

## How to use Organic Medicinal Herbs

It is really rewarding to grow medicinal herbs in your organic garden and have fresh herbs available to brew up some healing potions when you or your loved ones are ill. And, you can find many organic dried herbs available locally at apothecaries and health food stores. Herbal remedies are a wonder way to bring comfort, soothing and healing for many illnesses.

**DANDELION:** This beautiful yellow flower is one of the first harbingers of Spring, and nectar source for pollinators. The fresh, new leaves are fantastic in salads, steamed or in stir-fries; besides tasting great, this bitter green will help to stimulate the digestive system (especially the liver) to purge and flush out toxins. The root of the dandelion is yummy to eat, full of minerals, and also offering the above healing properties. I also harvest the roots, shave small pieces with a vegetable peeler and dry them for use in herbal infusions thru the Winter.

**MOTHERWORT:** The globe shape of this perennial plant is truly beautiful and the sort of hand-shaped leaves are very unique, thus creating a striking addition to your vegetable garden. The flowers attract many pollinators. The leaves are brewed into an infusion, offering wonderful balancing properties to both endocrine and cardiac functions. It is a favorite herb for menopause and beyond.

**HOREHOUND:** I love the sage green, curly and textured leaves of this low and globular growing herb, which adds a soft interest to the vegetable garden. It thrives all year in my Colorado garden. This herb makes an excellent infusion as a respiratory system tonic; for any cold/bronchitis/pneumonia/virus; drink an infusion of horehound, angelica root, ginger (and other herbs according to symptoms) (see recipes).

**CALENDULA:** These bright and happy flowers add vibrant color and interest to the garden. They also attract numerous pollinators and provide excellent natural pest control. Made into an herbal infusion, wound dressing, salve/cream, calendula is very healing to any skin condition (dry skin/psoriasis, acne, diaper rash) due to its anti-septic, anti-inflammatory, astringent, soothing and skin-regenerating qualities.

**MULLEIN:** This wonderful wild plant is native to Colorado. The soft, fuzzy, sage-green leaves add a natural beauty to the garden. The tall spikes of yellow flowers add height and color to the garden, while attracting pollinators. When the tops go to seed, they will feed birds all thru the Winter. I harvest Mullein leaves just after flowers set, chopping and drying them for use in infusions and salves. Mullein is a great herb for breaking up and purging mucous from the body.

**CLARY SAGE:** Have you ever eaten the lavender/white flowers of this plant? If not, then you are missing the Heaven on Earth qualities of their sweet nectar; of course, pollinators love them, as well. This perennial is very prolific; if you have one, you will have many. They are great to share with friends and neighbors. This herb is wonderful as an anti-depressant, hormone balancer, hypotensive (lowers blood pressure); it is both tonic and calming.

**COMFREY:** This plant offers some wonderful healing qualities and is often used in skin dressings and salves; it is anti-inflammatory, soothing, and skin-regenerating. Another name for

this plant is "bone-set," and it has been shown in folk medicine to stimulate bony fusion after fractures. Due to some medical studies done about 8-10 years ago, in which subjects were given the equivalent dose of 10 cups of infusion for 5+ years, some carcinogenic qualities were noted and this herb has been restricted in its usage/dosage in over-the-counter products. Because the plant grows so large (3' tall by 5' wide), spreads so easily, and the leaves have a nettle-like sting to them, I encourage you to plant one in a secluded area of your garden and cut the flowers off as soon as they begin to dry.

**HYSSOP MINT:** This plant will bring soooo many pollinators to your garden! This perennial grows very tall (4"), producing beautiful lavender-colored spike flowers; like all mints, it will spread profusely unless you dead-head the flowers as soon as they begin to dry. All of the mints are anti-inflammatory, anti-microbial and they offer support for digestive upsets by cooling irritations and relieving flatulence.

## RECIPES

**HERBAL FACIAL:** After a long hot day working in the garden (or stuck indoors under fluorescent lights), this is a wonderful way to bring cooling, soothing and rejuvenation to your face/skin. For dry skin, add 1/2 tablespoon of organic vegetable oil; for sunburn, add 3 drops of lavender essential oil. For acne, add 1/2 clove of garlic and 1 teaspoon of fresh rosemary leaves. To really pamper yourself and raise your vibration, add 3 drops of rose essential oil.

1 6 oz. container of plain yogurt	1/4 medium peeled cucumber plus 2 slices
2 tablespoons of organic aloe vera gel	3 calendula flowers pulled apart
2 plantain leaves	5 clary sage flowers (or mint or basil leaves)

Place all ingredients (except 2 cucumber slices with peel on) into blender/food processor; whip until smooth. Smear the facial all over your face, lie down in a dark/quiet room, place cucumber slices over your eyes; rest quietly for 20-30 minutes. You will be amazed at how soothed and rejuvenated you are after this facial!

**RESPIRATORY INFUSION:** Who wants to deal with the symptoms of a cold/upper respiratory infection for weeks at a time? This infusion tastes slightly bitter, hot and medicinal; my son's theory is that "Herbs don't really cure you - they just taste so bad that your body quickly heals itself so that it doesn't have to drink this horrible-tasting stuff anymore!" I actually love the taste of medicinal infusions and I know I am going to get better just from smelling and tasting them. If I am ill, I will usually make one-half gallon (double recipe) of this infusion and drink 12 to 16 oz. hot at least 4-5 times per day. Adding a 1/2 teaspoon of honey to each dose after it is brewed or reheated adds enzymes, sweetness and soothing to the remedy.

1 quart of filtered water, boiling hot and removed from the heat  
4 tablespoons of dry chopped horehound leaves (respiratory cleanser/tonic)  
1-2 tablespoons of dry chopped angelica root (purges mucous)  
1" long piece of fresh ginger root chopped into tiny pieces (raised body temp. to kill the virus)

Add all ingredients to boiling hot water, cover, steep for 30 minutes. Strain and drink as above. You may add one teaspoon of honey to each cup just before you drink it; honey is full of enzymes and is soothing to mucous membranes.

Options:

- 1 tablespoon of fenugreek seeds (breaks up mucous and supports you to cough it out)
- 3 grandelia/sticky weed flowers (very bitter, breaks up mucous and support you to cough it out)
- 3 cloves of sliced fresh garlic and 1/4 teaspoon of cayenne pepper (this is great when there is an infectious component [green mucous, fever]; these herbs will raise your fever to kill the bacteria, help you sweat it out, and move thru the illness much faster)

This hand-out includes just a few of the many wonderful herbs that we can grow and use for our medicinal needs. I have been a Master Herbalist for 40 years and maintain a private practice as a Naturopath and Homeopath in Boulder, CO. I use many holistic modalities to support people through numerous illnesses and symptom profiles. I hope this class gives you a new perspective on the beauty, qualities and importance of herbs - in our gardens and in our lives.