

# HERBS FOR FAMILY HEALTH

## By Rosemary Gladstar

### A Quick History of Herbalism

We'll discuss the history of herbalism in relationship to its practical and applicable uses in modern times.

- Every nationality, every country in the world has a long history of an herbal tradition(s)
- Herbalism is the oldest system of healing known on earth with exception perhaps of 'laying on of hands' (touching, prayer)
- 82% of the Worlds population still practices herbal medicine as their primary, not secondary, system of healing
- Over 30,000 + years of recorded use of herbal medicine, (in some situations longer use is recorded)
- Over 5,000 + years of written history

### Herbs for family Health

One of the best ways to become familiar with using herbs for your families well being is to have a cupboard filled with favorite, useful medicinal plants that serve a variety of purposes. As you become familiar with the use of these herbs for everyday situations such as gastric upsets, stomachs, colds and flues, you'll also be expanding your knowledge and understanding of how herbs work.

- Stock only safe non-toxic herbs in your 'medicine cupboard'. Store in glass airtight containers out of direct sunlight.
- Look up each herb in **at least three herb books** to determine the dosage, safety issues, and use of each plant.
- Store an ounce or two of each and restock as used up

#### **Some of my favorite herbs for family health:**

Chamomile	Licorice	Nettle
Astragalus	Valerian	Dandelion lf/rt
Echinacea	Burdock	Hawthorne
Siberian Ginseng	Marshmallow rt	Turmeric
Lemon Balm	Oats, milky tops	St. John's Wort
Lavender	Ginger	Cayenne
Garlic	Peppermint	Yarrow
Golden Seal (organically cultivated)		Elder berries/flowers

**Being a Plant Conscious/Plant worthy consumer;** It's as important when using plants to be as conscious and careful about the conservation needs of the plant communities as it is important to know how to use herbs safely and judiciously. Join United Plant Savers and help in the conservation, preservation and habitat restoration of our precious plant resources

### **Know Your Kitchen Herbs**

Become Familiar with the well known and widely accepted culinary herbs that are often found in people's kitchens cupboards. They are often there, unknownst to most, because of their medicinal properties and were early paired with specific food not because of flavor as we're lead to believe but because of their medicinal virtues. .

Cinnamon	Basil	Thyme	Turmeric	Ginger
Rosemary	Cayenne	Clove	fennel	anise
dill	cardamom	caraway	poppy seeds and more...	

### **The actions of plants; how one herb can have so many different uses & effects**

The major chemical constituents found in the plants often define the actions of plants. For instance: plants that rich in tannins have an astringent or binding action; plants high in mucilage are soothing, cooling and often nourishing; plants with major ' bitters principles' stimulate the liver/gall bladder and digestive tract; and all plants rich in alkaloids, one of the most complex and difficult to understand plant constituents, will have a strong physiological reaction on the body, can often be toxic, and drug like in action.

But chemical constituents are only one way of defining and understanding the actions of plants. There are many other factors that one need consider. We'll discuss different ways of understanding the complexity of plant interactions on the body, the synergistic actions of plants working together, and the relationship/action that plants have with one another.

### **Essential Oils**

Essential oils are 'a constituent' of plants. They are very complex (often one oil is made up of hundreds of different chemical constituents), volatile, and are extremely concentrated and therefore very strong. It can take hundreds of pounds of plant material to make a single ounce of pure essential oil. One must take care when using them, but when used properly they can be very effective in the home medicine check. Following are a few of the safest and most versatile to have on hand:

Lavender      Tea Tree      Eucalyptus      Peppermint      Clove

### **Some Suggested Ways to prepare herbs for family health**

We'll discuss various ways to prepare herbs, proper dosage, and length of duration that herbs should be used. The best medicine no matter how good is useless if left sitting on a shelf. Remember to prepare the herbs in the ways that people will use them. Medicinal plants can be made to taste good when necessary.

Tea	Syrups	Capsules/pills	Extracts/Tinctures
Baths	Steams	Salves/ointments	Poultices/Compresses
Hydrotherapy	Food/culinary		

- Responsible dosages for each method of preparation.
- We'll also discuss the pros and cons of standardized tinctures
- Dosages for elders and children
- Dosages for acute and chronic problems

## **Create an Herbal First Aide Kit**

How to create your own herbal first aide kit for home and travel.

\* See Attachment

## **Safety and counter indications**

We do need to be wise and informed in using medicinal plants. Some plants can cause toxic reactions in certain individuals. Some medicinal plants are drug like in their actions and need to be carefully administered. However, the majority of herbs are safe and have a long history of being used by individuals for medicinal purposes. In 1997 AAPCC (The American Association of Poison Control Center)s reported that approx 100,000 people in the U.S. died from adverse reactions to legally prescribed prescription deaths making legally prescribed drug use the 4<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the U.S. Between 5,000 and 10,000 died of illicit drugs or illicit use of prescription drugs. The AAPCC receives so few toxicity reports due to medicinal herb usage there is no special category assigned them. **AAPCC reports herbs are not a major public health hazard.** Houseplants & Mushrooms cause more toxicity than medicinal herbs.

Books on the topic of plant toxicity (use only as references, not as absolutes!):

1. Herb Contraindications and Drug Interactions by Dr. Francis Brinker (Eclectic Medical Publications, Oregon)
2. Botanical Safety Handbook edited by Michael McGuffin, Christopher Hobbs, Roy Upton, and Alicia Goldberg (CRC Press, Washington DC)
3. Drug-Herb-Vitamin Interactions Bible by Richard Harkness & Steven Bratman (Prima Publications, www.TNP.com)

## **A Few Favorite Reference books**

There is a plethora of good herb books available. There are also herb books filled with misinformation. Be sure to purchase books for medicinal purposes that are written by herbal practitioners, i.e. people who ‘practice’ and use herbs on a daily basis and have done so for many years. That way you know they are writing about what they know, not second hand knowledge. Listed here are a few of my favorites. This is by no way a complete listing! I could easily include another twenty or so ‘favorites’....

- Healing with the Herbs of Life by Leslie Tierra
- Herbal Recipes for Vibrant Health by Rosemary Gladstar (Storey Book Pub.)
- Medicinal Herbs; A Beginners Guide by Rosemary Gladstar (Story Books)
- The Wholistic Herbal by David Hoffmann
- The Herbalist's Way by Michael and Nancy Phillips
- Herbal Healing for Women by Rosemary Gladstar
- Encyclopedia of Medicinal Plants by Andrew Chevalier
- The Way of Herbs by Dr. Michael Tierra
- Books by Matthew Wood, Juliette de Bairacli Levy, Brigitte Mars, Kathi Keville, Michael and Lesley Tierra, Pam Montgomery, David Hoffmann, Stephen Buhner, Dr. James Duke, and Tieraona Low Dog. For culinary recipes and wisdom turn to Susan Belsinger and Pat Crocker.

### **A Few Favorite herbs for kids**

Chamomile	Oats	Nettle	Lemon balm
Catnip	Rosehips	Slippery Elm	Marshmallow
Astragalus	Echinacea		

### **How to prepare herbs for small c children:**

Mother's milk	tea	mixed with fruit juice
Frozen Pops	glycerites	Jump for Joy Balls
Food/recipes	blender shakes	

### **A Few Favorite Herbs for Men**

Saw palmetto	Hawthorn	Ginseng	Rhodiola
Ashwanganda	Nettle	Oats	Daminana

### **A Few Favorite Herbs for Women**

Black Cohash	Dong Quai	Yarrow	Nettle
Ladies mantle	schizandra	Raspberry Lf.	

### **A Few Favorite Herbs for Elders**

Hawthorn	ginseng	Echinacea
Oats	gingko	gota kola
Blue berry/bilberry	Sage	Nettle

### **FAVORITE REMEDIES FOR COLDS/FLU'S**

**Immune support tincture:** contains turmeric, echinacea, organically golden seal, horseradish root, garlic, ginger, cayenne.

**Ginger lemonade:** contains ginger, honey, cayenne

**Cold care capsules:** contains organically cultivated golden seal, ginger, cayenne, marshmallow root (or slippery elm) cayenne, myrrh

**Throat balls:** contains marshmallow rt, comfrey rt, goldenseal, carob, licorice rt, honey and peppermint oil

**Immuno Enhancing soup:** shitake, reishi, seaweed, burdock, dandelion, astragalus, ho shu wu

### **A Few Suggested Herbs to have on hand for winter health:**

Golden seal	Ginger	Licorice	Elder
Yarrow	Coltsfoot	Comfrey	Mullein
Mullein flowers	Mustard pd	Echinacea	Horseradish rt
Garlic	Shitake Mushrooms	Turmeric	Cayenne

*And any others that make you feel healthy, happy and wise!*