

HEALING HERBS A TO Z

A Handy Reference to
Healing Plants

Diane Stein

A stylized sun graphic in shades of orange and brown, featuring a semi-circle at the bottom and several pointed rays extending upwards and outwards.

A Woman's I Ching
All Women Are Healers
All Women Are Psychics
Casting the Circle
Diane Stein's Guide to Goddess Craft
Essential Energy Balancing
Essential Energy Balancing II
Essential Energy Balancing III
Essential Psychic Healing
Essential Reiki
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Healing with Flower and Gemstone Essences
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Lady Sun, Lady Moon
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A HANDY REFERENCE
TO HEALING PLANTS

HEALING
HERBS

A^{TO} Z

Diane Stein


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The material presented here is for information and educational purposes only, and is not meant to take the place of expert medical advice. The information in this book does not intend to diagnose, cure, or treat disease. Individual reactions to herbs may vary. In situations of illness, seek the professional help of your choice.

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INTRODUCTION



In 1985 when I wrote *The Women's Spirituality Book* (now titled *Diane Stein's Guide to Goddess Craft*), I wanted to include a chapter on using herbs. At that time, I had been working with herbs for a few years and was very excited about it, but I felt I didn't know enough to write even a chapter on them. When I wrote *All Women Are Healers* five years later, I got a little braver and did an herb chapter. After twenty-five years of studying and using herbs and making my own tinctures, I am finally compiling an herbal, as I have always wanted to do. I still feel that I don't know enough and could never know enough—but that I have to start somewhere I am and hope the real experts will be indulgent with my effort.

This book is not designed for herbal experts, though they may find useful information here. This book is for the confused layperson who wants to regain control of her health but doesn't know where to start.

The first thing an herb user needs to know is which herb will do what she needs. The second is to find the herb and identify it accurately (a mistake in the field can be toxic or even fatal). And the third is to know how to use the herb appropriately. A traditional herbalist learns from those who know how to use herbs, information that used to be passed down from teacher to student, or from mother to daughter, over many generations through ancient and time-honored oral tradition. She learns how to recognize herbs accurately, along with when to pick them, and which plant parts to harvest and use. She also learns how and when to use them—and when not to.

Tragically, that oral tradition has been lost. Most of us who wish to learn about herbs do so from books, the Internet, or by taking a workshop here and there, followed by limited experience with personal use.

Traditional herbalists used what was growing in the neighboring woods and fields, and locally harvested herbs were considered the most useful for people living in that area. Because of this limited the number and variety of plants available. Today's herb users have many more plant varieties available to them from all over the United States, South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

For those who choose herbal healing, the way to do it may not be to go to the woods and fields to identify, pick, and process the right local plants. It may simply mean a visit to the local health food store, natural pharmacy, or herb website to buy what's needed.

This book is a reference guide for the herb shopper who, while not having the benefit of ancient oral tradition or personal instruction, still wants to use herbs as knowledgeably as she can.

Herbs used properly are very often as effective as medical drugs—or more so—without the side effects, cost, and potential for dependency. Herbs help people become enabled, instead of disabled. They leave us stronger, not weaker. But we need to learn how and when to use them, as well as when to seek more expert help, which might mean consulting a physician, midwife, or acupuncturist. We need to understand the appropriate uses of herbs—for example, when it's safe to substitute black cohosh for hormone replacement therapy (which

for many of us presents an unacceptable risk of cancer) to treat the uncomfortable symptoms of menopause.

This book is intended for the herb shopper, not the professional practitioner. It explains what's in the bottles lined up on the shelves of the local health food store and the conditions that each herb helps heal. The information is presented in a highly concentrated way—no pages of explanation and description, but a quick reference of the herb's primary attributes and uses. Where a more comprehensive herbal reference book might also describe how to identify the plant, where to find it, when to pick it, which parts to use, and how to prepare those parts, this book assumes that the user will buy already identified, prepared, and ready-to-use plant material. Dosages and dosing instructions (how many drops or capsules, how many times a day) are listed on the bottle, along with how long the herb can be used safely and contraindications for its use.

Ready-prepared herbs come in several forms. Traditional use is as an herb tea, called a **tisane**, or the harder-boiled tea, called a **decoction**, for preparing woody plant parts, which may be ingested or applied externally in a **compress** (wet a cloth with the tea or decoction and place it on the body) or a **poultice** (wrap the boiled herb matter in a cloth and place on the body). Herbs also come in capsules, which are easy to take but may be less effective than ingesting a tea or decoction, because the raw, dried herbs in them may not be as fresh and harder for the body to assimilate. Some herbs also come in salves, creams, or ointments for external use only.

Another frequently found form for internal use is the **tincture** or **extract**, where the herb is steeped cold in alcohol (brandy, vodka) for several weeks. The herb matter is then strained out, and the alcohol, which has extracted the herb's benefits, is used medicinally. To remove the alcohol from an alcohol extract, put the drops of herb preparation in a few teaspoons of boiling or near-boiling water and the alcohol will evaporate in a few seconds, leaving the potency of the herb.

Alcohol-free glycerin tinctures are also available and are often used for children or by those who do not wish to ingest alcohol. Glycerin is sugar, however. It does not keep as long or as bacteria-free as alcohol preparations, is not as medicinally strong, and is not safe for diabetics.

The one herbal usage to avoid, for the purposes of this book, is the **essential oil**. This is an entirely different branch of healing, where the oils from some plants are distilled into a highly concentrated form. Essential oils are not to be taken internally, as they can be highly toxic and even result in death with just a few drops. They are used externally, and the healing benefits come from inhaling their fragrances. If you are interested in this form of healing, there are many books on aromatherapy (the use of essential oils) to get you started. For external use, only the essential oils of lavender and tea tree may be used directly on the skin. All others must be diluted, usually one drop of oil to a teaspoon of "carrier oil," generally vegetable salad oil.

The few oils found in this book are the **essential fatty acids** and meant for ingestion—evening primrose oil, flaxseed oil, borage oil, sea buckthorn oil, black currant oil—and they come in capsules for that purpose. Wild oregano oil needs to be diluted, and sometimes comes that way. These are not essential oils, and no essential oil is to be taken internally without the direction of an aromatherapy expert.

Essential oils, by the way, are not the same as **flower essences** (also known as essential essences), which are the vibrations of flowers preserved in alcohol or a vinegar tincture. Flower essences are not discussed here, but refer to my book *Healing with Flower and Gemstone Essences* for more on their use.

The information in this book focuses on using one herb at a time. Single herbs used alone are traditionally called “simples.” Experienced herbalists often use several herbs together, but for those who are learning, it’s less confusing and more important to learn what each herb does before combining them. Some commercial herbal combinations may contain a dozen or more herbs, which to me seems to miss the point. If you want to understand how herbs work, you must do it one herb at a time. Also, not all herbs work well together. It’s best to use them individually until you gain experience.

Read labels for warnings and possible drug interactions. If you are taking any medication, their effects can be increased, decreased, altered, or deactivated by a particular herb. It is very important to research your medications’ interactions with *any* herb you are considering. (For example, blood thinners, such as the anticoagulant warfarin, are contraindicated due to a potentially dangerous interaction.) The Internet has made this relatively easy to do, but be aware that there are a number of websites whose main purpose seems to be to scare people away from using herbs altogether. Herbs used properly are safe, but it is essential to make informed decisions.

With each herb entry, I have included information on side effects, warnings, and possible drug interactions. In some cases it has been very difficult to separate fact from fiction on the subject. For the most part, herb side effects happen only with misuse, overuse, or contaminated herbs. Some side effects are simply the effects of the herb itself. Increased sweating or diarrhea, for example, may be among the herb’s uses, one of the ways the herb works for healing. Most toxic side-effect disasters are caused by ingestion of essential oils *that were never meant to be ingested*. It is important to realize, too, that each person is different and how an herb reacts for you may be slightly different from another person’s reactions to it. Also, anyone can be allergic to anything, whether peanuts or goji juice. Obviously, if you have an allergic reaction to an herb, or any other disquieting effect, *stop taking it*. I have tried to responsibly list as many drug interactions and side effects as possible, but my information cannot be considered complete; there are thousands of medications available, with more being added daily.

For acute conditions, such as a cold or sore throat, expect the right herb for the condition to begin having benefit after two or three doses, sometimes sooner. For chronic conditions such as menstrual difficulties or arthritis, it will usually take longer. Some herbs (and conditions) can take as long as two or three months for the benefits to become evident. So be patient, and adjust your expectations. Healing often occurs gradually, and you may experience more improvement than you realize at first.

If you have a serious dis-ease—I use this form of the word to note that we are not “diseased” but may have “lack of ease” in our bodies—it is best to seek professional advice for it. Whether this means advice from a physician, an herbalist, or another kind of healer is that is your choice. If you choose to use herbs for serious conditions, it is wise to seek the advice of an experienced herbalist.

This is also the case if you wish to have herbal support in pregnancy or for an abortion.

Some of the herbs in this book are designated safe for pregnancy and some are not. Those that are listed as not for use in pregnancy or nursing may be acceptable with the advice of a skilled herbalist or midwife. Many herbs are labeled “not for pregnancy or breastfeeding” simply to err on the side of caution. Some herbs listed in this book are abortifacients; they bring on menses that can cause an abortion early in pregnancy. Although the information belongs to women and adamantly needs to be available, herbs should not be used to replace a professional medical procedure in a sanitary clinical setting.

There is a list of specialized terms that herbalists frequently use, each one indicating a herb’s attributes and providing a shorthand description of what the herb does. An experienced herbalist looks at the list and immediately knows how to use the herb. Sources often differ on the attributes assigned to an herb. In this book, I have tried to reconcile various sources, and in cases where an herb has no research list, I have attempted to assign one. I have also attempted to make it a list that is understandable to nonherbalists. For example, an herb listed as an “emmenagogue” (classic definition: brings blood flow to the pelvic area and uterus) may be described as a uterine toner or “brings on menses.” I have done my best with these terms. For a version of the classic list, see below.

I hope this book will be a convenient reference for those who wish to learn about using herbs. Even more, I hope it will help those who need healing and are looking for safe alternatives to drugs. Herbs link the past, present, and future of human life; they are a vital part of our herstory.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEDICINAL ATTRIBUTES OF HERBS

Adaptogen – tonic, normalizes all systems and organs, stress healer

Alterative – changes assimilation processes to regulate body functions

Analgesic – pain reliever

Antibacterial – kills or prevents bacterial growth

Anticatarrhal – eliminates mucus (see Expectorant)

Anticoagulant – blood thinner

Antiemetic – stops or relieves vomiting

Antifungal – kills or prevents the growth of fungi

Antihistamine – reduces or stops allergic reactions

Anti-inflammatory – stops or reduces inflammation

Antimicrobial – kills or reduces the spread of all microscopic pathogens (bacteria, fungi)

viruses, parasites)

Antiparasitic – kills or prevents the growth of parasites (intestinal worms, protozoa, amoeba, etc.)

Antipyretic – lowers body temperature to reduce fevers

Antiseptic – kills toxic bacteria to prevent infection

Antispasmodic – calms contraction of smooth muscles; for twitching, spasms, coughing, cramping

Antiviral – kills or prevents the growth of viruses

Aphrodisiac – increases libido and sexual function

Aromatic – fragrant, spicy herbs that stimulate the gastrointestinal system

Astringent – contracts, constricts, or shrinks tissues, stops discharges

Carminative – eases digestive cramps and releases gas

Cholagogue – stimulates secretion of bile

Demulcent – soothes and provides a protective coating

Diaphoretic – causes sweating to break a fever

Diuretic – increases urination, eliminates excess water from the body

Emetic – causes vomiting

Emmenagogue – increases blood flow to the uterus and pelvis

Expectorant – thins and expels respiratory tract mucus

Hepatic – regulates bile

Hormonal – plant with hormonal properties, phytoestrogen

Laxative – stimulates bowel movements

Mucilaginous – expands and adheres to tissues to soothe them

Nervine – benefits the nervous system, nerve tonic, calms the nerves

Sedative – central nervous system depressant, calms and relaxes

Stimulant – increases the action of the body or of a specific system or organ

Stomachic – improves stomach function, increases appetite

Tonic – strengthens and tones organs and systems

Vermifuge – expels intestinal worms

Vulnerary – heals wounds

HEALING HERBS

A^{TO} Z

HERB
LISTINGS





Alfalfa • (*Medicago sativa*)

Grass native to Iran in the Bronze Age, planted for animal feed and as a nitrogen soil fixative worldwide; more a food plant than a medicinal herb but also used medicinally; high in minerals and vitamins, amino acids, protein, enzymes, iron, and chlorophyll, good protein source for vegetarians; tonic, detoxifier, liver and blood cleanser, pituitary stimulant, glandular balance; diuretic for fluid retention, swelling, edema, kidney stones, bladder and kidney infections, rheumatoid arthritis, lumbago, prostate enlargement, jaundice; used for stomach disorders, all types of ulcers, colitis, to help increase appetite, listed by some sources as a cure for diabetes; used externally as a poultice for black-and-blue bruises, wounds, joint pain, and muscle pain; bath herb, facial steam, hair rinse. Reduces high fevers, reduces bleeding, helps blood clot, lowers high blood pressure, lowers cholesterol; antiviral, clears infections, clears grass allergies, aids drug and alcohol withdrawal, laxative, provides vitamins and nutrients to aid and prevent night blindness; good in pregnancy to prevent bleeding, increases breast milk, reduces tooth decay, promotes healthy teeth and bones for mother and child, prevents anemia, strengthens children that fail to thrive and grow, strengthens connective tissue; combine white willow, burdock, and alfalfa for a tasty arthritis tea. *Nutrient, tonic, appetite stimulant, diuretic.* No known side effects; avoid with gout and lupus, overuse of alfalfa can induce lupus in susceptible people; allergy potential if allergic to peas, soy, or peanuts; may interfere with diabetic drugs, diuretics, blood thinners (anticoagulants).

All Heal • See [Self Heal](#)

Aloe Vera • (Also known as *Aloe barbadensis*)

Use in topical gel or 2 to 4 ounces of juice drunk daily; juice has almost no taste and is most effective when a tablespoon of liquid chlorophyll is added; also used during colon cleansing treatments; effective for all skin irritations and dis-eases, burns, radiation burns, sunburns, boils, insect bites, athlete's foot, poison ivy and oak, wounds, cuts, acne, eczema, psoriasis, ringworm, dark spots on skin, scalp and hair damage and dis-eases; skin moisturizer and cell regenerator; heals gum dis-ease and mouth canker sores (rinse with liquid); use as a gargle for sore throat and tonsillitis; prevents infection, helps bronchial congestion, antiseptic and tissue-soothing for cystitis and kidney infection, detoxifies; drink juice to heal internal ulcers (ulcerative colitis, ulcerative bowel dis-eases, and stomach ulcers); best remedy for constipation, bowel regularity, intestinal irritations and dis-eases, inflammatory bowel dis-eases, hemorrhoids, heartburn, upset stomach, reduces toxic flora in intestines and yeast overruns, liver damage, detoxifies and cleanses the entire digestive system, aid for weight loss and loss of appetite; heals the uterus and brings on menses, can be used as a douche; helps joint and muscle strain and pain, especially after hard exercise; increases prote

absorption; immune enhancer, tonic; increases general energy and feelings of well-being; reduces triglycerides, reduces total cholesterol, increases good HDL cholesterol; high in minerals, vitamins, and amino acids. *Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, astringent, diuretic, liver tonic, laxative, wound healer*. Possible side effects: cramps, diarrhea, laxative dependence; do not use with abdominal pain (possible appendicitis), avoid in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Angelica • (*Angelica archangelica, Angelica officinalis*)

Garden angelica, also called wild celery; not the Chinese angelica (dong quai); expectorant; clear infections with lung congestion: colds, cough, flu, pleurisy, bronchitis, pneumonia, whooping cough, asthma; can be used as a chest poultice; strengthens digestion, reduces gas, colic, heartburn, gastritis, appetite loss, anorexia nervosa; increases blood sugar levels; regulates the menstrual cycle, helps restore cycles after going off the Pill, brings on menses, eases menstrual cramps, PMS, mood swings, water retention, and contracts the uterus; immune stimulant; diuretic and urinary antiseptic for cystitis, gout, rheumatism; reduces fever by sweating; calms the nerves; aids weakness, debility, and recovery after illness; warms the body, stimulates circulation especially to the extremities; use for cold hands and feet, Buerger's disease (narrowed arteries in hands and feet), neuralgia. *Expectorant, astringent, diuretic, digestive stimulant, antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, tonic*. Possible side effects: contact dermatitis; not for use in pregnancy or breastfeeding, by diabetics, with heart disease, or when taking blood thinners. Oil is never to be used internally; safe short term but may cause photosensitivity; not for use in the eyes.

Artichoke Leaf • (*Cynara scolymus*)

Related to milk thistle and with similar function, do not confuse with Jerusalem artichoke; major use is for promoting optimal liver function, which in turn reduces indigestion and high cholesterol; liver detoxifier, stimulates bile flow, opens obstructed bile ducts, prevents gallstones, antioxidant liver protector, aids insufficient liver function, aids liver regeneration; inhibits cholesterol production, stimulates breakdown and elimination of cholesterol; used for symptoms of nonspecific liver insufficiency, including fatigue, headache, lassitude, abdominal pain, bloating, nausea, constipation or diarrhea, heartburn, discomfort after meals, inability to eat foods with fat, increased allergies and sensitivities; used for inflamed liver, jaundice, hepatitis, cirrhosis, excessive use of alcohol, fatty liver; protects from liver damage; cleanses and protects the liver from pollutants, chemicals, alcohol; also lowers blood sugar levels (diabetes); facilitates function in kidney disease, irritable bowel syndrome; normalizes bowel peristalsis, prevents viral replication in HIV and cancer, aids indigestion, anemia; lowers triglycerides, helps prevent heart disease, may prevent DNA damage. *Antioxidant, liver protective, bile stimulant*. Not for use with gallstones or obstructed bile ducts, in pregnancy or breastfeeding; possible side effects: allergic reactions, gas, skin rash; no listed warnings or drug interactions.

Ashwaganda • (*Withania somnifera*)

Adaptogen similar in properties to Korean ginseng, used for thousands of years in India, also

called winter cherry; used alone and in many herbal combinations; normalizes healthy whole body function when challenged by stress; supports adaptation to stress, resistance to disease and aging; promotes better physical and mental performance; nourishes the brain, muscles, bones, and endocrine system; promotes immune function; also is antioxidant, rejuvenating, tonic, anti-inflammatory, sexual enhancer; prevents some cancers and tumors; enhances mental function for memory, mood, clarity, alertness, concentration, and focus; aids debility, anxiety, depression, exhaustion, adrenal exhaustion, mental and physical fatigue including stress-induced fatigue, chronic fatigue, insomnia; also used for arthritis, rheumatism, ulcer, swollen glands, colds, cough, flu, bronchitis, inflamed eyes, anemia, infertility, gynecological disorders, aging, and to induce general feeling of vitality and wellness. *Adaptogen, antiinflammatory, antitumor, antioxidant, antistress*. No toxicity but may cause drowsiness; overdose causes restlessness; best when taken only a few days a week, or take for three weeks and stop for the fourth; should not be used in pregnancy or breastfeeding; increases the effects of other herbs and drugs (expert advice recommended).

Astragalus • (*Astragalus membranaceus*)

Used in traditional Chinese medicine for immune enhancement, immune balancing, and autoimmune diseases; safe used long term; delicious as a tea or in soup; use for all immune diseases, chronic fatigue, CMV (cytomegalovirus), HIV and AIDS, HPV (human papillomavirus, cervical cancer, vaginal warts), tuberculosis, lupus; anticancer, may increase effectiveness of chemotherapy, reduces chemotherapy side effects (especially fatigue, appetite loss) and genital herpes; asthma, multiple allergies, long-standing infections, stomach ulcers, arthritis; increases white blood cell count, supports the adrenals; useful for critical diseases including stroke, heart disease, heart inflammation, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, improves heart function, kidney disease and failure, liver disease and hepatitis B and C, diabetes (reduces blood sugar levels), diabetes leg and foot ulcers, diabetic neuropathy, hyperthyroidism; also for viral infections (colds, flu), upper respiratory infections, fever, anemia, wound healing, burn healing, indigestion (diarrhea, gas, bloating, colic), irregular menstruation, menstrual disorders, insomnia, diuretic, tonic; enhances athletic performance, increases mental acuity in children, possible help in Alzheimer's disease and dementia, aids in stopping smoking. *Antiviral, immune enhancer, anticancer, antifungal, anti-inflammatory, antimicrobial, antioxidant*. Few or no side effects but large overdose can suppress the immune system; okay for children if they do not have a fever; may increase the effects of antiviral drugs, diabetes drugs, blood pressure drugs, blood thinners, diuretics; may counteract immune-depressant drugs like cyclosporine.

Bacopa • (*Bacopa monnieri*)

Ayurvedic herb, also called water hyssop; benefits mind, spirit, and consciousness; used to consecrate and "awaken" newborns; tonic that supports and enhances brain and mental function, cognitive function, increases intelligence, short- and long-term memory, alertness, mental clarity, learning, information retention, concentration; used for neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, ADHD and restlessness in children, senility of aging, mental disorders, forgetfulness, depression, students' learning aid; relaxant, mildly sedative

antianxiety, antiseizure; cardio tonic, digestive aid, improves respiratory function, thyroid stimulant, protects the liver from drug damage, reduces fats in blood; free-radical antioxidant; rejuvenates; reduces allergies and allergic reactions for asthma, hay fever, eczema; protects the gastrointestinal tract lining and decreases smooth muscle spasms for indigestion, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome; laxative; inhibits cancer growth; also for anemia, fevers, bronchitis, bronchial constriction, antifungal for *Candida albicans*. *Antioxidant, vasodilator, anticancer, sedative, antifungal, antimicrobial*. No listed side effects; long-term use needed for benefit; may decrease effectiveness of thyroid drugs and increase effects of sedatives.

Barberry • (*Berberis vulgaris*)

The root and bright red berries of the prickly hedge, used since ancient Egypt as a medicinal herb, can be substituted for Oregon grape root or goldenseal; stimulant and cleanser for the liver, normalizes liver function, promotes bile flow, clears jaundice, reduces enlarged liver and spleen; digestive bitter, indigestion, heartburn; treats bacterial, fungal, and viral infections; kills *Pseudomonas* bacteria, *E. coli*, *Streptococcus*, and other bacteria in the body: bacterial diarrhea, traveler's dysentery, food poisoning, urinary tract infections, respiratory infections (sore throat, lung and nasal congestion, sinusitis, bronchitis, conjunctivitis), skin infections, and diseases; intestinal parasites, yeast overrun; also used for gout and rheumatism; abnormal uterine bleeding, fever, convulsions, appetite stimulant, immune stimulant; sedative; lowers blood pressure by dilating blood vessels; may shrink tumors. *Antibacterial, antifungal, antiviral, antiparasitic, astringent, anti-inflammatory, antibiotic, laxative, bitter tonic*. Overdose side effects include diarrhea, nosebleed, vomiting, dizziness, confusion, drop in blood pressure, kidney disease; not for use in pregnancy or breastfeeding, or for infants; not for those with heart or chronic respiratory diseases; use short term only; may increase or decrease the effects of some medical drugs.

Bee Propolis, Bee Pollen • See [Propolis](#)

Beet Root • (*Beta vulgaris*)

Properties of sugar beet (or borscht beet) are long known to juicers—juicing is still the best way to utilize the benefits; blood purifier, regenerates red blood cells, high in iron, regulates blood pH balance, heals acidosis, heals anemia, replaces blood loss in menstruating women; raises low blood sugar, increases energy and vitality, and oxygenates the body through the blood; detoxifies the liver, gallbladder, spleen, and kidneys; clears obstructions from liver and spleen; for liver diseases, jaundice, hepatitis, cirrhosis, biliousness, liver toxicity from alcohol, constipation and diarrhea, dysentery, hemorrhoids; promotes bowel peristalsis; inhibits formation of tumors, growths, and cancer cells; promotes resistance to cancer; dissolves cancer cells and tumors; reduces tumors of lung, prostate, breast, and uterus; promising antiviral for HIV/AIDS; lowers high blood pressure, lowers total and LDL cholesterol to prevent heart disease and strokes; skin detoxifier used internally and as a poultice to draw out toxins, for acne, boils, abscesses, scabs, skin infections and

inflammations, measles and children's eruptive dis-eases, dandruff; also for varicose vein ulcers, fever, swollen glands, sore throat, viral and bacterial infections, resistance to infections and dis-ease, and as an aphrodisiac. *Anticancer, antitumor, liver protective, detoxifier*. A nutritious food, no known warnings, cautions, or drug interactions; take care not to overuse and detoxify too quickly; start with very small amounts and increase gradually, cut back if uncomfortable; red urine from beet ingestion is harmless.

Bilberry • (*Vaccinium myrtillus*)

Relative to the blueberry plant, used medicinally by Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179); active ingredients are anthocyanosides, strong antioxidants, also high in vitamin C; protects, heals, and regenerates the capillaries, increases capillary circulation, reduces blood clots, relaxes and widens the blood vessels of the circulatory system; stops bleeding, prevents easy bruising, lowers risk of heart attacks and strokes, reduces high blood pressure, lowers triglycerides, lowers cholesterol, lowers blood sugar, regenerates connective tissue, and protects against cancer (antiangiogenesis); for peripheral vascular dis-eases: improves night vision, reduces cataracts, reverses degenerative eye dis-eases, macular degeneration, glaucoma, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy, eyestrain, myopia, retinitis pigmentosa; varicose veins, spider veins, swollen legs, chronic venous insufficiency, Raynaud's syndrome, Bell's palsy, emphysema, hemorrhoids, fibrocystic breast dis-ease; also for chronic inflammatory dis-eases, gastrointestinal dis-eases, diarrhea, dysentery, food poisoning, peptic ulcers (inhibits *H. pylori* bacteria), blood in stool or urine, bleeding gums; liver dis-eases, gallstones, kidney diseases, inflamed mucous membranes, respiratory viruses, sore throat, fevers, skin infections and ulcers, wounds; diuretic for cystitis, rheumatoid arthritis, gout, rheumatism, and painful menstruation; prevents or stops production of breast milk. *Antioxidant, diuretic, astringent, anti-inflammatory, vascular protective*. Considered a food and very safe, no side effects with normal use; overdose effects include indigestion, nausea, and diarrhea; safe in pregnancy but may stop breast milk if nursing; caution with diabetes drugs (bilberry lowers blood sugar), blood thinners, antiulcer drugs, and laxative drugs.

Bitter Melon • (*Momordica charantia*)

Known and used in India, Asia, South America, Africa, and the Caribbean as an insulin substitute for the treatment of diabetes; regulates blood sugar, works by suppressing the neural response to sweet-taste stimuli, increases production of beta cells in the pancreas, regulates carbohydrate metabolism, increases cell uptake of glucose, raises insulin levels in the blood, increases effectiveness of diabetic medications; also reduces high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high triglyceride levels; stimulates digestion, lowers body temperature, reduces inflammation, detoxifies, raises immune function, is contraceptive, may help prevent HIV replication, and may be effective against leukemia and a variety of cancers; used for many illnesses and dis-eases: constipation, mucus conditions, fevers, colds and coughs, flu, hemorrhoids, jaundice, intestinal worms and parasites, indigestion, acute gastritis, poor digestion, malaria, chronic fatigue, ulcers, skin conditions, sores and wounds; increases breast milk, and regulates hormones. *Antibacterial, antioxidant, antimicrobial, astringent, antispasmodic, antiviral, hypoglycemic*. Possible side effects: diarrhea or indigestion; diabetic

need to monitor blood sugar levels carefully with any antidiabetic herb or drug; not for use pregnancy or breastfeeding, or if wanting to get pregnant; not for those with hypoglycemia.

Blackberry • (*Rubus fruticosus, Rubus species*)

Delicious in tea and easily available in any supermarket; active ingredient is tannin, an herb astringent; primarily used for diarrhea and sore throat; for diarrhea, dysentery, food poisoning, hemorrhoids, bowel inflammations, intestinal ulcers; inflammation of throat, mouth, gums; tightens loose teeth; common cold with sore throat, laryngitis, tonsillitis, lung dis-eases, bronchitis; loosens phlegm; also reduces heavy menstrual flow, brings on menses, corrects lack of menses; uterine tonic, douche for vaginitis; eases labor pain; skin tonic and for all skin conditions (used externally), boils, eczema; black hair dye; traditionally used for whooping cough, appendicitis, and cholera; diuretic for swollen feet and ankles (kidney and heart dis-ease), gout, swollen arthritic joints, rheumatism, cystitis; poison antidote, antidote for venomous snakebites and insect bites; anemia; antioxidant to prevent and reverse cell damage, preventive for heart dis-ease, cancer, strokes, degenerative eye dis-eases such as cataracts and macular degeneration. *Anti-inflammatory, astringent, tonic, mild diuretic, stops bleeding.* A very few sensitive individuals may experience nausea or vomiting, especially those with chronic gastrointestinal dis-ease; no known drug interactions.

Black Cohosh • (*Cimicifuga racemosa*)

Primary herb for menopause relief, safe alternative to hormone replacement therapy including after hysterectomy; not an estrogen and with no estrogenic effects; can be taken long term, takes several weeks before benefits manifest; menopause relief for hot flashes, night sweats, bloating, breast swelling and cystic breasts, osteoporosis (slows or prevents bone loss), weight gain, fatigue, mood swings, anxiety, depression, irritability, hormone imbalance, insomnia, memory loss, headaches and migraines, fibroids, vaginal dryness, heart palpitations, high blood pressure, menstrual cramps, PMS, cervical dysplasia, heavy periods, painful periods, inflammations of uterus and ovaries, and most gynecological disorders (these uses are for women of all ages if needed); used in younger women for infertility, endometriosis, threatened miscarriage, to induce labor, labor pain relief, heavy periods, PMS, cystic breasts, ovarian cysts, fibroid tumors, hormone imbalance, cervical dysplasia, painful periods, heavy bleeding in menstruation, and other gynecological conditions; other uses include mild sedative, neurological conditions, kidney infections, gallbladder and liver disease, malaria, rheumatism, arthritis and joint pain, hives, back pain, coughs, colds, fever, tinnitus, appetite stimulant, diuretic, diarrhea. *Astringent, diuretic, expectorant, menstrual tonic, antispasmodic, sedative.* Do not overdose; mild side effects may include headache, indigestion, weight gain, nausea, dizziness, sweating, and heaviness in the legs; rarely, side effects may include nausea, indigestion, dizziness, headache, or sweating; not for use in pregnancy or nursing without expert advice, not for those with liver dis-ease; increases the effectiveness of the breast cancer drug tamoxifen; not estrogenic and does not foster breast cancer growth.

Black Currant Seed Oil • (*Ribes nigrum*)

Used interchangeably with flaxseed oil for its essential fatty acids, including gamma-linolenic acid (GLA) and omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. See [Flaxseed Oil](#) for more uses; primarily used for heart support and protection against heart attack and stroke, prevents blood clotting, reduces inflammation in the circulatory system, regulates heart rate, lowers blood pressure and cholesterol levels, dilates the blood vessels, lowers triglycerides, aids sodium-potassium balance in the body; also used as an anti-inflammatory for the pain and swelling of joint diseases (arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis), PMS, menopausal symptoms, sinusitis, and as a tumor and cancer preventive; normalizes gastrointestinal function, heart function, cardiovascular function, allergic response, hormone and steroid production, neurological and brain function, bone support; immune enhancer especially for the elderly, raises T-cell function and antibody production, enhances resistance to bacterial and viruses; protects the pancreas and pancreatic function; diabetes support; heals the skin and hair, protects the body from stress; effective anti-aging. *Anti-inflammatory, antitumor, anticancer, diuretic*. Considered safe even long term; the only listed side effect is diarrhea; not recommended for hemophiliacs, those taking blood thinner drugs, or in pregnancy without expert advice.

Black Haw • (*Viburnum prunifolium*)

Used interchangeably with cramp bark (*Viburnum opulus*); but black haw was used primarily by white and Native American colonial-era women for the uterus; also used by slave owners to prevent black slave women from aborting unwanted pregnancies; relaxes muscles by blocking the enzyme that causes spasms; useful for every muscle in the body (internal and external), every discomfort resulting from muscle spasms and overcontraction, and every pain associated with movement; use for muscle pain and tension, cramps of all kinds (menstrual, uterine, muscle cramps, stomach or intestinal cramps), irritable bowel syndrome, constipation, headache, contracted muscles in arthritis, joint pain, back pain, pain of mumps and swollen glands, lockjaw; menstrual and menopausal pain and blood loss; brings on delayed or too light menses, stops threatened miscarriage or abortion, hormonal migraines, endometriosis; sedative, calms and soothes the nerves, nervous tension, nervous disorders, seizures; lowers blood pressure, heart palpitations, improves blood circulation, circulatory diseases, heart disease; rheumatism, breathing difficulties, asthma, colic. *Antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, astringent, sedative*. Little research has been done on this traditional herb; no known side effects; may worsen tinnitus, no known drug interactions.

Black Walnut Hulls • (*Juglans nigra*)

Blood purifier and detoxifier known to the ancient Greeks and Romans; used externally and internally as a vermifuge, antifungal, and antiseptic; use topically and internally together for all blood and intestinal parasites, and for all toxic blood conditions: ringworm, pinworm, tapeworm, fungus infections, vaginal infections (douche), *Candida albicans*, coccidia, giardia, warts, herpes, cold sores, poison ivy, poison oak, scrofula, impetigo, tuberculosis, venomous bites, hair loss, dandruff, athlete's foot, nail fungus, syphilis, jock itch; all skin diseases with sores, wounds, bruising, acne, eczema, psoriasis, hemorrhoids, tumors, mouth sores, ulcers, boils, abscesses, tumors; laxative but also heals diarrhea, lowers high blood pressure, cleanses blood vessels of cholesterol, lowers LDL cholesterol, lowers blood sugar, dissolves kidney

stones; induces healthy sleep patterns, builds teeth, strengthens muscles and nerves, high iodine for thyroid deficiency; also used for sore throats, tonsillitis, malaria, coughs, asthma, chronic bronchitis, nosebleeds; digestion, colic, gas, heartburn, appetite loss; intestinal diseases, inflamed conditions of the bowel, colitis, ballooned or relaxed colon, rheumatism, gout, prolapsed uterus, brain disorders, glandular deficiencies and dis-eases, eye disorders and conjunctivitis; also stimulates liver bile, heals the spleen. *Astringent, antifungal, antiparasitic, antiseptic, anti-inflammatory, laxative*. May be toxic to kidneys and liver in overdose, stains the skin; should not be used with coughs with fever, when pregnant or breastfeeding; no known drug interactions.

Blessed Thistle • (*Cnicus benedictus*)

Not to be confused with milk thistle; used in the Renaissance as an all-healer where it was believed to prevent all sicknesses including plague; usually combined with other herbs; may be useful for eating disorders and appetite loss, including anorexia nervosa; stimulates breast milk production, brings on menses, stimulates menstrual flow, relieves menstrual pain, amenorrhea (lack of menses); detoxifier and disinfectant for cervical dysplasia, vaginal infections (douche), used in breast enhancement formulas; contraceptive and abortifacient; stimulates stomach acid and saliva; digestive bitter, indigestion, gas, gastrointestinal infections and dis-eases; liver stimulant, hepatitis, jaundice, headaches from liver congestion, bile flow, liver dis-eases, gallbladder dis-ease; antiinflammatory, prevents and heals infections, antibacterial for some bacterial types, anticancer, stops bleeding, blood purifier, diuretic, fever (promotes sweating), enhances memory; clears respiratory mucus for colds and bronchitis; use topically for infections, skin ulcers, boils, wounds, gangrenous skin conditions, acne, and aids repair of collagen for skin healing. *Antioxidant, astringent, expectorant, diuretic, anti-inflammatory, digestive bitter, antibacterial, tonic*. Considered safe when used short term; side effects include allergy, stomach irritation, vomiting; not for use in pregnancy, with inflammatory bowel conditions, stomach ulcers, hiatus hernia, gastroesophageal reflux dis-ease; not recommended for use with blood thinners, aspirin or ibuprofen (NSAIDs), and antacids (including over-the-counter preparations).

Blue Cohosh • (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*)

Midwife's remedy used in the last two to three weeks of pregnancy and in labor for ease of labor and delivery; induces labor, stimulates contractions, coordinates contractions, increases strength of contractions, prevents or stops false labor pains, prevents premature delivery and miscarriage, restarts stalled or inefficient labor, aids in delivering the placenta, stops bleeding after birth, reduces after-pains, eases restlessness in pregnancy, uterine tonic; use for PMS, menstrual cramps, chronic or acute uterine pain and inflammation, chronic or acute ovarian pain and inflammation, endometriosis, metritis, breast pain, vaginal infections, chlamydia, thrush, cervical dysplasia, for menopausal symptoms and pain; use to bring on menses and to regulate menstrual cycle; restores cycles after stopping birth control pills; abortifacient if used very early pregnancy, especially used in tinctures with black cohosh and pennyroyal (never the oil); also used for rheumatism, arthritis inflammation, colic, bronchitis, pneumonia, whooping cough, asthma, bladder and kidney infections, gout, dropsy, sore throat, hiccup

epilepsy, muscle spasms of all kinds; calms nerves, improves memory. *Antispasmodic, diuretic, antibiotic, immune stimulant, vasodilator, uterine tonic, estrogenic*. Unless for abortion, take only in the last month of pregnancy, never in the first or second trimester; don't overuse; can cause headaches, nausea, high blood pressure, pains in arms and legs; powder can irritate skin and mucous membranes; avoid with estrogenic conditions and cancers; no known drug interactions.

Boldo • (*Peumus boldus*, *Peumus boldus molina*)

Kept handy in most South American households as a culinary spice and to stop indigestion. Sold as tea bags in most Spanish supermarkets; stimulates the liver, gallbladder, and gastrointestinal tracts, protects and detoxifies, dissolves fats and relieves inflammation and pain; digestive bitter that stimulates secretion of stomach juices; used for indigestion, dyspepsia, gas, stomach cramps, heartburn, ulcers, laxative, lack of appetite, and weight loss; stimulates bile for liver ailments, gallstones, fatty liver, jaundice, hepatitis; slows digestion in the intestines; use for intestinal cramps, spastic colon, inflammatory bowel diseases; expels parasites and worms; reduces uric acid production for gout and rheumatism; diuretic for bladder and kidney inflammation; use for cystitis, water retention, prostate enlargement; also tones the heart, increases blood flow to the heart, reduces heart rate, relaxes the blood vessels, inhibits blood clots; cellular protector and antioxidant, mild sedative; used for severe pain, insomnia, dizziness, to treat sexually transmitted infections, malaria, colds, earache. *Anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, tonic, antiseptic, stimulant, diuretic, sedative*. No listed side effects; use only ascaridole-free preparations; not for long-term use, never take the essential oil internally; not for use in pregnancy or breastfeeding, with obstructed bile ducts or serious liver or kidney disease; do not use with blood thinner drugs or aspirin; may reduce effectiveness of drugs that are processed by the liver.

Boneset • (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*)

Known by Native Americans and taught to the earliest colonists; written about by Avicenna (980–1037 CE), aspirin substitute, primarily used for flu with body pain; standard herbal for colds, coughs, flu, bronchitis, upper respiratory congestion, sore throats, fever, minor viral diseases, chills, aches and pains, upset stomach; cold and flu preventive when taken at first symptoms; causes heavy sweating to break fever; decongestant, laxative; used for malaria and dengue (break-bone) fever, typhoid, cholera, pneumonia; anticonvulsive used for epilepsy and fever seizures; immune stimulant, increases white blood cell production; circulatory stimulant, digestive bitter, and liver tonic; diuretic for edema, water retention; urinary and kidney infections, gout; appetite stimulant, expels intestinal worms, snakebite remedy; use for gonorrhea, calming; aids digestion and indigestion in elderly people, head body pain from many sources (arthritis, rheumatism); anti-inflammatory used topically for skin diseases and infected sores; regulates menstrual cycle, eases pain in childbirth; use warm or hot tea for flu symptoms; drink a cup every half hour or hour for three or four doses until sweating begins; use cool tea as a general tonic. *Stimulant, laxative, reduces fever, antispasmodic*. Do not eat the fresh leaves (liver toxic); not for use longer than two weeks, do not overdose or overuse (can cause vomiting and severe diarrhea); avoid in pregnancy; r

known drug interactions; effective and safe.

Borage • (*Borago officinalis*)

Primarily used in capsules as an oil (pressed seeds, not essential oil); the plant leaves and stems may be liver toxic in large doses; food plant, contains omega-6 essential fatty acids for promoting heart and artery health; regulates hormone production and balance; glandular balancer, normalizes the metabolism; adrenal tonic for recovery from stress or surgery, and recovery of adrenal function after use of steroids or cortisone; known for its healing of menopausal symptoms, hot flashes, PMS, mood swings; increases breast milk after childbirth; significant anti-inflammatory action for arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, rheumatism, joint damage and pain, also for inflammatory bowel diseases (such as irritable bowel syndrome, Crohn's disease, colitis, diverticulitis), and skin disorders; expectorant for respiratory viruses, colds, flu, dry cough, sore throat, pleurisy, bronchitis, asthma; lowers fever by promoting sweating; heals the skin (external and internal use) for eczema, psoriasis, dermatitis, seborrhea, itching, swelling, healthy skin and nails, healthy hair; diuretic for kidney and bladder diseases, cystitis, kidney stones and urinary gravel, soothes and releases water retention; heals gastritis, cures hangovers; calming, sedative, reduces depression, stabilizes mood, nervous disorders, agitation, irritability, pain relief; reduces high blood pressure, high cholesterol, high triglycerides, relaxes the blood vessels to prevent heart disease, heart attacks, and strokes. *Anti-inflammatory, diuretic, expectorant, vasodilator.* Oil side effects include belching, bloating, diarrhea, leaking of oil from rectum; the plant (not the oil) may be toxic in overdose; avoid in pregnancy, with seizure disorders, or if taking blood thinners (including aspirin).

Boswellin • (*Boswellia serrata*)

Ayurvedic remedy made from the gum resin of the frankincense tree, active ingredient boswellic acid, used internally and as a warming topical cream. Major anti-inflammatory action, especially for arthritis but throughout the body internally and externally; protects tissues from inflammation damage, increases circulation to joints and tissues, and prevents deterioration of cartilage; used for arthritis (all types), rheumatism, aches and pains, muscle and joint pain, back pain, sports injuries; inflammatory bowel diseases such as chronic ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease, dysentery, bowel ulcers; lowers cholesterol and triglycerides, stimulates the thyroid, promotes hair growth and weight loss, relieves pain; immune balancer; also used for asthma, coughs, sores, snakebite, laryngitis, vomiting, fever, abscesses; antitumor and anticancer properties, especially for brain tumors, inhibits leukemia; sedative, offers a sense of wellness and well-being. *Anti-inflammatory, antitumor, immunomodulator, expectorant.* Mild side effects may include diarrhea, nausea, skin rash, heartburn, or aftertaste; no known warnings or drug interactions.

Burdock • (*Artium lappa*)

Good-tasting food herb especially pleasant in soups, high in fiber, minerals, and vitamins including vitamin C; blood purifier and detoxifier used in Essiac, Hoxsey formula, as well as

other anticancer and antiarthritis herbal combinations; scientific research on burdock use for cancer, HIV, and bacterial infections is so far inconclusive; reduces blood sugar and may be helpful for diabetes; used for all skin and hair dis-eases (internally and externally), including hair loss, dandruff, itching scalp, sores, psoriasis, eczema, hives, lice and ringworm, warts, skin ulcers, acne, boils, bruises, burns, bites, and skin lesions that don't heal; diuretic for kidney stones, bladder and kidney infections, water retention; liver dis-eases, hemorrhoids, rheumatism, gout; colds, sore throat, fever, indigestion, sciatica; blood thinner, stomach toner, anti-inflammatory, laxative, relaxant, soothes all tissues; use for arthritis with alfalfa and white willow in a tasty tea. *Blood purifier, diuretic, induces perspiration, digestive bitter.* No known side effects but allergic reactions are possible, avoid if allergic to ragweed; may increase dehydration and hypoglycemia, or effects of drugs that are diuretic or lower blood sugar.

Butcher's Broom • (*Ruscus aculeatus*)

Used internally and in poultices, primarily as a vasoconstrictor for vein disorders (venous insufficiency) and as a diuretic to remove fluids from the body; for lower leg and ankle swelling, itching, cramping, and aching heaviness in legs, varicose veins, spider veins, vein weakness with dark dry skin, ulcerative sores, blood clots (phlebitis, thrombosis) including after surgery, hemorrhoids, dizziness standing up; reduces capillary fragility, prevents atherosclerosis; diuretic, increases urine flow and reduces water retention for cystitis; use for bladder and kidney stones, kidney and bladder infections, urethritis, nephritis, edema, dropsy, gout, rheumatism, menstrual difficulties, and PMS; also used as a poultice for sprains and broken and dislocated bones; internally and as a poultice for respiratory dis-eases with difficult breathing and chest congestion; jaundice, headaches; laxative, appetite stimulant; increases sweating to reduce and break fevers; in cosmetic creams to tighten and soothe skin, cellulite, stretch marks, wrinkles, and around eyes. *Diuretic, anti-inflammatory, vasoconstricting.* Rare side effects of nausea and upset stomach; may worsen high blood pressure and benign prostate dis-ease but listed as safe in pregnancy; no confirmed drug interactions but may interfere with high blood pressure drugs.

Butterbur • (*Petasites hybridis, Petasites vulgaris*)

Used in Europe since the Middle Ages; only use preparations marked PA-free (pyrrolizidine alkaloids removed), as these alkaloids are liver toxic and possibly carcinogenic; positive potential for migraine sufferers, reduces frequency and intensity of migraines and relief from pain during migraines, works for even severe migraine conditions, also for headaches and neuralgia; effective nondrug alternative for hay fever and allergic rhinitis (nasal congestion), colds, asthma, considered as effective as pseudoephedrine without the drowsiness side effect; internal and external smooth muscle relaxant and antispasmodic for muscle and skeletal pain, backache, stammering, cough, whooping cough, cramps, spasms; diuretic, water retention, cystitis; heart tonic; prevents ulcers, reduces fever by increasing perspiration; anti-inflammatory for internal and external infections; stress reducer, external use for skin wounds. *Antispasmodic, anti-inflammatory, antihistamine, diuretic, cardiac tonic.* Use PA-free (no pyrrolizidine alkaloids) only; mild possible side effects of burping or indigestion; not for use

in pregnancy or breastfeeding, for small children, with severe kidney or liver dis-ease, or allergic to ragweed; no known drug interactions.

Calendula • (*Calendula officinalis*)

Also called pot marigold; best known in many homeopathic salves and ointments but also used internally in tinctures and capsules; internal and external healer that soothes the skin, mucous membranes, and digestive tract; use as a salve for skin moisturizing and all skin disorders, cuts, wounds, acne, minor infections, inflammation, bruises, sunburn, burn, bleeding, insect bites, eczema, psoriasis, diaper rash, cradle cap, herpes sores, gum ulcers; offers skin burn protection in cancer radiation therapy; used in eardrops for ear infection pain; internally used for intestinal inflammation, indigestion, colitis, stomach ulcers, bowel ulcers, diverticulitis, yeast overrun in the bowel, liver and gallbladder dis-eases, hepatitis, jaundice; increases bile flow; promotes sweating to break fevers, used to “break out” pending childhood eruptive dis-eases; reduces pain, thought to prevent gangrene and tetanus; soothes digestive tract after surgery; regulates the menstrual cycle, relieves cramps, may reduce conception; uterine stimulant; inflammatory pelvic dis-ease, varicose veins; may help reduce blood pressure. *Antifungal, anti-inflammatory, stimulant, astringent, antiseptic, wound healer.* No known side effects; do not use in pregnancy or breastfeeding, or if allergic; may increase effects of sedative drugs.

California Poppy • (*Eschscholzia californica*)

California state flower, also called golden poppy, distantly related to opium poppy but without opiate or narcotic constituents, nonaddictive; can be smoked for a legal euphoric sedative high (but a cup of the tea is stronger); calms the nerves, acts as a sedative, promotes sleep without grogginess the next morning; can be used for overexcited children who won't go to sleep, nervous tension, anxiety, agitation, hyperactivity; pain relief especially for pain with anxiety; inflammatory or arthritis pain, colic, toothache, coughs; relieves constipation and bedwetting; internal and external cleanser and detoxifier; cleanses the gallbladder; increases cellular nutrient absorption, oxygenates the circulatory system, helps in the assimilation of vitamin A. *Antispasmodic, sedative, analgesic.* Often combined with other herbs for sleep or calming; no side effects or aftereffects; not for use with sleeping pills, not recommended in pregnancy or breastfeeding, or for children under six years.

Cascara Sagrada • (*Rhamnus purshiana*)

Standard herb for treating constipation; can be used alone but is more often combined with senna and other herbs; laxative, colon cleanser and toner; stimulates peristaltic action of the large intestine, expels worms and parasites, used for acute and chronic constipation, prevents constipation from becoming chronic, prevents laxative dependency by promoting regularity, not habit forming, doesn't deplete the body of nutrients; reduces the length of illnesses by cleaning toxins from the body, eliminates cancer cells and bacterial toxins from the digestive tract and body, thus preventing colon cancer and inflammatory bowel dis-eases (diverticulitis, Crohn's dis-ease, colitis, ileitis, irritable bowel syndrome), promotes balance of beneficial

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