellow dock is one of the few laxative herbs which are safe to use during pregnancy.

Yellow dock enhances digestion of fat and protein, and improves the assimilation of minerals. It can be used to improve the digestion and assimilation of iron, which is beneficial for the treatment of iron deficiency anemia. It can also be used as a digestive bitter tonic by individuals with poor digestion, frequent gas and bloating, and / or difficulty assimilating nutrients.

Yellow dock is a gentle liver detoxifier. It can be useful as a treatment for individuals with chronic skin conditions, including acne, eczema, premenstrual breakouts, and psoriasis. Yellow dock can also be used as a recuperative agent for individuals who have had hepatitis or jaundice. In terms of Chinese medicine, yellow dock clears damp heat in the lower burner.

**\*\*Contraindications: too high a dose can cause loose stools. Either lower the dose or discontinue use yellow dock if this occurs.\*\***

#### **Yerba Mansa** (*Anemopsis californica*)

Yerba mansa is a useful antibacterial agent for infections of the sinus, lungs, and urinary tract. It has aromatic astringent properties which reduce excessive respiratory secretions and address stagnant mucus. The root can be very useful for the treatment of respiratory infections and allergies. It acts as a urinary tract disinfectant as well a diuretic, and it can be used for the treatment of cystitis and urethritis. Yerba mansa can also be used when tissues are inflamed and congested as a result of injury, prolonged infection, or inflammation. This often happens once an infection has continued past five to seven days. Yerba mansa helps to astringe the tissue, improving fluid transport and waste removal. Yerba mansa is effective in healing lingering infections of the mouth, gums, throat, lung, stomach, duodenum, and urinary tract. It also prevents scar tissue that can result from recurring infections. Yerba mansa also has anti-inflammatory effects, similar to aspirin, which can be helpful for some types of joint problems. A gargle of the tea is helpful for bleeding gums, sore throat, or mouth ulcers. The root is also an anti-fungal agent; it can be used internally for the treatment of candidiasis of the intestines or of the vagina. Topically, a dust of powder or a salve is beneficial for athlete's foot, ringworm, and other kinds of skin tinea. Yerba mansa has been used as an alternative to goldenseal.

**\*\*Contraindications: discontinue use of yerba mansa if it is too drying to the mucus membranes.\*\***

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#### **Yerba Santa** (*Eriodictyon californica*)

Yerba santa is an expectorant and a decongestant which is useful for excess mucus in the sinus and the lungs. In addition to drying up the membranes, it helps to thin and expel mucus. It has a beneficial action when incorporated into allergy formulas. It can also be useful for chronic gastritis.

**\*\*Contraindications: discontinue use of yerba santa if it is too drying to the mucus membranes.\*\***

#### **Yohimbe** (*Corynanthe yohimbe*)

Yohimbe is used primarily as a sexual stimulant (i.e. an aphrodisiac). It has secondary stimulant actions on the nervous system. Yohimbe can increase the excitability of erectile tissue and facilitate engorgement of that tissue with blood. It is used for the treatment of erectile dysfunction, lowered libido, impotence, and an-orgasmia. Yohimbe can dilate and inflame small arteries, which can be dangerous for some individuals.

*Please read the contraindications before using this herb.*

**\*\*Contraindications: never use yohimbe during pregnancy or lactation, or in young people. Yohimbe can increase blood pressure and pulse rate and should never be used by individuals who have moderate or high blood pressure, or by anyone taking medications to manage blood pressure. It should also be avoided by individuals with blood vessel disorders and by those prone to migraine headaches. Yohimbe should also not be used by men with benign prostatic hypertrophy or prostatitis, as it can cause difficulty with prostate drainage. Women who have cervical inflammation or with a tipped uterus should also avoid using yohimbe, as it may cause inflammation of the tissues. Yohimbe should be avoided by individuals who have nervous system conditions and by those who are easily stimulated. Discontinue using yohimbe if it causes anxiety or insomnia. Yohimbe is best avoided by individuals taking any medications on a regular basis.\*\***